

ESOL teachers and technology:
a narrative inquiry investigating cognition and practice in the
Further Education sector

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Abstract

This study examines three ESOL teachers' cognitions about, and use of, technology in the context of the Further Education (FE) in the UK. Using narrative inquiry, I investigated the cognitions teachers hold about technology, how these cognitions have developed, and their relationship with teachers' pedagogic practice. Where relevant, I also investigated factors which prevent teachers from operationalising their beliefs. The findings reveal that teachers' hold largely positive views about technology. They do not consider it to be a pre-requisite for successful language teaching, but value it as a tool which can promote authentic language input and use, and enable differentiated learning opportunities. They also recognise the importance of digital skills in the twenty-first century and the potential impact on students' life chances if they are not digitally competent. The cognitions which teachers hold have been formed over time, and stem from a complex range of factors including childhood learning experiences, classroom practice, and their own personal use of technology. However, their cognitions are not static and there is evidence of considerable change in teachers' technology cognitions and associated practices over the course of their careers. Their current cognitions about technology are broadly aligned with their practice, and the teachers use technology as a tool to support their broader beliefs about language teaching. However, a lack of appropriate training, access to resources, and time constraints are revealed as barriers to technology use. In contrast, peer support and positive experiences using technology emerge as key enablers in helping teachers to embed technology into their practice.

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List of abbreviations

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
EdTech	Educational Technology
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
IT	Information Technology
IWB	Interactive Whiteboard
L2	Second language
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

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For the best teachers I know: Mum and Dad

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The origins of this research lie in my experiences as an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher, manager, and more recently, teacher educator. Between 2000 and 2009, I worked as a Curriculum Manager in two Further Education (FE) Colleges in England, before moving to my current role as a Senior Lecturer in TESOL at a university. These years correspond with a period of rapid diffusion in the availability and use of technology, both in society as a whole, and in education. In all of my professional roles, I have been required to engage with technology and have done so with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success. At the same time, I have witnessed colleagues who have transformed their practice through the innovative use of technology, and who eagerly adopt any and every new form of social media, mobile applications (henceforth 'apps') and digital tools they come across. Others, however, still refuse to be convinced that technology can benefit their teaching and remain firmly wedded to their preferred, more traditional teaching practices. I locate myself somewhere between these two poles: enthusiastic at times, but also somewhat sceptical about the emphasis that is sometimes placed on the importance of technology.

Observing the very different ways teachers respond to technology has led me to question how teachers make decisions about their practice, particularly in relation to the adoption of new technology. Teachers' cognitions, defined by Borg (2003, p.81) as "what teachers know, believe, and think" about a matter, are often cited as central to teachers' pedagogic choices (Borg; 2016; Borg and Phipps, 2009; Kagan, 1992; Li, 2017; Pajares, 1992). However, there is also evidence that teachers' practices can be influenced by other factors relating to the context in which they work (Deng et al, 2014; El-Metoui and Graham-Brown, 2021; Gönen, 2019; Johnson, 2006; Kiliçkaya 2019; Li, 2014, Yunus, 2007). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine ESOL teachers' cognitions about technology, their classroom practice, and the relationship between the two. In this introduction, I will outline the rationale for this study in more detail, and

discuss the context of the FE sector. I will then outline the research questions which this study addresses. I will end by providing an overview of the chapters in this thesis.

1.2 Rationale and main themes

As the diffusion of new technologies has spread rapidly across society at large, as well as in education, teachers are now faced with an ever-increasing range of potential pedagogical tools. Mishan and Timmis (2015) comment that technology is “quite literally part of the classroom furniture” (p.75) in many parts of the world, and the FE sector is no exception to this, with interactive whiteboards (WBs) and computers installed in most teaching environments, and mobile devices bringing new opportunities for language teaching and learning. At one time, teachers were mainly limited to the use of textbooks and other printed materials in their classes, but new technologies are creating a much broader range of pedagogic options than are found between the pages of a traditional textbook (Chappelle, 2010). Used appropriately, technology can create many of the conditions widely considered to be essential for language learning, namely; exposure to authentic language in use and opportunities for interaction, both with other people and with texts (Li, 2020; Tomlinson, 2011). In turn, it is claimed that this authenticity of language and materials can lead to increased motivation and engagement from students, another key ingredient for successful learning (Li, 2017; Reinders and White, 2010).

However, a consistent theme in literature relating to the field of language teaching suggests that many teachers struggle to exploit this technology to its full potential (Beatty, 2003; Fathi and Ebadi, 2020; Gönen, 2019; Highton et al, 2019; Hu and Mcgrath, 2011; Kiliçkaya, 2019; Li, 2014; Merç, 2015; Pelgrum, 2001; Stone et al, 2020; Tomlinson, 2011). Teachers are central to the success of any innovation as they are the ones who have the ability to adapt, reinvent or reject it (Carless, 2001), and therefore it is important to examine the factors which influence their practice. There is substantial empirical evidence to suggest that teachers’ cognitions, or what they think, know and believe about a matter (Borg, 2006), play an important role in influencing teachers’ use of technology (Deng et al, 2014; Li 2017; Tondeur et al, 2017; Tour,

2015). Literature from education studies in general, as well as that from the field of language teaching, is consistent in the view that teachers' cognitions are influenced by their early experiences as learners and may operate as a filter through which new information is interpreted (Borg and Phipps, 2009; Pajares, 1992). Moreover, they can be highly resistant to change and may override the effect of teacher education courses (Kagan, 1992). It is also suggested that beliefs in particular are a strong predictor of a teacher's behaviour (Pajares, 1992), and there is substantial empirical evidence to link teachers' beliefs with their pedagogic practices, with teachers more likely to use technology in their teaching if they can readily identify the benefit of it in relation to their own pedagogical beliefs (Davis et al, 1989; Lam, 2000; Li, 2017; Zhao & Frank, 2003).

However, despite evidence that cognitions can exert a powerful influence in shaping teachers' practices, there is also evidence that teachers do not, or are not always able to, operationalise their cognitions and some researchers have highlighted discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g. Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Nishino, 2012; Phan, 2018; Phipps and Borg, 2009). Barnard and Burns (2012) suggest that this lack of congruence between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices is best understood in relation to the contexts in which they work. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) describe these contexts as complex and dynamic systems in which a variety of factors interact to support or constrain the ability to translate one's beliefs into practice. Thus it can be seen that the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their classroom practices is highly complex and influenced by a number of factors. This study will explore these factors in relation to ESOL teachers' use of technology in the Further Education sector.

1.3 The context for this research

The Further Education sector in England includes "any institutions or organisations (other than schools or universities) that receive government funding to provide education and training to people over the age of 16 (some also offer courses for 14 and 15-year-olds)" (Education and Training Foundation, N.D). This includes sixth form colleges, private training providers, third sector organisations and FE colleges.

The use of technology in Further Education has become much more widespread in recent years, with most teachers reporting that they use it in some way in their teaching (Education and Training Foundation; 2019; Jisc, 2021). This may be driven in part by an intense focus on the use of technology by the government and non-governmental organisations, increasing particularly since the election of the coalition government in 2010 (AoC/ALT, 2014). Since then, a series of successive reports have emphasised the need to use technology to enhance teaching (U.K. Parliament, 2016; FELTAG, 2014). Most recently, in 2019, the government published its first national Educational Technology (EdTech) strategy in which it set out its aims to “support and enable the education sector in England to help develop and embed technology in a way that cuts workload, fosters efficiencies, removes barriers to education and ultimately drives improvements in educational outcomes” (Key Non Parliamentary Papers Education. (2019, p. 5). The strategy commits to working with providers to drive improvement in five key areas, namely: administration processes, assessment process, teaching practices, continuing professional development and learning throughout life. The rationale for this is associated with a broader move from the government to upskill young people and adults in response to a perceived skills’ shortage (DfE, 2016). It reflects “how technology has become rooted across all parts of society and therefore it is expected that the education sector follow course and engage with technology to benefit from its potential” (Dabbous and Emms, 2020, p.8).

However, despite the intense push towards the “technologification” of adult learning (Selwyn, 2006, p.13), questions persist about the impact of these policies. There is little empirical research on the use of technology in FE (Armstrong, 2019), but an examination of that which does exist reveals mixed findings about the extent to which technology has permeated teachers’ classroom practice. Findings from FELTAG’s (2014) report into the use of technology in the Further Education (FE) suggests that “teachers are becoming more confident and capable in their use of technology” and that ‘teaching practitioners are more curious than fearful of digital technology and are using a wide range of products and digital technology in their practices” (p.13). Results from the Education and Training Foundation’s 2019 Teacher Digital Perspectives Survey

(Education and Training Foundation, 2019) appear to support this, indicating that teachers have a very high level of engagement with technology, with only 6% saying that they never use it. Other recent research contradicts this, however, with findings from Dabbous and Emms (2020) revealing that the main challenge for staff in integrating technology was a “lack of confidence among staff in using digital tools” and that “Some teaching staff were reluctant to try a new approach, feared failure in front of students and thought they were not digitally literate enough to integrate technologies” (p. 35). An explanation for this may come from Laurillard and Doel (2016) who report that access to technology training for teachers is lacking, particularly for those with lower level digital skills. The government also alludes to problems in the adoption of technology within its own EdTech strategy (Key Non Parliamentary Papers Education, (2019) referring to education as having “pockets of good practice” (p. 5), thus implying that there is room for improvement. This indicates, therefore, that teachers may not be using technology to its full potential, and that barriers still exist to its use.

Despite the increased focus on the use of technology in the FE sector, there has been very limited research into its use in ESOL. In the first part of the twenty-first century, the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) published a range of research into ESOL, some of which also referred to technology. Mellor et al (2004), for example, conducted detailed observations of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes in order to explore the impact of technology on teaching. They discovered that technology, mainly in the form of computers, was being used in a variety of ways to support learning and that the most common approach was a group presentation by the teacher, followed by individual work on a computer. They also noted that while enthusiastic about the use of technology, teachers were largely in the early stages of their technology use and needed more support to integrate it effectively. This research combined data from ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy classes and although the findings did not discuss the subjects discretely, it provided a useful insight into teachers’ practices at the time. Though the study made recommendations for further research into teachers and learners’ use of technology, there has been very little research in adult ESOL in the UK since then in general, and more specifically in relation to ESOL

teachers relationship with technology (BIS, 2014) which is the focus of this study. A recent report, commissioned by the Department for Education (Higton et al, 2019) exploring the extent to which adult ESOL provision addresses the needs of learners in the FE sector, contains a short section on the use of technology in teaching. This reveals broadly positive attitudes towards technology from teachers and that the majority of those surveyed use it in their teaching. However, it also highlights the barriers to use which still exist, particularly for third sector organisations who report having limited access to online technology and the needs for more staff development and training. While this survey is useful, technology forms only a small part of its focus, and the largely quantitative nature of the data means that it lacks detail about *why* teachers do or not engage with technology and the factors which influence their practice. It also provides a high-level look at technology use with little detail of the actual ways teachers use technology. Baynham (cited in Rosenberg, 2007) suggests that the lack of UK-based research into adult ESOL may be the result of an over-reliance on the well-established research base in ELT and Applied Linguistics across the globe, thus highlighting the need for more localised research. As the requirement to use technology in teaching is so firmly embedded into discourse relating to the FE sector, it is essential that more research is undertaken to examine if and how it is being used.

1.4 Research aims and significance

This study attempts to address the dearth of research into ESOL teachers' engagement with technology in the FE sector. Reflecting previous research which highlights the link between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice, this research draws on Borg's (2006) framework for teacher cognition and examines the cognitions that teachers hold about technology, their development, and the extent to which there is congruence between their pedagogic practices and the beliefs that underlie them. This acknowledges that although individual agency has been shown to have an impact on teachers' actions, external factors, such as policy, institutional constraints or student behaviour, may restrict teachers' ability to translate their beliefs into practice (Nishino, 2012; Orafi and Borg, 2009; Phan 2018). Therefore, where a lack of congruence

between beliefs and practice is shown to exist, the reasons for this will also be examined.

The specific research questions which this study aims to answer are as follows:

1. What cognitions do ESOL teachers hold about the use of technology for teaching ESOL?
2. Which factors have influenced the development of these cognitions?
3. To what extent is there congruence between teachers' cognitions and practices?
4. If a lack of congruence exists, what factors prevents teachers from operationalising their cognitions?

1.5 Contribution to knowledge

This research makes an original contribution as it addresses the lack of empirical research relating to ESOL teachers' engagement with technology in the FE sector and sheds light on an under-researched area. As technology is now a fundamental part of teaching in FE, research into how teachers navigate working with technology within ESOL classes is essential in understanding factors which enable or prohibit its use.

This research is informed by situated theories of cognition and learning which view cognition and behaviour as being constructed through social interaction and cultural activity within a particular community, and are thus highly influenced by the environment in which they occur (Greeno, 1998). Accordingly, research of this nature requires a methodology which allows an examination of people's experiences within a particular social setting as this facilitates better understanding of teachers' use of technology. For this reason, I have narrative inquiry for this study as it allows an in-depth exploration of people's experiences in particular contexts and the meanings they attach to them.

1.6 Definition of key terms

Before proceeding with a more detailed rationale for this study, it is necessary to define some key terms relating to technology. There is a certain lexical messiness when

defining technology as different terms proliferate. In the field of language teaching, the term Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been well established since the early 1980s (Chapelle, 2001) and is characterised by Egbert (2005) as 'learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies (p. 4). This term is still in use, though the rise in the number of portable devices such as tablets and smartphones has also given rise to the use of the term Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as this highlights the opportunities created by personal, portable devices which emphasise access and use across different contexts of use (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). In this work, I shall refer to 'technology' and use this to encompass both CALL and MALL. In much literature relating to technology in language teaching, technology refers specifically to digital technology and this deliberately excludes older forms of technology such as CD and DVD players which have long been 'normalised' (Bax, 2003, p.23) into everyday use. I follow this approach when referring to teachers' current pedagogy, but when referring to historic practices, I use the term to encompass tools which would have been referred to as technology at that time.

Globally, a variety of terms are used to refer to the field of language teaching, including English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as an Additional Language (EAL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). The acronym ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) is the universally accepted term when referring to publicly funded provision in the Further Education sector in the UK and this is used throughout when referring to the specific context in which the research takes place. I used the term ELT when referring to literature and research which takes place in other contexts.

In chapters two and three, I offer a detailed discussion of terminology relating to teacher cognition and narrative respectively.

1.7 Timing of the research

The data for this study was collected and analysed before the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and therefore no references are made to this period by the participants. Since the first UK-wide lockdown in March 2020 and the move to

emergency remote teaching that this necessitated, teachers have been required to engage with technology in new ways and this is likely to have had a significant impact on their attitude towards, and use of, technology. However, this study, like others before it (Li, 2014; Tondeur et al, 2017), examines the complexity inherent in the development of teachers' technological beliefs and practices and illuminates how they are influenced by multiple personal and professional factors rather than one single incident or set of circumstances. Therefore, it is anticipated that this research will still contribute to an understanding of ESOL teachers' cognition and practices in relation to technology, and also how they navigate change in this arena.

1.8 Structure of the study

This study is structured in eight chapters. In this first chapter, I have provided an overview of the origins of this research, and the rationale for its study.

Chapter 2 discusses key literature relating to teacher cognition, the use of technology in ELT, and their interrelationship. I also examine a range of other factors which promote or prevent the effective uptake of technology.

In chapter 3, I will discuss the methodological and ethical issues inherent in undertaking a narrative inquiry of this nature. I will also consider the use of a recorded monologue, interviews and classroom observations as tools for data collection, and the selection of participants.

Chapters 4 to 6 presents my participants' stories. Each chapter is a narrative analysis which tells the story of one participant and provides an account of their cognitions about, and engagement with, technology during their career.

Chapter 7 is a cross-narrative analysis in which I analyse and discuss the differences and similarities between my participants' cognitions and practices in relation to technology, and how they developed. I will do this by using Borg's (2006) model of elements and processes in language teacher cognition as a conceptual framework.

The final chapter of this study provides a summary of the key findings of the research and considers their implications for further research. It also highlights the study's original contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to examine three ESOL teachers' cognitions about, and their uses of, technology. In chapter 1, I outlined the origins of this study, and how my own experiences as an ESOL lecturer prompted my interest in this topic. In this chapter, I will analyse existing literature which has informed this study and through my discussions, I will highlight the importance of teachers' beliefs in relation to their pedagogic practice.

I will start by considering the concept of teacher cognition and its significance. I then discuss key facets of, and processes involved in, teacher cognition using Borg's (2006) framework for the study of teacher cognition. I will focus in particular on the impact of early learning experiences and professional coursework in the development of cognitions, and on the complex relationship which exists between beliefs, classroom practice and context. The final part of the chapter moves away from teacher cognition to explore other issues which affect teachers' engagement with technology including confidence and competence; availability of resources; teacher education; peer collaboration; time; institutional support; and learner variables. This reflects a substantial body of evidence which indicates that teachers' use of technology can be helped or hindered by external as well as internal factors.

2.2 Introducing teacher cognition

According to Borg (2006), until the 1970s, researchers working in the field of teacher education were largely interested in exploring teachers' behaviour. He states that this stemmed from the belief that there was a direct correspondence between teachers' actions and student learning. It was assumed that if the specific teacher behaviours which led to successful learning could be identified, other teachers could be taught to implement the same behaviours, and this would then lead to better educational achievement. However, in the 1980s, developments in cognitive psychology highlighted the role that cognitive processes play in determining behaviour: teachers were no longer

seen as automata who could be programmed to reproduce certain behaviours, but unique individuals with knowledge and beliefs which they actively use to shape their practice (Borg, 2012). Accordingly, research attention shifted from a focus on teachers' behaviour to their "thinking, beliefs, planning and decision-making processes" (Fang, 1996, p. 47).

Cutrim Schmid (2017) states that it was not until the 1990s that teacher cognition became recognised as an important area of inquiry within the field of language teaching. Since then however, it has flourished and Li (2020) reports that there have been over two hundred books and journal articles written on the topic since the year 2000. The main themes evident in empirical research relate to teachers' knowledge of, and beliefs about, particular aspects of teaching and learning such as grammar teaching or technology integration (e.g., Andrews, 2007; Watson, 2015; Zheng and Borg, 2014); the impact of initial teacher education and professional development on cognitions (Borg, 2011; Borg et al 2014; Caraboglu and Roberts, 2000; Johnson, 2015; Svalberg 2015), and the relationship between cognition and practice and the extent to which they are congruent (Breen et al, 2001; Ding et al, 2019; Farrell and Ives, 2015; Gao and Zhang, 2020; Nishino, 2012; Phipps and Borg, 2009). Thanks to this body of research, it is now widely accepted that teachers' beliefs "influence how the teacher orchestrates the interaction between learner, teacher, and subject matter in a particular classroom context with particular resources" (Breen et al, 2001, p. 473) and that examining these cognitions is essential to understanding teaching and learning processes. This has particular significance for my study as it has long been argued that teachers' beliefs are the most significant factor in determining how teachers use technology (Ertmer, 2005) and there is a body of research which examines the relationship between teacher cognition and technology use (Deng et al 2014; Ding et al 2019; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al, 2010; Tondeur, et al, 2008; Wang, 2021). However, as I highlighted in chapter 1, despite the widespread use of technology in the FE sector, there is a lack of literature from the field which explores teachers' beliefs about technology, their pedagogic practices, or the relationship between the two. More research is needed in order to understand how teachers make sense of new technologies in their teaching.

2.3 Defining key terms

One of the challenges in studying teacher cognition lies in the range of terminology which exists in the field (Pajares, 1992). Li (2020) reports that a literature review of language teacher cognition reveals that the most frequently used terms in literature are “perception, conception, attitudes and beliefs” (p. 19) while Borg (2006) reports that there are over thirty terms used to describe teachers’ mental lives. To complicate matters further, he notes that the same terms are often defined in multiple ways, with different terms used to describe similar concepts. Burns (1996), for example, refers to ‘theories for practice’ to describe the thought processes and beliefs which affect teachers’ actions in a classroom, while Freeman (1993) uses the term ‘conceptions of practice’ to denote the underlying ideas which influence teachers’ behaviour.

One of the key discussions within literature about teacher cognition relates to the extent to which beliefs differ from knowledge, though Borg (2015) notes that “Thirty years of intellectual consideration of these issues have not generated any consensus” (p. 489). Definitions of beliefs reveal that they are considered to be heavily subjective in nature. Rokeach (1972), for example, defines a belief as any proposition that starts with “I believe that...”. Murphy and Mason (2006) echo this subjectivity by describing beliefs as “all that one accepts or wants to be true. Beliefs do not require verification and cannot be verified” (pp. 306-307). In a similar vein, Nespor (1987) posits that beliefs entail stronger affective and evaluative elements than knowledge. For Calderhead (1996) beliefs are “suppositions, commitments, and ideologies” while Pajares (1992) suggests that they are “an individual’s judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition” (p. 316).

In contrast, knowledge is typically seen as involving factual propositions and understandings (Calderhead, 1996; Meijer et al, 2001) and claims which have evidence to support them, and therefore have epistemic value (Fenstermacher, 1994). Ertmer (2005) exemplifies the difference between these two sets of definitions by relating them to teaching:

...after gaining knowledge of a proposition, we are still free to accept it as being either true or false (i.e., believe it, or not). For example, teachers may gain specific knowledge about how to create spreadsheets for student record keeping, and may also know that other teachers have used them successfully, yet still not believe that spreadsheets offer an effective tool for their classroom use. (p. 28)

Thus, even in the face of evidence to support a claim, a teacher's personal belief system may lead them to reject it. A belief, is therefore, more subjective than knowledge and does not rely on verifiable, objective evidence.

However, despite the difference in these definitions, many writers regard beliefs and knowledge as being deeply intertwined and ultimately, inseparable (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992, Woods, 1996). Verloop et al (2001) use the phrase 'teacher knowledge' as an umbrella term to embrace "a large variety of cognitions, from conscious and well-balanced opinions to unconscious and unreflected intuitions" (p. 446). This term includes, therefore, both beliefs and knowledge as they argue that these concepts are indistinguishable in the minds of teachers. Fenstermacher (1994) also supports the notion of 'knowledge' as a superordinate term which encompasses multiple constructs including beliefs, whilst also acknowledging that it can be used to refer to factual knowledge alone. At the heart of these discussions about beliefs and knowledge, and the extent to which they overlap, are philosophical questions about epistemology: what knowledge is and how it is created. As I shall outline in more detail in chapter 3, my research is influenced by a social constructivist worldview which emphasises knowledge as a personal, subjective construct, and there is no clear distinction between facts and values (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Accordingly, in this thesis, I do not distinguish between beliefs and knowledge and use the terms interchangeably. Moreover, I use Borg's (2006; 2012) definitions of teacher cognition as an umbrella term to refer to everything which "language teachers think, know and believe – and of its relationship to teachers' classroom practices" (Borg, 2006, p. 1). Borg later broadened this definition to include, "attitudes, identities and emotions, in recognition of the fact that these are all aspects of the unobservable dimension of teaching" (Borg, 2012, p. 11). This definition is significant for two key reasons. Firstly, it

encompasses a range of psychological constructs and therefore addresses the complexity of teachers' mental processes and the indistinct lines which delineate them. Here, I am influenced by Kagan (1992) who remarked that in the field of education, there are few incontrovertible 'truths' and that "most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded more accurately as a belief" (p. 73). Borg's definition also acknowledges this overlap between knowledge and belief. Moreover, the inclusion of emotions is also significant for this study as affective factors are often cited as a significant factor in the adoption of technology (Al-Awidi and Aldhafeeri, 2017; Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Kessler, 2007; Lam, 2000; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2010). Secondly, Borg's definition also includes reference to the relationship between cognition and pedagogy. Research indicates that cognitions and practices are bi-directional with beliefs influencing practice and practice influencing beliefs. (Borg, 2006; Tondeur et al, 2017). Research into teacher cognition cannot, therefore, be studied out of context (Borg, 2006; 2015; Li, 2017) but must address the role that context plays in shaping teachers beliefs and vice versa.

2.4 The nature of teacher cognition

Phipps and Borg (2009) report that there is much agreement in existing literature about the nature of teachers' beliefs, and also about their relationship with practice. One area where researchers concur is the acknowledgement that teachers' beliefs are widely regarded as being influenced by early learning experiences (Borg, 2003; Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Lortie, 1975; Numrich, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Windschitl, 2002). Beliefs which develop early in life can be more rigid and difficult to change (Kagan, 1990) and therefore may not be significantly affected by teacher education or professional development programmes (Almarza, 1996; Belland, 2009; Richardson, 1996). Phipps and Borg (2009) describe beliefs, therefore, as acting "as a filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience" (p. 381). In order for a change in beliefs to occur, certain personality traits are desirable and include an ability to reflect, accept feedback, and try out new possibilities (Kang and Cheng, 2014). When this

occurs, teachers' cognitions can and do undergo change throughout their careers in light of their experiences, though these changes are unpredictable (Feryok, 2010).

Feryok (2010) argues that beliefs do not exist as separate, discrete entities, but form a system in which different cognitions interact and influence each other. The strength of these beliefs may vary however, with some acting as core beliefs while others are more peripheral (Pajares, 1992; Phipps and Borg, 2009). Borg (2012) describes the difference between the two as being a matter of conviction with core beliefs being stronger and more firmly held, while peripheral beliefs are less rigid and therefore more malleable. This view concurs with Rokeach (1968) who suggests that people hold a complex range of beliefs which are ranked according to their importance. When two beliefs are in conflict, the one which ranks higher will outlive the other.

The relationship between teachers' cognitions and classroom practices is complex. Pajares (2013) describes beliefs as "the best predictors of individual behavior" (p. 45) and there is significant evidence that beliefs have an impact on teachers' practice (Borg, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Kubaniyova, 2012; Richardson, 2003; Tsui, 2003; Woods, 1996). This impact is, in fact, bi-directional, as cognitions shape practice, but practice can also shape cognitions (Borg, 2006; Phipps and Borg, 2009). However, teachers' beliefs are not always congruent with their observed pedagogy. Although some research has highlighted congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices (Ding et al, 2019; Farrell and Ives, 2015; Kuzborska, 2011), other studies evidence tensions between beliefs and practices (Farrell and Ives, 2015; Kang and Cheng, 2014; Phipps and Borg, 2009). The reasons for this are multifactorial. Firstly, the context in which teaching occurs can have a considerable impact on teachers' ability to operationalise their beliefs and this may relate to students, resources, organisational issues or national policies. In the context of technology integration for example, teachers may be constrained by the availability of resources (Hu and Mcgrath, 2011; Gönen, 2019; Li, 2014; Merç, 2015). Feryok (2010) suggests that another reason for the lack of alignment between beliefs and practice relates to teachers' knowledge, and she highlights in particular the difference between declarative and procedural knowledge and argues that while teachers may have theoretical knowledge about an aspect of

teaching, they may not know how to translate this into practice. This may be a particular issue in terms of teachers' pedagogic practices as teachers are continually confronted with new technological tools and affordances. A third reason for apparent discrepancies between teachers' cognitions and practice may be associated with a mismatch between their stated beliefs and actual beliefs. Borg (2006; 2015), contends that researchers need to consider carefully their choice of methodology and as different data collection tools may yield different results. He suggests that data elicited through abstract means, such as questionnaires or direct questioning outside the context of a class may lead to idealised, theoretical views being espoused rather than actual beliefs. Therefore, they may not relate to actual, observable classroom practices. My research questions focus not just on the beliefs that teachers hold about technology but also how they have developed. Therefore a more detailed examination of literature relating to this theme will be explored in sections 2.7 – 2.10.

2.5 The significance of research into teacher cognition

Johnson (2006) highlights the importance of studies in teacher cognition arguing that “many factors have advanced the field’s understanding of L2 teachers’ work, but none is more significant than the emergence of a substantial body of research now referred to as teacher cognition” (p. 236). Research indicates that there is a strong link between teachers’ cognition and their classroom practices (Borg 2006; Pajares, 1992; Li 2017). The study of teacher cognition, therefore, sheds light on why teachers behave the way they do, and the knowledge, beliefs and thought processes which influence their pedagogy. When these cognitions are studied in tandem with teachers’ practice, they can also reveal how beliefs are mediated through context.

Cutrim Schmid (2017) also highlights the significance of teachers’ beliefs for teacher education. She suggests that research which provides insight into how teachers learn and how they operationalise this knowledge in their classrooms, can act as a powerful tool in the development of teacher education programmes and professional development activities. Firstly, it can shed light on the impact of teacher education programmes and the extent to which they facilitate a change in cognitions (Borg, 2011).

Secondly, professional coursework which encourages teachers to identify and articulate their beliefs is likely to have more impact as beliefs cannot develop if they are not acknowledged (Pajares, 1992).

However, although research into teacher cognition can be beneficial, Borg (2015a) is critical of research which explores teacher cognition without a clear rationale or an indication of its potential value. This is echoed by Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) who call for greater reflection on how insights into teachers' mental processes might lead to a better understanding of teaching and learning. Borg (2015) comments that some studies provide little justification for their value beyond what he calls the 'gap' argument i.e. that little is known about a topic. Rather than studying teacher cognition simply because one can, he contends research must have a clear rationale for why a study is needed. According to Borg, an argument can be made for researching a particular aspect of teacher cognition if it: "... (a) is characterised by a large literature (b) is a fundamental activity in L2 teaching and (c) has not been studied from a teacher cognition perspective".

This study meets each of Borg's conditions, thus indicating its potential contribution to the field. As I outlined in chapter 1, the use of technology is now central to government policy in the FE sector, and indeed all sectors of education in the UK, and teachers are expected to integrate it into their teaching (Higton et al, 2019). However, there is a lack of research into how ESOL teachers working in FE use technology, or their attitudes towards it. While there is a significant body of literature relating to teacher cognition and technology use in the broader field of ELT, each classroom is its own unique socio-cultural space which is impacted by a range of contextual factors. Findings from other educational settings therefore may not be directly relevant to the FE sector and more research is needed in order to understand how ESOL teachers make sense of, and implement, this curriculum directive. Indeed, Breen et al (2001) highlight the importance of teacher cognition when examining curriculum innovation as they suggest that for innovations to be successful, they must fit into teachers' existing pedagogic principles. This is supported by Borg (2006) who indicates that teachers' cognitions impact how they interpret and implement curriculum change. The study of teacher

cognition in the context of technology integration is vital therefore as “...it provides insider knowledge about the plausibility of such innovation and potential barriers and possible conditions; second, strategies or guidelines or pedagogies developed by teachers within that particular situation can facilitate such innovation and speed up its adoption” (Li, 2017, pp 14-15).

2.6 Borg’s framework for the study of teacher cognition

Borg (2003, p. 81) notes that the focus on much research into teacher cognition attempts to answer the following questions:

- What do teachers have cognitions about?
- How do these cognitions develop?
- How do they interact with teacher learning?
- How do they interact with classroom practice?

Following a detailed analysis of mainstream research into teacher cognition, Borg (2003) created a “schematic conceptualisation” in which he attempted to identify what teachers have cognitions about, how they develop and how they interact with classroom practice and teacher learning. He later refined this model and this newer version is presented in figure 1 overleaf). Writing about the first iteration of this framework, he argues it is necessary because it provides an overarching conceptualisation of the field of language teacher cognition which:

militates against the accumulation of isolated studies conducted without sufficient awareness of how these relate to existing work; it reminds researchers of key dimensions in the study of language teacher cognition (e.g., prior learning, professional education, context); and it highlights key themes and relationships and promotes more focused attention to these (Borg, 2003, p. 105).

Within the framework, he highlights the significance of early schooling, professional coursework, classroom practice and the wider context on teacher cognition.

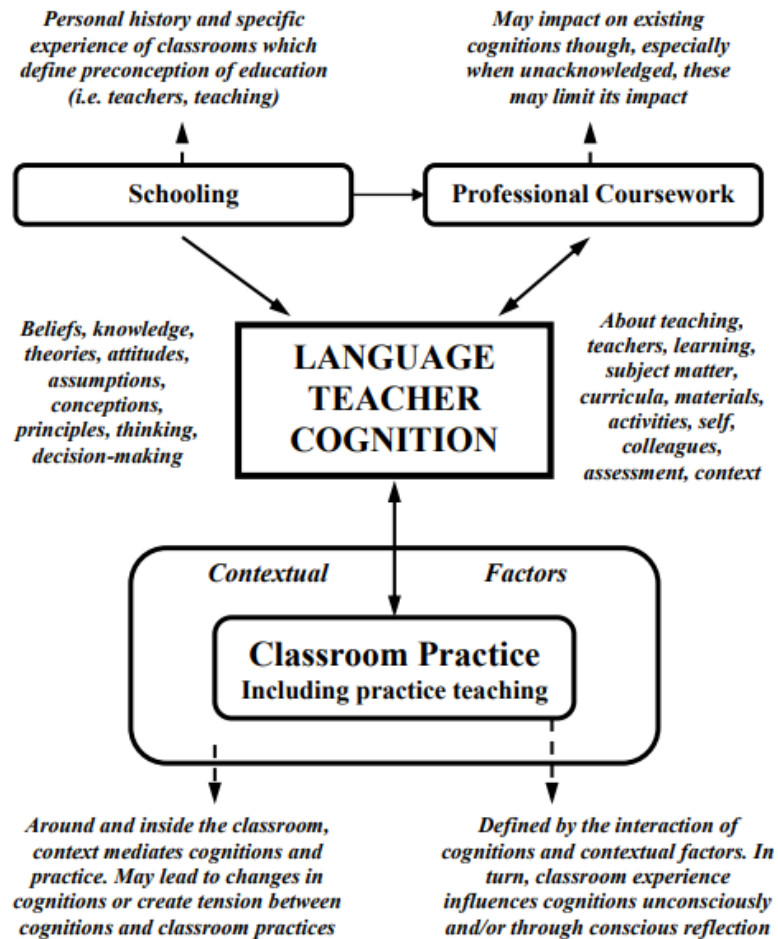


Figure 1: Borg (2006) Elements and processes in teacher cognition

Borg's work has direct relevance to my research questions which relate to the development of ESOL teachers' cognitions and practices over time, and the factors which have influenced them. For this reason, I have adopted Borg's (2006) work as a theoretical framework for this study as it:

- highlights the multiple factors which influence the development of teachers' cognitions thus accentuating the complexity inherent in the formation of beliefs
- emphasises that beliefs are shaped over time, starting in childhood and continuing through ones' professional career (Borg, 2003; Ertmer and Ottenbreit-

Leftwich, 2010; Lortie, 1975; Moodie, 2016; Pajares, 1992; Numrich, 1996; Windschitl, 2002)

- acknowledges the significance of context, both in and out of the classroom, in the development of teachers' beliefs. In particular, it demonstrates the symbiotic relationship which exists between language teacher cognition and both professional coursework, and classroom practice. In both cases, these elements are mutually influential with each shaping the other.

In the next section, I shall examine literature relating to each of the categories in Borg's (2006) framework in turn beginning with schooling, followed by professional coursework and finally the relationship between cognition, classroom practice and contextual factors.

2.7 Teacher Cognition and Schooling

Lortie (1975) argues that teachers' experiences and as a learner in school have a significant impact on their beliefs about teaching and their pedagogical practices. He contends that when trainees begin their training as teachers, they have already spent thousands of hours in a classroom as a student, observing and evaluating teachers. In turn, this informs their beliefs about what teachers do, and what good and poor teaching entails. However, he notes that students only see part of teaching, namely that which is visible to an observer and he likens this to an audience viewing a play. As such, they do not see what occurs behind the scenes, such as planning and the thought processes this involves, or other factors which affect their decision making such as curricular or organisational constraints. This partial view of the role of teachers means that students are unable to analyse or reflect on what they see. Moreover, when they later become teachers, they may underestimate the complexities inherent within the profession. According to Lortie, the result of this "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 62) might also be that teachers' pedagogy is largely based on imitating their teachers, "which, being generalized across individuals, becomes tradition" and "transcends generations" (p. 63). Wideen et al (1998) note the lack of empirical evidence Lortie provides to support this claim but the significance of early schooling remains widely cited in discussions relating

to the development of teachers' beliefs and practices (Attia, 2014; Bailey et al, 1996; Borg, 2003, 2006; Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996 Pajares, 1992).

Several studies highlight the significance of early learning experiences. Johnson (1994), for example, investigated pre-service English language teachers' beliefs during teaching practice. Her findings indicated that the teachers evaluated pedagogic approaches by drawing on their own experiences as language learners. In particular, she noted that teachers' beliefs stemmed from "images" (p. 450) of teaching which developed during their formal schooling and that this was likely to be reflected in their own teaching. She surmises: "Probably the most striking pattern that emerged from these data is the apparent power that images from prior experiences within formal language classrooms had on these teachers" images of themselves as teachers, teaching, and their own instructional practices" (p. 449).

This view is also reflected in research from mainstream education. For example, Flores and Day's (2006) longitudinal study into factors which influence teachers' identities in the early stages of their career highlights formal early learning experiences as central in shaping teachers' identities and pedagogy. When their participants reflected on their time as pupils, they identified both positive and negative experiences which affected their time at school and subsequently influenced their own teaching. Several of them identified a specific link between their own practice, and that of their former teacher. In some cases, this involved them actively imitating pedagogy they admired:

Maybe the experience of my former teachers during my secondary education helped me to behave the way I do, because they did exactly what I am trying to do now. Actually, there was this teacher of Chemistry who I admired a lot and who I try to follow as a model. (p. 223)

Other participants sought to avoid what they perceived as bad teaching with one teacher admitting:

Regarding the classes, I tried to create an image of what went wrong when I was a student, and I have tried to change that. I mean, now I try to do the opposite to what the bad teachers did during my schooling experience. (pp. 223-224).

The impact of positive and negative learning experiences is also evident in a study by Sheehan and Munro (2019) which investigated teachers' cognitions about, and experiences of, assessment. Our research had a partial focus on how teachers' experience of assessment in their own schooling influenced their assessment practices. Our findings revealed that only 26% of participants reported using assessment techniques which reflected those that they had witnessed as pupils. This contradicted earlier research which indicated that teachers test as they were tested (Vogt and Tsagari, 2014; Xu and Brown, 2016;). In contrast, several participants described actively rejecting the assessment models they had been subjected to and made clear links between negative assessment experiences in school and their choice of assessment techniques as a teacher. One teacher for example, criticised the lack of transparency in grading criteria: "... the grades were shady, you never knew why you got a three or a four, I didn't like that so we always explain to the students which grades they got." (p. 11). Even those participants who had performed well in school rejected the approaches taken by their teachers and looked for alternatives in their own pedagogy with one stating that: "I did well but I simply realised that was not the best method to evaluate my students" (p. 11). Rather than relying on tests, this teacher instead preferred to use communicative activities rather than rote learning in her practice.

These studies corroborate Korthagen's (2001) argument that historic factors which shape teachers' cognitions and practices can stem from both positive and negative experiences. Moodle (2016) refers to this phenomenon as the 'anti-apprenticeship of observation', indicating that teachers take active steps not to replicate the teaching they experienced early in life. A further example of this can be found in Numrich's (1996) study which explored novice teachers' experiences on a ten week practicum which was part of a Master's in TESOL programme. The students wrote a diary in which they provided an overview of their language learning history in addition to their reflections on the practicum and an analysis thereof. The findings indicated a clear link between the

teachers' own language learning experiences and their subsequent practice as a teacher. For example, just over one quarter of the participants included a cultural component in their teaching as this was something they regarded as beneficial in their own education. However, the participants also reported rejecting pedagogic techniques which had impacted them negatively as learners. Error correction was cited most frequently as an area of language teaching which had impeded them from speaking in class as youngsters. As a result, several participants reported avoiding correction completely. The findings suggest that the beliefs participants developed during their own schooling was so deeply rooted that they struggled to introduce correction even when student feedback indicated that they were unhappy with their teacher's current approach.

Attia's (2014) study into Arabic language teachers' cognitions about, and use of, technology reveals the impact of early informal learning experiences on teachers' pedagogy. One of her participants, for example, moved from Egypt to America as a young child. Although she had already started learning English in school at this point, it was through her interactions with a child who lived next door to her that she became more confident and proficient in the language. As a teacher, she is a strong advocate of communicative approaches, which she attributes to her experiences in childhood. The research also indicates that learning experiences at home, with parents, also shape views about learning and teaching and in the case of one participant, led to her decision to become a teacher. As Attia notes, "...the effect of former learning experiences extends beyond apprenticeship of observation in classroom to cover the imprints of parents and the wider social network."(p. 7).

Thus, it can be seen that early learning experiences, both formal and informal, positive and negative can have a considerable impact on teachers' cognitions and their practice. This has particular significance for my research as my interest lies not just in teachers' current cognitions, but also how they have developed over time. Therefore, an examination of teachers' early lives is a key part of this study.

2.8 Teacher Cognition and Professional Coursework

The impact of teacher education on teachers' cognitions has been widely debated for decades. An early study by Kagan (1992) suggested that teacher training programmes had little impact on the development of teachers' beliefs. She argued that:

...the personal beliefs and images that preservice candidates bring to programs of teacher education usually remain inflexible. Candidates tend to use the information provided in coursework to confirm rather than to confront and correct their pre-existing beliefs. Thus, a candidate's personal beliefs and images determine how much knowledge the candidate acquires from a preservice program and how it is interpreted (p. 154)

In subsequent years, however, there has been an increasing number of empirical studies which demonstrate a link between professional coursework and a change in cognitions, and by extension, practice. Wyatt's (2009) longitudinal research, for example, investigated the development of a secondary school teacher's practical knowledge over three years. In particular, he explored how participation in a teacher education programme led to a change in the participant's practical knowledge in relation to communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT is a broad approach to language teaching which places meaningful interaction at the heart of the teaching and learning process and emphasises the importance of developing communicative, rather than just linguistic (i.e. grammatical) competence (Hymes, 1972). Often considered to be the most dominant methodological approach in language teaching (Knight, 2007), there is a significant amount of research which focuses on how teachers conceptualise and/or operationalise it (see for example Nishino, 2012; Orafi and Borg, 2009). In this instance, Wyatt analysed her assignments, lesson observations and interviews, and discovered a change in both her theoretical understanding of CLT and her ability to operationalise this during her engagement on the course.

Responding directly to Kagan's (1992) notion of the inflexibility of beliefs, Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) aimed to investigate this in the context of a Modern Foreign Languages PGCE. They used three in-depth interviews to explore trainees beliefs across the course and their findings revealed that nineteen out of twenty of their participants

experienced a change in their beliefs. For most of these trainees, the change came slowly and was cumulative in nature, though two experienced a complete transformation in their beliefs.

Borg (2011) also highlighted the impact of teacher education programmes on teacher cognitions. His research investigated the impact of an eight-week DELTA (Diploma in English language teaching to adults) on six in-service language teachers. He reported that the course did not result in “a deep and radical reversal” (p. 378) of teacher’s beliefs, but that its impact was nonetheless significant. In particular, his findings revealed that teachers experienced a change in their ability to articulate their beliefs and/or a change in their cognitions.

Both Borg’s (2011) and Cabaroglu and Roberts’ (2000) studies reveal characteristics of teacher education courses which may facilitate a development in teacher beliefs. Borg suggests that the change evident in his research resulted from providing opportunities for trainees to consciously explore their beliefs and then reflect on how these beliefs might be translated into practice. Similarly, Cabaroglu and Roberts emphasize the importance of “early confrontation of pre-existing beliefs” (p. 399) in their course. Pajares (1992) explains the significance of exploring trainees’ beliefs explicitly: “Beliefs are unlikely to be replaced unless they prove unsatisfactory, and they are unlikely to prove unsatisfactory unless they are challenged and one is able to assimilate them into existing conceptions.” (1992, p.321).

Another significant feature of Borg’s (2011) and Cabaroglu and Roberts’ (2000) studies is the notion that people will be affected by education programmes in different ways: some may alter their beliefs dramatically, while at the other end of the spectrum trainees may experience more subtle changes in their belief system. This echoes earlier research by Richards et al (1996). They investigated beliefs of five trainees on a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) course. They discovered that the trainees’ cognitions changed considerably during the course, but these changes were unique to each person. In contrast, Phipps’ (2007) study on the impact of a teacher education programme on Turkish teachers’ cognitions about teaching grammar. His research revealed that his participants’ beliefs were not transformed by the course

but that their existing beliefs became stronger, and held with more conviction. These studies suggest, therefore, that impact of teacher education is highly unpredictable (Borg, 2003; 2006).

The literature I have discussed in the section highlights the potential significance of teacher education in the development of teachers' cognitions and thus this has direct significance to my research questions.

2.9 Teacher Cognition and Classroom Practice

Borg's (2003) review of language teacher cognition highlights the bi-directional relationship between cognition and classroom practice. Put simply, teachers' cognitions influence their pedagogy but their experience in the classroom and their reflections thereof can also result in a change in beliefs (Breen et al., 2001).

It is often argued that teachers' beliefs exert a significant influence on their classroom practice (Deng et al, 2014; Ertmer et al, 2015; Fives and Gill; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Some studies indicate a strong correlation between beliefs' and practice. Kuzborska (2011), for example, examined the beliefs and practices of eight English for Academic Purposes teachers in relation to the teaching of reading. Her findings reveal a strong correlation between teachers' cognitions and pedagogy even though their practices did not correspond with approaches currently advocated in research literature. Farrell and Kun's (2008) investigation into three primary school teachers' use of Singlish also revealed close links between cognitions and classroom practice with regard to corrective strategies. In their study, teachers professed the belief that students should not be corrected every time they used Singlish in their speech and classroom observations confirmed this to be the case.

A considerable number of studies, however, indicate a more complex picture of the tensions which exist between teachers' cognitions and practices. Basturkmen's (2012) integrative review of empirical research exploring the relationship between language teachers' beliefs and practices revealed although there were some studies which revealed clear alignment between cognitions and pedagogy, there were significantly

more which demonstrated a more complex, tentative relationship between them. Phipps and Borg (2009) for example, investigated the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three experienced EFL teachers in Turkey over an eighteen-month period. The findings indicated that teachers' cognitions and choice of pedagogy were generally congruent but that there were certain areas of practice, such as the use of grammar practice activities, which did not relate to their professed beliefs. Phipps and Borg contend that there are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, they suggest that although the teachers' practices did not relate to their stated cognitions about language learning, they did reflect their broader beliefs about learning. In other words, their general beliefs outweighed their subject specific beliefs. Secondly, they posit that teachers may hold contradictory views "I believe in x but I also believe in y" (p. 388) and when this occurs, stronger, core beliefs will prevail. This raises the question of why certain beliefs are held with more conviction than others and they argue that beliefs which derive from experience are the ones which have most influence on practice, while those which are largely theoretical are more likely to be dismissed because teachers have not witnessed their benefits. They summarise this notion as follows:

We can hypothesize here, therefore, that a characteristic of core beliefs is that they are experientially ingrained, while peripheral beliefs, though theoretically embraced, will not be held with the same level of conviction. Where core and peripheral beliefs can be implemented harmoniously, teachers' practices will be characterized by fewer tensions; where, though, the actions implied by core and peripheral beliefs are at odds (as in the grammar teaching practices of the teachers in this study), peripheral beliefs will not necessarily be reflected in practice. (p. 388).

An apparent misalignment of espoused beliefs and practices may relate therefore, to competing cognitions rather than an abandonment of one's beliefs.

Farrell and Ives (2015) also highlight tensions between beliefs and practice in their investigation of one novice teacher's espoused beliefs and classroom practices with regard to teaching reading. Using interviews, classroom observations and a reflective journal, they discovered although many of the teacher's practices reflected his

cognitions there was also evidence of regular classroom practices which were not evident in his stated beliefs. They indicated that were two potential reasons for this. Firstly, as the teacher was in his first year of teaching, his beliefs may not have been fully formed and by extension, he may not have been aware of his beliefs. Secondly, his beliefs may have changed during the data collection process due to his experiences in the classroom. They suggest that this highlights the “interactive relationship in which beliefs influence classroom actions while classroom experiences and more importantly conscious reflection... on those experiences in turn can influence and even change those beliefs” (p. 604).

Kang and Cheng’s (2014) study exploring the development of a novice EFL teacher’s cognitions and practices in their first year of teaching also reveals how classroom experience can lead to change. The findings revealed significant changes in several areas of her practice which included: “substitution of existing practices with new ones, addition of new practices, modification of the existing practices, and elimination of the existing practices” (p. 176). These changes were also linked with a change in her cognitions which were related to three categories: confirmation of existing beliefs, extending or refining her thinking and rejecting an old belief and replacing it with a new one. The authors attribute these changes to her classroom experiences, reflection on action and the influence of the context in which she worked. This study highlights an important point in relation to changes in beliefs, namely that changes do not imply a complete volte-face, but can be more subtle and involve slight changes in thinking in addition to whole new beliefs.

Berry et al (2019) also highlight the impact that classroom experiences have on teachers’ cognitions and practice. Their study used classroom observation, interviews and focus groups to explore in-service EFL teachers’ knowledge of assessment. Their findings indicated that teachers had little formal training in testing or assessment, yet the observations revealed they used a wide range of assessment practices effectively. They suggest that teachers develop their knowledge of assessment through a complex range of factors including early learning experiences, and interactions with colleagues. Crucially, they also highlight the impact of teaching experiences in the development of

teachers' cognitions. One participant, for example, stated that "You build up your own ideas of assessment just through experience of what your students are capable of doing." (pp. 117-118). The authors suggest, therefore, that in the absence of formal education and training, teachers' conceptualisations of assessment activities develop from classroom experience and through interactions with students. This corresponds with Borg's (2006) contention that cognitions and classroom practices are bidirectional with each shaping the other and Guskey's (1986) assertion that changes in belief follow practice rather than preceding it.

2.10 Teacher Cognition and Context

Another consistent theme in literature on teacher cognition relates to the role that contextual factors play in mediating teachers' beliefs and there are several empirical studies which highlight this. Orafi and Borg (2009) investigated how three Libyan secondary school teachers' implemented a new English Language Teaching curriculum which was based on the principles of communicative language teaching. A particular focus of their study was the extent to which teachers' pedagogy were aligned with the recommended curriculum. The findings indicated that there was limited correspondence between the new curriculum and teachers' practices, and that they remained wedded to traditional, teacher-centred approaches while eschewing learner-centred activities usually associated with CLT such as pair work. The authors highlight a range of factors relating to the teachers themselves, their students and the broader educational setting factors which influenced the extent to which they implemented the new curriculum:

The experiences of the teachers studied here reflect their reactions to a curriculum which promotes novel practices they feel ill-equipped to implement, which challenge their beliefs and experiences, which threaten their authority, which are at odds with the instructional practices of teachers of other subjects, which students resist and cannot cope adequately with, and which are not supported by the assessment system. (p. 252).

It is evident, therefore, that teachers filtered out aspects of the curriculum which they felt were inappropriate for the context or did not match their cognitions about language teaching.

These findings echo those of Nishino (2012) and Phan (2018) who also reveal the how context can prevent teachers from enacting their pedagogical beliefs. Nishino investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs, practices, and socio-educational factors in relation to the use of CLT in the context of a Japanese high school. His study also revealed tensions between cognition and practice, and it highlighted the role that context plays in preventing teachers from putting their beliefs into practice. In particular, his findings indicated that students' expectations, motivations and language level all acted as barriers to the enactment of teachers' beliefs. Phan explored Vietnamese EFL teachers' beliefs about effective language teaching and their pedagogical practice. Though the teachers expressed an awareness of, and belief in the value of communicative activities, their classroom practice revealed that their teaching was heavily teacher-centred and drew on principles of grammar translation. The teachers cited students' motivation and proficiency, traditional educational values, time, class size, stress and family issues as reasons why they were unable to teach according to their beliefs.

These studies reveal the 'reality check' (Feryok, 2010) which teachers' experience when they are in the workplace. Classrooms are not idealised settings in which they can operationalise their personal teaching philosophies, and heavy workloads, scarce resources, institutional policies and government directives can all affect a teacher's sense of agency. While teachers may hold strong beliefs about teaching and learning, the environment in which they work may not be conducive to applying them. In section 2.11 I will discuss in more detail how contextual factors can impact teachers' cognitions and practice in relation to technology use.

2.11 Teacher Cognition and Technology Use

Teachers' cognitions have long been identified as a key factor in their use of technology (Deng et al, 2014; Ertmer, 2005; Ertmer et al, 2015; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al, 2010;

Tondeur et al, 2017; Tour, 2015; Zhao and Frank, 2003) and Li (2017) argues that teachers' beliefs are, in fact, the most significant factor in shaping teachers' technology use. It is not enough to simply provide teachers with technology with the expectation that they will use it, they need to be convinced of its value. The importance of teachers' understanding the benefits of technology is linked with Davis et al's (1989) technology acceptance model (TAM) which suggests that if teachers believe that technology adds value to teaching and/or learning in some way, they are more likely to regard it positively and incorporate it into their pedagogy. This is echoed by Levy (1999) who suggests that in order for teachers to be motivated to use technology, there must be an alignment between their beliefs about teaching and learning, and their beliefs about technology. Exploring teachers' beliefs can shed light on why teachers use technology in different ways and lead to greater congruence between research and teacher education in order to promote educational change.

Existing research indicates that teachers' beliefs play a significant role in shaping their technology use. For example, there is evidence that teachers who hold constructivist beliefs are more likely to use technology (Ertmer et al, 2015; Johnson, 2006), while Deng et al's (2014) study of Chinese secondary school teachers' cognitions about, and use of, technology, indicates that teachers who espouse student-centred beliefs are more willing to use technology. Conversely, Tondeur et al's (2008) investigation into teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to technology revealed that those who held teacher-centred beliefs were less inclined to include interactive activities when using technology. A belief-practice alignment was also evident in Li's (2014) case study exploring how Chinese EFL teachers use technology and the factors which affect this. Her findings indicated that teachers' beliefs were one of several factors which influenced their pedagogic practice. In particular, the participants report turning to technology due to dissatisfaction with their current teaching approaches and a belief that technology would offer new and improved ways of teaching.

Research which explores teachers' beliefs about technology reveal that teachers typically demonstrate a positive attitude toward technology in language teaching (Higton et al, 2019; Inayati and Emaliana, 2017; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2011; Gao and Zhang,

2020). However, negative attitudes towards technology can also influence practice. Van Praag and Sanchez (2015) also highlighted the impact of teachers' beliefs on technological practices. Their research examined EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to the use of mobile phones and discovered a close correlation between teachers' negative attitudes towards the use of mobiles in class, and their limited use of them in class. This corroborates findings by Tondeur et al (2017) which indicates the potential for beliefs to either promote or hinder technology use.

Tour (2015) reports that teachers' perceptions of the benefits and affordances of the technology they use in their personal lives directly impacts their use of technology in the classroom. For example, one teacher described technology as an "add-on" to, (p. 129) rather than an integral part of, her life. Her personal technology use supported existing day-to-day activities rather than creating new ones and this was replicated in her pedagogical use of technology where she used it to support her existing practice rather than transforming it to provide new learning opportunities. Reflecting on the congruence between her participants' beliefs and uses of technology in their personal and professional lives, Tour draws on the work of Mackey (1998) who describes an individual's mindset as a "cage" (p. 93) and argues that:

People "carry" these "cages" everywhere and they frame their activities. This means that teachers use of digital technologies is not isolated. Their everyday digital literacy practices are not left behind at the classroom door: they are brought into the classroom and influence what happens there. (p. 136)

These studies all highlight how beliefs can inform teachers' use of technology. However, Tondeur et al (2017) report that teachers' use of technology can also lead to a change in beliefs, thus confirming the symbiotic relationship between cognition and practice which I discussed in section 2.9. They conducted a systematic review of findings from fourteen qualitative research studies which explored the link between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and technology practice. In nine of the fourteen studies, there was evidence of teachers' practice acting as an enabler to a change in beliefs. Ertmer et al (2015), for example, discovered that by using technology, teachers' were able to transform their practice. Kang and Cheng (2014) also revealed the impact of

practice on teachers' beliefs' system in their case study of one novice teacher's classroom experience. Their results revealed that the teacher's cognitions and classroom practices changed considerably which they attributed to the interplay between experience, reflections on teaching and the classroom context.

Ding et al (2018) explored the relationship between twelve Chinese EFL teachers' content specific pedagogical beliefs, that is to say their beliefs about language learning and teaching, with their use of technology. The researchers used a combination of classroom artefacts (lesson plans), interviews and a beliefs inventory in order to ascertain the match between teachers' cognitions and practice. A significant aspect of their data collection was the use of the inventory which classified teachers' beliefs as being primary or secondary thus indicating the strength of their beliefs about different aspects of teaching. The findings showed that ten out of twelve teachers used technology in a way which was congruent with their espoused beliefs. However, they also found that half of these teachers demonstrated stronger alignment with their secondary beliefs when using technology. One teacher, for example, held strong primary beliefs about explicit grammar teaching but when using technology, adopted more communicative activities. Ding et al contend that this demonstrates how technology can lead to a shift in teaching practices but note that these changes have to correspond to the teachers' existing belief system. This would seem to support Davis et al's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which suggests that teachers are more likely to use technology when they can see the benefits of it.

2.12 Other factors affecting teachers' use of technology

My review of literature thus far has revealed that teachers' cognitions play a central role in how teachers use technology in language teaching. However, technology integration is a complex process which multiple factors contribute to. Teachers who believe in the value of technology may be more likely to embed it in their teaching, but Somekh (2008) contends that their pedagogy is influenced by more than just their cognitions: "Teachers are not 'free agents' and their use of ICT for teaching and learning depends on the interlocking cultural, social and organizational contexts in which they live and

work.” (p. 450). Studies which explore the reasons behind teachers’ pedagogical practices, must, therefore, take into account the broader socio-cultural context in which teachers work rather than focussing solely on the mindset of the individual:

... teaching cannot be seen as “magic” that happens within an individual, a “craft” developed between teachers and their classrooms, nor is it a pre-determined body of knowledge to be imparted through academic coursework. Rather, teaching must be explored within the complexity of its social, intrapersonal, and interpersonal contexts. (Jourdenais, 2009, p. 648)

In the section which follows, I shall discuss key variables which emerge from existing literature as factors which promote or hinder teachers’ ability or willingness to engage with technology for pedagogical purposes. These factors are: confidence and competence; availability of resources; teacher education; peer collaboration, time, institutional support, and learner variables.

2.13 Confidence and competence

ESOL teachers’ technical competence, i.e. their knowledge and skill in using a technology, is a crucial element in the integration of CALL (Son and Windeatt, 2017). In studies exploring factors which affect teachers’ use of technology in language teaching, this area is routinely highlighted by teachers as a barrier to its use (see for example, Alghasab et al, 2020; Fathi and Ebadi, 2020; Hu and McGrath, 2011; Hubbard, 2008; Lam, 2000; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2010; Pelgrum, 2001). As most people use much more technology in their personal lives than ever before, it might be assumed that teachers’ technical skill level would be reasonably high. Motteram (2017) notes that students on his MA module ‘Language Learning and Technology’ at the University of Manchester are mainly ‘tech savvy’ (p. 64) but that this is not true for everyone and there are still students who need additional support in developing their digital competence, thus corroborating evidence from the more recent studies cited above. This correlates with research from the FE sector which indicates that many teachers report needing more training in how to use technology for teaching purposes (Higton et al, 2019; Education and Training Foundation 2018b).

Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) argue that confidence is a key factor in teachers' willingness to use new technology. They contend that although knowledge about technology and how to teach with it is essential, confidence may be a more important variable in deciding the extent to which they incorporate it into their actual practice. They note that "learning about technology is equivalent to asking teachers to hit a moving target. Teachers will never have "complete" knowledge about the tools available, as they are always in a state of flux." (pp.260-261). This implies therefore, that effective teachers need to have a strong sense of self-efficacy about their ability to navigate these changes effectively as there will always be gaps in their knowledge and skills. This argument is corroborated by research which indicates that teachers who lack confidence in using technology are less likely to be willing to integrate it into their pedagogy (Al-Awidi and Aldhafeeri, 2017; Kessler, 2007; Lam, 2000; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2010). In Alghasab et al's (2020) study, for example, which investigated factors affecting ICT integration into Kuwait, teachers' low confidence was revealed to be a key factor in their reluctance to engage with technology. Significantly, some of the teachers reported their lack of confidence made them actively avoid using it. In particular, they highlight the fear and embarrassment caused when things go wrong which is evident in this quotation from a teacher 'Mona':

I really feel embarrassed when technology does not work properly. I just pretend in front of my students that I know everything and I can handle it, but in reality, I do not know what to do, that's why I would avoid using technology. (Alghasab et al, 2020, p.19).

This demonstrates the close relationship between confidence and competence and how the two may not be easily separated. Torsani (2016) suggests that many teachers are afraid of losing control in classrooms where students have more advanced technological skills than they do. In Mona's case, this leads to her shutting out the possibility of using technology entirely.

Several studies highlight the importance of initial teacher education programmes and CPD in helping teachers to gain in confidence through the development of their technical and pedagogical knowledge (Gönen, 2019; Hu and McGrath, 2011; Li, 2014).

However, echoing Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Letwich's (2010) notion that teachers remain forever learners when it comes to technology due to its ever-evolving nature, Howard and Gigliotti (2016) also suggest that teachers also need to develop strategies to manage challenging situations so that they can cope with problems when they arise and are afraid to trial new technology.

2.14 Availability of resources

One of the key variables in teachers' ability to use technology is the availability of resources. No matter how willing a teacher is to use technology, they can only use the technology they have access to (Li, 2017; Torsani, 2015). In previous research, access to resources is revealed to be a regular barrier to technology use (Becta, 2004; Ertmer 1999; Hu and Mcgrath, 2011; Gönen, 2019; Li, 2014; Merç, 2015; Pelgrum, 2001). In the FE sector, a lack of appropriate resources is still highlighted as a barrier to technology integration by the Education and Training Foundation (2019) whose survey revealed that "According to teachers, the biggest barrier to using technology in learning are the physical restrictions caused by classroom design, including access to WIFI/hardware." (p.18). Specifically, teachers complain of their organisations having poor Wifi (39%), a lack of appropriate hard- and software (32%), and a difficulty in accessing digital resources (16%). Ofsted (2014) also reports that in inspections of twenty FE providers rated outstanding, a barrier to excellent provision was "investing too little in high quality resources or developing teachers' use of information and learning technology (ILT) to underpin teaching, learning and assessment" (p.5).

Research into ESOL provision in the FE sector, also highlights the difference in the availability of technology in different settings with few third sector providers reporting that they had access to technology (Higton et al, 2019). The report reveals that while most FE colleges use IWBs, for example, these were seldom used by teachers in the third sector. It also reveals that nearly half of the ESOL providers surveyed deliver ESOL classes through outreach programmes. These classes often take place in community centres, temples, mosques, children's centres and many of them make use of multi-purpose rooms that are not designed for teaching and therefore are much less

likely to lack technology than traditional, classroom-based environments. As such, it is likely that a significant proportion of ESOL teachers do not have technology at their disposal in their teaching environment. Community settings which do provide access to technology may not have the budget to buy the latest, or best technology. Stone et al (2020) report that these venues often struggle to purchase technology for teaching and learning purposes and instead rely on “hand-me-down equipment from schools or businesses” (p.13) which in turn creates a “tech-lag” in which the technology is potentially slower or uses less up-to-date versions of software. For teachers, this can mean that their own devices are not compatible with the older versions which creates barriers to their use by teachers. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many community organisations ceased to offer ESOL classes as their lack of technology meant they were unable to move classes online (El-Metoui and Graham-Brown, 2021).

As outlined above, much of the literature that highlights access to technology as a barrier to its integration focuses solely on the availability of resources for teachers. However, teachers’ practices can also be constrained by learners’ access to technology. Li’s (2014) investigation into how Chinese teachers integrate technology revealed that teachers had appropriate hard- and software, but the lack of computers available to students limited their use and led to teachers relying on teacher- rather than student-centred approaches. Gönen’s (2019) study presented similar findings. His research examined pre-service teachers’ experience of integrating technology into their teaching practice and found that although classrooms were well-equipped, the students’ inability to access technological tools outside class limited their ability to fully take advantage of learning opportunities.

Learners’ lack of access to technology has particular significance in the FE sector as research suggests that ESOL learners are more likely to be digitally excluded than other groups within society. In the UK, many ESOL students come from economically disadvantaged groups including asylum seekers, refugees and job seekers (DfE, 2019). Asylum seekers, for example, currently receive £39.63 per week in benefits which is approximately 60% of the lower rate of universal credit available to UK citizens. With a level of income significantly below the rest of the population, they are highly unlikely to

be able to afford computers, laptops or smartphones, or to have access to Wifi at home. The most recent Lloyds UK Consumer Digital Index report (2021) reveals a strong link between economic deprivation and low digital engagement as only half of households earning between £6000 - £10,000 have internet access at home compared with 99% of households with an income of over £40,000. Moreover, its findings suggest that people in receipt of benefits are much less likely to demonstrate digital engagement or confidence than the remainder of the population. This reflects the findings of Stone et al (2020) who report that “People with no, low or limited digital skills are more than three times more likely to be living on low incomes or have low levels of schooling and qualifications.” (p.6).

This form of digital poverty, in which learners do not have easy access to technology outside of their lessons, can directly impact teachers’ ability to use technology. One of the oft-cited benefits of using technology in language learning is the availability of resource at any time of the day or night, and in any location. Many FE colleges, for example, use virtual learning environments to store learning resources which students can use outside of class hours. In theory, by flipping the classroom in this way, additional opportunities are created for students to learn outside class. However, if students do not have technology at home, they will be excluded from these learning experiences. In this case, although the teacher may have access to technology, the learners’ lack of it prohibits its use. This barrier to the use of technology by learners themselves, as opposed to teachers was brought to the fore in the global Covid-19 pandemic. El-Metoui and Graham-Brown’s (2021) report into the impact of COVID-19 on ESOL learners and teachers in the UK reveals that many learners simply did not have the technology to take part in the online lessons which were made available by some providers and were, therefore, excluded from learning opportunities. While a pandemic is an extreme example, it is a stark reminder of digital inequalities which exist in the UK.

2.15 Teacher education

In order for teachers to be persuaded to use technology and to integrate it effectively into their pedagogy, access to high quality education and training is essential (Li, 2017; Son and Windeatt, 2017; Stockwell, 2022). However, research on the actual impact of CALL training yields mixed results. Some studies reveal a positive impact on teachers' confidence and ability to embed technology into their teaching. Tai's (2015) study, for example, investigated the effect of fifteen hours of CALL workshops on twenty-four in-service elementary school teachers in Taiwan. Using a combination of surveys, observations, interviews and reflections, Tai examined the impact of the training on participants' competence in selecting technology based on its ability to meet defined learning objectives, as well as the extent to which they actually applied what they had learned into their classroom practice. All the participants reported that their technological competency had improved as a result of the training. In addition, observations of the teachers revealed that not only did they integrate the relevant technology into their pedagogy, they also began to add additional technological tools to their teaching repertoire. Kilickaya (2009) also examined the impact of a CALL course on undergraduate, pre-service teachers. His findings suggested that participants felt positively about the use of relevant technology and half had utilised it in their teaching practice. Moreover, they were motivated to try and use it once they had graduated and gained employment.

However, despite the potential benefits of CALL teacher education, a lack of appropriate training in how to use technology is often cited as a barrier to its integration and in particular, training courses are often criticised for not leading to any discernible change in pedagogy (Hu, 2015; Khokhar and Javaid, 2016; Park and Son, 2020; Tondeur et al., 2017). There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, some studies have suggested that teacher education courses focus too much on the development of technical skills rather than pedagogy (Arnold and Ducate, 2015; Hubbard 2008; Torsani; 2016). If the focus of this training focuses simply on developing teachers' technical skills, i.e. how to use a particular piece of hard- or software, rather than helping them to understand how it can be used specifically to enhance learning, it is unlikely to be successful (Li, 2017; Reinders, 2009). Fathi and Ebadi's (2020) study for example,

investigated how teachers implemented technology into their practice following a four-week course in CALL training. They discovered that although teachers felt positive about the use of CALL during their course, they struggled to implement it post-training and reported that they lacked the knowledge or skills to actually integrate the technology into their teaching practice. The participants reported that they needed more time to practice actually using the technology for pedagogical purposes rather than focussing on the capabilities of individual tools.

This corroborates findings from existing literature which suggest that effective integration of technology relies on teachers' ability to make links between their technological, pedagogical and content (i.e. subject) knowledge (Sun, Strobel and Newby, 2017). Mishra and Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework highlights how these three elements of knowledge are not separate, but are interlinked. At the point that they intersect, additional forms of knowledge are created as demonstrated by the image below:

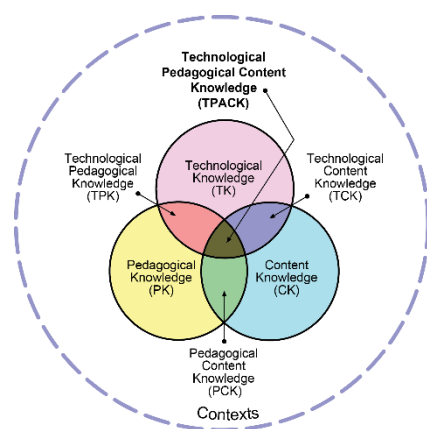


Figure 2: The TPACK framework (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). Reproduced by permission of the publisher, © 2012 by tpack.org

At the centre of this framework lies Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) which is described as: "...pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content" (Koehler and Mishra, 2009). The interrelationship of the different facets of knowledge implies that if training pays insufficient attention to one or more of these elements, teachers may not have the appropriate knowledge to embed

technology into their practice. Put simply, knowing how to use technology does not mean that a teacher knows how to use it to teach (Reinders, 2009) and conversely, a good knowledge of general pedagogy does not necessarily lead to effective use of technology in the classroom.

A second reason for the failure of teacher education programmes to prepare teachers to use technology effectively is the speed at which it changes. Guichon (2009) notes the challenge teacher education programmes face in keeping up-to-date with the fast-paced technology industry: as technology changes, so too does the need for training courses to reflect this or they quickly become obsolete. Teacher educators themselves, therefore, need to be both highly skilled in technology use and responsive enough to adapt their courses accordingly. Hubbard (2008), however, suggests that many teacher educators, who may have completed their own initial teacher education at a time when technology was little used for language teaching, may not have the knowledge or skills to train others in how to do so.

Much of the literature on CALL teacher education focuses on pre-service programmes and there is much less written on the needs of in-service teachers, many of whom may have qualified at a time when technology was not routinely included in pre-service courses (Stockwell, 2022). Given the ever-changing nature of technology, the provision of high quality CPD courses is essential if teachers are to navigate its use throughout their career, rather than just at the start of it (Li, 2017; Tondeur et al, 2016). This is particularly important in the FE sector where a quarter of teachers either hold no initial teaching qualification, or only hold one below level 2 (ETF, 2018b). These teachers may not have had any training in using technology, unless they have engaged in CPD. However, just over 60% of teachers in FE report that they spend no time at all on CPD activities (ETF, 2018b) which suggests that ongoing training in the use of technology is not being undertaken by the majority of teachers. Despite this, the need for more training in the use of technology is frequently highlighted in research reports from the sector. In 2018, for example, an ETF survey of teaching staff found that they reported a lack of training as acting as barrier to technology integration (ETF, 2018a). In 2019, another survey of 450 FE teachers found that 59% of teachers responded that they

needed more training in this area and 70% said they needed more support (ETF, 2019). There appears to be a contradiction, therefore, between teachers' reported lack of engagement in CPD and their desire to undertake more training which may suggest that either training opportunities are not available to them, or that there are other barriers which prevent them from participating such as time. Li (2017) suggests that CPD does not need to be in the form of formal training courses, but should instead be seen as being part of a learning community with other teachers. As such, she says, it becomes the responsibility of the organisation and the teachers themselves. One of the criticisms of CALL teacher education programmes is that they can lack relevance to a particular setting and do not reflect the realities of teachers' real life settings (Dooly, 2009; Egbert et al, 2002). Gönen (2019), therefore, highlights the need for pre-service trainees to critically examine and reflect on the impact of context during training.

Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al (2010) suggest that teachers are more willing to use technology when it either reflects their own beliefs about teaching/learning, or it meets their students' needs. Therefore, one of the benefits of such an approach is that it allows training to be contextualised to meet the needs of a specific group of teachers and thus be more likely to lead to successful integration.

2.16 Peer collaboration

Stockwell (2022) maintains that without some kind of support in integrating technology, many teachers will struggle to use it effectively in their teaching. While formal learning opportunities can influence teachers' use of technology, so too can informal learning opportunities. Egbert et al (2002) suggest that peer support is the main way teachers learn about technology outside training. One of the key criticisms of CALL training is that it pays insufficient attention to the context in which teachers will be working and that trainees are unable to apply their training because it is not aligned with the realities of their own setting (Kozlova and Priven, 2015). However, a benefit of peer collaboration is that it can be situated in the context of a teacher's professional practice and allow the exploration of technology-enhanced pedagogy within the context of their own classroom and with their own students. If, as studies suggest, teachers' adoption of technology is

linked to their ability to relate it to their own needs (Davis et al, 1989; Li, 2017) peer collaboration may lead to more effective pedagogy. While the effectiveness of teachers' practices is outside the scope of this study, the impact of peer collaboration is relevant because of the impact it may have on teachers' cognitions and practices. Stockwell (2022) highlights the importance of novice users of technology working with others as it allows them the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others and avoid potential pitfalls or "reinventing the wheel" (p. 52). This is supported by research by Çelik (2014) who investigated Turkish language teachers' reflections on their use of interactive whiteboards following participation in a training programme. The teachers reported that although the programme was useful, they believed they would benefit from ongoing support once the programme had finished. They proposed a variety of collaborative activities to promote this including peer observations and the sharing of ideas and resources. Fathi and Ebadi (2020) also reported similar findings in their research into the impact of a CALL training programme with their participants reporting that opportunities to collaborate with colleagues post-training contributed to their ability to keep using technology when they faced challenges with its use. This suggests that peer collaboration can encourage teachers to persist with technology when faced with difficulties. These findings are consistent with Richards and Pennington (1998) who contend that novice teachers can be positively influenced by more experienced teachers' use of technology, whereas conversely, if they are not witness to others using it, they may not use it themselves. As I indicated earlier, a significant number of teachers in FE do not have a teaching qualification. Consequently, they may need to rely on other sources of information, including their peers, in order to develop their knowledge and pedagogy. This signifies the potential importance of peer collaboration for this study.

2.17 Time

Bates (2015) claims that one of the key benefits of using technology for language teaching is that the development and use of CALL materials do not require a lot of time. Consequently, he argues, teachers can actually save time and reduce their workload.

However, while traditional resources such as coursebooks or paper-based handouts are static and can be used repeatedly with few alterations, the use of technology in teaching can place additional demands on teachers' time. While it is true that resources can be used multiple times once created, change in technology, software upgrades and the need to learn how to use new tools all require a time commitment. This may include short activities such as checking for broken links in PowerPoints or online resources, to more lengthy activities such as the creation of learning materials or attending training to learn how to use a new tool. It is unsurprising therefore, that time, or rather a lack of time, is often highlighted as a key barrier to the integration of technology (Jones, 2001; Lam, 2000; Yunus, 2007). In the FE sector, a recent survey of staff revealed that 45% of teachers report not having sufficient time to create digital resources (Education and Training Foundation, 2019). After a lack of training, this was cited as the second biggest barrier to the use of technology in teaching. This echoes an earlier research report in which teachers again stated that time constraints prevented them from engaging with technology with one lecturer noting, "It's having the time to create a lot of things...sometimes you have to use older stuff because you haven't got the time to create something new." (Education and Training Foundation, 2018a, p.6). It is evident, therefore, that heavy workloads and limited time can thwart creativity even when teachers are willing to use technology.

2.18 Institutional Support

Research suggests that teachers who work in organisations which promote the use of technology are more likely to use it themselves. The support provided can come in different forms, including access to resources, training, opportunities for peer collaboration and incentives to use technology (Eickelmann, 2011; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2010).

Li's (2014) research into Chinese teachers' use of technology reveals that institutional support for the use of technology, and the approval of colleagues was significant in helping teachers to integrate it into their practice. She later notes in particular how societal and cultural norms influence this:

“...in a society that highly values the expectations of others and recognises its leaders, support from school leaders and local education authorities is crucial. Recognition from the organisation and colleagues was vital for the teachers because they see it as a validation of their behaviour.” (2017, p.197).

Zhao and Frank (2003) also noted the potential influence of a workplace environment on teachers. They suggest that teachers are more likely to use forms of technology which align with the institutional philosophy or the beliefs and practices of their colleagues.

However, if institutional support can act as an enabler in the integration of technology, institutional pressure can have the opposite effect. Teachers who, are mandated to use technology that they do not value or know how to use because of either national reforms or organisational policy are more likely to be reluctant users of technology (Stockwell, 2022). Stockwell and Reinders (2019) suggests that external pressure to use technology can result in teachers feeling resentful about their loss of agency and can far-reaching consequences:

...such negative attitudes often filter down to the learners, who can sense their teachers' lack of enthusiasm (or even criticism) about the technologies that they are required to use, and this can have a detrimental effect on the learning environment on the whole. (p. 45).

Stockwell (2013) notes that teachers' motivation to use technology will have a direct impact on which technologies they use, how they use them, and how long they use them for. Therefore, institutions which work with teachers to support them learning how to use technology for pedagogical purposes and allow them to make decisions about their practices are more likely to see long-term, beneficial effects of technology integration.

Access to technical support within an institution can be a critical factor in technology adoption. As discussed in section 2.13, teachers' lack of confidence can lead to teachers abandoning technology in favour of traditional approaches. This often stems from “fear of things going wrong”, and a subsequent “lack of technical support” (Jones,

2004, pp. 15- 16). While FE colleges have better infrastructure and IT support teams on site who can be called in to troubleshoot where needed, third sector and community-based organisations typically have older technology and are unlikely to have in-house support leaving teachers to manage difficulties themselves (Higton et al, 2019; Stone et al, 2020). It is clear that the intersectionality between competence, confidence and support can create barriers to teachers who lack any one of these elements.

2.19 Learners' expectations and digital skills

Teachers' pedagogical decisions are not only linked to factors outside their classroom, but also those within it. In particular, teachers' use of technology may be linked to the needs, preferences and skills level of their own students.

Kiliçkaya's (2019) study investigated how in-service teachers responded to a bespoke CALL training programme which was designed to meet their stated needs. Specifically, he examined the extent to which the teachers were willing create and utilise materials for their own students, and factors which might affect their implementation. Though the teachers expressed an interest in designing materials, they expressed reservations about using them with secondary school students due to the students' response to them. They reported that their students expressed a preference for low tech' activities due to the perception that online activities were frivolous, even if they practised the same content as paper-based activities. Students' attitudes therefore created a barrier to technology use in spite of the teachers' desire to use it.

The students' level of digital skills may also impact teachers' ability or willingness to use technology with their classes. ESOL learners often struggle to get online or engage meaningfully with technology (Cooke and Simpson, 2008) and a recent survey from the Department for Education (DfE, 2019) revealed that nearly half of teachers indicated that their students found it difficult to use technology for learning. The qualitative data from this research highlighted that lower level students, older learners and those with little education in their first language had particular problems in this area. This corroborates Higton et al's (2019) claim that students with low levels of English are more likely to have poor digital skills. One of the challenges in developing digital

competence for ESOL learners is their own level of literacy. Baynham et al's (2007) survey of five hundred ESOL students indicated that 12% were not literate in either English or their first language. Van Deursen and Van Dijk (2016) consider literacy to be an essential component in the development of digital skills and they point out that even the most elementary of tasks, such as logging on or entering a password, requires a certain level of literacy. For ESOL teachers, this presents a significant challenge in engaging learners with digital resources, as they need to spend time teaching students how to use technology. How teachers respond to this may depend on their views on their role as a teacher, and the extent to which they feel this includes teaching digital skills.

2.20 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to critically discuss key literature relating to teacher cognition and technology use. I started the chapter by highlighting the complexity of research into teacher cognition. This complexity stems from conceptual understandings of the nature of knowledge and beliefs and the extent to which they differ, as well as the language used to describe them. I drew on the work of Borg (2006) to shed light on the elements and processes involved in teacher cognition and made a case for its use as a conceptual framework for this study. In particular, its emphasis on the range of factors which lead to the formation of beliefs, and its acknowledgement of the relationship between cognition, context and practice allows for exploration of cognition within its social context. Finally, I have argued that teachers' technology practices are also shaped by external factors and I have discussed key barriers and enablers to technology integration.

In the next chapter, I will provide a critical discussion of my chosen methodology, namely narrative inquiry, and its suitability for exploring my research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 My research story: A vignette

“Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Birmingham New Street. Change here for trains to Liverpool and Edinburgh. For those leaving us, we hope you have enjoyed your journey. Please do remember to take all your personal items with you. For our remaining passengers, please note that the train is quite full today and this is a busy stop so please do ensure that luggage is not blocking the aisles and that all seats are free from coats and bags.”

Groaning inwardly, I looked at the space around me. Books filled the empty seat next to me; some lay open, the pages covered with highlighter pen and notes scribbled in the margins, while others remained closed, waiting to be read. Carefully balanced on my lap was an iPad and a pencil case stuffed with assorted pens, pencils and rubbers. Every inch of space was used. I had so wanted to use this journey to make some headway with my PhD research while I was away from the distractions of office and home life and so far, one hour in, I'd made good progress. While the scene around me may have looked chaotic, it was organized chaos and I was reluctant to disturb it. I was 'in the zone' and distractions were not welcome. Aware that the carriage was now filling up, I kept my head down and avoided making eye contact with anyone, hoping that new passengers would walk on by rather than wait for me to move my things. "Please don't sit by me, please don't sit by me," I repeated in my head. But my mantra was in vain.

“Sorry, but do you mind if I sit here? All the other seats are taken now.”

I looked up and saw a friendly looking woman with an apologetic smile on her face.

“I really am sorry, I can see that you're working”, she continued. “It's just that there's nowhere else left to sit.”

Feeling guilty, I apologized for the mess and started piling my books onto my knee.

‘Are you an ESOL teacher?’

Responding to my confused expression, she pointed at my books as if for confirmation.

“But I’m guessing you must be doing either a PhD or an MA with those books as they’re not something you use for lesson planning.”

Congratulating her on her speedy analysis of the situation, I explained that I had worked as an ESOL teacher for some years, but now worked as a lecturer in TESOL at a university and was doing a part time PhD looking at how ESOL teachers use technology in their teaching.

“Interesting topic. Very current too. I mean, there’s so much pressure on us to use technology nowadays, isn’t there? Especially, in FE.”

Pleased that her comments seemed to validate my topic as one worthy of study, I asked if she used technology in her own teaching.

“Do I use technology? Yes and no, I mean it’s changed over time……”

For the next half hour, my new travelling companion talked about her teaching, barely pausing for breath. With little prompting from me she talked about her use of technology, explaining how her lessons had changed during her career. She talked about the people and situations which had inspired her pedagogical choices, and those which had limited them. She talked of frustrations, challenges, inspirations and achievements. She talked non-stop. Though desperate to share my own thoughts, I couldn’t seem to find a way of interrupting her. At one point, as if sensing my desire to say something, she apologized for talking too much.

‘Once I get going, I just go on and on, don’t I?, she said. ‘It’s just I don’t often get to talk about these things, not in any depth anyway. And certainly not with someone who actually listens!’ she laughed.

And then it dawned on me. Don’t interrupt, Sonia. It’s her story, not yours. Just listen.

3.2 Introduction

The story above is true and it took place in the early stages of my research. Until this point, I had intended to use a qualitative case study to investigate teachers’ current

cognitions about, and use of, technology. However, my interactions with ‘the woman on a train’ precipitated a fundamental shift in my thinking about my research. In listening to her story, I realised that she talked far more about the past than the present as she detailed the people, places and events that had influenced her. It was apparent that her current cognitions, and indeed practices, had formed as a result of what had gone before, rather than just reflecting her current position. This epiphany led me to explore approaches to research which could capture the complex range of factors which influence teachers’ professional lives both past and present. It was this search which led me to narrative inquiry.

This chapter provides a rationale for this choice, beginning with a discussion about the nature of my chosen methodology and my reasons for joining the ‘narrative turn’. I will then discuss methods for the collection and analysis of data, and the construction of my participants’ stories. Finally, I will shed light on key issues that have influenced my work including my strategy for the selection of participants, my ethical stance and positionality.

3.3 What is narrative inquiry?

At its most basic level, the term narrative inquiry is an overarching term used to describe research which uses stories as a way of understanding how people make sense of the world and their place in it (Barkhuizen et al, 2013; Murray, 2009; Riessman, 2008). Underpinning this is a narrative epistemology which assumes that humans “make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures. That is, we select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us” (Bell, 2002, p.207). This is echoed by De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) who define narrative as a “mode of thought, communication and apprehension of reality” (p. 15). The origins of these conceptualisations are associated with the work of Bruner (1986) who argues that humans use two types of thought to understand the world around them and make sense of their experiences: the paradigmatic mode and the narrative mode. The paradigmatic mode demands the formation of logical argument to establish empirical proof and is

typical of scientific research. However, Bruner contends that this is not how humans make sense of their lives. He argues instead that people order, connect and make sense of their experiences through use of the narrative mode in which they tell stories about our experiences. These stories do not convince people of their truth through evidence, but through their verisimilitude, or lifelikeness.

Kramp (2004) highlights the importance of these stories in how people come to understand our experiences and world around us: "Stories assist humans to make life experiences meaningful. Stories preserve our memories, prompt our reflections, connect us with our past and present, and assist us to envision our future." (p.107). In turn, researchers use narrative inquiry as "...a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus." (Connelly & Clandinin 2006, p.20).

Both these definitions reveal key facets of narrative inquiry. Firstly, people use stories to order, reflect on and make sense of our lived experiences. These experiences do not take place in a vacuum, but in a particular social context which is part of the story: the storyteller and the context cannot be separated. Clandinin and Connolly (2000) suggest, therefore, that researchers explore both the personal and social conditions in which experiences occur. The personal dimension relates to people's "feelings, hopes, desires" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) while the social dimension refers to the broader social, cultural and organisational environment. The notion of context also extends to include the physical surroundings, which they refer to as 'place' (p. 480). Narrative inquiry, therefore, demands an examination of people's experiences within a particular social setting.

Secondly, narratives have a temporal dimension in that they can relate not only to the past, but also enable people to make sense of the present, and the future, even if this is hypothetical (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). As time progresses, so too does our understanding of experiences and the stories we tell may change to account for our shifting perspectives and sense of self as we configure our "personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.150).

Thirdly, they are co-constructed between the informant and the audience, and in the case of research, the participant(s) and the researcher. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) maintain that in narrative inquiry there are always two stories, the one told by the participant, and the one constructed by the researcher. The latter is not simply a retelling of story, but requires analysis and interpretation on the part of the researcher as s/he seeks to understand how a participant makes sense of their experience (Barkhuizen, 2013; Benson, 2014; Riessman, 1993).

The power of stories in academic study, therefore, lies in their ability to reveal the lived experiences of participants, and how they make sense of them (Barkhuizen, 2013). However, the telling or reading of stories alone does not constitute academic research: they need to be an object of investigation (Riessman, 1993), interpreted through the lens of literature in a particular field (Murray, 2009) and provide critical insights into the phenomena under study (Golombek, 1988). Without these elements, stories remain in the realm of everyday discourse and cannot be considered as academic inquiry. The definitions in the previous paragraphs describe how individuals use stories to make sense of the world around them. Barkhuizen (2011) however, coined the term 'narrative knowledging' (p.395) to describe the activities involved in narrative research specifically. He describes narrative knowledging as: "the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analysing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/listening to research reports" (p. 395). Through this definition, Barkhuizen demonstrates that narrative knowledging is a social and cognitive activity through which knowledge is generated, thus elevating it from storytelling into an academic pursuit.

Kim (2016) states that the narrative mode of thinking has traditionally been considered by scholars as less important than paradigmatic thinking. However, the mid 1980s witnessed a "narrative turn" in the social sciences (Riessman, 2008, p. 14) in which researchers began to value the use of participants' stories to explore their lived experiences, and their perceptions thereof (Barkhuizen, 2013; Barkhuizen et al, 2014; Goodson and Gill, 2011; Riessman, 1993). The reasons for this are complex. Firstly, it reflected a more general shift away from positivist approaches towards qualitative

research due to criticisms that the methods used to study the natural world were unsuitable for studying the social world (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). In particular, Goodson and Gill (2011) note that the tendency of positivist research to place the researcher outside the phenomena under study, raised questions about its ability to truly represent and understand the social reality of a particular context and the experiences of those who live within it.

Barkhuizen et al (2014) describe the second reason for this narrative turn lying in the postmodern movement which signalled a shift away from broad theories that seek to predict human behaviour and instead focus more on identity and the individual.

Andrews et al (2013) also link this to the rise of humanist, person-centred approaches within psychology and sociology which emerged post second world war. Thirdly, the process of telling stories and using them to making sense of experience allows research to explore how people construct their identities and situate themselves. Finally, narrative inquiry is often linked with empowerment with Barkhuizen (2013) who claims that it has the potential to broaden the range of voices that feature in research and that it often brings attention to marginalised groups. This has particular significance in the field of ESOL where students often belong to disadvantaged communities.

3.4 What is a narrative?

There is no single definition of narrative, and how it is defined will depend partly on the academic discipline in which it is used (Riessman, 2008). She describes, for example, a traditional, literary view of narrative as having beginning, middle and end, and a plot enacted by characters. In contrast, she complains that in current parlance the term is used “to mean anything beyond a few bullet points; when someone speaks or writes more than a few lines, the outcomes is now called a narrative by news anchors and even some qualitative researchers” (p.4). Referring specifically to the context of narrative inquiry, Polkinghorne (1995) describes narrative as “a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot.” (p.5). Elliott (2005), defines a narrative in social sciences as needing “a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its

relation to the whole. In this way, a narrative conveys the meaning of events.” (p.3). Both Polkinghorne and Elliott’s definitions highlight the requirement for there to be an ordering of events in a narrative. However, like Elliott, Salmon and Riessman (2013) argue that an essential part of a narrative lies not in just in sequencing events, but the connections between them:

A fundamental criterion of narrative is surely that of contingency. Whatever the content, stories demand the consequential linking of events or ideas. Narrative shaping entails imposing meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected. The ‘and then’ of stories includes temporal ordering, but goes beyond this in presenting some kind of humanly understandable connection” (p. 197).

It is noteworthy here that Salmon and Riessman (2008) use the terms narrative and stories in their definition. Kim (2016, p.8) also confirms that the terms narrative and story are often used interchangeably, but suggests that “a story has a connotation of a ‘full description of lived experience, whereas a narrative has a connotation of a ‘partial’ description of lived experience” (p.9) thus making story a higher category than narrative. However, narrative inquirers often draw on the work of Bamberg (2007) to refer to the use of ‘big’ or ‘small’ stories. The former refers to narratives which tell of events over time and draw on multiple interviews or sources of data to build up a big picture such as a life history. In contrast, small stories are snippets of talk, found in everyday conversation or in interviews in which people reveal aspects of their lives. As there is no clear, accepted distinction between the terms story and narrative, I follow in the steps of other narrative inquirers (Barkhuizen, 2014; Josselson, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 2008) and use the two words interchangeably.

3.5 Stories and ‘truth’

While there are multiple definitions of what a narrative is, there is perhaps more agreement on what it is not. Stories do not represent historical truth, nor do they act as a mirror to past events (Riessman, 2008). When people tell stories, they tell a version of the truth. What they include, or omit, will depend on multiple factors including their

memory, how they wish to present themselves or others, the audience with whom they are engaging, and their understanding of events. Moreover, the stories people tell are not static and may change on each telling. Sometimes this reflects a shift in perspectives as new experiences change people's understanding of past events and they re-work their stories to reflect this. At other times, they may adapt their stories because they feel unable to speak honestly (Murray, 2009). In using stories as a source of data, narrative inquirers reject a realist ontology and embrace a more relativist worldview in which it is accepted that there are multiple concepts of reality, and that different individuals apprehend and interpret the same phenomenon in various ways (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Barkhuizen et al (2013) caution researchers, therefore, from treating narratives as though they are fact. They give the example of a learner describing lessons as boring and assert that this must not be treated as an objective fact when it is actually the participant's subjective interpretation of events. My interest in my participants' stories, therefore, does not stem from a quest for historical truth, but an interest in how they make meaning out of their experiences:

Storyed evidence is gathered not to determine if events actually happened but about the meaning experienced by people whether or not the events are accurately described Storyed texts serve as evidence for personal meaning, not for the factual occurrence of the events reported in the stories. (Polkinghorne, 2007 p.479)

3.6 Narrative inquiry and its significance in this study

My choice of narrative inquiry for my research does not have its roots in my own philosophical orientations. Rather, it is a pragmatic choice linked to my research questions and the topic under investigation (Dörnyei, 2007). I shall reiterate these research questions here:

1. What cognitions do ESOL teachers hold about the use of technology for teaching ESOL?
2. Which factors have influenced the development of these cognitions?

3. To what extent is there congruence between teachers' cognitions and practices?
4. If a lack of congruence exists, what factors prevents teachers from operationalising their cognitions?

As discussed in chapter 2, the development of both cognitions and practices are complex. Teachers' cognitions are intricate and nuanced: they may not be easily articulated and are likely to change over time (Borg, 2006). Research into teacher cognition demands, therefore, a methodology which is able to deal with this level of complexity. It is my contention that narrative inquiry is best suited to explore these questions. I discuss the reasons for this in the sections which follow (3.6.1-3.6.3).

3.6.1 Access to inner words

Lieblich et al (1998) claim that narrative inquiry is "one of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world" (p. 7). Its goal is not to uncover the truth of particular phenomena, but to understand how people experience the world and the meanings they attribute to these experiences (Flowerdew and Miller, 2013). In other words, narrative inquiry affords opportunities to understand the perspectives of my participants and provides insight into their decision-making processes and how they construct their identities as teachers. Fenstermacher (1997) describes this as follows:

One of the truly valuable contributions of narrative inquiry in education is the revelation of the intentions and beliefs of teachers. Through narrative, we begin to understand the actor's reasons for action, and are thereby encouraged to make sense of these actions through the eyes of the teacher. (p. 123)

3.6.2 Understanding changes over time

The use of a life history narrative inquiry also enables researchers to examine how people experience change over time (Kouritzin, 2000; Roberts, 2002). This has particular significance for this study as the field of technology moves rapidly and teachers have to respond to new technological developments. The temporal nature of narrative inquiry can yield insights into how teachers negotiate these changes and their attitudes towards them.

3.6.3 The role of context

Riessman (2008) asserts that “stories don’t fall from the sky” (p. 105). In fact, they are inextricably bound up in the life of the narrator and the broader situation in which they occur. Narrative inquiry does not separate out the storyteller from their context, but explores how the social, political and cultural milieu affects their lives, and their responses to this (Clandinin and Connolly, 2006). This is particularly important for this study as teachers’ decision-making is influenced not just by their beliefs, but mediated by a complex range of socio-economic, geo-political, institutional and personal factors (Torsani, 2016). As narrative allows the exploration of teachers’ lives in context, this has particular value to my study which focuses on how teachers operate within the context of their own educational setting.

The arguments above relate my decision to adopt narrative inquiry for my research by discussing its benefits to my requirements as a researcher. However, participating in research can also have a positive impact on participants. Johnson and Golombek (2002) note that investigating teachers’ experiences can be a powerful tool in their development as it allows them to: “...act with foresight. It gives them increasing control over their thoughts and actions; grants their experiences enriched, deepened meaning and enable them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work.” (pp.6-7). While my decision to use narrative inquiry for this study was associated first and foremost with my own needs, I believe that participation in a study like this can have a positive impact on the participants. I shall return to this in my final chapter.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

In this study I used three main tools for data collection: a recorded oral monologue; observations of classroom teaching and semi-structured interviews. In the sections below, I will justify each of these tools, highlighting how their use enabled me to address my research questions effectively.

3.7.1 Recorded oral monologue

My data collection began with my participants recording an oral monologue in which they talked about their experiences using technology. I first came across this technique in the work of Ford (2012) whose research used a narrative inquiry to investigate an EFL teacher's teaching life story. He used a "taped monologue" (p.27) as the starting point for data elicitation by providing his participant with a tape recorder and asking her to record her story. The result was a two-hour account of her career which acted as his primary source of data collection. This was followed by an interview in which Ford probed information which had been absent from her account. Once this data had been analysed, Ford used two additional interviews in which he shared his version of her story and asked for her reflections on it.

The use of this taped monologue intrigued me, primarily because it reminded me of my incident with the 'woman on a train' which I recounted at the start of this chapter. Reflecting on Ford's use of a taped monologue, I realised that she had also, in effect, provided me with her own monologue and I could see how this might be a useful tool in my study.

Ford (2012) notes that the appeal of an oral monologue is that the speaker is in complete control: they alone decide what information to include and how it is sequenced. The use of such a broad, open-ended task enables participants to present information which they consider to be of significance and therefore allows for more diverse data to be collected than would be possible if the researcher imposed more constraints (Allen, 2017). For narrative inquiry, this is particularly useful as it empowers participants to relate their story as they wish, privileging the events, people and place which they consider to be of most importance and also reduces the power differential between the researcher and the researched. In this sense, the process of data collection becomes closer to the way people use narrative in real life and produce storied data rather than just a response to a set of questions prepared by a researcher.

Another feature of the recorded monologue which attracted me, was the absence of a researcher presence in the initial data collection. When taking part in a narrative inquiry which focuses on their teaching life history, participants open up about their lives in

ways that can be unexpected and revealing. They are not just describing their practice, but talking about their strengths and weaknesses, their attitudes and beliefs, and the people and places which have influenced this, positively or otherwise. This process is both introspective and retrospective in nature as it requires the speaker to explore their own thoughts, perceptions and beliefs, whilst also examining past actions (Rose et al, 2019). It demands, therefore, a certain level of honesty, reflexivity and vulnerability, particularly if one is discussing strengths and weaknesses or challenging situations. I would argue that the absence of a researcher in a recorded monologue, and the privacy which this affords, may facilitate a more open, and honest account than when talking face-to-face. While talking into the ether may be an unusual experience, the participant may feel more at ease than they would when being stared at by an expectant researcher, sitting with pen poised.

However, despite the possible benefits I foresaw above, I questioned whether my participants might feel overwhelmed with such an open brief and, rather like a researcher staring at a blank page, not know how or where to begin. Consequently, I conducted a pilot study with a willing former colleague. I asked her to respond to the question "Tell me about your experiences using technology in TESOL" using either a video or audio recording. She chose the latter and provided me with a forty-five minute account of her past and current practices and her reflections on them. The data was rich, storied and ripe for analysis. Emboldened, I decided to use the same approach as my first data collection tool. Each participant was given the same brief as in the pilot study (see Appendix 1) and all chose to use audio rather than video recordings.

On completion, each monologue was transcribed. The process was slow and laborious and required approximately six hours per monologue. The nature of spoken language is that it is full of hesitations, false starts, interruptions, incomplete sentences and the use of fillers such as 'you know', 'I mean' and 'er'. When language is transcribed fully in this way, it becomes more difficult to read as the flow is constantly interrupted as it does not follow our expectations of written discourse. As the focus of my inquiry was the content of the stories rather than the language used, I utilised a 'naturalized' transcription process in which spoken utterances are transcribed in accordance with

written conventions thus allowing the reader to focus on the content of the story without distraction. This compares with a 'denaturalized' transcription in which everything is recorded verbatim, including pauses, emphasis, linguistic errors and corrections (Bucholtz, 2000 p.1439).

I have updated Ford's (2012) term 'taped monologue' and refer instead to an 'recorded monologue' which reflects the move away from analogue tapes to digital recording devices.

3.7.2 Classroom observations

The importance of observations stems from the ability to examine what is actually happening in the classroom (Rose et al, 2019), rather than just what teachers report about their pedagogy. Cowie (2009) notes that teachers "often have quite fixed values, beliefs, and assumptions" (p.168) about what should or should not happen in a classroom and that observation can illuminate aspects of their practices. As my first research question concerns the extent to which, and how, teachers engage with technology in their practice, the insight provided by observation was essential.

Borg (2003) also notes that observations are an important tool for the exploration of teacher cognition. Questioning whether teacher cognition can be investigated without the use of classroom observation, he asserts:

Can language teacher cognition be usefully studied without reference to what happens in classrooms? Personally, I am sceptical, though it is clear that where large numbers of teachers are being studied and/or ideal typologies are being developed, analyses solely of teachers' reported cognitions can provide a useful basis for further inquiry. Ultimately, though, we are interested in understanding teachers' professional actions, not what or how they think in isolation of what they do. (p. 105)

Previous research has highlighted both a lack of congruence between teachers' beliefs and practices, and between teachers' reported and actual practices. The use of observations allows, therefore, for an in-depth exploration of the complex

interrelationship between cognition and pedagogy and allows me to explore what teachers actually do rather than just what they say they do which is central to my research questions (RQs 3 and 4).

Borg (2015) notes that the act of conducting observations can lead to changes in the behaviour of the people being observed and recommends therefore, that multiple observations are carried out. This has the benefit of allowing participants to become more comfortable with the researcher's presence but in my case, it also allowed me to explore teachers' pedagogy in more than one context and with a variety of technological tools, thus revealing different facets of their practice. Accordingly, I conducted ten observations with each participant, with each one lasting between two and three hours. During the observations, I took the role of a "complete observer" (Cresswell, 2009) in which I observed the class without participating in any way. In each session I sat at the back of the classroom tried to remain as unobtrusive as possible. Though I did not initiate interaction with the students, they often greeted me and in one lesson, offered to show me some videos they were discussing (see chapter 6: Danny).

I did not provide the teachers with any guidelines for the observations or ask them to prepare anything specifically for me. However, on most occasions, they provided me with a lesson plan which outlined their aims and objectives and main activities in the lesson.

When conducting interviews, it is essential to record the data in some way. In the age of technology, video recordings of lessons might appear the efficient way of doing this. However, Borg (2006) notes that they are also the most obtrusive tool and often "generate most reactivity" (p. 239) from those being observed and this was also my experience. It was originally my intention to video record the lessons but the teachers were unhappy with this for two reasons. Firstly, they all had high numbers of Muslim students in their classes whom, they felt, would be unwilling to be recorded for religious and cultural reasons. Secondly, the teachers themselves were unwilling to be recorded. Sally and Aisha in particular were extremely reluctant to appear on screen, citing self-consciousness as a reason for this. For these reasons, my plans were abandoned. Instead, during the observations, I relied on copious field notes using a simple Word

document I devised (see Appendix 2). Shortly before I embarked on my observations, I had taken part in an ELTRA funded research project in which a colleague and I investigated language teachers' assessment literacy. As part of the data collection process, we undertook several classroom observations which involved the use of an observation schedule. Given (2008) describes this tool as a form, prepared before an observation, which "delineates the behavior and situational features to be observed and recorded during observation". In our research, it required us to look at the schedule every three minutes and tick off any assessment practice we had observed. I found this tool cumbersome to use as I struggled to identify and categorise activities quickly enough and the time I spent searching for the right category diverted my attention from what was actually happening in the classroom. For this reason, I decided to rely wholly on field notes as a way of recording classroom happenings. Each lesson, I made a note of factual information such as level and aims of the lesson. Then, as I observed the class, I made notes in real time focussing on three specific areas:

1. Classroom activities
2. Use of technology
3. My own reflections and/or questions for follow up

The broad, unstructured nature of my notes meant that I was able to generate in-depth descriptions of classroom activities and behaviours which could later be analysed for key themes and followed up in the post-observation interviews. My notes were chronological as I recorded events as they occurred in real time, describing the activities by both teachers and learners. This was significant as there was evidence of technology use by both parties in many lessons, and while this was sometimes due to the direction of the teacher, students in some classes used technology spontaneously through their own volition. Therefore, my focus on the classroom as a whole allowed me to record this and discuss it later with the teachers.

3.7.3 Interviews

The popularity of interviews stems from their ability to provide insights into people's experiences and the "possibility of *understanding* [his emphasis] the lived world from the

perspectives of the participants involved” (Richards, 2009, p.187). The unobservable nature of teachers’ cognitions (Kagan, 1990) means interviews are a particularly powerful tool for the exploration of teachers’ mental lives and Borg (2015) notes that they are the most commonly used data collection technique used in this field.

During data collection, I used interviews in two ways. Firstly, I conducted an interview with each participant after I had transcribed and analysed their recorded monologue. I used this to further examine salient themes which emerged from the monologue.

Secondly, I used post-observation interviews. Although classroom observations yielded useful insights into teachers’ pedagogy, they cannot reveal the underlying decision-making that influenced their practices. For this reason, I also used these interviews as a way of exploring teachers’ practices and the cognitions and decisions which underpinned them.

In both cases, interviews were semi-structured to allow me to focus on key issues, whilst also allowing enough flexibility that the discussion could lead to other areas (Richards, 2009). In my follow-up to the recorded monologue, I made a list of key themes which I wished to cover, together with some specific questions which were either to address areas that had not been covered, or to further probe issues of particular interest. In line with my approach to the recorded monologue, I aimed to keep the questions open rather than closed in order to allow participants the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences rather than just responding to a narrow set of questions.

I intended to conduct a short interview after each lesson observation but it quickly became apparent that this would not be possible due to participants’ hectic work life in which they often rushed from one class directly into another with no time for a comfort break, let alone an interview. For this reason, and with the consent of my participants, I decided to cluster my observations, doing two or three in a short space of time (for example consecutive days) and then using one interview to discuss multiple observations. This had a practical benefit for the participants as it impinged less on their time, but it was also advantageous for me as it allowed me to encourage participants to compare and contrast their practices across different classes. However,

it was imperative that interviews were conducted as soon as possible after the sessions to avoid the deterioration of memories (Gass and Mackey, 2000). For this reason, wherever possibly, I aimed to do observations on the same or consecutive days and carry out the interview within twenty-four hours.

Borg (2015) cautions against asking teachers to explicitly describe their beliefs in interviews i.e. asking 'What are your beliefs about x'). He describes such a strategy as being ineffective as teachers may not be able to articulate their beliefs. Woods (1996) also suggests that asking teachers about their beliefs in an abstract, decontextualized manner can lead to them presenting a set of idealised beliefs, rather than their own working beliefs. Borg (2015) argues instead, that researchers should "create interview contexts...where the discussion of beliefs is related to concrete experiences or objects" (Borg, 2015 p.429). Calderhead (1981) describes this technique, known as stimulated recall, as follows:

The term 'stimulated recall' has been used to denote a variety of techniques. Typically, it involves the use of audiotapes or videotapes of skilled behaviour, which are used to aid a participant's recall of his thought processes at the time of that behavior. (p. 212)

This approach is particularly useful following teaching observations as participants cannot discuss the rationale for their practices while teaching. However, I find the use of the term 'recall' misleading here as participants are encouraged not just to remember what they did, but to reflect on the practical reasoning (Fenstermacher, 1994) behind their actions. This is not a memory test, but an activity which encourages teachers to reflect on their practices and the thought processes behind them.

Stimulated recall often involves the use of video stimulus (Calderhead, 1981; Lyle, 2002; Ryan and Gass, 2012) but this is not essential (Borg, 2015) and as I was unable to video record the observed sessions, I had to rely on other prompts. In the interview which followed the recorded monologue, I referred to events or experiences they had described in the recorded monologue as a starting point for the discussions. In the

post-observation interviews, I used artefacts relevant to the lesson such as the teacher’s lesson plan and/or resources they had used in class such as mobile applications or websites as a way stimulus for discussion. The interviews were transcribed as I outlined in section 3.7.1.

3.7.4 Data Collection Summary

Below is a summary of all the data collected during this study.

Table 1: Data collection summary

	Sally	Danny	Aisha
Recorded monologue			
	1 hour 15 minutes	54 minutes	57 minutes
Interview 1: Follow up to oral monologue			
Interview 1	1 hour	1 hour 10 minutes	1hour
Post-observation interviews			
Interview 2	Post session 1: 30 minutes	Post session 1: 30 minutes	Post session 1: 1 hour
Interview 3	Post session 3: 45 minutes	Post session 3: 30 minutes	Post session 3: 30 minutes
Interview 4	Post session 5: 30 minutes	Post session 5: 45 minutes	Post session 5: 35 minutes
Interview 5	Post session 7: 30 minutes	Post session 8: 25 minutes	Post session 7: 30 minutes
Interview 6	Post session 10: 30 minutes	Post session 10; 40 minutes	Post session 10: 30 minutes
Final interview:			
Interview 7	40 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes
Observations of teaching			
	10 x 2 hours sessions	4 x 3 hours sessions 6 x 2 hour sessions	12 x 2 hours teaching sessions
Total engagement	25 hours 40 minutes	31 hours 54 minutes	29 hours 42 minutes

3.8 Data analysis and the construction of stories

There is no one single way to conduct a narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993; Squire et al, 2013; Stanley & Temple, 2008) and distinctions exist between how researchers source and analyse narratives. Firstly, the ways in which researchers find and make use of

stories can differ significantly. Benson (2014) notes that narrative inquirers traditionally drew on one of four sources of data: “autobiographical records or reflection, published memoirs, written language learning histories, or interviews” and that they typically only made use of one of these (p.157). More latterly, however, studies feature a wider range of data sources (Benson, 2013) and have included, for example, observations (Ellis, 2013), blogs (Johnson and Golombek, 2013), and visual narratives in the form of self-portraits Kajala et al (2014). The type of data which is included in narrative inquiry is, therefore, wide-ranging in nature and not just limited to data in storied form. Moreover, it is now more common for researchers to utilise multiple methods of data collection in order to enhance the credibility of the research through the comparison of different data sets (Benson, 2014).

The way in which researchers analyse the data they collect also varies significantly and is linked to the type of data collected (Barkhuizen et al, 2014). Where the data are already in narrative form, such as biographies or oral histories, they can be analysed using procedures in which coding and categorisation are used to uncover patterns, the links between them, and their relationship with broader concepts. Polkinghorne (1995) refers to this as analysis of narratives and it draws on Bruner’s (1986) concept of the paradigmatic mode of thinking. Most narrative researchers use a content or thematic analysis to analyse narrative data (Benson, 2014; Polkinghorne, 1995) and in this sense, both the process and presentation of findings are consistent with most other forms of qualitative research, with findings typically structured according to key themes.

Polkinghorne (1995) contrasts analysis of narratives with the term narrative analysis which occurs when researchers create their own story as a way of analysing and presenting their data. Here, the narrative is the outcome of the research process rather than the data collected:

In the second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories (for example, a history, case study, or biographic episode). Thus, analysis of narrative moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis from elements to stories. (p.12)

In other words, in narrative analysis a researcher constructs a story, or an “emplotted narrative” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.15), from either non-narrative data, or a combination of narrative and non-narrative data, and uses this as a way of both analysing and presenting their findings. The role of the researcher is to “discover a plot that displays the linkage among the data elements as parts of an unfolding temporal element culminating in the denouement” (p.15). This has particular value for biographical studies such as mine where I focus on the development of participants’ pedagogy and cognitions over the course of their career, rather than just a snapshot of a particular moment in time. As such, its use is fundamental in allowing me to address my research questions.

Polkinghorne’s (1995) distinction between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis suggests that the choice of which framework to use might be straightforward. However, I was presented with a dilemma. Part of my data was in narrative form, including the oral monologue and some parts of the interviews, while the observational data and other sections of the observations were strictly non-narrative. It appeared, therefore, that they seemed to straddle the two approaches. I felt an instinctive draw towards the use of narrative analysis as my research examines the development of teachers’ cognitions and practices throughout their career and thus lends itself to a historic, storied account of their professional life history since it focuses on past events, actions and beliefs, and the links between them. However, my data also focus on teacher’s current cognitions and practices which do not fit as easily into a story framework. Moreover, I also recognised that there needed to be a cross-case analysis of the three separate stories of my participants in order to explore the commonalities and differences between them. Benson (2013) notes that narrative inquiry can be a hybrid of both in which narrative analysis and analysis of narratives are used together. For example, a researcher may analyse a set of data in narrative form and then conduct a thematic analysis of these multiple narratives. Therefore, in this study I have adopted Benson’s approach and combined narrative analysis with an analysis of narratives. In chapters four, five and six, I present my participants’ stories, with one chapter for each participant. In chapter seven, I conduct a cross-case analysis of the stories to discuss their key themes in light of literature. This allows me, therefore, to:

- use narrative analysis to take a range of discrete data sets for each participant and organise them into a coherent, chronological plot which reveals the links between events and situations and their impact on the participants
- use analysis of narratives to compare and contrast multiple stories thematically

To those unfamiliar with narrative inquiry, the use of a story, with its absence of in-text citations or explicit critical discussion may appear somehow unacademic in nature. However, Benson (2013) argues that the story created through narrative analysis is a research text in its own right. It is not a simple retelling of someone's story or a close description of a participant, but a narrative created through an analytical and interpretive process which addresses key issues which are of interest to the researcher: in my case the development of teachers' cognitions and practices in relation to technology use. Benson's (2013) own preference is to analyse and present data using narrative analysis but not to include any explicit interpretation of the story, arguing instead that "narrative research should challenge readers to read and interpret narratives themselves" (p.257). However, I have offered an explicit analysis of the stories in chapter seven. The placement of this allows the reader to interpret the narratives themselves, as Benson suggests, but also ensures that my interpretation, as co-creator of the stories, is also heard. In the section below, I will outline how data analysis was conducted.

3.9 Stages of data analysis

Polkinghorne's (1995) work describes the principles of narrative analysis but not how it is actually done in practice. Moreover, my literature search revealed that little is written about this elsewhere, which is in stark contrast to the emphasis given to thematic analysis in literature on qualitative research methods. The reason for the lack of literature on narrative analysis is likely to be associated with how seldom it features in journal articles (Benson 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995). Benson notes the challenge of getting papers which use narrative analysis published, claiming that editors are reluctant to include work which appear experimental and do not follow the conventions of academic journals. However, I found several studies which served as inspiration for this research (Benson et al, 2013; Chik and Benson, 2008; Liu and Xu, 2011; Nasheeda et

al, 2019; Shedivy, 2004) and which allowed me to formulate my own approach to the analysis and presentation of data following the stages described below.

3.9.1 Transcription and familiarisation with transcripts

Firstly, the recorded monologue and interviews were transcribed as outlined in section 3.7.1. Transcribing them myself rather than employing someone else to do this allowed me to immerse myself fully in the data. The process of listening to the recordings multiple times enabled me to identify areas worthy of more investigation in subsequent interviews or observations, and to plan how to follow this up accordingly (Murray, 2009).

3.9.2 Plotting the stories chronologically

When the transcripts were complete, I followed Benson's (2013) approach of deleting sections that were clearly not relevant to my research questions and thereby reducing the quantity of data I needed to work with. Once complete, I began the process of putting the remaining data into chronological order. Liu and Xu (2011) started their data analysis by coding the data before they plotted it. However, I chose to group together extracts of data based on the time they occurred as this allowed me to reduce the data down to a more manageable size and collate extracts which related to the same time period, event or person more easily, and see where repetition occurred.

3.9.3 Coding and identifying themes

Once I had imposed a chronological structure on the data, I began to highlight sections that were particularly relevant to my research questions and then assign them with a key word or phrase which summarised their content. For example, a section of Sally's story where she talks about her feelings towards being required to use technology was labelled 'anger'. These codes were derived inductively from the data itself rather than from literature, as I was not searching for pre-determined themes, but allowing them to emerge from the data (Stake, 1995). This process was neither straightforward nor linear, but was an iterative process in which I returned to the data multiple times,

reassigning codes which did not seem appropriate on a second, or third reading, and adding new codes where I had initially missed the significance of data. On completion of the coding, I began to search for links between the codes to form broader categories and themes which stemmed from related codes (Murray, 2009). An example of this is seen in table 2 below. The rigorous analytical processes involved in coding the data ensured that I was able to identify and capture the key essence of each part of my participants' stories and also guard against bias in my re-telling and interpretation of their stories.

Table 2: from data to themes

Sections of data	Code	Category	Theme
<i>My German teacher was amazing. Everything was about practising language and I loved everything he did. He just made me want to speak German.</i>	Teaching role models	Schooling	Impact of early learning experiences
<i>I hated my French lessons. The teacher was nice enough but her approach was just so old-fashioned. The language we did wasn't practical at all. You know, it all translation of sentences like 'My brother's cat is on my grandmother's sofa' and there was no sense of talking about anything useful, or interesting, or relevant to our lives. I mean seriously, have you ever said that your brother's cat is on your grandmother's sofa?</i>	Negative experiences of language learning in school		
<i>I didn't learn Bengali formally, I just learned it from my Grandmas. They'd speak to me in Bengali because the really wanted me to learn it and I just picked it up. And I think that really made me influenced me later but I understood how importance input is.</i>	Informal early learning		

Examples of coding from each individual data collection tool can be found in appendix 5 (coded extract from a recorded monologue), appendix 6 (coded extract from an interview) and appendix 7 (coded classroom observation).

3.9.4 Story construction

The next stage of data analysis involved story construction. By this stage, I had the outline of the chronological plot and had identified key elements within the stories and I used this to configure the stories. I decided on an authorial style of storytelling in which I used a combination of third person writing with first person quotations from the data to enrich the story and allow participants' voices to be heard.

3.9.5 Member checking

Once the stories had been constructed, I sent each one to the appropriate participant and asked participants to check it for accuracy and the extent to which they felt it reflected their experiences. This process is known as member checking (Birt et al, 2016) and is seen by many qualitative researchers as essential in enhancing the credibility of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Barkhuizen et al (2014) suggest that is particularly important in narrative inquiry as its interpretive nature means that there is always a risk that researchers may misrepresent their participants' thoughts or intentions. They argue, therefore, that involving participants in the research at multiple stages can help mitigate this. Doyle (2007) suggests that research is a "negotiated process" (p. 889) which enables researchers and participants to construct meaning jointly, and allows the voices of participants to be heard. Thus, the benefit of using member checks is that the trustworthiness of the study may be enhanced if participants are more actively involved in the construction of their narratives and offer alternative insights which may then be incorporated into the final analysis (Barkhuizen, 2010, Chik and Benson, 2008, Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Squire, 2013,).

However, the use of member checks remains controversial. Freeman (2006), for example, rejects seeking forms of validity which imply that there is a single version of

the 'truth' which a participant can confirm or deny. As discussed earlier, narrative inquiry rejects realist assumptions and embraces interpretivism which allows for multiple interpretations on the same phenomena. Therefore, a researcher's interpretation of their stories may be different to that of my participants particularly as they may not always be able to understand their own behaviours (Holloway and Jefferson, 2001). Riessman (2008) also posits that the stories we tell change over time and accordingly, so too do the meanings we attach to them. When deciding if and how to use member checks, my own fear, therefore, was that by inviting ongoing dialogue about the accuracy of my interpretations, I risked a never-ending back and forth discussion in which a participant was never satisfied with my work because of their own shifting perceptions. However, conscious of my ethical stance and my 'relational responsibility' towards my participants (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000), I felt an obligation to provide participants with an opportunity to provide feedback on my narrative analysis, though I bore in mind the stance of Chamberlayne et al (2002), who invite participants to comment on their interpretations, but do not commit to changing their work in light of this. Thus, once I had written an initial draft of the narrative analysis chapters, I sent the relevant one to each participant and asked them to read them and respond to three questions:

1. Have I concealed your identity sufficiently? (I discuss this more fully in section 3.12 Ethical Issues')
2. Do you feel that this story represents you and your professional life?
3. Do you have any other comments?

My intention behind questions two and three was to ensure that I had accurately captured the main aspects and themes in Sally, Danny and Aisha's professional lives and had neither omitted anything significant, nor overstated particular aspects of their experience. In other words, I sought approval that I had captured them, and their lives, appropriately. Only one participant, Danny, provided any feedback (see appendix 3). He suggested that his initial fear of using technology when he joined the sector did not come across strongly enough. He noted that he was not sure if that was because he had understated this in his recorded monologue or because I had not picked up on it, but he felt it was a significant factor in his initial reluctance to engage with technology.

In our final interview, we discussed this in more detail and my chapter was amended to reflect this. As my other participants did not request any changes, their stories remained the same.

3.9.6 Cross story thematic analysis

The final stage of data analysis mirrored the earlier stage of thematic analysis. This time however, I carried out a cross-narrative thematic analysis in which I analysed the three stories for salient themes. The findings from this analysis are discussed in chapter 7.

3.10 Selection and recruitment of participants

Stake (2000) asserts that the key criterion in selecting participants is the 'opportunity to learn' (p. 451). Recruitment of participants is not, therefore, random, but purposeful and based on principled decisions about who will allow us to learn most about a particular phenomenon:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in greater depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (Patton, 1990 p.169)

This raises the question of how a researcher can identify such information-rich cases. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) describe the first step as deciding on a set of criteria which will be used for selecting the sample, a strategy described by Dörnyei (2007) as criterion-based sampling. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) also express a preference for this term due to its specificity, as, they claim, all sampling is purposeful in some way.

The aims of my research directly influenced the criteria for the selection of participants. Since this study examines the development of teachers' cognitions and practices over time, it was crucial that the practitioners in this study were both a) currently working as a teacher and b) experienced practitioners rather than newcomers to the field. However, determining what constitutes an experienced teacher was not without its challenges. My first question was how long a teacher needs to have been in-service in order to be

considered as experienced. Gallup and Rodriguez (2010) note that definitions in literature differ about the numbers of years teaching required to be considered as experienced, but the general consensus is five years or more (see for example, Gatbonton, 1999; Tsui, 2005). Although this seemed like a useful guideline, I was initially concerned that this might significantly narrow my choice of participants. Retention of teachers in FE is poor and many new-entrants leave the profession within the first three years (Department for Education, 2021). Of teachers who entered the profession in 2008 for example, slightly fewer than 60% remained three years later. By 2016 this figure had decreased to only 51%. Given the high attrition rates of staff within the sector, I was aware that it might be difficult to recruit participants with this level of experience and that a level of flexibility might be required and therefore I looked for those with around five years' experience or more .

It was also essential that the participants were regular users of technology in order that sufficient data could be generated to explore their practices and their relationship with technology. However, it was not important whether teachers considered themselves to be effective users of technology, nor that they held specific views about its (dis) benefits, simply that they made use of technology in their teaching.

In summary, I identified three key criteria for the selection of participants. They should:

- be in-service teacher of ESOL, working within the FE sector
- have a minimum of around five years ESOL teaching experience
- self-identify as regular users of technology in their teaching

3.10.1 The challenge of recruiting participants

Kim (2016) highlights the difficulty that students and researchers have in determining how many participants to include in a narrative inquiry. Some studies focus on a single participant while others include multiple narratives which may vary in size from two to several hundred (Barkhuizen et al 2014). While the sample size relates fundamentally

to the project's aims, one also has to consider more prosaic issues such as access, time and resources (Stake, 2000).

I selected an initial goal of six participants for my study. This is typical of many narratives studies which are often very small in scale due the amount of data they can yield and their focus on exploring participants' lives in detail. It was also manageable for an individual researcher working full-time and studying part-time. In addition, it allowed some room for attrition in the event that participants decided they no longer wanted to take part in the study. However, this number was a guide rather than an absolute following Dörnyei (2007) who notes the importance participant selection processes should:

...remain open in a qualitative study for as long as possible so that after initial accounts are gathered and analysed, additional participants can be added who can fill gaps in the initial description or can expand or even challenge it.(p. 126).

Recruitment of participants was challenging and two early potential recruits decided not to get involved over fears of the time commitment. However, I was able to recruit five participants through my contacts in the sector. Unfortunately, two of these pulled out after completing the audio-monologue: one due to life-limiting illness and another who simply stopped responding to my messages. I subsequently learned that she had left teaching.

3.10.2 My participants

The table below summarises the participants in this study.

Table 3: participant information

Name	Teaching experience at the start of the research	Teaching qualifications (listed chronologically)	Current Teaching Context
Sally	Circa 25 years	PGCE in Modern Languages (Secondary) CELTA	FE College Teaching adults on full- and part-time courses
Danny	Circa 25 years	CELTA PGCE (Lifelong Learning)	FE College

		MA TESOL	Teaching adults on full- and part-time courses
Aisha	Circa 5 years	PGCE (Lifelong Learning, ESOL Subject specialist)	FE College Teaching 16 – 19 year olds on full-time courses and part-time adult learners in community outreach centres

3.11 Positionality

Dorothy was shocked to learn the truth from the Wizard of Oz:

“But isn’t everything here green?” asked Dorothy.

“No more than in any other city,” replied Oz; “but when you wear green spectacles, why of course everything you see looks green to you. The Emerald City was built a great many years ago, for I was a young man when the balloon brought me here, and I am a very old man now. But my people have worn green glasses on their eyes so long that most of them think it really is an Emerald City....

The Wizard of Oz, L. Frank Baum

In chapter one I outlined my background as a former ESOL teacher, the origins of this research and how this led to my interest in this research topic. This study is informed by a social constructivist worldview which assumes that individuals search for understanding in the world they live in, and in doing so, develop subjective meanings of their experiences. Individuals will ascribe multiple meanings to these experiences, thus driving researchers to acknowledge and seek the complexities inherent in participants’ understanding of the world rather than limiting their focus to narrow, pre-determined categories (Cresswell, 2007). Since meanings develop through experience, social interaction and cultural activity within a particular community, they are intrinsically linked to the environment in which they occur (Greeno, 1998). They are also unique as each individual will experience the world in differing ways based on a range of variables including factors such as social class, ethnicity, gender, religion etc. (Rosen, 1998).

Accordingly, researchers too are a product of their environment and experiences. My past experiences, beliefs and attitudes all contribute to my identity as a teacher. They

also influence me as a researcher. Burgess (1984, p.210) comments that “while some [researchers] become interested in an area of study through reading other people’s work, this is only one part of the story, for the biography of the individual researcher has a part to play.” This view is echoed by Denzin (1989) who argues that, “interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher” (p.12) and Crotty (1998) who also notes that researchers’ interpretation of phenomena is shaped by their own experience and background. Accordingly, my choice of topic, the questions I seek answers for, the methodology I have chosen, and the way I interpret data are all influenced by my lived experiences. Like Dorothy entering the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz, I see the world through tinted spectacles. In my case, the lenses are tinted green through my own experiences, beliefs, and subjectivities. However, unlike Dorothy, I cannot simply remove my spectacles: I cannot separate myself from my experiences, nor my identity from my research.

I do not, therefore, approach this research from a neutral, unbiased perspective, but from one influenced by my personal and professional identity. This may, therefore, impact different aspects of the study. Foote and Bartell (2011) posit that a researcher’s positionality may have a significant impact on research, their choice of approach and the interpretation of data. Bourke (2014) also notes that in qualitative research, where the researchers acts as a data collection instrument, it is to be expected that his/her background, beliefs and biases may affect different aspects of the study. He suggests that “...our own biases shape the research process, serving as checkpoints along the way” (p.1) and that “not only may my own biases influence the participants, their responses, and my own observation and interpretations, but so too the very nature of the study” (p.2).

Relating this to my own research, I am aware of how my experiences as an ESOL teacher and manager may have tinted the lenses through which I regard this study. I have ‘baggage’, which affects how I regard the use of technology. On the one hand, I have positive beliefs about the potential value of certain technologies for language learning. On the other hand, I have a sense of frustration at being ‘forced’ to use

technology even when I remain unconvinced of its benefits (which I described in chapter 1). Both these points may impact the data I seek, or how I interpret it. The question which arises out of this is how this impacts my research, and what steps I should take to account for this.

Recognizing how my background has influenced the design of this research, and my interpretation of it, is in line with social constructivist research (Cresswell, 2007). Sikes (2004) contends that researchers should devote time to considering their positioning in relation to the research, and the assumptions that they hold, so that they are aware of the potential impact of this. Moreover, she argues for researchers to be both reflective and reflexive so that they become

...a rigorous researcher who is able to present their findings and interpretations in the confidence that they have thought about, acknowledged and been honest and explicit about their stance and the influence it has had on their research.

This is important given that a major criticism of much educational research is that it is biased and partisan (p. 19).

Positionality can, therefore, be described as giving consideration to one's own position in relation all aspects of the research process (McDowell, 1992) thus affording researchers the opportunity to explore the intricacies of research conducted within one's own community or culture (England, 1994; Merriam et al., 2001; Rose, 1997).

Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013) suggest should first address their own positionality by making explicit the personal assumptions, values and experiences which may consciously or subconsciously impact upon the research. My background as an ESOL teacher, and my current role as a teacher educator lead me to having certain knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about both the teaching of ESOL, and the Lifelong Learning Sector. Acknowledgement of this forced me to consider how I could approach

the research with 'eyes open' as though I was seeing this for the first time (Asselin, 2003). LaSala (2003) argues that since insiders are familiar with issues which affect their participants, they may be better placed to ask relevant questions when designing an interview schedule. However, one could equally argue that inside knowledge means that they risk ignoring parts of the data if it does not conform with their expectations (ibid). Therefore, in addition to taking a reflexive stance throughout my research journey, I also made a conscious decision to use a recorded monologue as the starting point of my research with each participant, as I discussed earlier in the chapter.

Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013) also assert that researchers addressing positionality need to place themselves in relation to their participants. This requires the researcher to consider both how they view the participants, and how the participants may view them. This demands a discussion of the notion of the researcher and their status as insider and/or outsider. The term insider refers to issues of commonality and typically describes a researcher undertaking research with participants who belong to the same group or community which the researchers also belong to (Kanuha, 2000). Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) refer to insiders as having shared characteristics and experiences, while Asselin (2003) refers to notions of shared identity, language and experience base. By extension, an outsider refers to one whose position lies outside these commonalities.

Merriam et al (2001) state that early discussions about insider/outsider status assumed that the researcher was either an insider or an outsider and that each position has various (dis)benefits. Multiple advantages of being an insider have been discussed. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) for example, suggest that the lived experiences of an insider afford particular insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) note that participants are more likely to trust an insider and open up to them, thus leading to their offering more in depth data. Merriam et al (2001) also suggest that insiders find it easier to gain and nurture rapport with participants and

that their own experiences enable them to ask more meaningful questions. On a more practical level, working from the inside also allows easier access to participants.

Adler and Adler (1987) take a more circumspect view of insider status and indicate that it can confer both legitimacy and/or stigma onto researchers. While legitimacy comes from the benefits described above, the stigma relates to the key criticisms of insider status, namely that researchers who share so much commonality with the research population cannot lose the objectivity required in academic research. Insiders can also face particular difficulties in conducting research with those they already have a relationship with. Birch and Miller (2000) for example highlight the ethical difficulties which can arise when participants see the researcher as a friend, confidante or counsellor and therefore over-share information which either goes beyond the realms of the research, or which one party is uncomfortable with. Bridges (2001) notes that the role of insider does not guarantee understanding or insight and therefore may have no benefit over being an outsider. Indeed, the very closeness to a group mentioned above, can prevent a researcher from fully exploring phenomenon if taken for granted assumptions are not made explicit and destabilized.

The arguments for and against insider status are, however, over-simplistic in the sense that that insider and outsider status are presented as being mutually exclusive. Merriam et al (2001) note Aguilar's (1981) description of all cultures, including subcultures, as being characterized by 'internal variation', thus raising the question of what an insider is actually inside of (p.25). This question is pertinent to my own role and status within this research. As a former ESOL teacher, and current ESOL teacher educator, I viewed the commonalities between myself and my participants as being greater than our differences: we all work in education, in the field of ESOL. I spent twelve years working as exclusively an ESOL teacher so why would I not be regarded as 'one of them'? However, as the research progressed and the search began for participants, I realized that I was farther removed from ESOL teachers than I thought. The ease of access which is highlighted as a benefit of insider status (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) was

noticeably absent as my requests for participants lay unanswered. I had made a conscious decision not to ask friends to take part in my study in case either the request or their participation had a negative effect on our friendship. However, I had hoped that they could act as a sort of broker, finding and introducing me to interested parties. The very fact that I need their help highlighted the distance between me and my potential participants. I had not worked in the Lifelong Learning Sector for several years and many former colleagues had left the profession. When I approached teachers to participate in my research, my 'brokers' informed me that teachers were wary of taking part and cited a nervousness of being interviewed and 'judged' by a University lecturer. They viewed me as an outsider.

This role is apparent in an early interview with Danny. When talking about the demands of a heavy teaching load and the impact this has on his ability to innovate, he commented, "I suppose it's different for you, Universities don't have the pressures we have" (D-I1) and later referred to me as having "jumped ship to a university" (D-I1) thus confirming his view of me as an outsider. This apparent benefit of this was that Danny provided particularly rich descriptions of his setting, talking in detail about issues which he might reasonably have expected me to be familiar with rather than making assumptions about my knowledge and thus leaving key information unsaid, which can be typical of conversations between insider researchers and participants (Kanuha, 2000).

However, as we spent more time together and our discussions about his work in his organisation progressed, he referred to my 'knowing how it is' (D-I3) and in the same interview suggested that 'teachers like us need to make a stand against managers who don't know what we do'. His use of 'us' and 'we' here indicates that he regarded me as part of her community and thus demonstrates how his perception of me changed. Danny's shifting view of me also corresponded with an increased level of openness on his part and he later commented that he felt he could be more open with me once he knew that I 'had spent real time in the sector and hadn't just popped in one day when

lost'. Here it appears that the commonality we shared helped to facilitate our discussions.

Danny's early comments prompted me to reconsider my view of my relationship with ESOL provision in the Lifelong Learning Sector. My understanding of the sector is personal to me, and is formed by memories which are specific to a particular time, place and group of people. My experiences are not those of my participants. Though we have worked in the same sector, our experiences may be very different. Indeed, as described in chapter 1, the Lifelong Learning Sector is characterized by its very diversity and no two providers are the same. This reflects Aguilar's notion of internal variation within cultures (op cit). Thus, if we talk of insiders, what are they insiders of? Are they insiders of the education sector at large, the Lifelong Learning Sector, an individual organization or a specific team? I would argue that one can be an insider in one of these categories, but not another. If I met Danny at a dinner party and we were the only two teachers among a group of bankers, he may have viewed me as an insider. However, in the context of this research, my position as a former ESOL teacher placed me, initially at least, on the outside.

Danny's comments highlight that the perception insider/outsider status, is not fixed. Kanuha (2000) refers to researching at the 'hyphen of the insider-outsider' (p.43). The use of the hyphen here brings together two identities and allows a continuum along which our identities may travel. The rejection of a binary description of one's status reflects the complexities inherent in insider/outsider status and also acknowledges the difficulty in defining a community or culture and what membership of a particular group entails. Moreover, it minimizes the extremes of the (dis)benefits associated with each and enables a researcher to navigate his or her position with participants on an individual basis. The role of outsider enabled me take a more critical view of certain phenomena, but as an insider I was able to empathise and gain trust of participants.

3.12 Ethical issues

Although it is standard practice for academics to complete requests for ethical approval at the start of their study, Clandinin and Connolly (2000) suggest that ethical issues need to be considered throughout the research process, rather than be just seen as something to be dealt with at the beginning. Josselson (2007) notes that due to its focus on exploring and reflecting on people's lives narrative research is an "inherently a relational endeavor" (p. 537) which demands that we take steps to protect the confidentiality and dignity of our participants. We do this, she argues, by adopting an "ethical attitude" (p. 538) in which a researcher carefully considers ethical issues arising in their research and how to protect their participants, while also maintaining the integrity and quality of their work. Drawing on BERA's (2011) principles for ethical practice in educational research, in the section below I will discuss how my own 'ethical attitude' has informed this work.

3.12.1 Informed, voluntary consent and the right to withdraw

When I approached potential participants for the research, I provided them with a written participant information sheet with a summary of the purposes of the research and what it would involve (see Appendix 4). This document made clear that participation in the research was voluntary and explained how the data would be used i.e. to whom the results of the research would be made available.

At the start of the research, I stressed to participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that I would respect their right to do so. Two participants left the project and my ethical attitude can be seen in light of my response to this. 'Jo' completed the audio monologue but did not respond to a request to arrange a follow up interview. Her recording revealed that she was unhappy in her current role and in her life more generally. Unwilling to put pressure on her, I sent her a message in which I expressed my hope that she was well and that her circumstances had improved. I reiterated her ability to withdraw from the research if she felt unable or unwilling to take part and said that I would not contact her again unless she replied, as I had no wish to pressurize her into taking part. Many months later, Jo contacted me and apologised for

her slow response. She had left teaching after feeling bullied in her job and she expressed her gratitude that I had 'left her to it' at a difficult time in her life.

'Paul' also withdrew from the research. He was diagnosed with a potentially life-limiting illness not long after completing his first follow-up interview. He expressed a wish to continue with the research once his health was more stable. We remained in contact, sharing friendly emails now and again, until his death in 2018.

3.12.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

A key issue in the ethics of narrative inquiry regards the interrelated issues of confidentiality and anonymity. BERA (2011) notes that "The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research" and this right to privacy is reflected across literature (see for example Barkhuizen et al, 2014; Cresswell, 2009, Denscombe, 2017).

Although the two terms are often conflated in literature (Saunders et al, 2015), they refer to different concepts. Wiles (2013) describes confidentiality as a process in which "identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed and that the identity of research participants will be protected through various processes designed to anonymise them" while "anonymity is the vehicle by which confidentiality is operationalised".

A common approach to ensuring anonymity is the use of pseudonyms, but this alone does not guarantee that participants will not be identifiable (Denscombe, 2002; Dörnyei, 2007). The nature of narrative inquiry in particular means that ensuring confidentiality and anonymity is more complex than in many other forms of research to due the amount and depth of data that is typically collected. In relating their stories, participants can share a great deal of information about themselves, their students, their workplace and colleagues and even their families. When we look at a snippet of this information, the promise of confidentiality may seem realistic. However, when we piece together stories to form a longer, chronological narrative which extends over time, the potential for identification becomes greater.

Clandinin and Connolly (2000) also note that the very act of data collection can inadvertently reveal our participants to others. They query the impact on anonymity if, for example, we are seen observing a lesson and are asked by students or other teachers what we are doing, or if participants tell others about their involvement in the research. For this reason, I took a number of steps to protect the privacy of my participants:

- All the participants expressed a desire take on a pseudonym for the purposes of the research and each chose their own name at the start of the project. I took care to use this name in all data, including field notes and observations.
- Interviews were conducted online via Skype to ensure that we were not a risk of being overheard by students or colleagues (Barkhuizen et al, 2014).
- All paperwork, recordings, and notes were kept securely in password-protected files on my personal drive within the University's computer network.
- When writing my participants' stories, I changed certain factual information to help protect their identity. Squire (2013) notes that omitting or changing data can result in a loss of the data's richness but the changes I have made do not alter the fundamental fabric of the story or the meanings participants ascribed to events. They could, however, act as red herrings if someone close to the participant read their story.

Riessman (2008) maintains that ethical practice in narrative inquiry requires researchers to give participants the opportunity to read our version of their story and ask them to confirm we have concealed their identity sufficiently. In my research, this formed part of the member checking process which I outlined in section 3.9.5. Riessman argues that this is not just a matter of respondent validation, but an opportunity for re-negotiation of informed consent. At the heart of this, lies a determination to protect people from harm, a key theme in literature on ethics (BERA 2011; Dornyei, 2007; Josselson 2007; Kim, 2016]. Clandinin and Connolly (2000) highlight the potential risk to a participant who is not "seen as valuing or honouring institutional narratives" (p.175) and therefore the importance of anonymity is fundamental to mitigate this risk. This is of particular relevance to my study where all participants are, at times, critical of the institutions in

which they work and the people they work for. Plummer (2001) questions whether participants can ever really understand what they are agreeing to when they sign up for a research project and I wondered if reading the criticisms they level at their institutions might make my participants fear the ramifications of this if their identities were uncovered. Ultimately, my decision was led by my own sense of “relational responsibility” (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000) towards my participants, without whom, this research would not exist. The ‘protection from harm’, which is so often cited as being central to ethical research, cannot exist if researchers are unwilling to respect their participants’ right to confidentiality and their right to withdraw their consent if they wish to do so. All of my participants agreed that their anonymity had been preserved and that they were happy to proceed with the study.

3.13 Evaluating narrative inquiry

The question of how narrative research can be evaluated is not straightforward. In other forms of qualitative research, the concepts of objectivity, generalisability, validity and reliability are often called upon to establish the quality of a study (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Dörnyei 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, Riessman (1993) suggests that such notions rely on a realist perspective of the world and as such, are of little relevance to narrative inquiry. As discussed in section 3.5, stories are not fixed but change according to the speakers’ intentions, understanding of events, and the context in which the narrative occurs. As the speakers stories changes, so does the researcher’s interpretations of phenomena. For this reason, Barkhuizen et al (2014) highlight the “individuality and uniqueness” of narratives (p.88) and claim that narrative research is never replicable. Moreover, as the aim of narrative inquiry is to explore the unfolding lived experience of individuals and the meanings they attribute to them, there is seldom an attempt to generalise findings to a larger group.

While traditional measures used to determine quality criteria may be rejected by many narrative inquirers, it is vital that a researcher has a set of principles which can be used to assess their work (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Hammersley, 2008). Riessman notes,

(2008, p.186) “there is no canon”, or single set of criteria on which academics agree and Loh (2013) highlights the lack of consideration given to this in much of the literature relating to narrative inquiry. For this reason, in this study I have drawn on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Barkhuizen et al (2014) to develop a set of principles which guide this study, the aims of which are to promote trustworthiness rather than truth (Riessman, 1993).

3.13.1 Rigor

Barkhuizen et al (2014) describe rigor as “...the degree to which an analysis is systematic with regard to both the coverage of data and the application of analytical procedures” (p.89). They call for researchers to ensure that all data are analysed, that this is done systematically, and the procedures used are made explicit. In section 3.9, I gave a full account how my data were analysed.

3.13.2 Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to the time spent in the field working with participants and more specifically, to devoting enough time to the data collection process that one becomes sufficiently familiar with the participants and their context. This can help to ensure that a researcher can develop mutual trust with participants and prevent misinterpretation of phenomena (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). My data collection took a year to complete and I spent over twenty-five hours with each participant. This allowed me to generate ‘thick description’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) in which I was able to describe both the behaviours of my participants, as well as the context in which they work, so that they “become meaningful to an outsider” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018 p.121). Spending such a long period with my participants also helped me to identify when my data reached ‘saturation’, namely the point at which no new insights were revealed (Hennink and Kaiser, 2019).

3.13.3 Member checking

As I outlined in detail in section 3.9.5, I used member checking to ensure that I had preserved my participants' anonymity and to ascertain if they felt that I had represented their stories fairly.

3.13.4 Triangulation

The purpose of triangulation is to enhance the quality of qualitative research by allowing researchers to “get a stronger fix on the data” (Richards, 2015 p.63). It aims to do this through a variety of data collection methods such as interviews and observations (Creswell & Miller, 2000) and/or the triangulation of data in which data are collected at different times, in different contexts, and from different people (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The assumption behind this is that “if researchers can substantiate these various data sets with each other, the interpretations and conclusions drawn from them are likely to be trustworthy” (Carlson, 2010 p. 1104). In this study, triangulation was achieved through:

- The use of multiple methods of data collection including the recorded monologue, interviews and observations of teaching
- Conducting multiple observations in different contexts and with different groups

3.14 Summary

In this chapter I have provided a detailed rationale for my choice of methodology and the principles which underlie this research. I argued that the use of narrative inquiry provides access to participants' inner lives and sheds light on how they experience and make sense of their experiences. Moreover, it allows examination of processes and events over time, and within a specific context, thus allowing me to address my specific research questions. The use of multiple data collection tools, including a recorded monologue, interviews and classroom observations enables the exploration of both beliefs and practices, and the relationship between the two. The chapter has also highlighted the importance of ethical consideration, and in particular questions of confidentiality and anonymity, and my responsibility to my participants.

In the next three chapters, I will present a narrative analysis for each of my three participants.

Chapter 4: Sally's Story

4.1 Introduction

In the next three chapters, I will present my participants' stories in turn. In line with Polkinghorne's (1995) definition of narrative analysis, I have drawn on both narrative and non-narrative data to create an emplotted story which charts the evolution of each person's technology beliefs and practices *over time*. Each chapter follows the same structure. In line with Borg's (2006) framework for research into language teacher cognition, their stories do not start at the beginning of their careers, but with a journey through aspects of their childhood which have impacted their views on language teaching and learning. I will then provide an in-depth account of their experiences of using technology to teach ESOL, their cognitions surrounding this, and factors which have been influential. Finally, I will summarise the most significant themes which emerge from the story. The use of narrative analysis and Borg's framework act in a complementary fashion enabling me to reveal the links between the people, places and events which have been influential in their stories and therefore address my research questions.

The codes used after each quotation indicates where it is from. The first letter indicates the name of the participant, and the second indicates if it is from the recorded monologue (RM), an interview (I) or observation (O) and the number thereof. For example, (S-O1) refers to Sally's first observation. I have repeated this pattern across all participants.

4.2 Introducing Sally

"I love what I do. Teaching ESOL is the best job in the world." (S-RM)

At the start of the research process Sally was in her late forties and had been working as an English language teacher since she left university at the age of twenty-two. After graduating with a degree in French and Spanish, she completed a certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) and spent nearly eight years working abroad as an English teacher. She worked in private language schools for eight years, teaching

both general and Business English. Though she loved living and working in Spain, the combination of a relationship breakdown and a family member in the UK facing a serious illness meant she decided to return to the UK.

When she returned home, she embarked on a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with the aim of teaching Spanish in secondary schools. Describing working with British teenagers as ‘a special kind of hell’ (S-I1) due to their lack of interest in, and motivation for, language learning, she completed the course but immediately sought professional opportunities elsewhere and quickly found a full-time job as an ESOL lecturer in a further education college where she has now worked for over fifteen years. Married, she lives with her husband and two teenage sons in a large town in the North of England.

4.3 Early Language Learning Experiences

Sally starts her recorded monologue with a story from her childhood. In it she describes her very first visit abroad, to Spain, at the age of eight. Given £5 by her grandparents as spending money before the holiday started, she bought a children’s Spanish phrasebook at the airport and started reading it on the plane. Aided by her brother, who was fifteen and studying Spanish ‘O’ level, Sally started practising and trying to learn as much as she could. Each day the book stayed with her as she worked through each section in turn. A naturally shy child, Sally was too embarrassed to try to actually use the language until the very last day of the holiday. Standing in a queue waiting to buy some postcards, she watched a clearly agitated English woman trying to ask the shop assistant for directions to the public toilets. Unable to understand each other, Sally plucked up the courage to intervene and asked the shop assistant where the toilets were, and then, having understood the answer, directed the lady where to go:

All these years later I can still remember how I felt standing there at that moment. I don’t think I had ever felt as proud of anything as I did then. I had spoken Spanish to somebody, he had understood me, and then I had understood him when he replied. I was an eight year old from Yorkshire and I could have a conversation in Spanish. I was so proud of myself I thought my heart was going to burst out of my chest.’ (S-RM)

Sally talked at length in the audio monologue and subsequent interview about the importance of this incident and its impact on her. She attributes the origins of her love of languages to this event and describes pouring over her brother's exercise books on her return, desperate to learn as much as she could. By the time she started secondary school and began formal Spanish lessons, she was significantly ahead of her peers who were all learning from scratch: "They were all learning how to say hello and goodbye, and I could read the texts in my brother's 'O' level books" (S-RM). Identified by her teachers as excelling in languages, she went on to take Spanish and French at 'A' level, whilst also teaching herself Italian in her free time. This was followed by a degree in Modern languages (French and Spanish) at University. However, she was left feeling uninspired by many of the language lessons she attended at school and university. She is critical of the tedious nature of school lessons in which teachers used a traditional grammar-based approach consisting largely of rote learning of grammar and lexis, and the translation of sentences to and from Spanish:

I found lessons incredibly boring and, a lot of the time, pointless. The idea of a communicative syllabus clearly hadn't reached Yorkshire in the 1980s and our teachers were still using traditional coursebooks that had a typical grammar translation approach. There was absolutely no focus on communication at all in class. The teacher spoke English all lesson, and we never spoke Spanish unless we were reading aloud a passage from a book.' (S-I1)

Sally found her university experiences similarly frustrating with most of the course content focussing on literature, and little opportunity to learn about the language or to use it:

All our classes were in English. I don't ever remember having a class in French or Spanish. When I look back at it now, I can't fathom their rationale for this. Perhaps they thought we'd learn language through literature, but studying Cervantes or Moliere really doesn't help you navigate modern day life in a foreign country. Seventeenth century Spanish isn't much use in the train station or at the doctor's. (S-I1)

She attributes, therefore, her success in language learning to her own motivation, and in spite of her education rather than because of it:

I found so much of what we did a waste of time. And honestly, it had a really negative impact on me as a language user [her emphasis]. Because of the way we were taught at school and university, I had a really good command of vocabulary and grammar but I couldn't really interact with anyone in a natural or spontaneous way. (S-RM)

These informal and formal learning experiences had a profound effect on Sally, and her views on language teaching and she articulates her teaching philosophy thus:

What I learned as an eight-year-old was that the power of language lies in its ability to help us communicate. There is no point in learning a language unless you're able to use it to interact with people in some way. My goal is always to create an environment where students have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to communicate in a foreign language. If I can't do that, I've failed my students. (S-RM)

Sally's early language learning experiences have directly influenced both her cognitions about the purpose of language teaching and aspects of her pedagogy: "That moment in my childhood was one of the most memorable and powerful events in my life, and I'm quite certain that it made me the teacher I am today." (S-I1)

4.4 Early experiences using technology in teaching: bringing the outside in

Sally found her first teaching job shortly after completing her CELTA and she began work as an EFL tutor in a large private language school in northern Spain. She describes this period as "one of the most enjoyable and exciting times of my professional life" (S-I1). Sally enjoyed the hustle and bustle of a busy language school and she appreciated the wide range of teaching opportunities her timetable afforded: she taught adults learners in the day, business and exam classes at the weekend and children's clubs at the weekend and in school holidays. As this was a private language school, students were committed and eager to develop their language skills. Many had learned some English at school but felt that this had not met their needs as the traditional grammatical syllabi their teachers had followed had left them ill-equipped to use English for personal and professional purposes.

A clear advocate of communicative approaches to language teaching, Sally was keen to apply these principles into her teaching and this is reflected in her early experiences of integrating technology in an attempt to develop her students' communication skills. Communicative language teaching emphasises the importance providing opportunities for students to be exposed to, and use, language for real-life purposes (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 2006). Accordingly, it promotes the use of resources sourced from daily life, commonly referred to as authentic materials (Gilmore, 2007) and Sally's first use of technology stemmed from this approach. The school she worked at was large and well-equipped and in addition to an array of global coursebooks and teacher resource books, each classroom had a television and video recorder and teachers had access to a well-stocked video library with copies of British and American films and television programmes. Sally use of these materials was her first real engagement with technology in her teaching and she acknowledges the benefit of these resources:

'It probably seems old fashioned now but having a TV and video player in each classroom was a really big deal as it meant that we could easily bring authentic language into the classroom. It's easy do to that nowadays with mobile technology, but much less so in the 1990s. (S-I1)

For Sally, this opportunity was an invaluable language learning experience as it allowed her students to engage with authentic language, rather than the simplified, sanitised content found in coursebooks:

The videos meant that students could hear real life language, from real life contexts and this was so important for students living in another country, who had limited opportunities to hear and speak English. A lot of my students were business people who needed to be able to communicate effectively and spontaneously in English, and you can't do this if you only ever hear coursebook listenings which are simplified to the nth degree. They just don't prepare you for real life. (S-RM)

In addition to using the school's videos, Sally also added to their collection. Each time she went home for the holidays she would give family and friends a pack of videos and ask them to record anything they thought might be of interest to adult learners. As a

result, she built up a collection of films, news reports, advertisements and television programmes which became an essential and frequent part of her teaching repertoire since: “The more I got, the more I used them, and the more I saw their benefit” (S-RM). While Sally’s belief in the importance of exposing students to authentic language became a key driver in her adoption of this technology, her students’ response to this further reinforced this:

Students always commented how much they appreciated being able to watch and listen to authentic resources and this encouraged me even more. They would often ask to borrow my videos so they could watch them at home. It was the only time they ever asked for homework so it was clearly motivating for them. (S-RM)

Sally’s use of technology in Spain is significant as it became a regular part of her teaching repertoire and one which she believed to be both motivating and beneficial to her students. Here, we see that Sally’s technological practices were firmly aligned with her overall beliefs about language teaching, namely that learning occurs best when students have opportunities to engage with real life language use. Her beliefs and practice were fully congruent at this stage in her career and she had a strong sense of agency over ability to shape her teaching approach.

4.5 Early days in the FE sector: The challenge of a new environment

Sally returned to the UK in the early 2000s and immediately found a job teaching ESOL in an FE college. She describes her early days in the Further Education as ‘an exciting but exhausting whirlwind of activity’ (S-I1). Though she was an experienced EFL teacher when she joined the sector, she faced a steep learning curve when adapting to the needs of ESOL learners, and working in the public sector. Used to teaching students who were typically affluent and well-educated, Sally struggled at first to adapt to the needs of ESOL students, especially those who had little or no literacy in their first language.

In Spain, Sally had taught largely from coursebooks which meant that little preparation was needed as they provided a ready-made syllabus, teaching materials and homework

activities. Though her college had access to some EFL coursebooks, Sally decided that they were unsuitable for her teaching due to their lack of relevance:

My students need to learn very practical, functional English. They need to know how to ask for things in the post office, how to apply for jobs, register with a GP, contact their child's teacher, tell the landlord that their boiler is broken etc. None of this is covered in an EFL coursebook. (S-I2)

With few published resources designed specifically for ESOL learners, Sally resorted to making most of her materials herself. Due to her beliefs about the importance of using communicative approaches, she drew heavily on authentic resources and created materials which reflected the kind of language and situations students would need outside class thus replicating the drive for authenticity that we see in her practices in Spain.

4.6 All change in the FE sector: resentment and frustration

Sally joined the FE in the mid 2000s when significant changes were occurring in both ESOL and the wider FE sector and one of the most significant changes was the push towards the integration of technology into teaching. The year after she took up her post, Sally's college responded to the government's call for colleges to integrate technology into all teaching by timetabling full-time courses into a computer room at least once a week and encouraging staff to embed technology into their teaching. At first, Sally ignored this suggestion and carried on teaching her usual lessons: "I really couldn't see how computers would benefit my students so I didn't use them. I wasn't teaching IT, I was teaching a language and you learn from a person, not a computer." (S-RM). As time progressed however, so did college policy, and the initial gentle encouragement from senior management to use technology became a mandate: all staff were expected to embed technology into schemes of work and incorporate regular opportunities for students to use computers within their teaching sessions:

Very quickly we were told that we had to use technology every week and our schemes of work and lessons plans were checked by our managers to make sure that we were doing it. Not using it just wasn't an option any more. (S-I1).

This top-down management strategy infuriated Sally who felt that it was “an assault on professional freedoms” (S-I1). Her anger stemmed partly from indignation that others, particularly those who were not language teachers, were making decisions about what should happen in her classroom:

I hated the fact that people were telling me how to teach. I was a really experienced language teacher, and a bloody good one at that, and I resented being told how to teach by a bunch of managers who had taught catering and business. What did they know about ESOL? (S-RM)

Her resentment at being told what to do was compounded by a deep-seated belief that the decision to make technology integration compulsory was wrong: “I honestly couldn't see any value in using computers to teach so I didn't want to do it.” (S-RM). Although Sally had used audio-visual technology in her teaching overseas and viewed it positively, her attitude towards to use of computers to teach was overwhelmingly negative. She felt that not only would it not be beneficial to her students, it may also have a negative impact on learning: “I didn't want my students sitting silently on computers. I wanted them active, and making the most of every chance to talk. How was a computer room going to help with that? No language teacher wants a silent class.” (R-I1). Sally demonstrates here a fixed view of what using computers in teaching must entail, namely an individual activity which does not involve language use. As this did not align with her own beliefs about good practice in ESOL, she rejected its use completely.

Sally's resentment at mandated technological pedagogy was also linked to her own IT competence, or lack thereof.

I had absolutely no idea what I was supposed to do in the computer lab. My own IT skills weren't great and my students' were non-existent. I absolutely hated the fact that I was asked to do something that I knew I couldn't do. (S-RM)

Sally's formal initial teacher education had not provided any focus on using technology in language teaching. Her college had offered optional training sessions on using their VLE which she had attended, but she felt these served only to further entrench her attitudes towards technology:

The college training we had was pointless. It was all around how to put worksheets onto the VLE but I just couldn't get on board with that kind of teaching. The VLE was just a glorified online filing cabinet and what's the point of that? I had a real life filing cabinet in my classroom, with actual papers in it that I could hand out and explain in person. How was them being online any better?
(S-11)

At this point in her career, Sally's beliefs about the value of technology in ESOL pedagogy were strongly held. However, the FE sector was changing and Sally acknowledged that she, too, had to change or she'd be left behind: "I didn't want to use technology but I knew I had to in the end. It was inevitable. I just had to find the least painful way to do it." (S-RM)

4.7 Tactical compliance

While Sally mourned the loss of agency she felt by being forced to incorporate IT into her teaching, she also recognised the need to move on and feared the consequences if she didn't:

I'd been quite vocal about not wanting to use IT and I was aware that I might be seen as difficult by management. At the end of the day I had a mortgage and kids and I needed this job. So I had to comply. Like it or not. (S-RM)

Sally's attitude to using technology was still fundamentally negative at this point and though she accepted the need to use it, she did so on her own terms: "I decided to show willing, meet the essential criteria if you like, but I wanted to do it in a way that caused me the least amount of stress and didn't impact my students negatively." (S-RM).

Sally decided to incorporate a short amount of time on the computers in her classroom so that she could evidence regular engagement with technology on her lesson plans and schemes of work. She estimates that in a typical two-hour timetabled lesson, she would ask students to work on the computers for about fifteen to thirty minutes: “Though to be truthful, I’d show it as an hour long activity on my lesson plans so it was more acceptable to my boss.” (S-I2).

The combination of her own limited IT skills and her lack of training in using technology for language teaching meant that she struggled to think of activities to do and therefore gave the students the same kind of tasks each lesson. Helped by other colleagues who felt equally bamboozled by the requirement to use computers, they worked together to create a small bank of resources:

None of us knew what to do really but someone from another team showed us how to use Hot Potatoes ¹and we’d used it every lesson. Everyone in the team agreed to produce one Hot Potatoes worksheet a week and then we’d share them. (S-RM)

Sally’s feeling on this approach were positive at first as she merged her own interests with those of management.:

That kind of activity was never going to set the world alight but it was easy for me to manage and produce and it ticked the requisite box for management and that was my priority. Also, it didn’t offend me from a pedagogic perspective. I used this kind of activity to practise grammar in class anyway, albeit very seldom, so I just moved it online. I could accept it because although using the computers didn’t really benefit the students, it didn’t do any harm either. (S-RM).

At first, she viewed this pragmatism positively, pleased that she was able to meet the requirements of her jobs, without abandoning her principles. As time went on though, she became uneasy about the repetitive nature of her lessons as “The students quite

¹Hot Potatoes is free, online software which allows users to create six different types of quizzes for the Internet. These include: ‘interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises (Hot Potatoes, 2016).

liked it at first but they found it boring after a while.” (S-I3). Sally had always taken a great of pride in her teaching and the knowledge that her lessons were not engaging students caused a growing sense of disquiet but she felt unable to respond to this by changing her practice:

I knew I needed to change something but I didn’t know how to. And honestly, I was so busy that I didn’t have time to start learning how to do something new. And I know that sounds terrible, but FE has such a high teaching load that there isn’t the time to do all your normal work in college hours, never mind do something extra. I just didn’t have the capacity to do anything more. (S-RM)

For now, the status quo continued.

4.8 A kick in the teeth and a lightning bolt

During the next few years, Sally continued with the same pattern of technology use. Occasionally, she would try a different activity such as asking students to do simple word processing activities in which they would type out a piece of work they had written. However, she did not persevere with these tasks as her old resentment resurfaced and she struggled with her lack of training and support:

Most of my students didn’t have particularly good IT skills so just getting them to log on to the VLE and complete a worksheet was a challenge. They could search for things on the Internet but not much else. I didn’t want to risk doing anything with them where they needed to learn new skills because I didn’t feel it was my place to teach them that. I’m not an IT teacher, it’s not my job. No-one asks IT teachers to teach ESOL so why the other way round? There is a limit on my role and that’s the line. (S-I3)

Sally and her colleagues had a positive working relationship and although they supported each other in many ways, sharing resources and ideas, none of them had received sufficient training in ESOL and IT pedagogy to enable them to help each other develop their practice:

We were all just fumbling around in the dark. If just one of us had known what to do, it might have been very different. The college wasn't supportive either because we kept saying that their training was inadequate but nothing changed. (S-I1)

Sally's frustration came to a head while in an appraisal with her Head of Department:

I'd had a really positive appraisal but right at the end, I started moaning about management expectations of us. I made the comment that I was sick of being expected to use technology in my lessons when I hadn't been trained to do this. She agreed and because she was sympathetic I think that made me a little more loose-tongued than I should have been and I just went on and on about the boring activities I made students do and how pointless they were. When I finished, she looked at me and said,

"So why don't you something useful then? You're a good teacher. Find a way to do it better."

It was like she kicked me in the teeth. I felt so attacked. So hurt. And so embarrassed. And I also knew she was right. (S-RM)

Sally views this incident as a turning point in her professional life. Though nothing changed immediately, her manager's words stayed with her. She recognised that she needed to make changes to her practice but still struggled to know how to do this. She considered undertaking a postgraduate course in TESOL but rejected this on the grounds that she had neither the time nor the finances to do so. Eventually, she embarked on her own research and using a £100 Amazon voucher she had been gifted, she bought a range of books relating language teaching pedagogy and technology. She also looked online for inspiration, "madly searching through YouTube for examples of lessons I might copy" (S-I1). However, although she uncovered some useful ideas, much of what she found required software she did not have, or IT skills she didn't possess. The breakthrough came while at home with her family on a Sunday afternoon. She had planned a family lunch and was irritated that her teenage son was constantly

looking at his iPad. When she berated him for ignoring her, she was surprised at his response:

I laughed when he said that he was doing something educational. But he was, indirectly at least. He was looking at the Facebook page of a singer her liked. The singer was German and he had been introduced to him by his German teacher. He showed me the page and I could see that he was trying to post something in very basic German and I was astonished that he was motivated enough to do this. (S-RM)

This incident was critical in marking a shift in Sally's attitude to technology and one she describes as her "lightning bolt moment" (S-RM) indicating the force of the impact it had on her. She describes her son as hitherto never having shown any interest in, or aptitude for, language learning, yet she could see that his use of technology had allowed him to not only engage with authentic language outside of school through his own volition, but also to do so in a way which facilitated both exposure to and use of language. Although she was not immediately able to picture she how might incorporate this into her teaching, it provided a spark of interest and insight into potential uses:

I wasn't quite sure what this meant for my own practice, but for the first time, I could see that technology might have benefits for my students. I just wasn't quite sure how to harness it or what it might look like. (S-RM)

4.9 Trial and error: a gradual process of change

Sally's first steps to incorporating more technology into her teaching were tentative. She started by using the technology which she, and her students, felt most comfortable, namely the Internet. She utilised WebQuest activities in which students searched for information using a pre-selected list of websites, which were typically newspapers. She was careful only to use these activities with classes where students had stronger IT skills, as well as sufficient language competence to deal with authentic language input: "I could see that these activities might work with higher levels but could be demotivating for lower level groups who would be overwhelmed by lengthy, authentic texts." (S-I3)

As she lacked confidence in her ability to plan effectively using technology, she sought feedback from her students. Although they viewed the tasks positively in terms of both the use of authentic materials, and the use of technology, they were less keen on the type of texts Sally had selected which they felt were too focussed on current affairs. Sally took this on board and instead encouraged students to think about the kinds of material they would be interested in and used this in her planning.

In the months that followed, Sally's confidence increased and she progressed from tightly controlled WebQuests to less structured activities in which students sourced their own input through online sources including websites and social media such as Facebook and Twitter and used this as a basis for presentations and discussions. As her confidence grew, and she began to see some of the potential the technology might hold for teaching, she sought out CPD opportunities: "I tried to get myself on to as many training sessions as I could. If it had 'technology' in the title, I was on it." (S-15).

Most of the training she undertook was based in her college and it focussed largely on the use of specific hard- or software. Some of the activities she learned to do became part of her early technology-based pedagogy and she felt proud of her efforts to embrace change: "I was proud that I learned to use the IWB and Moodle (the college's VLE). I felt like an innovator." (S-15). She regularly incorporated these activities in her lessons and activities such as online quizzes in which students submitted anonymous answers via their mobile phones or tablets became part of her everyday teaching repertoire. She viewed these particularly positively as they allowed her "to check students' understanding quickly and easily, in a non-face threatening way" (S-13).

Sally's early foray into using technology appears successful at this stage, yet as time progressed, she started to become disillusioned with the activities she was using.

I started to realise that a lot of the things I was doing, like putting worksheets onto Moodle, using PowerPoint or doing online quizzes wasn't actually generating much interaction or language use. And so in effect, I was doing the very things I had been so critical of in my early days in FE: I was using technology but not necessarily doing so in a way that improved [her emphasis] learning or made them better language users. (S-RM)

Sally's exceptional ability to reflect on her own practice and her resilience and determination to improve her practice meant that she started to look at her teaching more critically:

I tried to look at the all activities I was doing and think about their benefits. I'd seen my son being so engaged by his use of technology, and I'd seen him using it communicate and I wanted the same for my students. If my activities weren't doing that, I didn't want to use them anymore. (S-11)

Over time, Sally gradually started to reject activities which she felt did not meet her goals in language teaching. Her focus switched from 'just using technology, to using it better' (S-11). In doing so, she found that she actually used less technology, but that its use became more aligned with her overall pedagogic aims:

Overall, I stopped using things which I felt didn't have any significant impact on learning, so much of my IWB use disappeared. I stopped drag and drop vocab activities that took longer than they would on paper and I stopped creating PPTs for every lesson when I could just write on the board if I needed to. Instead, I focussed on the things that really matter – getting students to use language. (S-11)

4.10 Sally's current practices and cognitions

In the previous section, I have provided a historic account of Sally's cognitions and practices and the factors that have influenced them. In the following section, I shall turn my attention to present day and focus on her current pedagogy and cognitions.

4.10.1 Tales from the classroom

Monday, 9.00am.

Class: Entry 3

Topic: Healthcare

Sally sits on the desk at the front of the classroom as her students enter the room. The classroom has seven desks arranged in a horseshoe shape. At the front of the room is an Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) with a smaller whiteboard next to it. In the corner of the room is a teacher's desk with a desktop computer linked to the IWB.

As the students trickle in, Sally calls out cheerily to greet each student, asking them about their weekend and if they had been aware of any events on Remembrance Sunday. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal as two class members ask Sally about the origins of the day and the significance of poppies. Sally skilfully elicits the class's existing knowledge about this and writes new vocabulary on the board.

Sally admits that she's not entirely sure why poppies are linked with remembrance rather than another flower but thinks that the red colour symbolises death. One student then mentions that she's heard of white poppies and asks about the difference, and Sally suggests that students search for the answer online using their mobile phones. She quickly checks that everyone has a phone with them and that they are all connected to the college's Wi-Fi. There is laughter as one student comments that some students forget to bring a pen or paper, and she regularly forgets her reading glasses, but no-one ever forgets their mobile phone.

"But we can only use it in your class." says another student who then starts to complain about being told off for having her phone on the desk in another teacher's session. Sally responds that different teachers have different rules and, seemingly keen to move on quickly, tasks half the class with looking for information about the origins of the poppy while the other half researches white poppies. As students start to reach for their phones, Sally stops them and asks which search terms they are going to use. As students shout out different words and phrases, she writes them on the board. They

generate a list of eight suggestions and Sally asks which are likely to be the most useful, and why. One student responds that they need to be specific and the class quickly eliminates single word suggestions leaving a range of possibilities such as 'remembrance day poppies' and 'why do we wear a poppy?' left on the board.

Sally sets a time limit of ten minutes and asks the students to find out as much information as possible within this time. As they set to work, Sally monitors their progress from the back of the room. The room is silent to start with as each person uses their phone to complete the task. Gradually, students start to talk to each other, reaching across to each other to look at phone screens and comparing their findings. One student signals to Sally to come over and asks if the class can read the poem she has found together as she doesn't understand it fully.

Sally gets the students attention and asks them to work with a partner from the opposite group and share the information they have found. As they do this, she goes to the computer and brings up the website the student has found which shows John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields', and projects it into onto the IWB.

After a few minutes, Sally asks the group for feedback and students describe their findings. Sally is pleased with the amount of information they have gained in such a short space of time and commends them on both their searching and language skills.

One student comments that the activity was really useful as she hadn't known much about Remembrance Sunday and several students nod their head in approval. Sally asks if any of the students have ever read the poem which inspired the wearing of poppies. A couple of students say yes, but comment that it's quite difficult.

Sally turns to the IWB and suggests they read it together. She begins by reading the poem aloud herself and asks the students what they think the poem is about. One student suggests that it is about soldiers who have died and there is a murmur of agreement. In turn, each student reads a line of the poem and the class discusses it, talking about its meaning and clarifying lexis when needed.

As they reach the end of the poem, Sally asks the class to read it silently to themselves. The class is completely quiet for several minutes.

The silence is broken when Sally asks if the students enjoyed reading the poem. Several voices answer 'yes' immediately. One student states that he enjoyed reading and thinking about the poem, and it's not something he's done before, either in English or in his first language, Albanian.

'Can we read more poems?' asks one student. Sally seems surprised and replies that she can find more poems and do them in another class if it's something everyone is interested in. There is much nodding of heads and Sally says she'll think about it over the week.

In the meantime, she explains that there is a lot of famous poetry written by soldiers during the First World War and she writes the names of several poets on the board and suggests that students should search for them online after class if they'd like to read more after class. All the students write down the names from the board.

'OK then,' says Sally, 'it's nearly 10 o'clock and this wasn't what I'd intended to do today so we'd better move on the lesson. So, healthcare.....what does that term mean...?'

4.10.2 Sally's current practices and cognitions

The lesson I outline above was typical of many of the observations I carried out in Sally's classroom. It exemplifies several facets of her current practices whilst also reflecting how her core beliefs about language learning are displayed in her pedagogy. I will outline these in the following sections.

4.10.3 On-the-fly technology use

The first key aspect of Sally's technological practices evident in this vignette is an 'on-the-fly approach' to technology in which her interactions with, and use of technology are spontaneous rather than a planned part of the lesson. This is a deliberate strategy and one she favours as it allows her to adapt quickly to the needs and interests of her class:

Students having tablets and smart phones in class means I can really respond to what's happening in a lesson and, you know, switch it up. If students ask about a

topic, they can go online and research it. If someone mentions an interesting news story or local event, we can all read about it. If we need to look up a word or find an alternative, we can do it easily. If some students are struggling with a grammar point, I can tell them to do some additional practice activities online while others do something else. I think it gives me a level of flexibility in a lesson that doesn't exist when you just have paper and pens so my lessons often change significantly from what I planned. And of course, the language and tasks are authentic. It's a win-win. (S-I4).

In classrooms observations there were multiple occasions where Sally deviated from her planned lesson and asked students to use their phones or tablets for the reasons mentioned above. For example, I observed her asking students to search for language they were unfamiliar with in a text (S-O2), or searching for additional information about a text they had read (S-O4).

On a separate occasion, Sally taught countable and uncountable nouns to an Entry 3 class. Some of the students struggled with her controlled practice activities, getting few answers correct so she suggested that they do some additional practice before moving to the next activity and provided them with a link to the website www.myenglishpages.com. Students completed these exercises on their phones while Sally asked the stronger students to do a different activity (S-O3). Sally views this flexibility as a key benefit of technology as, "it allows for quick and easy differentiation. The internet is full of activities and they're normally easy to find on the hoof" (S-I3).

The students in Sally's class were clearly familiar with her approach to mobile technology and I witnessed the students initiating their own internet searches during the lesson. In one lesson (S-O5), I observed with an Entry 2 class the students were discussing sport. Some Afghan students were trying to explain Buzkashi, which is their national game in which horseback riders drag a dead goat towards a goal. Though the students made a good attempt at describing the game, their limited English meant there was still some confusion about how it was played. A student asked if they could find a video online and show it to the rest of the class. Sally agreed and the class were enthralled as they watched the video. This prompted other students to want to talk

about sports popular in their country and Sally responded by asking students to work in small groups, search for a video of a sport famous in their country and then present it to their group. There was a buzz in the classroom as students learned about more unusual sports they had never heard of, and they searched and asked for new vocabulary to help them do this.

Sally asserts strong beliefs about the value of this kind of activity:

For me, successful learning come from being interested in something. You know, it's about feeling that what you're doing is relevant to you, and that it's fun. I think using technology in this way, in using it to respond, you know, to what's happening in the class, to what they're interested in, or what they need, means that you can grab learners' interest and, you know, hook them in so that they want to do more. We couldn't do that when we just had coursebooks so it really does revolutionise what we can do in a classroom. (S-I3)

However, Sally also admits that her choice of activities is often linked as much her own capabilities as it is to her beliefs about teaching:

I incorporate the things I know how to do. I am so busy that I don't have the time to learn how to use new technology so I stick with what I know how to do, and what works in class. And you learn that over time. (S-I3)

4.10.4 The quest for authenticity

The second salient feature of Sally's technology use involves a quest for authenticity. Sally's own understanding of the term as it is one she uses frequently. For Sally, the term authenticity has two facets.

Firstly, authenticity of language which occurs when real life speakers use language to communicate a real message, for a real audience. This language may be spoken or written. Secondly, authenticity of task relates to providing students opportunities to take part in activities which replicate real life tasks as

closely as possible e.g. searching the Internet for information about a topic they are interested in. (S-I3)

She describes her goal in language teaching as being to “develop students’ ability to use language in the outside world.” (S-I2) She acknowledges that classroom-based activity can never completely replicate the range of contexts or language used beyond its four walls, but to try to achieve her goal, she prioritises both aspects of authenticity equally and describes this as central to her practice “because students can’t become competent language users if you don’t provide them with opportunities to explore real life language and use it in ways that reflect real life contexts.” (S-I3).

In terms of providing exposure to authentic language, Sally asserts that technology is an essential tool in achieving her aims as it allows her access to “vast amounts of texts that I wouldn’t have had before the invention of the Internet” and that this means she can “easily find real life texts rather than relying on coursebooks or texts I create myself” (S-I4). She stresses however, that although technology provides access to potential content, its success in a language classroom depends on how it is used:

It’s not enough to just provide access to authentic texts, you’ve got think carefully about how they’re used, in the way you would with any content. They need to be so many things at the same time: at the right level linguistically i.e. challenging, but not too challenging; relevant; interesting; culturally appropriate; linked to previous learning... there’s a lot to think about. (S-I4)

This belief places teachers, rather than technology at the centre of the learning process and she rejects the notion technology automatically leads to better learning: “It’s not the technology that teaches students, it’s the teacher. The technology can help us, but it’s not a silver bullet” (S-RM).

However, Sally asserts that the use of technology is motivating for students due to the level of authenticity it offers: “I really believe students are motivated by doing things in class that they do outside class and technology helps with this.” (S-RM). She describes the ability to find the relevant, up-to-date resources as being particularly motivating for

ESOL learners, 'many of whom cannot relate to the bland, middle class, western world that is portrayed in coursebooks'.

The authenticity of task is of equal importance to Sally:

So much of our lives are online now. Shopping, entertainment, accessing services, transport etc. And all of this being online makes it easier to bring the outside world into the classroom and practice real life activities. There's so much learning to be had if we use technology to access this.

Sally regularly uses technology in class to facilitate authentic tasks. In one lesson I observed (S-O6), she asked students to download the Royal Mail app and use it to calculate postage costs. In another (S-O7), students used the Tesco grocery app to select food for a picnic for their class. The food had to be suitable for the dietary requirements of pescatarian and Muslim students, as well as those with specific allergies. The students used the app to check nutritional information and prices. These type of activities are common in Sally's class:

They replicate information gap activities of old, but do so in a way that really replicates real life and students love this. I always get good feedback on these activities as they are just so practical but students really feel like they're learning from them too. This level of authenticity can't ever be recreated by a coursebook." (S-I4).

Sally reports that she spends a significant amount of time searching for suitable texts online but by keeping carefully curated lists of web links of useful texts and activities, this has the benefit of saving her time in the long-term.

The impact of Sally's early struggle to use technology is seen in her commitment to share these resources with colleagues. She places her curated website list in a shared area on her college's VLE so that it is easily accessed by all. Sally describes views her college environment as being one which, indirectly, hinders staff from developing their technological pedagogy:

The college is really good at saying it supports staff in using technology, but what they offer is training in how to use a specific tool rather than how to use it to teach. And of course, it's never subject specific so ESOL teachers are often left wondering how we can apply it with low level learners or students will no access to technology at home for example. So we need to really band together and share what works so we all benefit. (S-14)

She views peer support as essential in encouraging staff to make more use of technology: "I didn't have anyone to help me when I started using technology and I suffered from that. I'm not claiming that my practice is outstanding, but if we all share our ideas and resources, we can all improve." (S-13).

Through her own support of others, Sally hopes to affect change in a way that her college's training programme has failed to do.

4.10.5 Pragmatism in action: technology and breathing space

In the sections above, there is evidence of strong congruence between Sally's cognitions about language teaching and learning, and her use of technology. However, there are instances in which there is a clear disconnect between Sally's cognitions and practices.

As described earlier in section 4.10.3, much of Sally's technology use in class is spontaneous. However, she does include some pre-planned uses of technology. Once a month, Sally books her classes into a computer room and asks students to complete individually a range of activities which can be found on the VLE. The nature of the tasks she provides are in direct contrast to much of her other practice as they are all grammar exercises she has designed herself or links to grammar practice websites. Many of the materials are the 'Hot Potatoes' activities she designed when she first started using technology in her teaching. These are grammar transformation exercises in which students change one element of language, such as a present simple verb to the past simple, or cloze activities focussing on discrete grammar items. Activities of this type involve the manipulation of language and require some understanding of language form.

Commonly associated with Audio-lingualism, Warschauer (1996) refers to these types of activity as belonging to 'behaviouristic CALL', in which the focus is on basic language manipulation, with little feedback and no negotiation of meaning. The use of such decontextualized activities is described by Dudeney and Hockly (2012, p543) as "drill and kill" – the drill here referring to repetitive restricted practice exercises, and the kill referring perhaps to the boredom they incite and the subsequent death of student motivation.

Exercises of this nature do not require or promote language use and are therefore in direct opposition to Sally's stated beliefs and observed practices. The dissonance displayed here between Sally's beliefs about language learning, her beliefs about the value of technology and her practice are linked to the context in which she works and are practical rather than pedagogical: "I use the computer lesson for one of two things: either so that I can either plan some lessons or mark their work, and very occasionally, just to breathe." (S-RM)

She continues:

The computer room is a bit like sitting the kids in front of Netflix when you've got something important to do. It gives me a chance to do something that I won't have time to do otherwise. And I'm not trying to take the piss here, I'm a really hard worker, but I teach at least 26 hours a week, I attend two hours of meetings each week so that leaves me with 7 hours to plan all my lessons, make resources, mark work, help colleagues, deal with student issues, and other things I've probably forgotten and there just isn't the time. I'm constantly snowed under, working every weekend and I just can't keep up. That time in the computer room gives me just a little bit of space and I need that. (S-I3)

The choice of grammar activities rather than other online tasks is again pragmatic as Sally only includes tasks and websites where answers can be provided: if tasks were more open-ended, her involvement may be required.

Sally has mixed feelings about this aspect of her practice. On the one hand, she has a sense of guilt that she doesn't always follow her principles, "I feel bad because I'm not giving them the best learning experience in that session" (S-I4). However, she counters this by saying that this compromise enables her to gain a little time in which she can "pause, think and plan" (S-I4). The result is better teaching in her other sessions and so there is an overall benefit at the expense of only one lesson: "I think overall it's worth it and I often think that it protects my sanity a little and that can only be a good thing for everyone. A fraught teacher helps no-one." (S-I4).

Though her use of technology here does not align with her cognitions about teaching and learning in general, it is in line with her cognitions about technology: technology can be beneficial when used thoughtfully.

4.10.6 Sally's role as a teacher: establishing limits on her role

Much of Sally's engagement with technology requires students to use technology themselves. She recognises that these activities are only possible because her students have access to mobile technology and the linguistic and technological skills they need to carry out these tasks autonomously. Although she places great value on the affordances that students' use of technology brings here, she is reluctant to devote time to teaching IT skills to students with poor digital literacy:

My students are able to carry out these tasks because they're confident tech users. If they weren't, I'd probably take a more traditional approach to teaching them and just not use the technology. I don't think it's my job to teach IT skills, so if they can't use the tech, I don't either. (S-I4)

Sally clearly has a strong sense of the limits of her role as an ESOL teacher and this does not extend to developing students' digital skills. She acknowledges that there is a tension here between her desire to provide the best possible technology enhanced learning experiences for her students, and her unwillingness to help her students develop the knowledge and skills they need to access them. This results partly from her own confidence: "I'm just not sure I know how to teach IT and I'm worried that I'll get

drawn into things I don't know how to do. I'm not techie enough" (S-I4). It also links to her priorities as a language teacher:

If I start spending part of my lessons teaching IT, what should I lose? Do I do less grammar, less phonology? Should I stop doing exam prep or listening activities? There isn't time to do everything. Technology can help us teach in more interesting ways but I won't teach technology at the expense of time teaching language. At the end of the day, I can still teach language well without technology. It's not essential. (S-I4)

Sally's stance here is underpinned by a strong belief that technology is a tool that can bring benefits to language teaching, but learning can still take place effectively without it. Technology is useful for students to use, but not essential.

4.11 Summary of key issues

In this section I will summarise the key themes emerging from Sally's story.

Sally's early language learning experiences had a significant impact on the development of her personal teaching philosophy, at the heart of which lies a commitment to developing students' communicative competence. In turn, this influences, in most circumstances, her pedagogy, which draws heavily on the principles of communicative approaches to teaching with its emphasis on interaction and authenticity of language and task.

Sally's initial reluctance to use technology relates in part to these cognitions as she saw no value in its integration, contending that a teacher could not teach a learner in the way a teacher could. Moreover, her own lack of confidence and competence in using technology, combined with a lack of subject specialist training in the use of technology for language teaching meant that she struggled to identify its potential affordances as a tool for communication.

Sally's early use of computers was mandated, rather than through choice and her practice at this stage was limited to the use of one type of activity one, namely,

controlled grammar exercises. Although this type of grammatical practice was part of her wider teaching repertoire, it was not typical of her overall approach to teaching and therefore there was an obvious lack of alignment between her pedagogical beliefs and her technological practice.

The change in Sally's practices stems from a change in her cognitions. By observing her son's real life interactions with language through social media, she was able to begin to identify ways that technology might be used to engage students and allow them to interact with language in ways that relate to real life. However, there is also evidence that her classroom experiences shape her practice as she responds to negative student feedback this leads to a desire to change her practice.

Sally's development of her practice was not linear. She engaged in a slow process of trialling activities and finding ones which best served her purposes. Time, lack of relevant CPD and lack of support all hindered Sally's progress but her willingness to persevere have allowed her to find ways to align her use of technology with her broader teaching cognitions and practices.

Her current use of technology relies heavily on students' use of mobile technology in class. She encourages students to use this spontaneously, to search for information when the need arises just as they would do in real life, or to engage with real life tasks which require the use of technology. In doing this, she is able to promote both authentic language use as well as authentic technology use and meet her teaching aims. Her attitudes have thus shifted from seeing technology as an unnecessary distraction to viewing it as a useful, and at times essential tool in her teaching.

Sally's monthly use of the computer as babysitter may appear to not to align overall approach to teaching, but it also represents her shifting attitude: technology can be beneficial to teachers as well as students. For her, the realities of a heavy workload means that compromise is essential and technology is able to facilitate this.

Chapter 5: Aisha

5.1 Introducing Aisha

Aisha's childhood ambition was to become a teacher. Both her parents were secondary school science teachers and were passionate about the importance of education. She attended a private school which placed great emphasis on academic achievement and Aisha worked hard at school, achieving very good grades in her GCSEs and A levels. After leaving school, she studied English for her undergraduate degree and intended to follow her parents into high school teaching. However, after shadowing her parents in the final year of her degree, she felt that she was unsuited to working with teenagers and decided instead that she wanted to work with adult learners. Having grown up in a multilingual family, she developed an interest in teaching ESOL and, after completing her degree, she embarked upon a pre-service PGCE in Lifelong Learning (ESOL Subject Specialist).

After graduation, she initially found work as an hourly paid ESOL tutor working for multiple organisations. A year later, she found a permanent job in an FE college. Aisha's teaching in the college is divided between two discrete groups of students. A full-time member of staff, she spends two and a half days per week working at the main college campus teaching ESOL provision for 16-19 year olds, most of whom are either asylum seekers and refugees, or the children of newly arrived immigrants to settled communities. The remainder of her week is spent teaching ESOL to women only community classes at local outreach centres.

At the start of my research, Aisha was in her twenties and the least experienced of the participants having only been working as an ESOL teacher for a little over four years. Committed to her own professional development, she has recently enrolled on a part-time Master's degree in TESOL at a local university.

5.2 Early language learning experiences

Aisha was raised by her parents who are second-generation Bangladeshi immigrants. Both her parents speak fluent Bengali but spoke only in English at home and they were

determined that this should be Aisha's first language. Although she was not encouraged to learn Bengali at home, she learned from other family members including her grandparents, first generation immigrants whose English was fairly limited: "My grandparents had been here since the '60s but my grandmas in particular didn't speak much English. My granddads were better, mainly because they had to be because they had jobs while the women were stuck at home" (A-RM).

Consequently, Aisha learned Bengali mainly through exposure:

Neither of my grandmas liked speaking in English, because of their confidence really, so they'd only speak in English if it was absolutely necessary, like when we were out shopping or on a bus and no-one spoke Bengali. They never really spoke to me in English unless my parents were there and they encouraged them. (A-RM)

Aisha believes that being able to speak another language was a benefit when she started to learn foreign languages in secondary school as it gave her confidence:

Because I was used to speaking in another language already, it wasn't a stretch to be asked to do the same in another one. My classmates were all really shy and never wanted to talk in French or German in class but I was quite happy to chat away. (A-RM)

However, like Sally in the previous chapter, her early, informal learning experiences made her critical of the teaching she received in secondary school. She studied both French and German at GCSE but her respective teachers had very different approaches with the former using a more traditional, teacher-centred approach and the latter providing a much more interactive classroom with more opportunities for language exposure and use. She links her preference for the communicative style of teaching with her experiences learning Bengali:

Our French classes were so dull. Although the curriculum and materials were based on what I now know as CLT, the teacher never spoke in French and neither did we and it was deadly boring. She also did a lot of grammar, which I hated. I spoke really good Bengali and I'd never learned any grammar so why did I need it for French? (A-RM)

Her German teacher's approach reinforced her belief:

Our German teacher was brilliant though and he always spoke in German, even if he saw us in the corridor, and he encouraged us to do the same. I got a C in French and an A in German and I'm sure that's why. (A-I1)

As an experienced language teacher, Aisha now reflects on her past differently: "Having learned Bengali like this, with no real teaching, just immersion, I know how much can be gained just through exposure. You don't need lots of grammar teaching to be an effective communicator in a language" (A-I1). However, she also notes the limitations of this approach:

I can communicate really well in Bengali but I'm not always that accurate and I can't read and write very well because I was never taught how to. I think now, on reflection, that there needs to be some balance between the two, though in my early days teaching I didn't do much grammar at all. (A-RM)

Like Sally, there is a clear link here between Aisha's early learning experiences and her cognitions around language pedagogy. As we will see later in the chapter, in her current practice she has a preference for activities which afford opportunities for authentic input and communicative activities.

5.3 Initial Teacher Education: learning to teach

Sally completed a one-year, full-time, pre-service PGCE in Lifelong Learning. She selected the ESOL Subject Specialist route but was disappointed that much of the course seemed to focus more on generic issues than TESOL pedagogy: "There really wasn't enough about the practicalities of teaching ESOL, not nearly enough about methodologies" (A-RM). She struggled in the early days of her teaching placement as she felt ill prepared to plan, teach and assess students, particularly those working at pre-entry and Entry 1. She confessed to one of the teachers in her placement that she was having difficulties and he suggested that she undertake more observations of experienced teachers. Aisha followed this suggestion and identified teachers willing to allow her to sit in on lessons. The impact of this was significant:

For the first time, I began to get a sense of what good teaching looked like, and the kinds of things that I could and should be doing in class. It helped me so much to make sense of the pedagogy I was reading about in books, but couldn't quite picture. (A-RM)

One of the teachers Aisha observed, Jim, was particularly inspirational and she made the effort to visit his classes whenever she could. She describes him as offering classes that appealed to her sense of how teaching should be:

He was very interactive and really encouraged students to participate in the lesson. Students weren't sitting around with grammar worksheets or just working through the Skills for Life materials like they were in some classes, they were doing projects and tasks that really got them communicating and that felt right and natural to me. (A-I1)

One of the aspects of Jim's practice which aroused Aisha's interest was his use of technology. He regularly incorporated the use of computers, tablets and the IWB into his lessons and Aisha asked for his support in learning more about this: "We didn't really do anything on our PGCE about using technology other than a couple of sessions on using the IWB so Jim's teaching was quite a revelation as I saw how it might be used" (A-RM).

Aisha describes Jim as using a range of different technologies within his teaching, including the computers, tablets and the IWB. The lack of focus on technology in her ITE course meant that Aisha lacked knowledge about the type of technology available to her, and Jim provided her with a quick crash course in useful technological tools: "He gave me loads of practical advice about software I didn't know about, simple things like Audacity, Kahoot, but also the best websites to use, which Apps were free etc." (A-I1).

Aisha began to incorporate some of these elements into her teaching on a small scale. She describes several activities as being typical of her practice at this time: online quizzes using Kahoot to assess learning; using language learning websites and mobile applications from organisations such as the British Council and the BBC; and internet-

based activities such as WebQuests. The value of such tools, she believed, lay partly in their ability to engage and motivate students: “At the time I liked the fact that they seemed to really appeal to students. Students said they liked being given the chance to do something different than just the paper-based activities they were used to” (A-I2). She also saw the potential for authentic language input and output as a key benefit: “I could see that if I used technology in the right way, I could really maximise students’ opportunities to see, hear and use authentic language” (A-I2).

When asked about how she operationalised such opportunities, she stated:

Tasks like using the internet to research topics, searching for videos on Youtube, using simple apps from real life... all these things really mimic what we do in real life. ESOL students have to cope with authentic language in real life so it was really important to me that I did a lot of this in class too. You can’t prepare students for the outside world if you don’t let it into your classroom. (A-I2).

There is evidence here however, of a mismatch between Aisha’s espoused beliefs in the importance of output and her actual use of technology which relies more on input. Moreover, activities such as Kahoot quizzes and language learning apps and websites promote controlled language practice rather than authentic language use. This reflects perhaps the wider range of beliefs which she holds about language learning, namely the importance of grammar within a broader communicative framework.

Aisha looks back on her time on her PGCE with both frustration and gratitude. She considers the course to have given her a basic grounding in TESOL pedagogy, but one that was insufficient for a specialist course. In particular, she regards the lack of focus on the integration of new technologies as a major failing:

When you start work in colleges, you’re immediately expected to use technology in your teaching and yet we weren’t at all prepared for this. A couple of sessions using the IWB doesn’t cut it. There needed to be an explicit and prolonged focus on how ESOL teachers can use technology to improve teaching and learning. And, you know, that involves two things: teaching teachers what tech’ there is

and how you use it, and then teaching them to use it to teach English because they aren't the same things. (S-RM).

She regards her informal interactions with Jim as providing her most significant learning opportunities during her course and the ones which had most impact on her practice.

5.4 Adapting to life on the front line

Aisha's first year of post-qualification teaching was spent working as an hourly paid, casual lecturer for a variety of colleges and private training providers. Much of her work was arranged at the last minute through an agency and involved covering classes for absent teachers and short term 'zero hour' contracts. The use of technology took a back seat in her teaching during this period as the lack of continuity meant that she struggled to plan for unknown classes in unknown venues. Even when she worked in organisations for longer periods, she often found herself unable to use the technology provided. Sometimes this was due to being unfamiliar with the technology itself: "One organisation had a set of Android tablets that I wasn't familiar with and I didn't know how to use them so I just ignored them." (A-RM). At other times, the lack of support within the organisation acted as a barrier to the technology:

When you're only in a place for a few hours a week, or even just for a few days, you never know who to ask for help. So if I couldn't get the projector or IWB to work, I'd have to leave it because there was no-one I could easily call on for help. In that situation, it's easier and safer not to use it at all. (A-RM)

After a year of searching, Aisha found a full-time job as an ESOL lecturer in an FE college. Here she found herself teaching adult ESOL classes populated mainly with Eastern European students who were economic migrants. The remaining students were asylum seekers and refugees, or immigrants from settled communities.

Aisha found the stability of working at the college to be a relief after a period of such professional flux. She quickly settled into a new routine and took advantage of the facilities on offer:

The college was very well-equipped and every classroom had at least an IWB, but a lot also had a row of about five computers so I could get all or part of the class using them during a lesson. The library also had class sets of laptops and iPads that you could book out in advance borrow for a lesson so there was a lot of opportunity to try things out. (A-RM)

Aisha describes this period in her career as being one of technological experimentation. She enjoyed identifying and trying out new websites and apps and embedding their use into lessons. She describes a competitive element in her approach to planning: “It became a sort of competition with myself to see how many different types of activities I could use. I became a bit obsessed with finding new apps and websites in particular using them as often as I could” (A-RM). She notes that she learned a lot from this experience, rejecting activities or resources which students found boring or difficult to use and reusing those which were more successful.

Aisha’s motivation for this was multifactoral. Firstly, she still viewed technology as benefitting her students: “Lots of the websites and games I found were fun and engaging and students liked them. And obviously, if they enjoy classes, they’ll learn better” (A-RM). She also found they provided excellent opportunities for differentiation:

The thing about technology is that it makes it much easier to address individual needs. ESOL students have such spiky² profiles and it can be hard to address this in a class of twenty. When you have access to tech’, you can easily find different activities for students to do within the same website or App. (A-I1)

She admits, however, that her choice of technology was not discerning:

I didn’t really think much about benefit of each activity, I think I just assumed they’d help students. And looking back, I think a lot of what I did didn’t reflect the rest of my teaching because I did masses of grammar practice and probably not much else. (A-I1).

²“A learner is described as having a spiky profile if his or her abilities are stronger in some elements of a subject than in others; where, in literacy, for example, reading skills are more highly developed than writing skills.”
“Baynham et al, 2007 p.77)

Aisha was also driven not just by her belief that technology could enhance learning, but also by the expectations of her institution: “I knew the college policy was that teachers were expected to use tech’ so I wanted to show that I could not just meet that expectation, but exceed it. I thought it made me a good teacher” (A-RM).

She describes the college as being “very pro-technology” and in addition to plenty of hardware, the college also had regular opportunities for staff to take in-house CPD courses which focussed on embedding digital technologies into teaching. Aisha took part in as many sessions as she could but she felt frustrated that they did not help her as much as she hoped: “There was a lot of focus on how to use the VLE but it was never related to my subject area so it was difficult to imagine how I might apply it to ESOL” (A-I2).

Although Aisha demonstrated a drive to improve her own pedagogy, and saw technology as having the potential to help her do this, her CPD did not provide the answers she was looking for and the impact on her practice was minimal at best. She links the development of her pedagogical practices with her own technological skills and her willingness to take risks:

I grew up using technology so when I started teaching, it didn’t scare me like it did a lot of the older teachers. It’s always been part of my life so I think I felt more able to embrace it and try it out and not worry about things going wrong. (A-RM).

5.5 Questioning her practice

A year after she joined her college, Aisha’s timetable changed considerably and she was asked to work primarily on ESOL courses for 16-19 year old students. At first, she designed her lessons in the same way she always had done, but quickly realised that this wasn’t going to work: “Teenagers are just so different from adults and my lessons were flopping. And badly too. I hadn’t thought about how they might be different from mature adults and it was a real shock to the system” (A-RM). Aisha found the early days with these students to be very difficult as she battled to engage students and keep them

focussed on their work: “I found that the topics I was using weren’t of interest to them and they often got bored and struggled to focus when I gave them longer tasks to complete” (A-I2). Thinking that technology would be motivating for them, she increased the amount of technology she used in class, often encouraging them to use tablets or phones to search for information or access language learning Apps. This did not have the effect she intended:

My use of technology backfired massively. I’d spend half the lesson policing their phone use, telling them off for being on Facebook or texting when they were supposed to be studying. And when they were on computers, they’d be doing anything but the thing they were supposed to be doing. (A-RM)

Though Aisha thought her students would be motivated by the use of technology, she found that it seemed to have the opposite effect and students became less focussed and more dysregulated when they were using technology: “Their behaviour really deteriorated when the tablets came out and I’d just lose control. They weren’t running riot through the corridors, but they also weren’t doing what I wanted them to do” (A-RM). Aisha found herself particularly vexed by their use of mobile phones. The college policy was that students should be encouraged to use phones for learning purposes but she found them to be a distraction as students “played on them constantly and it wasn’t that uncommon for the phone to ring and the students answer it in the middle of the lesson” (A-RM). Aisha admits that it was “...not just the technology that was the problem, but my classroom management and lack of authority” (A-RM). She describes wanting to reduce the amount of technology she used with these students, she felt unable to do so in case her colleagues or management thought this reflected badly on her as she “still saw technology use as being a pre-requisite for good practice. That was the message from the college, and I believed it.” (A-RM).

Aisha describes this period in her life as a “miserable time professionally” (A-RM) as she struggled to navigate the challenges she faced. Her inability to make changes to her practice here reflects the power of educational policy and discourse and its impact on her cognitions about technology and teaching more broadly.

5.6 Finding her mojo

Aisha's experiences with her 16-19 year old learners had a significant impact on her confidence: "I started to dread my classes and really believe that I was a rubbish teacher. I begged my boss to switch my classes but he couldn't and I'd feel ill at the thought of teaching them" (A-I1). Although her manager couldn't remove her from these classes entirely, he did offer to change a few classes and timetabled her on some adult outreach classes in a local Sikh Gurdwara. The classes had been set up to address the needs of older adults who had been in the UK for some time, but still had very limited English. Her classroom was small, consisting only of tables, chairs and a flipchart board and no technology was available to her. For the first time in a long while, she started to enjoy her teaching again: "There was no drama, no telling people off and no phones. It was a blessed relief." (A-RM).

As the weeks and months went by, she felt her confidence return as she relaxed in the quiet calm of her classroom and saw her students' language skills developing:

"The students made such good progress. Even though there were older and made quite a lot of fossilized mistakes, they and I could really see the progress they were making" (A-I2).

The juxtaposition between the progress of her older learners and the battle with her younger ones prompted a period of reflection as Aisha started to question her practice:

In theory, my older learners had everything stacked against them, you know, their age, poor education, lots of ingrained errors, and the fear of making mistakes that comes with being older. But here they were, making amazing progress. And the really interesting thing was, my teaching with them but much more simple, paired back. No bells and whistles technology, but just straightforward teaching and interaction. It really got me thinking about what I was doing. (A-RM)

Until this point in her career, Aisha had relied heavily on technology, assuming that it would always benefit her learners in some way. However, seeing her older students' ability to learn without technology prompted a period of long reflection about her

pedagogy. “For the first time, I started to realise that technology was a *potential* [her emphasis] learning tool, rather than an essential one. And its benefits were dependent on both how it was used and who it was used with.” (A-I1).

Aisha identified that much of her 16-19 year olds’ behaviour was linked to her use of technology: “They were distracted by it or bored by it, but certainly not benefitting from it” (A-RM). This represents a major shift in her cognitions about the use of technology for language teaching.

This revelation led to Aisha taking a more critical approach to her pedagogy: “For the first time, I started to look at each activity more closely. I’d ask myself how it helped students to learn, how motivating it was and really importantly, what would happen if I didn’t use it” (A-I3).

Aisha didn’t make any immediate changes to her teaching as a result of this, but over time, she began to use less technology with her teenage learners and, in particular, restrict their access to it. At first, she saw the benefits of this: “I immediately felt that I was more in control of the lesson, and also that students were more engaged and learning better because they weren’t distracted” (A-I3). However, the disapproval of her line manager had a significant effect on the changes she was making when a student told him in passing that they were not allowed to use phones in Aisha’s lesson: “I got a real telling off. He told me I was going against college policy and that I was denying my students useful learning opportunities” (A-I3). Aisha’s immediate reaction was to “toe the party line” and she reverted to her original practice: “I felt I had no choice, I didn’t want to be seen as a bad teacher” (A-I3). However, as she witnessed yet another deterioration in her students’ behaviour, she started to push back:

Over time I began to get really annoyed. I knew that technology was not helping my students learn. Because I’d spent a lot of time reviewing my activities, I realised that I could actually defend what I was doing. I could explain why an activity didn’t benefit students and justify what another one might be better. And to be honest, it was probably the first time in my career that I’d been able to do this and that gave me confidence to stand my ground. (A-I1)

Aisha's newly found confidence meant that she continued to reduce the amount of technology students used as she had originally planned, despite her boss's disapproval. She describes this decision thus:

There's a real risk in going against the wishes of your bosses and it caused me a lot of anxiety because I'm generally someone who is submissive in the face of authority. But I also knew that my decision was the right one and I could defend my pedagogy. He and I don't necessarily agree on things, but he knows that I'm a good teacher and that my students achieve well so I think that he's willing to meet me halfway provided I still meet demonstrate so technology use. (A-I1)

5.7 Aisha's current practices and cognitions

In the next section I present two short tales from Aisha's classes which demonstrate key features of her current practices and how she has managed to broadly align her pedagogy with her cognitions, albeit within the restrictions of the context within which she works.

5.7.1 Tales from the classroom: younger learners

Class: Entry 3 ESOL

Context: Campus-based class for 16-19 year olds

Aisha stands at the classroom door, and checks her phone for the time. It's 11.03, two minutes before the class is due to start. She places her hand on the door handle and I assume that she's about to let the class in. Instead, she turns to look at me.

'I never let them in until it's time to start the class otherwise they start messing around and then it can be really hard to get them to settle and focus.'

I nod my head and smile. I notice that she's holding a plastic basket in her hand and I ask what it's for.

'Control' she says.

Seconds later she opens the door.

'Right, phones in the basket everyone please. And make sure they are on silent first.'

There is an audible groan and visible eye rolling from some of the students as they walk in and hand over their phones.

'You can have them back at the end but you don't need them in class.' Aisha continues, seemingly pre-empting the complaints she expects.

'Yes Miss,' says one of the students, 'it's an ESOL lesson, not a Facebook lesson.' His classmates laugh and two classmates high five him.

'Well I'm glad someone is listening at least', responds Aisha laughing. Now, let's get down to business'.

5.7.2 Tales from the classroom: adult learners

Class: Entry 2 Adult ESOL

Context: Ladies only class in a community outreach centre.

Aisha is halfway through a lesson on the topic of transport in which students have been practising asking for information about bus timetables. The women in the group are all from Bangladesh, and aged between 40 and 75. Although their listening skills appear strong for the level and they have no problems understanding Aisha who speaks in English at all times, and often quickly and without the grading of language that is often necessary at this level. However, their speaking skills are noticeably weaker and the students often talk to each other, and sometimes to Aisha, in Bengali.

'OK ladies, we're going to practise some of this language now, and we're going to use your phones to do this. Can you all get out your phones please?'

None of the women has their phone immediately to hand and for the next few minutes there is much fumbling about in bags and coats as phones are located and switched on. Aisha watches patiently until everyone is ready to start. Once they are ready, she asks them to move places depending on the type of phone they have, Apple phone users on the left of the room, Android on the right. Some of the older ladies are unsure where to sit but are helped by Aisha and their classmates.

Aisha had ascertained earlier in the lesson that everyone in the class travels regularly by bus and asks if anyone has ever used the First Bus app to check bus timetables. No-one has.

'OK then, today we're going to download the app onto your phones and learn how to use it to find out information about bus timetables. Don't look so scared, Saarah, I promise, this is going to be really useful for you.'

Aisha starts by demonstrating on her own phone how to find the App Store, search for a specific App and download it. As she does this, the ladies watch intently. Two of the ladies chat in Bengali and Aisha, clearly understanding what they have said, replies that all bus and train companies have apps like this and that you can also use them to book tickets. This generates interest from the group who start composing about long queues at the ticket office at the local train station.

'You see, I told you it would be useful' says Aisha laughing.

Aisha asks the students to download the First Bus app onto their own phones. Although some of the students do this quickly and easily, others come unstuck. Three students can't remember the password they need to download from the App Store. Aisha and some of the other students try to help as they attempt to reset their password and in one case, phone a family member to ask what the password is. Ultimately however, they are unsuccessful and are unable to complete the task. Another student is using her husband's phone and so is reluctant to download anything without his permission. Even for those who were successful, progress was slow due to the snail-like Wi-Fi in the community centre. A task that was scheduled to take 5 minutes on Aisha's lesson plan has now taken nearly 25.

With nearly half the class unable to look at the app on their own phone and time running out, Aisha is unable to proceed with her lesson exactly as planned. Undefeated, she gathers the class around her and uses the iPad to demonstrate how you can search for a bus route from one destination to another, and check journey times. The women watch, silent at first, but as the demonstration continues, there are gasps of surprise and delight as they realise how quickly and easily they can find out information for themselves.

'This is very, very good. I always ask my child about buses. Now I not ask any more' says one of the women.

'It's not just a timetable', says one woman, 'it tells which bus I get, the time and how long we walk. It very convenient. I really want this' says another.

'If things like this are useful, we can learn to use more apps like this. Do you think it's useful?' Aisha asks?

The women nod.

'Can we do shopping?' asks a lady who until now has only spoke in Bengali.

'Of course, have a think about what you want and we can talk about it next lesson. I'm really pleased this is useful' beams Aisha.

'OK, we only have about 5 minutes. Can you work in pairs with someone who has the app on their phone and look for 3 bus routes that might be useful for you?'

The women break off into pairs, and chat as they use the app. When Aisha tries to end the lesson, the women don't immediately move and instead keep looking at their phones. It takes several attempts at closing the lesson before they start packing their bags and leave the room.

As she closes the door as the final person leaves, she turns to me.

'You know you've done something right when they don't want to leave at the end of the lesson, don't you?'

I have chosen the two vignettes above to represent the very different approaches to technology which Aisha adopts in her practice. In the following section, I will explore how these classroom stories represent key features of her practice.

[5.7.3 An absence of student engagement with technology](#)

When working with her 16-19 year old groups, Aisha seldom requires students themselves to engage with technology in lessons. Moreover, she actively discourages its use by taking away her students' phones at the start of the class. She views technology as an unnecessary distraction with students of this age: "The moment you give them any kind of technology, their focus goes and they just immediately want to get on social media or start texting their mates and the lesson disintegrate" (A-I3). For Aisha, including technology in her lessons gives rise to a battle that she does not want

to be part of: “I’m not a school teacher and I don’t want to spend my lessons disciplining kids” (A-I2). Accordingly, this has a direct impact of her choice of pedagogy: “If something is having a negative impact on my students’ learning, then I don’t want it in my lesson” (A-I4).

This attitude is in stark contrast to her early days working in the sector when she prided herself of the amount of technology she used. Although her choice not to use technology in this context now is primarily linked to behaviour management concerns, it also represents a development in her cognitions about technology:

At one point in my career, I think I just focussed on using any and all technology, regardless of its merits. Lots of things I did certainly were useful, but probably a lot of what I did was just using technology for the sake of using it and I’m not really convinced it had much benefit. (A-I4)

She expanded on this further in another interview:

Let’s take something like an online quiz where I set the questions and they are projected onto the IWB. Students then answer the questions via their mobiles and the results show on the board. This activity doesn’t do any harm, but is there any real benefit either? I look now and this I could just as easily do the same thing with pen and paper. The technology just changes the medium, I don’t think it actually makes it any better. (A-I4)

Her attitude towards technology has moved from seeing it as fundamentally positive to being more circumspect about its use. This shift in attitude occurred as a result of her decision to abandon technology with her younger learners and she admits that had she not gone ‘cold turkey’ in this way, she would likely have ploughed on using it as she was. “When I stopped using technology with my teenagers, I realised that there was no negative impact in doing so and that was a real eye-opener. I think I’d really started to believe the hype that it’s essential, but it really isn’t” (A-RM).

Aisha contends that technology is so normalised for teenage learners that it does not hold the same level of appeal for them as it does for older learners:

I don't think there's anything inherently interesting about using technology for these students because they're so used to it. For adults, pulling out an iPad might represent something exciting or challenging because so many older ESOL students have very poor IT skills. But that's not true of the young ones who are using it all the time (A-RM).

Aisha occasionally allows the students in her 16-19 year old groups to use technology in her sessions but the decision is based on the requirements of her organisation:

I have to allow students use technology sometimes because it's a requirement to embed digital skills into all our teaching. The expectation is actually that we use technology in some form it in all our lessons but they can't police that. But if you're being observed, or submitting a Scheme of Work, there are boxes to be filled in, and if they aren't, you're hauled in and told to do it. (A-RM)

Aisha describes her college of being supportive to teachers who want to use technology, and critical of those who do not. She expresses mixed feelings about this. She admits that she too is critical of those who refuse to try and use any technology at all, or just pay lip-service to it since "It does have some benefits, even if it isn't the be-all and end-all" (A-I1). However, she also resents unwelcome intrusion into her pedagogic choices expressing a strong belief that: "the decision about what and how to teach should be mine, not a policy maker's" (A-RM).

However, her attitude is one of principled pragmatism in which she does what she is required to do, "but with integrity because I make sure that however I do use technology, it's in a way that benefits students language learning" (A-I1). How she does this will be discussed in the next sections.

5.7.4 Meeting real life needs

The second vignette above took place in one of Aisha's women only groups in a local Bangladeshi centre. The women are all aged over forty and most have been in the UK for at least fifteen years. The women attend a weekly three hour session and their main goal is to improve their confidence and communication in English. Despite having lived

in the UK for a long time, most of the women struggle to communicate in English which Aisha attributes to their lives outside class. Like her own grandmothers, they spend much of their time within their own communities. Aisha notes that it is commonly assumed that ESOL learners are immersed in English at all times but she explains that “Some of them will barely speak a word of English outside class from one week to the next” (A-RM). Their aim is simply to learn to speak English better. For Aisha, consideration of her students’ needs and context is central to her pedagogic approach she articulates her teaching goals thus: “The most important thing for these ladies is that they can communicate effectively outside class so everything I do in class links to this need” (A-I5).

Aisha makes a connection between her desire to promote authentic input and output with her own childhood experiences:

I want these women to feel empowered and to be able to have more opportunities than my grandmas did. Some of them want to get jobs or be involved in their kids’ school life but their lack of language and confidence really holds them back. They don’t need loads of grammar, but they do need the chance to interact, and practise using language inside class that prepares them for outside. (A-RM)

For this class, and others like it, she focuses on functional language and activities that promote interaction. She maintains that technology is key to this: “Using technology really allows me to expose students to real world language” (A-I1). However, it is not just the exposure to authentic input which is key, but the ability to practise real life tasks:

Practising bus timetables from a coursebook is a world apart from downloading your local bus company app and working out to get the bus to get to your dentist. The latter is authentic, it’s useful, it’s relevant and because of these things, it’s also motivating. It gives these ladies’ confidence to know they can manage in the world. (A-RM)

Aisha's use of technology to support learning is essential in meeting her goals. However, it also creates another teaching need: the requirement to develop students' digital skills which she considers to be as crucial as language skills:

The world is increasingly digitised and if students don't have basic digital skills, their lives will be very restricted in terms of the things they can access, whether that's information, jobs, health and other services or even entertainment. Students absolutely must develop these skills or they risk social inclusion. (A-RM)

Aisha does not advocate taking on the role of an IT teacher, but she stresses the need for ESOL teachers to take up the mantle in supporting their students to become more digitally competent: "I think it's our responsibility to teach our students some basic but essential IT skills. If not us, then who?" (A-I4).

The class featured in the vignette above was a new class which she had only been working with for a few weeks. Most of her classes are more competent than this but only because of the regular commitment to this kind of activity. For Aisha, in this context, the blending of ESOL and technology is non-negotiable, even if students are not always convinced of her approach:

I know some students aren't bothered about technology. They just say their husband or kids will do it for them. But I truly believe they need these skills and I'm doing them a disservice if I don't teach them. Even if they think they don't want one. I'm a bit of a dictator really, but a nice one. (A-RM)

Aisha's approaches with her two classes appear diametrically opposed here: she forbids her younger students from using technology while forcing her older ones to use it whether they like it or not. This apparent dissonance reveals, however, different facets of her cognitions about the (dis)benefits of technology and how they are operationalised in the classroom. She holds strong beliefs about the value of both authentic language and tasks for her older learners, and equally strong views on the importance of their developing their digital skills. At the same time, she recognises that technology does not guarantee effective teaching or learning and at times, may hinder it, thus rejecting its

use with younger learners. This demonstrates how Aisha's pedagogic decisions are based primarily on consideration of the context in which she is working, and more specifically, the needs of her students.

5.7.5 Barriers to the inclusion of technology

As the excerpt from Aisha's class shows, technical issues can pose a challenge to her teaching. On campus, she has access to computer suites, class sets of hardware and easy to access support from the college's IT team. Her community classes feature none of this and therefore limits the way in which she incorporates technology into her sessions. Of the six classrooms she currently teaches in, two have no technology all. One has an IWB and the remainder have a data projector and computer. The Wifi in the venues is slow when all the students are trying to use it at once. Aisha feels a strong sense of anger in relation to this:

I find the attitude of my college to be so hypocritical. They expect us to use technology and extoll its virtues. But only for college-based students. They really don't care about our outreach centres and I can't help but think it's because they're ethnic minority women that no-one really cares about. How else can they justify this? (A-11)

Aisha has complained to her college management about the lack of equity between venues but she feels no real steps have been made to address this. She notes the inequality which exists between campus and outreach-based courses:

Teaching community outreach classes is a bit like being a second-class citizen because we don't have anything like the same amount of resources that colleagues and students on campus have. What annoys me most is that the standard response to my complaints like this is for students to use their own devices. This ignores the fact that newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees won't have a Smartphone and even those that do, can't afford to enough data to use it in lessons. The Wifi is so awful in many centres that they can't use that so

we're stuck. They bang on about how important it is for students to learn digital skills but won't help them do it. (A-15)

Despite this, Aisha is determined to encourage her students to use technology any way they can. Sometimes, this involves students using their own devices, and at other times she borrows a class set of iPads to take to her classes. As the college will not let her keep them overnight, this adds an extra 30 minutes on to her working day to return them at the end of her class. While the environment might not appear hospitable to technology integration, her perseverance and resourcefulness allow her to achieve her goals with the technology she has available to her.

5.8 Summary

Like Sally in the previous chapter, Aisha's early learning experiences, both formal and informal, have shaped her cognitions about language teaching and learning. She asserts that authenticity and interaction are essential in language teaching and these are central to her current practice. When we examine her historic practices, however, she admits that a significant amount of her technology use in the early days of her career involved controlled grammar practice, thus representing a conflict between her core beliefs and pedagogy. The reasons for this are complex. She viewed technology as being inherently positive at this point in time and therefore did not question its value. The expectations of her institution with its pro-technology stance further reinforced the belief that technology is beneficial. It could be argued that the lack of focus on ESOL pedagogy in her ITE and CPD left her unable to examine her practice critically.

Aisha's experiences in class bring about change in both her cognitions and practices. The challenges she faced with her younger learners forced her to problematise her practice and experiment with new approaches. By moving away from her routinised pedagogy, she experiences a fundamental shift in her attitude towards technology and, in turn, how she embeds it.

Aisha's current cognitions towards technology are largely positive as she see potential benefit in some of its uses. However, she also views this as being dependent on the

context of learning, rejecting the notion of technology being a panacea for all teaching environments. Her current use of technology demonstrates her strong belief in the importance of exposure to authentic language and the opportunity to use it in a way that reflects real life. Moreover, it reflects the importance she places on the development of digital skills for ESOL learners whom, she believes, do not have the opportunity to do this elsewhere.

At various points in her career, Aisha's ability to use technology is constrained by her working context. The community settings where she works are resource poor and restrict the range of technology she can use, and the frequency with which she does it. This is further impacted by the lack of IT support in such venues. In addition, the lack of training she has received in both using technology for teaching ESOL and subject specialist pedagogy have at times limited her ability to engage fully with technology. However, her current practices reveal strongly held beliefs about the benefits and limitations of technology use in ESOL teaching, and a range of effective practices.

Chapter 6: Danny

6.1 Introducing Danny

Danny started his teaching career in the late 1980s. Having graduated from university with a degree in Latin and French, he decided to go travelling for a year. Aware that he would need to earn money on his travels, he embarked on what is now known as a CELTA course. Despite only intending to travel for a year, he spent approximately twenty years overseas working as a teacher in private language schools and universities. Starting in Indonesia, he then worked in Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, before spending ten years in China. A keen linguist, he considers himself to be a “language nerd” (D-RM) and made a concerted effort to learn the language in all the countries he work in. He describes himself as proficient in two foreign languages and having a working knowledge of four.

After many years abroad, Danny and his wife returned to the UK to raise their young family. Shortly after his return, he enrolled on a one-year, full-time MA in TESOL. He then spent a short time working in a private language school before gaining a full-time job at an FE college. Though he was initially employed to teach EFL, he was quickly moved to the ESOL team which was short-staffed. He currently teaches adult ESOL classes on campus and in the community.

6.2 Early learning experiences

Danny grew up in the north of England. Academically bright, he passed his eleven plus exam and attended a high performing, selective grammar school. He describes himself as “bright but fairly lazy” (D-I1) and the only subjects he felt particularly motivated by were French and Latin: “I suppose I had a natural aptitude for languages and I found them quite easy” (D-RM). In particular, Danny liked studying grammar:

My teachers were very traditional, as you’d probably expect in the early ‘80s and it was all grammar translation exercises. I especially loved Latin grammar and its logic. Parsing a sentence was like breaking a code and I enjoyed the challenge (D-RM).

At university, most of his lecturers followed a similar approach with his French lectures taught mainly in English, and a considerable amount of the course was devoted to translation. Danny only spotted the flaw in this when, in his third year, he spent two semesters at a French university:

It was only at that point that I realised how poor I was at speaking and listening. That probably sounds strange but because of the way I'd been taught, and perhaps because I was a white British man influenced by my colonial forefathers, it had never occurred to me that I might have to actually speak French at some point. Subconsciously, I think I'd always regarded language learning as an academic pursuit aimed at studying literature rather than a practical one which involved communicating with people. I probably assumed they'd just speak English to me. (D-RM)

Despite his lack of practice in speaking and listening in French, he performed well in his exams abroad, and back in the UK, and he graduated with a first class honours degree.

6.3 Initial Teacher Education

After graduation, Danny wanted to go travelling and saw teaching as a route to achieving this. As a result, he enrolled on the CELTA course. He describes the content of the course as being “based largely on the principles of CLT with a heavy dose of PPP.” (D-I1). Danny enjoyed the course but was confused by the teaching methodologies and techniques suggested:

I found the course interesting, but I didn't really take it seriously. I couldn't really see why these new approaches were needed. The whole process of elicitation of language, for example, seemed so convoluted when you could just tell students about it. And I think I just thought, I was a successful language learner and I wasn't taught like this, so what was wrong with the old way of doing things? (D-RM)

Danny describes himself as humouring his tutors by doing the things asked of him on the course in an attempt to pass the course, but without really subscribing to their value:

When I packed my case to go travelling, I didn't fill it with newspaper articles and authentic materials like my tutors suggested. I filled it with grammar books

because that's how I thought a language should be taught, with grammar, not with role plays. (D-RM)

At this stage in his career, Danny recognises the significance of his early experiences in shaping his later professional practice stating that: "I just defaulted to what I'd seen my teachers and lecturers do because it was what I was used to and despite the course offering me a different approach, I couldn't see how it would be more valid" (D-RM). His early learning experiences and the beliefs about language learning which they had helped to shape, acted as a filter through which new information about teaching was mediated, and ultimately rejected.

6.4 Early teaching experiences

Danny's first job was at a private language centre in Indonesia where he taught general English to adults. He describes his early teaching style as identical to that of his former schoolteachers: he stood at the front of the class, lectured his students about grammar and then asked then gave them exercises to check what they had understood. He recalls the only major difference between himself and his old teachers is that he "...didn't throw the blackboard rubber at students if they weren't listening" (D-RM). Danny was a conscientious teacher and he spent a lot of time teaching himself English grammar to ensure that he absolutely accurate in his explanations of key aspects of language. His descriptions of his pedagogy reveal that it was firmly rooted in didactic, teacher-centred traditions, and that he saw his role in the classroom as being the "giver of information" (D-I1). He recalls little communication between students in class, though he did encourage students to talk to him. However, he describes his interactions with students as being "very much based on a strict question and answer basis. I asked questions to check what they understood, and they asked me questions if they needed information. It was very functional. There wasn't a lot of personal *engagement*" [his emphasis] (D-I1).

Danny's approach appeared to yield positive results. His students performed well in exams, and gave glowing feedback at the end of the course. He was also well-regarded in his institution and he became the preferred member of staff for higher level

classes due to his in-depth knowledge of grammar. He was happy, and his students were happy, and the status quo remained thus for some time.

6.5 Learning a language: immersion style

When Danny arrived in Indonesia, he was keen to learn the language but was unable to find any classes to attend. However, he quickly picked up the basics through his everyday interactions and after a year, could communicate quite effectively. This prompted Danny to think more deeply about the nature of language learning:

Learning Indonesian was such a contrast to how I'd learned French and slowly, it started to make me think about the best way to learn a language. I got going with Indonesian much faster than many of my ex-pat friends and I could see that it wasn't necessarily because of aptitude, I mean we were all language graduates, but because I put myself out there. I made an effort to speak to people and to listen to them. I didn't do anything formal, it really was just about immersion. (D-RM).

Although this realisation did not precipitate any immediate change in Danny's teaching practice, it did prompt a slow process of reflection about language teaching pedagogy, and what it should entail. He recognised that his success in learning a new language was associated with both the amount of exposure he had to Indonesian, and his opportunities to use the language to communicate with others : "I began to realise that you can learn a language without a really heavy grammatical focus. For the first time, I really understood the importance of input and output. I honestly don't think I'd thought about this before" (D-RM).

As Danny thought about his own learning, he began to relate this to his teaching and realise that he was not providing his students with some of the language learning opportunities they needed. In particular, he recognised that his students had very few opportunities for output beyond sentence level:

My learning was much faster than that of my students, especially in relation to speaking. I suddenly realised that my students didn't really speak much in class, it was all me. And if they did speak, it was really just them reading out answers

they'd written in grammar exercises. And this was a massive realisation for me. Honestly, it was huge. Massive. It was like seeing the light for the first time because I could see that I was only giving them a small part of what they needed and I was neglecting really important parts of the learning process. And that had to change. (D-RM).

Danny returned to his CELTA notes and started to read more about communicative approaches to language teaching. Gradually, he introduced more interaction in his classes, started to emphasise functional language over form, and paired interaction over solo activity. He also introduced more authentic texts into his lessons, using his trips back to the UK to “stock up on newspapers, magazines and videos” (D-RM) to use in his lessons. However, student feedback on these resources was not always positive as students often struggled with the language level or cultural references:

I assumed students would find authentic texts motivating but actually, they often had the opposite effect because they couldn't make sense of them and they didn't see their relevance. I think that was an early lesson in the importance of really thinking about who your students are, and what will interest them. (D-I1).

However, students responded well to the changes in Danny's pedagogy overall, and he found more enjoyment in his work. He describes the significance of these years to his later and current practice thus:

In those early years of teaching in my journey as a teacher, I did a complete 180 in terms of my approach to teaching and I really put that down to my experiences of learning Indonesian. I sometime wonder if I would have made the shift to more communicative approaches if I had attended formal language classes and been taught Indonesian in the way I was taught at school. The immersion experience changed me completely as a teacher because it taught me about the importance of input, output and learner engagement and I think those things are very much at the centre of my practice now. I don't exclude grammar completely and I think it can be useful, but it's just one aspect of my teaching, rather than the whole shebang. (D-RM)

6.6 The return to the UK: MA TESOL

Danny returned to the UK after teaching overseas for nearly twenty years. Though he was an experienced EFL teacher, he was concerned about finding a job which would support his family. As a result, he decided to enrol on a one-year, MA TESOL programme at a UK university as he hoped that it would help him to secure a management job within a private language school. Having done lots of informal study during his career, he was enthusiastic about a new challenge and keen to develop his knowledge and skills. The course had some core modules focussing on language and methodology and a wide range of optional modules. One of these modules focussed on the use of technology but Danny swiftly discounted this one on the basis that he didn't know anything about technology:

My wife suggested it would be useful for me to do the technology module because I knew so little about it. For me, that was the reason *not* [his emphasis] to do it. Nobody wants to be the old fart in the class who can't keep up with the young ones who grew up with technology. (D-I1).

Danny's concern about being left behind by younger colleagues related partly to a lack of confidence in his own technological skills. The schools he had worked at overseas had little or no technology and therefore it had never formed part of his pedagogy. Although he was computer literate and used technology in a variety of ways in his personal life, he doubted that this would be sufficient in the context of an academic module relating professional practice: "I could use a computer for the Internet, emails, banking, email, Facebook etc. but I thought I'd need a lot more knowledge to be able to use it professionally" (D-I1). However, his reluctance to learn more about technology was also linked with a sense that it was not essential to his professional development. Having had a long and successful career in language teaching without the use of technology, he regarded it something for others, rather than himself:

I think I saw technology as being something quite niche. I was aware of CALL as an academic field and I thought this was something for language labs perhaps, or for people who wanted to teach online courses. I certainly didn't see it as something that was relevant to a mainstream teacher. It probably sounds

laughable now but if you've managed perfectly well without something for a long time, it's reasonable to assume it's not necessary." (D-I4)

Inadvertently, the University had reaffirmed this belief by offering CALL as a discrete course, rather than embedding it as a strand across the whole programme, thus emphasising it as something outside standard pedagogy. Once on the course however, Danny describes himself as developing a growing awareness of the potential benefits of technology during the course. This stemmed mainly from his fellow students rather than from his academic coursework, as few references were made to technology on the course. Danny developed close relationships with several people on the MA programme and they formed their own learning set and met frequently to discuss literature and work on assignments. As they were all experienced teachers, Danny notes that discussions invariably related to pedagogical matters and he listened with interest as others described their use of technology:

I was a real novice so hearing about things like Kahoot or mobile apps was a bit of a revelation. The main message I got from people was that CALL wasn't a separate part of teaching but something that you could bring in to lessons as and when you wanted. Also, that simple things like getting students to search for things online could really give students that exposure to authentic language and even though that's really basic, it hadn't occurred to me before. (D-RM).

Danny admits that these discussions did not lead to him immediately effecting change in his practice, but they did raise his awareness of the potential benefits of technology.

6.7 Joining the FE sector: pedagogic subterfuge

Shortly after completing his MA, was offered a Danny was offered a full-time teaching job at a local FE college. Although his previous experience was solely with EFL students, Danny adapted quickly to working with ESOL learners. However, he struggled to adapt to the culture in FE and found it to be a very different environment to the one he was used to. In his previous jobs he had had a great deal of autonomy and complete control over the curriculum while in FE he was supervised more closely and expected to use pre-existing schemes of work and materials. He was also expected to use technology in his lessons which came as a shock. The organisation Danny worked

in promoted technology heavily. All rooms in the college campus had an IWB, and there were multiple computer rooms which teachers could book to use with students. In addition, there were class sets of laptops and iPads which teachers to book for classroom use. All teaching staff were required to produce a lesson plan for every session and the college provided a pro forma for this purpose. On this was a box to indicate how opportunities technology was being used and Danny was informed by his manager that all staff were expected to embed it into their teaching. Danny, however, had little interest in technology taking the view that “I had managed perfectly well without technology for twenty years so I didn’t need it now.” (D-RM). As a result, he carried on with his usual pedagogy, ignoring the college’s mandate.

However, after an audit of Danny’s lesson plans by his line manager revealed the absence of technology in his lessons, he received a reminder to incorporate it more during his first annual appraisal. When Danny did not act on this, he began to find post-it notes stuck on his lesson plans asking him provide evidence of his technology use. Danny was hugely irritated by this approach. In part, he was annoyed that he was being surveilled and that he was not considered able to determine how best to teach his students. He was also frustrated by the way his manager handled this communication:

She should have spoken to me directly, not done it via a post-it note. But more than that, it really pissed me off that she was asking me to change my teaching but without giving me any indication of *why* [his emphasis] I should do this. I didn’t think there was any reason to use technology so if she did, she needed to at least convince me of her reasoning. (D-RM)

Initially, Danny carried on as usual and ignored the note, confident in the effectiveness of his pedagogy. However, his line manager’s intervention prompted him to start thinking more about technology and how it might be used. Although his initial response was that technology wasn’t necessary, he describes this as “a defensive response rather than a deep-seated belief” (DI1). In fact, he was aware from his MA that there was evidence to support the use of technology in language teaching but he was unsure if and how this was relevant to his own teaching:

I definitely had a sense at this stage that technology could be useful in TESOL but I wasn’t really sure in what way. I didn’t know which technology to use, or

how to use it to teach and looking back, I think it really scared me. I'd been teaching a long time at this point and I was confident that I was a good teacher. But technology was an unknown, and not knowing how to use it scared me because it meant that I maybe wasn't a good teacher. And I really hated the feeling that I was behind the curve, that I was past it, and that people had moved ahead of me. (D-I2)

As Danny felt the pressure to develop new approaches to teaching, he began to look for opportunities to learn more about technology. He started by attending several in-house training sessions on technology for teaching but he found that he learned little from them. There were two key issues. The first was that the courses were designed for college tutors who worked with British 16-19 year olds. These students had been brought up with technology and had a good level of IT competency. This contrasted sharply with Danny's ESOL students, many of whom had little experience using a computer. As a result, many of the suggested activities for learners were unsuitable for their literacy and IT skills. The second issue was that the training was not subject specific and lacked relevance to language teaching:

They mainly focused on how to upload material onto Moodle or create online portfolios for NVQs while I wanted to know how to use technology to practise language skills. The courses just didn't help me at all. (D-I3)

Danny asked colleagues for help but found that they too struggled with integrating technology and many of them limited their use of technology to showing PPTs. Frustrated, he turned to former classmates on his MA course and asked for their help. Though they were now all scattered around the globe, they had kept in touch via Facebook and they responded to his pleas for help. Some sent links to language learning websites which could be used by students, others sent suggested reading and indicated books which were particularly practical in nature. The best piece of advice, according to Danny, came from a friend who was particularly interested and proficient in technology:

She told me that I should start by listing all the ways I use technology in my own life. She said that this would identify the skills I already have and stop me thinking that I was useless. Then, she said to look at the list and think about

which of those activities might be useful for language learning. For example, browsing shopping websites can be useful for lexis, or looking up a train timetable could be useful for practising the present simple. She told me to start small and simple and do things I was already confident with rather than try to learn something completely different. (D-I1)

The suggestion to use Danny's personal use of technology as a source for language learning opportunities was "like lighting a touch paper" (D-RM) and he could instantly see possibilities for using technology. In particular, he recognised the potential for input opportunities through authentic tasks such as looking for cinema times or listening the news online, but also for output. Much of his own technology engagement involved interaction through email, text, blogging and social media and Danny was now able to see how this could be used to promote communicative language learning. Yet despite this, Danny did not start using technology immediately as although he could see its potential, he lacked confidence in his ability to deal with technical problems if they occurred and feared losing control in the classroom:

I knew how to manage a language class, but I didn't know how to manage a classroom full of computers, and students who didn't know much about them. And I just desperately didn't want to lose face in front of them. I've always been proud of my teaching so opening yourself up to doing something that you don't really know how to do, and doing that in front of an audience is terrifying for me. So it took me a long time to get going. (D-RM)

Ultimately, it was pressure from college management which persuaded Danny to start using technology as he was repeatedly asked to use it by his manager. At first, he engaged with "pedagogic subterfuge" (D-RM) where he made reference to the use of technology on his lesson plan even though he was not actually using it. Slowly, however, he began to implement short activities with his students. He did this because "Ultimately, I knew students might get something from it, but also because I didn't want to lose my job" (D-RM).

Danny's early practice took place in a computer room and relied heavily on the Internet, with students asked to visit a particular webpage and engage with its content in some way such as reading or listening comprehension. At first, Danny conducted lessons in a

lockstep fashion with all students doing the same activities at the same time “because it was much easier to manage the class if they were all doing the same thing and if one computer froze, they could just look at the next person’s screen” (D-RM). As his confidence grew, he gave the students more freedom, allowing them to search for information themselves in response to problem-based tasks, though he still provided some scaffolding by giving students a list of useful websites. Danny viewed these classes as a success from a personal perspective as they helped to increase his confidence, but acknowledged their limitations from a pedagogical perspective as they did not reflect his broader teaching philosophies:

These activities offer exposure to authentic language but I don’t think they really make the most of what technology can provide. They don’t offer choice of input, they don’t offer personalisation, they don’t offer interaction with other people, and I think these are the real benefits of technology, and they’re also the principles I try to follow in my teaching. So, although I gained in confidence and belief in my ability to use tech’, I didn’t really feel that they fitted with my teaching. (D-I1)

However, Danny’s increase in self-efficacy did lead to a prolonged period of reflection and experimentation in which he trialled new activities, rejecting those that “didn’t fit with my beliefs about what effective teaching looks like” (D-I2) and adopting those which reflected his broader pedagogical beliefs and practices. I will explore Danny’s current practice in the next section.

6.8 Danny’s current practices and cognitions

In line with other chapters, I will now discuss aspects of Danny’s current pedagogical practices which involve the use of technology, and the factors influencing this. The first of these, his use of social media, is exemplified by the previous vignette. In addition, to this, I will also discuss the teaching of digital skills and routine practices.

8.1 Tales from the classroom: Danny’s current classroom practices

Level 1 Adult ESOL

Context: campus-based lesson

An unusually quiet motorway means that I have arrived very early for my lesson observation with Danny. Having spotted me sitting in reception, he invites me to come and wait in his classroom while he sets up. He confesses that he's running a bit behind and he disappears off to the photocopier while I wait at the back of the class.

Gradually, students start to enter the room. They greet me as they wander in, and seem unbothered by my presence. This is the second time I've observed this class and they know that I'm there to observe Danny, not them. A group of three women sit in front of me.

"Did you see Ali's video on Facebook?" one woman asks the others. "It was so funny." The other women laugh, as does a man from the other side of the room.

"I can't believe he didn't hurt himself. He's too old to do that", he laughs.

I listen as the group chats about Ali. The general consensus is that he is either very brave or very stupid. Although I am trying to be unobtrusive and not listen in to private conversations, it's hard not to be curious about his exploits and even harder not to listen as the group talks together loudly.

The woman in front of me must sense my interest and she holds out her phone towards me and beckons me to look. On the screen is a video showing Ali, a middle-aged man, standing on the side of an ice rink.

"OK, I'm doing it" he shouts and he launches himself across the rink. Clearly his first time on the ice, it's impossible not to laugh as he moves across the ice, screaming while his arms and legs flail and he tries, ultimately in vain, to stay upright.

Danny walks into the room and has clearly already seen the video and recognises the screams.

"OK, do we think Ali will be here today or will be in hospital?"

"I survived, I'm here" says a man standing in the doorway whom I assume is Ali. He takes a bow as the class laughs and claps. Once the class has congratulated Ali on his skating, order returns and Danny asks Ali and the class to tell me about the video. Ali explains that they had two pieces of homework last week. One was to record a video which showed some thing they did at the weekend and upload it onto their class's Facebook page.

Danny has turned on the PC and projector and the Facebook group is suddenly shown on the IWB screen. He scrolls through the week, clearly looking for something and I am astonished by the number of posts. There are numerous videos from the weekend and all of them have multiple comments beneath them. The students' videos are punctuated by other posts, mainly links to YouTube videos and memes related to Donald Trump.

Danny commends the students for their posts and ask the students to vote for which video they liked best and why. The students cast their votes and the winning video is shown to the class. Danny congratulates them on their work and suggests that they do this any time they have something they want to share with the group. One of the students asks another to post a video when she goes to London to visit her daughter. The woman agrees and promises to share the most interesting bits of the trip. Danny turns his attention to the next part of the lesson which involves the students' other piece of homework.

"Ok then, did everyone find a story or news report online that they were interested in?" Students nod their heads in agreement.

"Brill, really good work. Where did you find them?"

The students shout out their answers. Most found news articles online, others used social media, particularly Facebook as a source.

"Right, I asked you all last week to find a story you were interested in and bring it to class. What we're going to do now is share those stories in small groups. I want you to work in groups of three and each person to tell the others in their group about your story or report. I want you to tell them three things. 1. What's it about? 2. Why did you like it? 3. Where did you find it? All OK? Right, off you go."

The students set to work. As they start to tell their stories, they are interrupted with questions about their stories. The interaction seems fuelled by genuine interest as they ask for more details or clarifications about what they are hearing. I notice some students pulling out their phones and showing pictures linked to their articles, and using them to explain aspects of their stories. In another group a student is talking about a report he found on the BBC about the status of the Welsh language and this leads to

them talking about languages in their own countries. As they talk, students use the dictionaries on their phones to search for key lexis such as 'die out' and 'bilingual'. Danny monitors the class, listening and occasionally joining in the discussions. As they are working, he tells the group to draw up a list of new and/or useful lexis that they are using during the activity. One of the students says he's going to post his story on their Facebook group as he thinks it will be interesting for the others to read. Danny thanks him and suggests others might want to do the same. "Don't forget", he say "the group is for you so keep posting on it any time you want. The best way to learn a language is to actually use it."

6.8.2 Use of social media

Unlike Sally and Aisha, much of Danny's technology use occurs outside rather than inside class. A keen user of Facebook in his personal life, Danny's social media use with students has become a significant part of his pedagogy. At the start of each academic year he sets up a private Facebook group for his higher level classes and he regularly posts content on this himself and encourages his students to do the same. His posts can be divided into two categories. Firstly, he provides content which has an explicit pedagogical focus. He includes links to language learning websites or recommendations for mobile apps, together with suggested activities which relate to either grammatical or phonology. For example, in one post provides a link to a British council app which focuses on pronunciation practice. He added a comment to this suggesting that students might want to practise the sounds /p/ and /b/ and /t/ and /d/ which they had focussed on in their lesson that day. The wording made clear that this was not compulsory homework, but that students might find it useful. Other examples of posts which have a learning focus links to grammar websites which contain either practice activities or a description of a grammar point which has recently been covered in class. Danny describes this signposting to useful language as "ESOL extra" (D-13), indicating the additional learning opportunities they provide outside class. He considers this an important part of teaching in the twenty-first century:

In this day and age, Google is everyone's best friend and I know that students will spend a lot of time looking language learning sites or apps themselves.

Obviously, this is a good thing in many ways but the problem is that some of these sites aren't great. Sometimes that's because they aren't user-friendly, or they have poor explanations of grammar, or maybe they're just quite boring apps, but all of these things will switch students off. So I see my role as separating the wheat from the chaff. If I can weed out the rubbish sites and send them to the best ones, they're more likely to stick with them and learn something. I don't think students can be expected to know which app is worth downloading so I think I have to help them with that. (D-I3)

Danny also views this type of activity as providing a form of differentiation in which he directs students to a range of learning options and students themselves can decide which are most useful to them:

ESOL students have such spiky profiles so it's really important to be able to guide them to activities that are useful for them specifically. It's hard to meet everyone's needs in class so technology can be useful to help them work on what they really need at home. (D-RM)

Danny also considers offering students sound learning opportunities outside class to be essential to their language development as class time is limited. Moreover, he believes it helps to promote a more autonomous view of learning:

Technology is really good for getting people to do things on their own because there is so much learning material on the 'net and students need to make the most of this if they really want to progress. Class time just isn't enough. Also, by promoting this, I hope I'm helping them to understand that they can't just rely on me for their knowledge, there is other stuff out there. (D-I7)

Danny's second use of Facebook involves posting content that he thinks may be of interest to learners, but is not specifically linked to language learning. These often include links to newspaper articles or videos which Danny thinks may be relevant to his students. For example, in one post he provided a link to a report in a local newspaper about the closure of a walk-in clinic and another about free local arts' festival. Other posts, and the ones which generate the most 'likes' from students, come from Danny himself and he regularly posts short videos about his life and hobbies. An example of this is a video of Danny sitting on a beach with his dog. He talks the students through

the contents of his picnic and muses whether picnicking is a British affair or if other nationalities do it too. He ends the video by encouraging the students to share videos of their weekend activities and toasts them with a cup of tea. Beneath these videos are comments from class members which Danny replies to with a message or an emoji. The students themselves often respond to each other creating further online interaction. Some of them also post their own videos in response to Danny's efforts such as Ali's video of his ice skating exploits. Danny normally has about 12 students in his class and he describes half as willing to upload their own content, and the other half as those who respond to other people's posts, but do not upload their own.

Danny regards his use of Facebook groups as an integral part of his teaching, even though this takes place entirely outside class. He believes that additional exposure to, and use of, English outside the class will have a positive impact on his students' language development. He describes many of his students as plateauing at Entry 3 level and he cites their lack of English use outside class as a reason for this. His use of Facebook therefore, is an attempt to increase students' engagement with English outside class:

A lot of my students hardly speak English outside class. When it's the holidays they can literally go for weeks without speaking a word of English. This is especially true of the women who are often very isolated because they don't work and they are at home all the time. It's a bit easier for the men because they're more likely to work. If I can encourage students to use English outside class in some small way, it has to be of benefit to them. That benefit might be about confidence or it might be about their actual learning, but it certainly isn't going to harm them. (D-RM)

Danny's chooses his Facebook content carefully and he attempts to balance links to pedagogic tasks with more general input:

I try to make sure that I include some links to language learning activities because there are some students who appreciate this kind of input. But for me, what's more important is that whatever I post arouses their interest in some way. You know, I want to grab their attention and create a desire for them to read something, or respond to something someone has said. I want to create the

conditions for genuine interaction where students use English because they want to say something, not because they're asked to. The beauty of technology is that you can find or create stuff that really appeals to your own classes. (D-RM)

Danny's use of social media here reflects a belief in the importance of affective engagement which he sees as a prerequisite for language learning: People will use language if they have something to say. Our job as teachers is to find out what interests them and if we can do that, the learning will follow" (D-I4). For Danny, input does not need to be authentic for it to have value, but it needs to be varied, relevant and interesting:

I think there's too much emphasis on providing authentic texts in language teaching. I'm not saying they don't have their place, or can't add value but they're not the be-all and end-all. When I create content for students myself, I simplify the language quite a lot depending on their level so is that really authentic? Probably not, but if it engages them, and makes them want to interact, that's more important to me. And actually, it's the output that I want to be authentic, I want them to have genuine, interesting, fun, thought-provoking interaction.

Although Danny espouses authentic output, his actual practices are somewhat contradictory as he encourages students to use full sentences when writing on Facebook, use words instead of emojis and emphasises the importance of accuracy. When a student responded to a post on Facebook using text speak, for example, Danny replied to the message, but made a comment at the end reminding him to 'write properly rather than using text language' thus privileging grammatical accuracy over informal language use which is more common in online environments.

Danny regards technology as a vital tool in providing input, creating opportunities for communication and doing so in a way that is meaningful, and extends learning opportunities beyond the classroom:

I think technology can be of so much benefit for language teaching because it provides teachers with opportunities that didn't exist when we just used coursebooks. You can find texts and videos on virtually any topic really quickly and easily so there's no excuse for churning out the same old boring texts on

families and healthy living. You can use it to communicate with other people and you can also use it to teach grammar through the thousands of language learning websites that exist. I think all of those things are essential in language learning and technology allows us access to them.

Thus, its use supports his existing beliefs about the nature of teaching and the conditions which facilitate it, but also extends it outside the confines of the classroom.

6.8.3 Digital skills and digital exclusion

Danny regards digital skills as a life skill and one which allows people to engage fully with society and all that it has to offer. He regards the absence of these skills as a barrier to opportunity:

If you don't have basic IT skills, there is so much you can't do or can't access: contacting your GP, applying for a job, applying for a passport, applying for a child's school place, ordering a new bin. It's all done online and if you don't know how to use a computer or a phone, your world, and your opportunities really shrink.

For this reason, Danny makes the development of basic digital skills a priority in classes where students do not already possess these skills. He suggests that there is a correlation in his classes between language proficiency and IT skills, with lower level students typically being less competent with technology though he notes that migrant workers from EU countries are an exception to this as they tend to have much stronger IT skills regardless of language level. With his higher level classes, Danny is usually able to use the Facebook activities described in the previous section without any difficulty, though he does provide help for those who need it. However, he describes his lower level students as typically needing much more support with technology:

Normally, at Entry 2 and below, students have quite limited IT skills. The stronger ones can use the Internet but they don't use social media and they often struggle to do much with their phones beyond phone calls. Some have basic computer skills but can't use things like Word or Excel effectively, and others really have no computer experience at all. (D-I3)

The significance Danny attaches to these skills in his own life, means that he views them as essential for others. Therefore, he tries to incorporate an element of technology training into his ESOL classes. At the start of each course, he conducts a short needs analysis with students to ascertain their skill level, needs and interest in learning about technology. He uses this to inform his planning, incorporating classroom activities which develop these skills. Some of these sessions involve an explicit focus on learning how to use technology. In one session I observed (D-O2), for example, Danny taught an Entry 2 class to use an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of household bills as part of a wider topic on 'House and Home'. They learned how to enter data into a spreadsheet, sort information and do basic calculations. Once Danny had finished his input, the students were given a task-based learning activity to complete in groups: they were given the household budget for a fictional family, a description of their lifestyle and asked to work out how they could reduce their spending by ten percent. Students then made amendments to the spreadsheet to reflect their discussions and presented their work to the class. Danny describes this as typical of the kind of teaching he favours as it combines learning about and practising a specific technology while also providing opportunities for language use:

I always try to integrate language learning and technology together because it's important that students don't feel that I'm robbing them of their ESOL time. Also, some students can be a bit scared of IT because it's new for them so I try and make everything relevant to the kinds of tasks that they could use in their everyday lives and show how technology can help them and make their lives easier. It's no good teaching them how to use a spreadsheet but not link it to their lives. What's the point?

There was also evidence of this approach in another observed lesson (D-O10) in which Danny taught students how to use Google search tools to locate different sources of information and then gave them a treasure hunt task to find different types of information such as a news story released within the past twenty-hour hours and associated pictures and videos. Danny tries to include an explicit focus on digital skills with his lower level students at least once a month but notes that he varies this

according to student feedback, with some groups asking for input more regularly. However, despite his conviction that integrating digital skills for students into his teaching is valuable, it is not necessarily a part of the role that he enjoys.

I don't really feel that confident teaching IT, and because of that, I find it quite stressful and don't enjoy it. It also takes me a huge amount of time to prepare, and it's often time I can't really spare. But I believe passionately that students need these skills so that they have the opportunities available to everyone else. It's no good helping them to learn a language if they then can't find a job, or book a hospital appointment because they can't navigate the online world. So I think it really falls to me to do this because who else is going to help them? (D-16)

Here, there is evidence that Danny's strength of conviction about the importance of digital skills in the modern world, overrides the stress and difficulty he experiences when teaching this. However, he does not typically include this focus on technology skills with higher level students due to his perception that they do not need to develop their digital proficiency. Consequently, he typically limits his technology use with them to the social media activities I outlined earlier and tasks which require students to search for online information in their own time which can then be used in class. His reasons for this also relate to his belief that technology is not inherently motivating for students:

If students have low level IT skills, using it in class can be motivating for them because they feel they're learning another skill. But I don't think technology is a motivator for students who have grown up with technology and have highly developed skills. For them, it's just a normal part of life so pulling out an iPad just isn't going to excite them. But it does the older students who aren't used to learning in this way.

Danny's use of technology and justification of this reveal how the needs, skill level, and interests of his students influence his teaching. Rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach to technology, he adapts his pedagogy in very different ways in line with his perceptions of its potential value.

6.8.4 Routine practices

Danny describes himself as a 'creature of habit who likes the sense of security that comes from routine' (DI-1) and this is evident in his engagement with technology. Over time, he has developed a repertoire of activities which he uses regularly in his teaching and he seldom deviates from this. In addition to his use of social media outside class, and his teaching of digital skills, his other uses of technology are limited in terms of the type of tools and activities he uses and consist entirely of using the IWB to show PowerPoint slides (PPTs). Danny uses the IWB much like an old-fashioned overhead projector (OHP) in that he uses it to show items, rather than interactively. In several of the lessons I observed (D-O1; D-O2; D-O3), he had some pre-prepared PPTs which he used to present information visually. This included explanations of grammar, gap-fill activities, discussion tasks and instructions for games. He also used it spontaneously, searching google for images to clarify lexis when a verbal description was insufficient (DO-1; D-O5; D-O6). Danny recognises that he is not making the most of the IWB and attributes this, in part, to a lack of knowledge and skill:

I'm sure there are loads of ways of using the interactive whiteboard to do fancy things, but I've no idea how. I did attend a training session after I first arrived but it was really short and not hands-on and I'd forgotten it all as soon as I left the room.

However, Danny admits that he could ask for help from colleagues if he wanted to, and that the college does offer sessions on IWB use on regular occasions which are open to him. This suggests, therefore, that there are other factors which prevent him from developing his own skills and there appears, therefore, to be a contradiction between Danny's desire for his students to develop their skills with technology and his own reluctance to do the same. A later comment denotes that his lack of engagement with the IWB may relate to a sense of contentment in his own practice and a reluctance to embrace change:

I think I've found what works for me in terms of my own technology skills and activities that I think are useful, and have some benefit for my students, and I don't really deviate much from this. I'm happy with what I do and there's a sense

of comfort and security that I get from that. And to be honest, I think I do enough with tech. You know, it's just one tool we have among many and while I think it has value, so do all the other things I do that don't involve it. I think sometimes that people, policymakers, managers etc, forget this. You have to turn on your critical thinking skills when you use it, not just assume that it will automatically help your students. It won't. (D-I-7)

Danny also highlights the challenge of working in FE and how the working environment can act as a deterrent to innovation or change:

In FE I have the highest workload I've had at any point in my career. I teach twenty-seven hours per week, I plan my sessions, mark work, write schemes of work, deal with student problems (of which there are a lot incidentally), signpost them to other sources of help, attend meetings, do admin and have to deal with every new initiative that the government throws at us. It's exhausting and there just isn't really time left to do anything else. There's no time to think, let alone learn how to do something new. (D-I4)

Danny acknowledges, therefore, that there is an element of tactical compliance in his IWB use as it allows him to box-tick and demonstrate regular technology use, thus meeting institutional requirements. For Danny, routine practices allow him to provide learning opportunities which correspond with his pedagogic beliefs, but also manage the demands of his workload and institutional expectations.

6.9 Summary

Like Sally and Aisha, Danny's early learning experiences had a profound effect on Danny's classroom practice, inculcating in him a didactic, grammatically-oriented approach to teaching. However, his informal experiences of learning Indonesian immersively in adulthood also shaped his practice significantly and ultimately led to the rejection of his traditional grammar-based teaching and the adoption of more communicative approaches. The pedagogy which emerged as a result of this is underpinned by a belief in the importance of rich input, opportunities to use language for meaningful interaction and affective engagement. Much of this is reflected in Danny's engagement with technology. He values technology for its ability to provide access to

input and output opportunities outside class, as the opportunities for personalised learning that this can create. He also considers the lack of digital skills as a barrier to opportunity, hence his willingness to teach digital skills despite his lack of confidence in doing this. He recognises, however, that technology is only one tool of many which teachers have at their disposal and must be treated with the same level of criticality as any other pedagogic tool.

In the next chapter, I will examine Sally, Aisha and Danny's stories together, highlighting the similarities and differences which exist between them.

Chapter 7: Cross-narrative analysis and discussion

7.1 Introduction

In chapters four, five and six, I presented a narrative analysis for each of my participants, and told the individual stories of their professional lives, with a particular focus on their use of technology. In this chapter, I will discuss the differences and similarities between these teachers' cognitions and practices in relation to technology, and how they developed. I will do this by using Borg's (2006) model of elements and processes in language teacher cognition as a conceptual framework by examining each of the following themes and their relationship with cognition and practice:

- a) schooling
- b) professional coursework
- c) classroom practice and contextual factors

I do not separate classroom practice and contextual factors in my discussion as there are some instances in which they are inextricably linked, and therefore are not easily separated. This reflects Borg's framework in which context is situated around classroom practice, rather than as a separate category.

7.2 Teacher cognition and schooling

As I outlined in chapter 2, there is significant evidence of the impact of teachers' schooling on their classroom practice (Bailey et al, 1996; Borg, 2003, 2006; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Flores & Day, 2006; Johnson, 1994; Lortie, 1975; Moodie, 2016; Numrich, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Sheehan and Munro, 2019). In this section, I will explore how my participants' own schooling has influenced them professionally and also highlight the significance of other, informal learning experiences.

None of my participants made any reference to the use of technology in their early schooling. In the case of Sally and Danny, who were in their forties and fifties at the start of data collection, this is unsurprising as digital technology did not become a feature of typical UK secondary schools until much later. Aisha was in her twenties at

the start of data collection and she attended school in the late 1990s and early 2000s when IWBs were becoming more commonplace in schools, although availability in schools was still variable this point and in 2004 37% of primary schools in England and Wales still did not have an IWB (Gillen et al, 2006). When asked about her recollections of her teachers' engagement with technology, Aisha commented that she remembers IWBs being installed in some classrooms, but she does not remember her teachers using them.

The absence of technology in Sally, Aisha and Danny's formal schooling may give the impression that their early learning experiences have no relevance to this particular study. However, there is evidence in all three narratives of the impact of their early learning experiences on their cognitions and later professional practice. Sally's visit to Spain as a young child, for example, and her first utterance in Spanish, had a profound effect on her. It led her to conceptualise language as a tool for communication and by extension, view the goal of language teaching as the development of communicative ability. Aisha's experience of learning Bengali within her extended family also influenced her view of the nature of language learning. Learning through immersion, with no explicit focus on grammar impressed upon her the importance of exposure to language and opportunities to use it for meaningful interaction. Her occasional lack of accuracy in Bengali also instilled a sense that an overt focus on grammar can be a useful part of language teaching, though it is not essential. These informal experiences and the beliefs they engendered exert a considerable influence on their views about teaching and their later practice. Indeed, Aisha posits; "I think learning Bengali really laid the groundwork for the kind of teacher I wanted to be" (A-17) while Sally describes the incident in Spain as "the start of my identity as a language teacher" (S-11). These stories corroborate Attia's (2014) assertion that teachers "do not enter the profession as blank slates" (p. 13) and that they carry with them experiences which shape their beliefs. This is a significant finding as much previous research has focussed largely on the impact of formal learning experiences whereas this suggests that informal language learning can be equally, and perhaps more, influential. It is notable that Aisha and Sally still maintain these beliefs now, indicating the potential strength of beliefs formed in childhood.

Sally, Aisha and Danny's formal schooling also played a significant role in their development of subsequent cognitions and practices. Danny's teachers relied heavily on traditional grammar translation practices and his success in language learning resulted in him imitating this approach in his own early practice, basing his lessons around grammatical and sentence level activities. So powerful was the impact of these early experiences, that they remain unchallenged by Danny even in the face of evidence which questioned their efficacy, namely his inability to communicate effectively during his undergraduate year abroad, and discussions of other methodologies on his CELTA course. This appears to corroborate Lortie's (1975) suggestion that teachers teach as they were taught following years spent as pupils in schools. It also echoes Phipps and Borg's (2009) contention that new experiences and information are filtered by beliefs formed early in life. However, although Danny's early teaching is characterised by default teaching practices linked to his schooling, he experiences a significant change in his cognitions and practices later in his career. This reveals that the impact of the apprenticeship of observation may not be permanent, though it may be more influential in the practice of novice teachers whose beliefs are not yet shaped by experience working as a teacher.

In contrast, Sally and Aisha's stories reveal evidence of Moodie's (2016) notion of the anti-apprenticeship of observation. Moodie argues that negative learning experiences lead to a desire to do something different to their teachers and that this develops into a belief about how teaching should be. While Danny felt positively about his schooling, Sally and Aisha were more critical of their teachers and the methodologies they used. Sally, for example, regarded her teacher's traditional approach to teaching as "neglecting speaking in favour of dull and boring grammar" (S-I2) while Aisha felt that her poor progress in French was "due to the lack of interaction in class and the constant use of English" (A-I1). These negative experiences reinforced their existing cognitions about the importance of interaction and communicative competence in language teaching and led to them rejecting these type of practices in their own pedagogy: "I wanted to teach differently to my teachers. I wanted to be better" (S-RM).

There is also evidence here of the cumulative effect of experience on the development of beliefs. Both Sally and Aisha had positive experiences of language learning before they started school and when their schooling did not conform with their existing cognitions about language teaching, they viewed them negatively which further confirmed their beliefs. This may augment Kagan's (1990) contention that the earlier beliefs are formed, the more difficult they are to change. For Sally and Aisha, the formation of beliefs pre-school is highly significant as it colours their later perceptions of teaching at school.

My participants' narratives of their early schooling highlights how both positive and negative experiences can shape teachers' cognitions and later, inform their practice. Although these experiences do not relate to technology specifically, they are relevant to this study as teachers' technology use does not exist in a vacuum: they make pedagogical choices based on a complex range of factors which include their broader beliefs about language learning (Li, 2017), and use technology in ways which support their existing beliefs (Ding et al, 2019). Of particular significance in these findings is the role that informal early learning experiences can play in influencing cognitions about language learning. Therefore, this expands Borg's (2006) category of schooling to encompass all forms of early engagement with a second or foreign language. This section highlights the value of narrative inquiry in the investigation of teacher cognition as it sheds light on factors which have influenced teachers at different stages of their lives.

7.3 Teacher cognition and professional coursework

In chapter 2, I discussed literature relating to the impact of professional coursework on teachers' cognitions and practice. Though findings are mixed, there is some evidence that teacher education programmes can lead to a change in beliefs and classroom pedagogy (Borg, 2011; Caraboglu and Roberts, 2000; Wyatt, 2009). In relation to technology use however, research reveals that many teacher education programmes have little impact on technology practices and do not lead to ongoing changes in

pedagogy (Hu, 2015; Khokhar & Javaid, 2016; Park & Son, 2020; Son and Windeatt, 2017; Tondeur et al., 2017).

My research supports previous studies which indicate the limited impact teacher education has on technology use, and all my participants are critical of the initial teacher education (ITE) and/or continuing professional development they have engaged with. As the youngest participant, and the one who qualified most recently, Aisha is the only participant whose ITE included explicit reference to technology but she recalls this as being limited to two sessions on using the IWB. This training had little impact due to the way it was delivered:

The tutor stood at the front and showed us all the different ways that the board could be used, but it was basically a lecture and we didn't get to try it out ourselves so I couldn't remember what happened the following day, never mind months later when I actually got a job (A-I3).

The absence of opportunities to try out technology, and the negative impact of this, is also highlighted by Danny whose describes instantly forgetting what he had been shown during a 'hands off' in-house training session on the IWB. This corresponds with Fathi and Ebadi's (2020) study in which teachers reported feeling ill-prepared to use technology in their teaching as they had not had sufficient time to practice it in their training. This highlights the importance of practically-oriented training which allows teachers to explore hard- and software themselves, and over time.

Another theme which emerges from this study is a lack of subject specific training relating to ESOL. Most of Sally, Aisha and Danny's formal training opportunities come from in-service, in-house training offered to all staff within their organisation and which was generic in nature. Their reflections on this training reveal a deep level of dissatisfaction with its relevance to their work. This stems partly from a belief that the training did not take into account the needs of teachers working with students who may have limited experience with computers, or whose ability to use technology may be hampered by their literacy levels (Van Deursen and Van Dijk, 2016). In addition to this, their training did not focus on issues of language teaching pedagogy, but on the use of a specific tool without reference to its potential pedagogic uses. All my participants

complained that their training left them unclear about how technology could be used to support language learning and therefore disregarded it. For Sally in particular, generic training served to confirm her existing belief that technology was neither necessary nor relevant to her practice. This highlights the importance of training which takes into account the actual teaching context, and helps teachers to consider how it might be applied in their own setting (Gönen, 2019). These findings have particular significance for teacher education in the field of ESOL specifically, as distinct from EFL or mainstream FE. The dearth of research into ESOL teacher education within the sector means that little is known about teachers' experiences of ITE or CPD and the extent to which it prepares teachers for the realities of working with the sector. However, this suggests that the training my participants have engaged in did not adequately prepare them to deal with the complex interplay between ESOL students' linguistic proficiency, literacy levels, and computer competence. Consequently, this has impacted their ability to use technology in their teaching.

There is evidence of considerable mismatch between teachers' beliefs about language learning and their use of technology in their early practice and it seems likely that this is associated, at least in part, with a lack of subject specific training relating to its use. All the teachers advocate the use of communicative approaches to language teaching which emphasise meaningful interaction over grammatical form. Despite this, an examination of Sally and Aisha's early use of technology reveals that they used it in ways which did not promote language use, and instead focused largely on controlled practice of discrete grammar points and some receptive skills work. In Sally's early technology use, this was partly associated with tactical compliance in which she did the minimum to tick a box, but no more. However, when she started to engage with technology more willingly, she struggled to find ways to do so that were aligned with her broader practices. Although Sally and Danny in particular, doubted their technical competency, they all possessed digital skills which could have been used to promote language use, but lacked knowledge of how to do so. This supports Reinder's (2009) and Li's (2017) assertion that training is unlikely to lead to change if it focuses on technical skills rather than pedagogy.

However, there is evidence within my study of the benefits of teacher education, albeit indirectly. Danny, for example, actively avoids taking a module on his MA TESOL due to his perception that it is not a mainstream part of teaching and therefore has no relevance to his practice. Although there was very little reference to technology on the modules he did study, his awareness of its potential benefits increased due to his interactions with others on the course, and therefore led to a change in his cognitions. Egbert et al (2002) contends that peer support is the main source of teacher learning about technology outside professional coursework, but this indicates that peer-to-peer learning can also take place during training and may be more powerful in the absence of formal instruction.

Aisha's ability to use technology in her practice also progresses during her initial teacher education, though like Danny, this does not stem from the course content or assessment. Instead, the support of an informal mentor in her teaching placement is crucial in her development. By shadowing an experienced teacher, observing his practice and engaging in professional discussions, Aisha "plugs the gaps from the course" (A-RM) and increase her understanding of how technology can be used for language teaching and learning. As these experiences are positive, they precipitate a strong belief in the importance of technology in TESOL, which is reflected in her eager use of technology post-qualification.

Danny and Aisha's positive learning experiences during teacher education occurs around the edges of their training rather than in formal classes and it is the presence of more knowledgeable teachers which becomes the starting place of their knowledge and beliefs about technology. This data highlights, therefore the impact of peer support during teacher education courses and supports the notion that inexperienced teachers can be positively influenced by more experienced teachers' use of technology (Richards and Pennington, 1998; Stockwell, 2022).

7.4 Teacher cognition and classroom practice

In this section I will explore teachers' classroom practices, cognitions and the relationship between them. This reflects a substantial body of literature which highlights

their “symbiotic relationship” (Foss & Kleinsasser 1996 p.441). Key themes which emerge from the data include: authenticity; the development of digital skills; differentiation; routine practices; institutional issues, and factors facilitating change.

7.4.1 Authenticity

A key theme emerging from the data relates to the notion of authenticity. All three teachers in this study talk of the importance of lessons which promote communication and authenticity. This reflects the dominance of communicative approaches to language teaching such as CLT and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) which have become dominant over the past 40 years (Littlewood, 2013). The goal of such approaches is to develop students’ communicative competence which is defined by Hymes (1972) as a combination of a speaker’s linguistic knowledge and their ability to apply this appropriately in different settings. Communicative approaches do not represent a fixed teaching method, but a set of broad principles which inform curriculum design, lesson activities, and the provenance and use of teaching materials (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). How CLT is implemented can vary and it is often conceptualised in two ways: a ‘strong’ version of CLT involves students “using English to learn it” Howatt (1984, p.279) and has little, if any, overt teaching of language structures and instead focuses on providing opportunities for student to interact in English. In contrast, in a weak version of CLT students are “learning to use” (p.279) English and typical activities include explicit linguistic focus combined with activities which are designed to allow students to practise this language through meaningful interaction. However, although CLT can be interpreted and applied in different ways, there are core principles which underpin it (Richards, 2006) and these include a high degree of interaction in class and a focus on exposure to, and use of, language for everyday purposes. This connection between classroom and real life communication is also achieved, where possible, through the use of authentic materials and tasks which relate to learners’ everyday lives and the potential contexts in which they will use the language.

Sally, Aisha and Danny’s commitment to communicative approaches to teachers is evident throughout their classroom practice and they all cite opportunities for students to

engage with authentic texts and/or tasks as the most significant benefit of their technology use. The term authenticity is widely debated in language teaching literature and Gilmore (2007), for example, highlights the wide range of definitions of the term. While some definitions relate specifically to language, other are broader and include reference to tasks, assessment and culture. My participants all conceptualise authenticity as relating to both language and tasks. Aisha for example, describes authenticity as “real life texts and real life tasks” (A-I1) while Sally defines it as “language used to communicate a genuine message and tasks which are done in the real world” (S-I1). Danny offers a similar definition, referring to authenticity as

language used for a real life purpose rather than for teaching, and activities which require a learner to do something that they could do in real life, where the focus is on actually doing something rather than the language used (D-I2).

Their reference to both language and tasks is significant here because it reflects their belief that language learning requires both input and output, and this is reflected in their technology use.

Sally and Aisha both place a great deal of value on the importance of authentic input in their pedagogy and view technology as an essential factor in promoting this. Through their use of the internet in particular, they provide regular opportunities for exposure to real life language which, they contend, is crucial in helping students to develop their ability to use language in their everyday lives. Their beliefs correspond with Tomlinson and Masuhara (2017, p.31) who claim that authentic texts “can provide the rich and meaningful exposure to language in use which is a pre-requisite for language acquisition.” In addition, there is a strong sense from all participants that ESOL learners’ situation as migrants living in an English speaking country requires a particular emphasis on authenticity and they all stress the importance of students being able to deal with authentic language in their everyday lives. Their technology use therefore, reflects their broader beliefs about language learning, thus echoing Davis et al’s (1989) claim that teachers are more likely to use technology if they see its relevance and usefulness in achieving their pedagogic goals.

Chappelle (2010) notes that technology provides access to a much greater range of resources than could ever be found in a coursebook and Sally, Aisha and Danny all consider this to be one of the main benefits of technology as it allows teachers to respond to the needs and wants of their students:

No matter how niche a topic is, you can always find something to help you on the Internet. One of my ladies' groups once asked me to do a session on language for going to the orthodontist as a lot of their children needed braces. I knew nothing about it but the internet did. (A-I4)

Aisha's statement here reflects Mishan's (2005) assertion that authentic input is motivating if it is chosen to address the specific needs of students. Danny is more circumspect however, and contends that the ability of a text to arouse students' interest and desire to interact is more important than its authenticity. Although Danny uses his Facebook groups to provide links to authentic videos and texts, his priority is not the authenticity of language which they provide, but their ability to engage students. Danny's social media use is based on the belief that it provides students with opportunities for authentic language use beyond the confines of the classroom and that this aids language development. Accordingly, his priority is the provision of texts which are engaging rather than simply authentic in nature. By encouraging students to respond to each other's posts and upload their own content, he attempts to enact his belief in the importance of task authenticity as a pre-requisite for language learning. However, although Danny's tasks have the potential for authentic communication by learners, his instructions to students reveal a tension between his goal of authentic language use and request that students use accurate language and avoid emojis shifts the focus towards form rather than simply meaning. Stickler (2022) notes that the rise of networked communication has led to a shift in the nature of written language and that when placing "a language-learning event on the authenticity scale, this change needs to be taken into account, rather than measuring online language use against an outdated pre-digital form of the target language" (p. 24). Danny's insistence on standard written forms may imply a lack of awareness of these changes or be evidence

of the legacy of the grammar-oriented approaches to teaching he was committed to in his early career.

Authenticity of task is another key feature of Sally, Danny and Aisha's practice.

Tomlinson (2017) defines an authentic task as: "one in which the learners perform a real life task which is meaning focussed, has a communicative purpose and aims to achieve intended effects (p. 13). Sally, Aisha and Danny all use technology to facilitate such tasks, though they operationalise this in different ways. Tomlinson differentiates between various types of authentic task. The first is one which takes place outside the classroom and does not require input from the teacher. Danny's social media use is an example of this as students are encouraged to post content themselves, not just respond to Danny's input. Sally's on-the-fly technology use is also evidence of this kind of task as students are encouraged to use their mobile phones whenever they need to in lessons and they regularly use this to search for the meaning of lexis (S-O2) or find out more information about a topic they are studying (S-O4, S-O5). Tomlinson's second type of authentic task occurs within the classroom and is designed to imitate an activity from real life. Aisha regularly uses this type of activity with her community-based, adult classes, using pedagogic tasks centred around real life mobile apps to practice using language in real life situations such as finding train timetables (A-O8), or searching for properties to let within a specific budget (A-O7). Danny's digital skills lessons also feature this type of activity as students are required to practice their skills in a real world task such as managing a family budget (D-O2). Although Sally, Aisha and Danny use authentic tasks in slightly different ways, their pedagogy is a reflection of firmly held beliefs about the importance of authenticity in language teaching.

This section has highlighted that there is significant alignment between teachers' broader beliefs about language learning, their beliefs about the benefits of technology and their actual practices. Their technology use is driven by their overall commitment to communicative approaches to teaching rather than by the technological tools they have available (Stickler 2022). As technology enables them to enact their beliefs easily and efficiently, they regard it positively and value its use in their teaching.

7.4.2 The development of digital skills: a quest for social justice?

A lack of competence in English is often linked with both poverty (National Institute for Adult and Community Education, 2006) and social exclusion (Casey, 2016), a phenomenon which Levitas et al (2007) describe as an inability to access the services, resources and activities which are available to other members of a community. All three participants in this study demonstrate an awareness of how their students' language level impacts their ability to engage fully in society. For Aisha, this is linked with her own family situation and her desire to ensure that her learners have more opportunities and face less isolation than her grandmothers' generation:

My grandmas spoke very little English, even after being here for years and it really stopped them from integrating or having the chances other women their age had. It makes me sad to think what they could have been if they'd had more chances. I want my students to have more choices than they did. (A-RM).

Sally also expresses concern about the impact of poor language skills on students' social and economic mobility:

If students have a reasonable language level, I mean, one that allows them to communicate easily in everyday life, they will have so many more opportunities than those who are stuck at lower levels. Those people just can't get out and do the things everyone else does because language is always a barrier. (S-RM)

However, Ward (2007) notes that social exclusion is seldom attributable to one single factor such as language, and that there are other elements which contribute to this.

This is echoed by Hill Collins and Bilge (2016) who assert that:

When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. (Hill Collins and Bilge, p.2).

Indeed, existing research highlights the intersectionality which exists between social exclusion, poor language skills, poverty, low level literacy, limited digital skills and digital poverty (El-Metoui and Graham-Brown, 2021; Higton et al, 2019; Stone et al, 2020; Van

Deursen and Van Dijk, 2016). In particular, issues relating to technology are increasingly highlighted as impeding the ability of some citizens to participate fully in everyday life, particularly as access to information and services are increasingly moved online by the government and local councils (Vollmer, 2019). If people have neither the ability nor resources to access the internet, they may not be able to access essential services, thus leading to “a growing social and economic gap between those who are connected and those who are not, the ‘digitally excluded’” (Williams et al, 2016, p.758). As I outlined earlier in section 2.14, immigrants whose first language is not English are more likely to be part of this digitally excluded group due to their low income and lack of access to digital resources. Thus, as Court (2014) notes, ESOL learners “may have rights to access and participate in aspects of society, but they may not have the capabilities to function within these” (p. 17).

All three participants in this study show awareness of how poor language and digital competence can impact their students socially and financially, though their response to this varies in terms of their classroom practice. Aisha and Danny’s narratives both demonstrate a strong sense of social justice, defined by Ward (2007, p.12) as the “drive to combat social exclusion” and this informs key aspects of their practice. Specifically, they try to embed digital skills into their ESOL classes as they consider this vital in overcoming the barriers that many of their students may face due to the combination of low language and IT proficiency. Aisha, for example, highlights the link between language and technology as follows:

Technology and language are both essential skills in this day and age. Without knowledge of one of those things, your life chances reduce dramatically. If you don’t have both, you’re pretty much screwed. But technology can help language learning and language helps with technology so if you can teach both, you’re really making a difference to people’s lives. (A-I4)

Aisha’s conviction about the interrelationship between language and technology and their significance in society means that she embeds digital skills in many of her ESOL classes. Danny takes a similar view, explicitly teaching aspects of technology use such as email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, as well as technologies used for communication

such as Skype and Facebook, because he believes that they aid language learning and help people to engage in society more fully.

Aisha and Danny demonstrate a belief here that technology and language are mutually influential, with each aiding the other thus forming a virtuous circle. In turn, this belief drives their practice and leads them to embed digital skills into their lessons. The strength of this belief is evident as both Danny and Aisha admit to not enjoying this aspect of their teaching, but they endure it because they believe it benefits their students.

Their commitment to helping students to develop their linguistic and digital skills appears to demonstrate a belief in ESOL as a source of individual empowerment (Brown, 2021): namely, if classes enable students to become more IT literate and speak better English, they will be able to function more effectively in society and fulfil their goals. However, they operationalise this in very different ways. While Danny asks students directly about their the digital skills they wish to practise and plans his sessions accordingly, Aisha takes a broadly top-down approach in the planning of their curriculum as it is she, rather than the students, who decides the content of their lessons. She notes:

I choose things that I think will be useful. Things I know they'll need in their day-to-day lives. I think about what I do and use that as a starting point to think about what they'll need. (A-11)

Brown (2021) is critical of such an approach, arguing that it can disempower students and subject them to a passive role as the teacher “dispenses knowledge according to perceived learner needs” (p. 875) and students have little or no say in their own learning experience. He advocates instead curricula which allow content to be negotiated between students and teachers and thus make space for the ESOL learners’ voices to be heard. The notion of voice is central to theories of social justice, with Fraser (2008) arguing that barriers to participation in society cannot be overcome if people do not have the right or ability to take part in discussions or decisions which affect their lives. This is further echoed in the work of Cooke and Simpson (2009) who note that immigrants are often not ‘audible’ (p.2). This inaudibility is not caused only by linguistic

ability, but because they lack “the knowledge, skills and education that are valued by the dominant or hegemonic group” (p.2) and are, therefore, silenced. It could be argued therefore, that although Aisha attempts to address some of the issues facing ESOL students, her actions also perpetuate the lack of agency which is experienced by many in marginalised groups.

There appears, therefore, to be a tension between Aisha’s desire to enable students to more choice and opportunity in their daily lives, and the lack of choice she provides them with in her classroom. It is important to note here, however, that although Aisha’s approach does not involve negotiation of content with students, it does involve her reflecting “on the material conditions of learners’ lives and experiences” (Cooke et al, 2015) and she attempts to address this in her lessons:

I don’t really ask my students about what they want to learn because how can they know which technology they need when they don’t know anything about technology? I get to know them, and learn about their lives, and I can use that knowledge, together with my own, to make a course that does actually meet their needs. (A-I3)

It is evident, therefore, that both Danny and Aisha recognise how poor digital skills can impact ESOL students’ lives and that they attempt to counteract this through their teaching, albeit in different ways.

This findings have several implications. Firstly, this supports the claim that teachers’ cognitions shape their practice (Borg, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Kubaniyova, 2012; Pajares, 2013; Richardson, 2003; Tsui, 2003; Woods, 1996). Danny and Aisha believe that students will have more and better opportunities to participate in society if they develop digital as well as linguistic proficiency and they reflect this in their teaching by explicitly teaching IT skills. Secondly, this indicates that beliefs can change over time (Feryok, 2010) as Danny shifts from viewing technology as unnecessary to seeing it as a vital part of language teaching. Thirdly, it demonstrates how non-pedagogical beliefs can influence pedagogical beliefs. Pajares (1992) asserts that “humans have beliefs about everything” (p. 315) and that teachers have both general and pedagogical beliefs. Here, there is evidence that teachers’ practices are not only influenced by their

cognitions about teaching and learning, but also their broader beliefs about non-educational matters such as the role technology plays in society and the impact of digital exclusion on ESOL learners.

Unlike Aisha and Danny, Sally makes a conscious decision not to teach digital skills. Sally holds broadly positive views about technology, and believes that it can be highly beneficial for language learning. She also recognises that society is increasingly digitalised and that poor IT skills can restrict people's ability to engage fully with society: "Technology is so ingrained in our lives and if you can't use it, you'll really struggle to access services you need" (S-I4). However, despite this, she only encourages students to use technology if they already have the competence to do so effectively, and if they do not possess these skills, she actively avoids its use in class. Though there appears to be a contradiction between her beliefs about the value of technology and her reluctance to use it, this actually highlights the complexity of her belief system (Feryok, 2010) and how her decision making is underpinned by competing cognitions. Firstly, although she believes that technology can benefit language learning, she does not regard it as essential since it is possible to learn without it. Secondly, she acknowledges that digital skills are increasingly essential in society but regards the teaching of these skills as "someone else's job" (S-I1). This is evidence of a hierarchy of beliefs with stronger beliefs taking precedence over less firmly held beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2009). This suggests, therefore, that her conceptualisation of a teacher's role reflects a core belief which then outweighs a less firmly held belief about the value of technology and its significance in students' lives (Borg, 2012; Rokeach, 1968).

These findings reveal the influence of teachers' broader awareness of, and views about, society, technology and the particular challenges that face migrants in the UK. Aisha and Danny's sense of social justice drives their pedagogy, and even though they do not enjoy this aspect of their role, they are committed to it due to their belief in the importance of digital skills in today's world. This demonstrates how contextual factors outside the classroom can be as influential as those inside it, particularly when teachers are aware of the impact of digital inequality. It also highlights the dual role that teachers

may adopt as they try to prepare their students for life beyond the confines of the classroom.

7.4.3 Differentiation

Baynham et al (2007) highlight the heterogeneity of ESOL students stemming from differences in background, education, first language, literacy and language proficiency. They note that the responsibility for dealing with this diversity falls to classroom teachers who:

...are expected to show on their lesson plans that they are 'differentiating' between learners of different levels, and to cater to each individual's learning through an ILP³, which is intended to help learners meet their language learning goals through a series of SMART⁴ targets" (p. 29).

There is evidence that all of the teachers in this study value the role which technology plays in providing such differentiated learning activities. Sally describes its importance as follows:

You never get a group of students who are all at the same level, and often their levels are really different. In an Entry 2 class, you might have a student who has Entry 3 speaking and Entry 1 writing so they're placed in the middle of those skills, while someone else is Entry 2 speaking and Entry 3 writing. Those needs are so diverse that you constantly need to differentiate or they just won't get anything from the course. (S-14)

Sally translates this belief into practice by using technology in various ways. For example, she encourages students' to use their mobile phones whenever they need to in order to search for information or use online tools such as dictionaries. Her use of pre-planned sessions in a computer room where students typically work individually on grammar practice activities also offers differentiation as students can select the tasks they want to use. Although she expresses reservations about the value of these

³ Individual Learning Plan

⁴ SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related (from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)

activities as they appear to contradict her belief in communicative approaches to language teaching, they represent a different belief about the importance of differentiation and technology allows her to operationalise this. This reflects Feryok's (2010) assertion that cognitions exist within a complex system and that teachers actions are influenced by multiple beliefs at any one time (Phipps and Borg, 2009).

Aisha's early practice also involved the use of grammar websites and apps to offer differentiation, though unlike Sally, she has moved away from this approach in search of activities which promote more interaction, and her differentiation now relies mainly on output rather than task. While she describes technology as valuable in facilitating differentiated learning, there is less evidence of this in her current practice as much of her pedagogy involves whole group work rather than individualised learning. However, this may relate to her access to resources in her community classes in which she is reliant on students' bringing their own technology with them. As some of her students do not have their own devices, this limits her and their ability to use technology for individual work.

Danny's use of technology also reveals a desire to differentiate learning and his use of technology outside class reflects his agreement with Baynham et al's assertion that "The super-diversity of ESOL learners cannot be fully catered for by differentiation in the classroom alone" (p. 10). Stockwell (2022) comments that when students choose to use mobile apps of their own volition, their learning is likely to be less methodical. He suggests that students may simply select resources in the order that they appear in the app store or website, and evaluate tools based on superficial impressions of usability. Danny's use of curated lists of language learning websites and apps is an attempt to simplify students' access to suitable learning resources and in doing so, provide a range of opportunities for students' to engage with materials which reflect their own needs, wants and level. This reflects his belief in the importance of engagement with language learning outside class as well as differentiation. There is evidence therefore, that Sally, and Danny's use of technology to offer differentiate learning opportunities demonstrates a clear belief-practice alignment, while Aisha's ability to enact her belief may be constrained by resource issues.

7.4.4 Routine practice

The participants in this study all have access to the same type of technology when they are working on the main college campus and this includes computers, laptops, iPads, IWBs. In addition, students may have access to their own technology, typically in the form of mobile phones. However, the interviews and classroom observations reveal that they each have a strong preference for certain tools and activities and use these repeatedly. Danny, for example, uses computers and social media and makes limited use of the IWB. His use of these tools involve either the development of digital skills inside class or activities to support communication and differentiated learning outside class. Sally has a strong inclination towards the use of mobile phones in class and encourages students to use them for research purposes. Her use of computers provides individual language learning opportunities linked to websites and the VLE. Aisha's use of technology is largely limited to mobile phones, and some use of iPads. All teachers make some use of the IWB though this is used solely to present information rather than interactively.

This evidence of routine practices is perhaps linked partly to the stage they are at in their career. Their narratives reveal that they have all undertaken a journey of exploration in which they have experimented with different types of technology, discarded those they do not value and adopted the ones they do. They respond differently to the same technological tools as the “pedagogy of exploration and individualisation also means that not every tool will work for everyone” (Stickler, 2022 p. 31). Their current practice, therefore, represents pedagogic equilibrium: put more simply, they have found what works for them and are sticking with it. At earlier points in their professional lives, there was significant dissonance between their beliefs and practices which ultimately led to dissatisfaction with their use of technology. However, there is now evidence of much greater alignment. Sally and Aisha have been able to find a way of using technology which reflects their overall teaching approach and cognitions about language learning. Danny's practice also reflects his pedagogic beliefs but also extends his practice beyond the classroom which he did not do in his early

career. Thus it appears that technology does not drive their practice at this stage in their career, rather is selected on its basis to fit in with existing cognitions and practices (Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).

However, there are additional factors which may also influence teachers' reliance on specific tools. Li (2017) notes that teachers can only use the technology they have access to, and Aisha's practice is very much dictated by the lack of technology available in community settings (Higton et al, 2019, Stone et al, 2020) where she does much of her teaching. An absence of IWBs and computers in these venues means that she is reliant on students bringing their own devices, yet this poses challenges as some students do not have access to mobile technology, or may not have sufficient data to use them if the Wifi is slow or not working. This supports previous studies which highlight how access to resources can act as a barrier to technology use (Becta, 2004; Hu and McGrath, 2011; Gönen, 2019; Li, 2014; Merç, 2015; Pelgrum, 2001).

Sally and Danny also indicate that a perceived lack of time influences their choice of technology. While Bates (2015) claims that technology can save teachers time, many teachers in Further Education report that a lack of time acts as a barrier to technology integration (Education and Training Foundation, 2018a; Education and Training Foundation, 2019). Sally and Danny both acknowledge that they could learn more about technology but feel they lack the time to do so. Consequently, they rely on technology they know rather than attempting to learn how to use new tools, or use existing ones in different ways. This suggests that conditions in the sector may constrain teachers' ability to innovate and lead them to rely on familiar practices.

7.4.5 Institutional issues

All the teachers in this study report feeling pressurised into using technology due to institutional policies which require it to be embedded into all aspects of teaching. Though working in different institutions, there are clear similarities between each of their college's approach to technology use by academic staff. Firstly, they are all required to complete lessons plans and schemes of work which evidence "regular and sustained use of technology in teaching" (D-I4). Secondly, they describe these documents as

being scrutinised regularly to ensure compliance, and teachers who do not evidence this are urged to do so. Thirdly, all their colleges offer in-house training on the use of technology. This is undoubtedly a reflection of the wider national educational context, and the government's drive to develop the digital skills of both teachers and learners (see for example: FELTAG, 2014; Key Non Parliamentary Papers Education, 2019; UK Parliament, 2016). However, while these colleges may appear to promote the use of technology, data from my study reveals that the pressure on teachers' to use technology may actually hinder its use. Although the institutions which Sally, Aisha and Danny work in have all provided access to appropriate technology in most settings, the lack of availability of high quality, subject specific training has had a direct impact on their ability to use technology and, at certain points in their career, to do so effectively. This implies a techno-centric approach on the part of colleges as they focus on the provision of technology rather than the people who use it (Gutierrez, 2006) or the aims of language teaching (Stickler, 2022). This results in well-equipped classrooms but teachers who are unable to make the most of them.

Sally and Danny both state that it was institutional pressure which led to their using technology, rather than an intrinsic desire to do so. Repeated reminders to embed technology and a fear of the repercussions or not doing so meant that they had little choice but to comply. This pressure resulted in strong emotional responses from both of them. Sally felt a great deal of anger and frustration at being told how to teach and viewed this as a loss of agency, which Benson (2016, p. 18) defines as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act". Stockwell (2022) notes that external requirements to use technology can lead to teachers being reluctant users of technology and this apparent in Sally's story. The more college management pressurized her to use technology, the more angry she became, and in turn this led to even more entrenched views: "The more they told me to use it, the more I wanted to dig my heels in, and I refused to even countenance that they might be right" (S-I1). When she finally began to use technology, she did so grudgingly and did the bare minimum to evidence her adherence to policy. Her lack of training and knowledge about the potential benefits of technology and her resentment at mandated practice combined, therefore, to create a pedagogical approach which was incongruent with the rest of her

practice: “I did what I needed to do to tick a box, not what I thought was useful” (S-RM). Her initial use of technology represented a change in her practice, but not her cognitions resulting in this belief-practice dissonance. This appears to validate Borg’s (2003) contention that “behavioural change does not imply cognitive change” (p. 91). The pressure on Sally to conform and use technology because she is equipped to do so results in a significant mismatch between her broader practices and use of technology.

Danny’s story also reveal the impact of institutional policy on practice. Like Sally, he also began using technology because he was required to do so. Danny’s response to repeated demands from management engage with technology prompted initial annoyance but his overwhelming reaction was one of fear and anxiety as he lacked knowledge of how to use technology to teach and also doubted his technical skills. So great was the pressure to use technology that he fabricated lessons plans to show that he was using when this was not actually the case. Even as Danny began to formulate ideas of how to use technology, his fear acted as a brake and prevented him from doing so: “I wanted to try things out, but fear just held me back” (D-I3). This highlights the importance of emotional factors, and particularly confidence, in shaping teachers’ practice (Al-Awidi & Aldhafeeri, 2017; Kessler, 2007; Lam, 2000; Li, 2014; Li and Walsh, 2010; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al, 2010) and the “high emotional cost involved in making use of technology within one’s pedagogical practice” (Bennett, 2014, p. 929).

As Aisha was a willing and confident user of technology, she did not face the same struggles as Sally and Danny. However, as I noted in chapter 5, despite her college’s pro-technology stance, the lack of resources they provide to community venues limits her ability to adhere to their policies which again results in a lack of alignment between her cognition and certain aspects of her practice.

While previous research indicates that institutional support for the use of technology can be significant in helping teachers to use technology (Li, 2014), Sally, Aisha and Danny’s stories reveal a more complex picture of the relationship between cognition, practice and context. In particular, there is evidence that their practices are shaped by multiple cognitive, affective and contextual factors. Sally, Aisha and Danny’s early technology use in particular supports Stockwell’s (2013) argument that a teacher’s motivations to

use technology impacts the tools they adopt, and how they use them. While the provision of resources, training and opportunities for peer collaboration may facilitate technology use (Eickelmann, 2011; Li, 2014; Li & Walsh, 2010), teachers may be unlikely to use technology, or to do so effectively if they do not perceive its value in the context of their own teaching. In particular, an absence of training which focuses on the use of technology within a specific subject area may not lead to lasting change.

7.4.6 Factors influencing change

As the narratives featured within this study provide an account of teachers' use of technology throughout their careers, it is unsurprising that there is evidence of considerable change in both their cognitions and practices over time. The way each participant has changed and the factors which have affected this are unique to the individual. However, there are key themes which emerge in the data relating to this.

Firstly, this research indicates the importance of mentoring and peer collaboration in the development of teachers' beliefs and practices. For Aisha, this support came early in her career, and by observing a more experienced teacher, she gained a sense of how technology might benefit language teaching and the tools she could use to do this.

While Danny's immediate colleagues also struggled to integrate technology themselves, his ability to connect with colleagues from his MA course was crucial in his initial foray into technology use. In contrast, although Sally worked with colleagues to develop her initial Hot Potatoes online activities, their inexperience meant that she could not rely on them for guidance when she wanted to extend her practice, and instead relied in her own initiative and study. These experiences suggest that being mentored by a more experienced colleague can have a positive effect on a novice teacher's technology use (Richards and Pennington, 1998) and that without this, teachers may struggle to integrate it into their practice (Stockwell, 2022).

These interactions also indicate that certain personal qualities and characteristics may also facilitate change. Once the teachers in this study embarked on their journey with technology, they all sought help from others and thus demonstrate a willingness acknowledge their areas for development. This requires a certain level of vulnerability,

openness and honesty. Moreover, when presented with challenge, they all demonstrate considerable resilience in overcoming obstacles through their ability to reflect on, and critically analyse their practice and experiment with new approaches to teaching. This confirms Kang and Cheng's (2014) assertion that certain personal qualities help to facilitate a change in beliefs.

As I outlined in chapter 2, there is considerable evidence that teachers' beliefs shape their classroom practice (Deng et al, 2014; Ertmer et al, 2015; Fives and Gill, 2015; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). However, there is also a substantial body of research which indicates that classroom practice influences teachers' beliefs (Borg, 2003; Farrell and Ives, 2015; Kang and Cheng, 2014) and the significance of experience is also reflected within this study.

Sally, Aisha and Danny all undergo shifts in their beliefs and practices in their career and there is considerable evidence that both their personal and professional experiences influence these changes. Sally undergoes arguably the biggest change in attitudes, moving from the position that technology has no value in language teaching, to seeing it as a tool which can bring considerable benefits to the ESOL classroom. Initially reluctant to engage with technology, it is her experiences in her personal life, namely watching her son use German online, which precipitate the initial shift in her thinking. Watching his genuine engagement with another language allows her to reconceptualise the affordances that technology might provide. Once she starts to change her practice, her experiences in the classroom shape her views, as she acts on feedback from students and also adapts her practice in line with her own views of "what works" (S-I3). She notes that "Seeing is believing I suppose. You start to see how learners benefit from technology and it changes your thinking" (S-I3).

Aisha's cognitions about technology are also transformed through classroom practice. Despite her early enthusiasm for technology, her experiences working with younger learners led to her resent the disruption which the use of mobile technology appeared to cause in her lessons. Having assumed that technology was an essential part of teaching, her subsequent work with adults in a technology poor environment resulted in her questioning its necessity and she moved to a less extreme position. While she still

acknowledges the potential benefits of technology, she now concedes that it not a panacea, and its value is dependent on how it is used in a particular context. This change in belief has resulted in a change in pedagogy and more circumspect use of technology. This reveals how negative classroom experiences can affect attitudes towards technology and influence practice (Van Praag and Sanchez, 2015).

Danny experiences a more gradual change in his cognitions, but like Sally, this is influenced by both personal and professional matters. Despite his professed lack of confidence in his technical competence, Danny is a regular user of technology in his private life. Once he was prompted by colleagues to reflect on how everyday uses of technology might benefit language learners, he was able to reconfigure his understanding of the role technology might play in ESOL and adapt his practice accordingly. This supports Tour's (2015) assertion that teachers' personal and professional uses of technology are interlinked as teachers bring their knowledge of, and attitudes towards, technology to their classrooms and this influences their practice. Like Sally and Aisha, Danny's practice has helped to further shape his cognitions, confirming his beliefs that technology can act as a tool for genuine interaction and thus aid language learning. His belief in the importance of students' development digital skills is further reinforced by positive student feedback about the impact it has on their lives:

So many times, I've had students come to me and say that they've been able to book a blood test, or apply for a job because of the things we've done in class. And that's partly because of the language they've learned through coming to college, but also because of the work I've done on developing their IT skills. And that's the most powerful feedback you can ever get. I used to doubt what I was doing. I wasn't sure if I was neglecting ESOL in favour of IT skills, or if I maybe wasn't teaching the IT stuff effectively. But I don't have those doubts now because they tell me that it works and that's enough for me. It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks, it doesn't matter if the college think I'm not using technology enough. What matters is that the small bit I do actually works. It

actually makes a difference to my students' lives and that tells me everything I need to know. (D-17).

Through my discussion in this section, I have highlighted a number of factors which have facilitated changes in Sally's, Danny's and Aisha's beliefs and practices including peer collaboration, personal qualities and characteristics, teachers' personal use of technology, and their classroom practice. This demonstrates the interplay between internal and external factors (Ertmer, 1999) and supports the notion of a bi-directional relationship between cognition and classroom practice, with each shaping the other (Borg, 2003; Farrell and Ives, 2015).

7.5 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the key themes which emerged from an analysis of the three participants' narratives in terms of their cognitions about, and use of technology, and the factors which influence this. I began by discussing the role which schooling plays in the development of teachers' cognitions and argued that both formal and informal learning experiences exert a considerable influence over teachers' beliefs about language learning. In turn, these early experiences, which may be either formal or informal, can shape their later practice.

This chapter has also illustrated the importance how an absence of high quality, subject specific education and training left these teachers struggling to integrate technology into their practice. In particular, a lack of opportunities to use technological tools and consider how they might be applied within a specific language learning context constrained their ability to use technology in ways which reflected their broader pedagogic approach. However, my study revealed that interactions with peers during training events can influence teachers positively.

In the final part of this chapter I discussed the relationship between Sally, Aisha and Danny's cognitions and classroom practice and how they interact with contextual factors. I argued that there was a great deal of alignment between their current beliefs and practices, particularly in regard to their use of authentic texts and tasks, differentiation, and the development of digital skills. However, both now and in the past,

context mediates their ability to operationalise their beliefs. In particular, time and access to resources constrain teachers' ability to translate their beliefs into practice. Moreover, institutional pressure to use technology can lead to teachers using technology in superficial, ineffective ways if they lack the will or skill to embed it into their practice.

To conclude, this chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the key themes relating to teachers' cognitions about technology, their classroom practice and the factors which have influenced them. In my final chapter, I shall discuss the main findings from this study in relation to my research questions and the potential for further research in this area.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study investigated ESOL teachers' cognitions and practices in relation to technology use. Using Borg's (2006) framework for teacher cognition as a framework for my study, I aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What cognitions do ESOL teachers hold about the use of technology for teaching ESOL?
2. Which factors have influenced the development of these cognitions?
3. To what extent is there congruence between teachers' cognitions and practices?
4. If a lack of congruence exists, what factors prevents teachers from operationalising their cognitions?

In this final chapter, I will begin by summarising briefly the answers to these questions in light of my analysis in the previous chapters. I will then outline this study's contribution to knowledge. I will end the chapter with a discussion of its limitations and implications for future research and teacher education.

8.2 Teachers' cognitions about technology

As I outlined in chapter 2, the field of teacher cognition is characterised by a range of terminology and definitions which are used to describe teachers' mental lives. In this study, I have adopted Borg's (2006, p.1) definition of cognition which refers to what "language teachers think, know and believe – and of its relationship to teachers' classroom practices" and used this in my examination of teachers' cognitions about technology.

Sally, Aisha and Danny all hold largely positive views about the use of technology for teaching ESOL. This stems in part from their broader cognitions about language teaching. They all espouse similar beliefs about the purpose of language teaching and the nature of effective language instruction and in particular, place a great deal of

emphasis on the importance of authenticity in terms of both texts and tasks. In turn, they view technology in a largely positive way as they believe that it can help to facilitate these aspects of language teaching and thus operationalise their pedagogic goals. In particular, they value its ability to provide access to a wealth of authentic language via the Internet and the opportunity to engage in authentic tasks which require language input and/or output. These activities reflect their conceptualisation of the needs of ESOL students as relating primarily to the ability to use language in everyday situations. This corroborates previous research which indicates that teachers generally view technology favourably (Li, 2017)

All three participants also consider technology to be beneficial in meeting the diverse needs of ESOL students due to its ability to provide differentiated learning opportunities. Throughout each of their narratives, they highlight the importance of technology in affording individualised classroom activities through materials which are available via language learning websites or mobile apps. Like Sally and Aisha, Danny believes that online language learning sites have much to offer students in terms of providing additional learning opportunities, but he also heavily promotes their use outside class. Danny holds strong views about the benefit of technology in extending learning beyond the confines of the classroom. In particular, he considers the use of social media to be a valuable tool in developing students' language skills outside class as it allows opportunities for authentic language use as well as authentic input.

In addition to recognising the potential pedagogic benefits of technology, all three teachers also acknowledge the value of digital skills in the twenty-first century, and the role they play in today's world. Although Sally adopts a different stance from Aisha and Danny in her refusal to teach these skills to students, they are all in agreement that digital proficiency is a life skill and that poor digital competence can limit people's ability to engage fully in society. Danny and Aisha in particular show considerable awareness of the sociocultural backgrounds of their students and the potential impact of digital exclusion if students do not develop their digital skills.

However, despite recognising its potential benefits, Sally, Aisha and Danny do not see technology as inherently motivating for most students unless they have a particular

need to improve their digital skills. For younger learners and those with more advanced digital proficiency, they recognise that the ubiquitousness of technology means that it no longer has the novelty appeal that may have existed earlier in their careers and that its success depends not just on its existence, but on how it is used by teachers. Danny, for example, recognises that students need support in using online language learning tools as they may not be able to identify easily which are most suitable for their needs, while both he and Sally stress the need to teachers to consider the relevance of input rather than just its authenticity. Thus, my participants reject a techno-centric view of learning in which it is assumed that the use of technology will automatically lead to learning, and instead place teachers at the centre of the learning experience. They regard technology as having a *potential* benefit, but only if it is used in the right way: its value is not an absolute, innate quality, but one which depends on how it is used by a teacher or learner.

Moreover, although they all acknowledge the potential benefits of technology, they also agree that its use is not essential as language learning can still take place effectively without it. This is particularly true for Aisha who considers the value of technology to be highly context dependent. While she values its use with adult learners, she regards the use of technology with younger (i.e. teenage) learners as a disruptive force whereby students are unable to resist the allure of using their phones for non-pedagogic purposes such as social media. She considers the distraction caused by students' use of technology to outweigh its potential benefits and therefore abandons its use in these classes.

Overall, the teachers demonstrate a very balanced view of the use, value and impact of technology as they recognise its potential affordances but view it as just one of many tools they have at their disposal.

8.3 Factors influencing the development of teachers' cognitions

One of the benefits of narrative inquiry is the opportunity it affords to examine both current and historic events, behaviours and cognitions, and to explore how they have changed over time (Kouritzin, 2000; Roberts, 2002). My use of narrative has, therefore,

provided considerable insight into the development of my participants' cognitions and highlighted the complexity inherent in this. Their cognitions do not stem from one person, event, or period in time, but are influenced by multiple factors which combine to create an intricate and interwoven set of beliefs. These influences start in childhood, continue into adulthood, and are affected by both personal and professional factors. Moreover, over time, new experiences and reflections thereon, result in all the teachers in this study undergoing changes to their beliefs' system. For Sally and Danny this represents a shift from viewing technology as something which was irrelevant to their practice, to embracing it as a valuable part of their teaching. In contrast, Aisha adopts technology enthusiastically at the start of her career, assuming that its use will benefit her teaching. Gradually, however, she comes to view it with more scepticism, and while she still considers it to be of value at times, she views its potential in relation to the context of her teaching rather than as offering unqualified benefits. These findings are significant as they indicate that cognitions are not immutable as Kagan (1990) suggests, but can and do develop over time.

There are multiple other factors which influence the development of Sally, Aisha and Danny's experiences. One of the key findings in this study relates to the importance of teachers' childhood experiences in the formation of their beliefs about language teaching and learning. While these early experiences do not relate to technology, they shape teachers' understanding of what a language is for and how it can best be learned, and this in turn influences how they view and use technology. These influences come from a variety of sources and people. While Danny's formal schooling was the most significant factor in the development of his early beliefs, informal learning experiences had the most impact on Aisha and Sally, inside and outside the home respectively. Their early exposure to language learning outside school coloured their expectations of how language teaching should be and this left them critical of much of their formal education. While Lortie's (1975) notion of the apprenticeship of observation can be applied to Danny, it is Moodie's (2016) concept of the anti-apprenticeship of observation which can best be applied to Sally and Aisha as they actively sought to adopt different types of pedagogy than they had witnessed at school. This evidence

indicates that all the participants' early learning experiences left an indelible mark which influenced both their beliefs and practices in language teaching.

The narrative accounts of my participants reveal that teacher education has had minimal impact on their cognitions. However, Aisha and Danny were able to identify opportunities for learning during the courses, though these occurred on the periphery of the course through informal mentoring and peer support rather than through the actual course content.

This study also reveals the impact of teachers' personal lives on their beliefs about technology and their related professional practice. Sally's and Danny's cognitions about, and use of technology, are both heavily influenced by their engagement with it in their private lives. Sally's son's extra-curricular engagement with German via social media acts as a catalyst for belief change, as it allows her to envisage how it can be used to support language learning. This leads to a significant shift in her attitudes as she moves from viewing technology as irrelevant and unnecessary to seeing it as a tool which can promote learning. This then allows her to draw on her own personal uses of technology to plan how she might use it to encourage students' exposure to language. Danny's reflections on his own technology use also facilitates a change in both cognitions and practice. While he has a vague sense that technology might be useful, discussions with more experienced colleagues enable him to better understand it uses and convince him of its potential, but he does this through the lens of his own technology use.

Classroom experience also plays a significant role in the development of my participants' cognitions, albeit in different ways. For Sally and Danny, successful classroom practice cements their beliefs into place. Positive experiences in classes and good feedback from students provides assurance to them that their use of technology is of value to students and this serves to confirm their then tentative beliefs about the value of technology and this is strengthened over time. In contrast, Aisha's negative experiences using technology with younger learners causes a significant change in her cognitions. When her initial assumption that technology always benefits a learning environment is challenged by her students' behaviour, she questions its value and

develops a much more circumspect view of technology. This is further reinforced by the contrast with her older learners who learn effectively without any technology at all. This indicates the importance of classroom experience in the development of their cognitions.

8.4 Cognition-practice congruence and factors which influence this

In this section, I will explore the complex relationship which exists between teachers' cognitions and practice. As I highlighted in chapter 7, Sally, Aisha and Danny's current practices reveal a significant amount of congruence between their beliefs and practices. They all use technology in ways which reflect their wider beliefs about effective language instruction and more specific beliefs about technology. All the teachers believe that technology can provide opportunities for authentic language input and authentic tasks and differentiated learning and there is evidence of these activities in all of their practice. While Sally and Aisha concentrate on using technology in class, Danny's use of social media and his curated lists of language learning websites and apps reflects a wider belief about the importance of using language outside class and encouraging independent learning.

Aisha and Danny also hold strongly held convictions about the importance of digital skills in the twenty-first century and make concerted efforts to teach some of these skills explicitly as part of their ESOL lessons. Their focus on these skills is associated with a strong sense of social justice and an awareness of the impact of digital exclusion on people's lives. This reflects an awareness of ESOL learners' status as migrants trying to carve out a life in a community, rather than just as language learners. While Sally also holds similar views about the importance of digital skills, her reluctance to embed this into her teaching appears to present a contradiction between her beliefs and her practice. However, this represents a different set of beliefs relating to her role as a teacher and the boundaries she applies to this. This highlights the complexity of teachers' beliefs systems, and demonstrates how teachers hold multiple beliefs which can contradict each other, and those which are held with more conviction outweigh more peripheral beliefs.

However, there is also evidence of mismatches between beliefs and practices in both their historic and current practices. Reasons for this are complex but a key factor in this stems from a lack of appropriate training. In Sally and Aisha's early technology use, they both relied on activities which involved grammar practice and the manipulation of language which was at odds with their views about language teaching and their broader approach to teaching. This stems largely from a lack of high quality, subject specific training as neither of them had understood fully how they could use technology to support other aspects of their practice. Aisha was an enthusiastic user of technology at the start of her career. However, although she espoused beliefs about the value of technology in promoting authentic input and provide opportunities for interaction, much of her actual use of technology relied on controlled practice activities involving grammar websites or assessment activities using Kahoot. Her sense that good teachers use technology seemed to prevent her from evaluating the nature of the activities she chose to use: she had the technical skill to integrate technology, but lacked knowledge of how to apply technology to promote language learning. It was only as she became more experienced that she was able to examine her practice more fully and develop approaches more congruent with her practice. For Sally, the weight of management expectations forces her to use technology when she lacks the skill or will to do so and this results in her resorting to tactical compliance (Orr, 2011) and simply doing as little as possible in ways which do not reflect the rest of her practice. This stems in part from a lack of knowledge about technology, but also an underlying belief that technology has no place in her classroom. Arguably therefore, it is her avoidance of technology which is aligned with her beliefs about technology, while her enforced use of it leads to a mismatch between beliefs and practices. Danny also displayed little awareness of how to use technology in his early days in FE, though his "pedagogic subterfuge" (D-RM) allowed him some breathing space to until he was able to formulate a plan of use which aligned with his beliefs about language teaching.

Aisha's ability to use technology in ways that she feels are valuable are also constrained throughout her career by resources issues. In the early days of her career, working as an hourly paid, casual ESOL lecturer, moving from organisation to organisation on a regular basis, she often found herself without access to technology

simply because she did not have appropriate permissions to access systems or because she was unfamiliar with the hardware. In her current role, limited resources in the community venues where she works at prevent her from using technology in the way she wishes to do so. It is only through her commitment and resourcefulness that she is able to provide her students with some opportunities to engage with technology.

Overall, Danny displays a high belief-practice correspondence across his career. In contrast, Sally and Aisha's stories indicate a significant level of dissonance in their early career, but much greater alignment currently. This can be attributed in no small measure to their willingness to reflect critically on and challenge their practice, and to embrace change. By doing this, they are able to embark on a process of learning which allows them to find ways of using technology which reflects their beliefs about language teaching and learning, and their beliefs about technology.

8.6 Contribution to knowledge

The study was conceived to address the lack of up-to-date empirical research about ESOL teachers' engagement with technology in the FE sector. Despite the push towards the use of technology within the FE sector, little is known about if and how ESOL teachers use technology and the factors which impact this. Through this research, I have been able to shed light the cognitions and practices of three ESOL teachers with regard to technology and advance empirical knowledge in this area.

One of the most significant findings of this research project is the complexity inherent in the development of teachers' cognitions. Unlike previous studies which focussed on one single aspect of cognition development and its relationship with practice, such as teacher education (Borg, 2011) or early learning experiences (Attia, 2014), this study took a more holistic approach by exploring my participants' personal and professional life history and its impact on their professional practice. The findings reveal a myriad of forces which combine to shape teachers' attitudes towards technology and their use thereof. There is significant evidence in this research that the origins of teachers' cognitions are grounded in formal and informal learning experiences in childhood which shape their understanding of teachers and teaching. While much previous research has

highlighted the influence of teachers' formal schooling (Borg, 2006) this study corroborates Attia's (2014) argument that all early learning experiences can be influential.

During the teachers' professional practice, their cognitions are then further moulded through classroom practice, interactions with students and support from colleagues. In addition to the influence of professional experience, my findings also indicate the significance of teachers' beliefs about the wider world, in this case, matters relating to digital inclusion and social justice. This indicates that teachers' cognitions are inextricably intertwined with their broader life experiences: the human and the teacher cannot be separated. My choice to use narrative inquiry for this study was particularly fruitful in allowing me to explore the interrelationship between the professional and the personal, as well as changes over time.

This study's second key contribution to knowledge stems from its focus on the context of the FE sector. This research provides a unique insight into ESOL teachers' cognitions about, and uses of, technology and how they are mediated by the settings in which they work. It highlights the lack of high quality, subject specific training available to the teachers and how this prevents them from using technology, and/or from using it in ways which reflect their broader beliefs about language teaching. Even when teachers have sufficient technological skills, they are unlikely to use technology, or use it effectively if they do not understand both its potential benefits, and how it can be applied in their own teaching contexts. Moreover, while colleges mandate the use of technology in teaching, limited resources and a lack of time can act as a barrier to change and innovation.

My findings also support existing research which indicates the bi-directional nature of cognitions (Berry et al, 2009; Borg, 2006; Breen et al., 2001; Tondeur et al, 2009). While there is evidence here that teachers' cognitions influence their practice, the converse is also true. Teachers' initial practice is governed very much by their cognitions, but as they gain in experience, their experiences in the classroom helps to confirm, adapt or transform these beliefs. This suggests that experience brings with it a

greater possibility of changing beliefs as classroom interactions either strengthen or weaken existing beliefs, or give rise to new ones entirely.

8.7 Limitations of the study

This study has a number of limitations. Firstly, with only three participants in this research project, no claims can be made for generalisability. As their narratives indicate, each of the teachers has their own unique story which may not be relevant to, or indicative of, the experiences of others. While there are no doubt some similarities between their stories, it cannot be assumed that these teachers are representative of the FE sector. Moreover, as each individual is unique, so too are the contexts in which they work. As I have argued in chapter 7, the setting of the participants' workplace has a significant impact on the development of teachers' pedagogy as contextual factors mediate their ability to translate their beliefs into practice. While there may be some factors such as government interventions and professional standards which affect all teachers within the sector, there are significant differences between providers, particularly in relation to the availability of resources (Higton et al, 2019, Stone et al, 2020). Moreover, as there is a great deal of heterogeneity in ESOL classes (Baynham et al, 2007), individual classroom contexts, and the people they contain, will also influence how teachers select their chosen pedagogy. For this reason, one cannot assume that these findings can be generalised across the sector.

8.8 Implications for further research

This study sheds light on the beliefs and practices of three ESOL teachers in the FE sector in relation to technology use. The scope, scale and findings of the study indicate the potential for further research in the following areas:

- As this project was limited to only three participants, there is clearly potential for more research which may reveal a wider range of perspectives and experiences. In particular, the participants in my research all work for Further Education Colleges and do not reflect the range of providers within the FE sector. More research is needed therefore in order to explore how teachers across the sector navigate the use of technology within their own settings. In particular, exploring

the work of teachers in sixth form colleges who work with students aged 16-19 may yield insight into how the teachers approach technology with young adult learners. Insight into a broader range of contexts will be significant in uncovering the different ways teachers use technology and the factors which promote or hinder this.

- The findings of this study support previous research which indicates that a lack of relevant, hands-on, subject specific training can be a barrier to technology integration (Arnold and Ducate, 2015; Education and training Foundation, 2019; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2012; Guichon, 2009; Hubbard, 2008; Kessler, 2006; Stockwell, 2022). This highlights the need for more detailed investigation into the training which is available to both pre- and in-service ESOL teachers, and the nature of the learning opportunities they afford. In line with Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich's (2010) contention that the ever-evolving nature of technology means that teachers will never have a 'complete' knowledge of technology, this also implies that more research is needed into CPD opportunities as well as initial teacher education programmes. Investigating both the range and scope of training opportunities available, and the impact this has on teachers' ability and willingness to use technology, could then be used to inform the design of teacher education and training courses.
- The teachers in this study were all experienced, having at least three years of teaching experience at the start of the project. This suggests that more work may be needed to understand the experiences of novice teachers, either during their initial training, or in their first year of practice, and the factors which impact their cognitions about, and use of, technology.
- The focus on this research was on teachers' cognitions and practices and the findings reveal how teachers' views of students needs and interests influences their teaching, particularly with regard to the development of digital skills. Research into learners' perceptions of these same issues warrants further

investigation into order to understand the extent to which teachers are actually meeting their students' needs and interests.

This study provides an insight into how three ESOL practitioners view themselves as teachers. In particular, it highlights how teachers' identities are not fixed, but change over time in response to their experiences (Gee, 2001) and encompass not just who they are now, but who they were in the past and who they want to be in the future. This sense of identity is in turn linked to teachers' classroom practices as they try to enact their pedagogic beliefs. However, there is significant evidence in this study that teachers' agency, defined by Benson (2016) as their ability to act out their will in a particular context, is often constrained by the setting in which they work. There is scope for further work in this area, examining how FE ESOL teachers' professional identities develop, how they influence their work, and factors which may prevent teachers from operationalizing their beliefs.

8.9 Final reflections

In chapter 3, I noted that narrative inquiry can have a positive impact on participants, and quoted Johnson and Golombek (2002) who argue that examining teachers' experiences can act as a catalyst for self-development as it enables them to: "...act with foresight. It gives them increasing control over their thoughts and actions; grants their experiences enriched, deepened meaning and enable them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work" (pp.6-7). I agonized about the inclusion of this suggestion, worried that I might make myself a hostage to fortune. However, feedback from Sally, Aisha and Danny indicates that this experience has been worthwhile for each of them:

I can honestly say that this whole process has been bloody brilliant and I'm so glad I took part. I've learned so much about myself as a teacher and also about the kind of teacher I want to be for the rest of my career. I'm much more aware of my choices now, and the things that influence me. (S-17)

I've learned so much from doing this study, I really have. It's made me think about my life and teaching in a totally different way and I'm so glad I took part. (A-17)

This whole process has been amazing. I didn't think much about why I did things before, but I certainly do now. It's made me a much more critical practitioner. (D-17)

In turn, this process has also changed me, and made me reflect on my own practice and use of technology to support learning. Sally, Aisha and Danny's unwavering determination to improve their practice is inspirational. I am determined to do more. For that, I am truly grateful.

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Appendix 1: Recorded monologue instructions

Dear.....

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research. This study will involve:

- a recorded monologue
- observations of ESOL lessons
- interviews

The first element is the recorded monologue.

In the recording, **I would like you to tell me about your experiences using technology in teaching ESOL.**

Please note the following:

- This can be either an audio or video recording. Please choose whichever you feel most comfortable with.
- There is no length requirement, it can be as long or as short as you want.
- You can pause the recording if you need to and return to it later. This does not need to be completed in one sitting.

Once you have finished the recording, please let me know. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with me on s.munro@hud.ac.uk

Many thanks

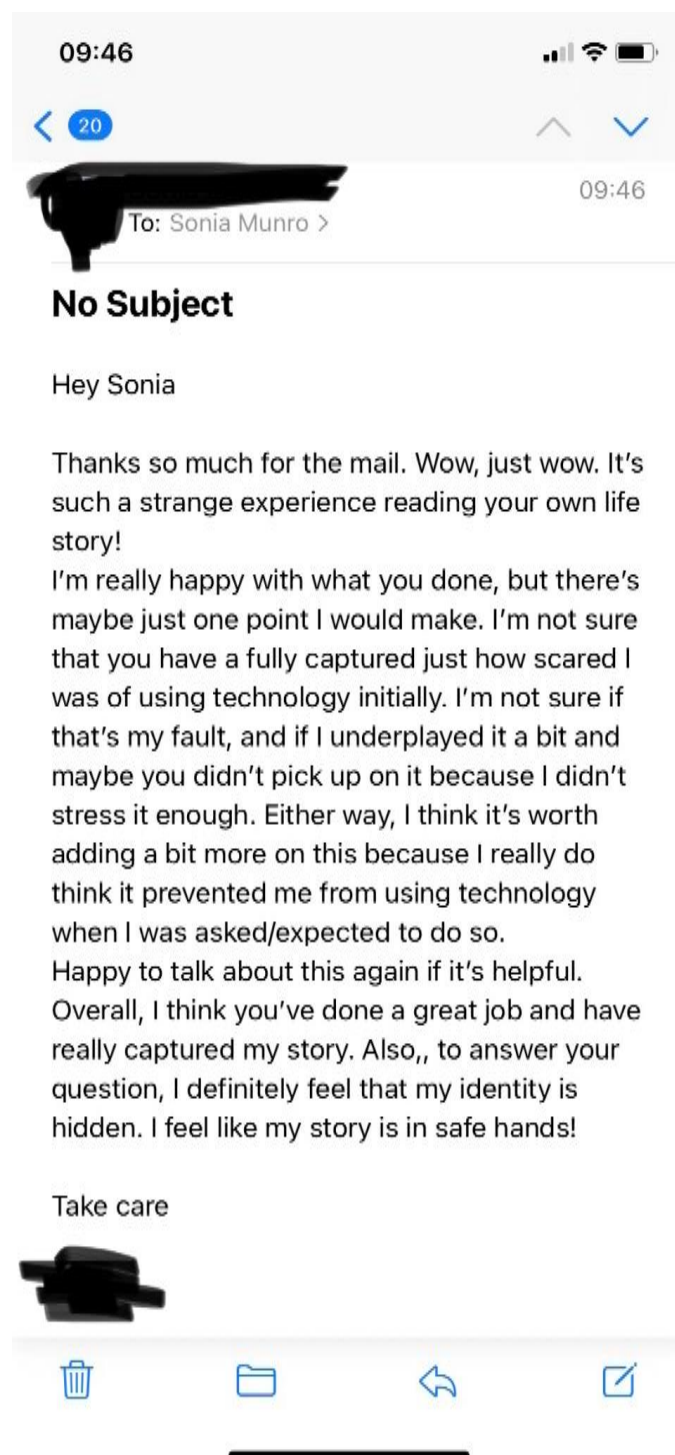
Appendix 2: Observation pro forma

Name: Lesson topic and level:

Date: Lesson plan provided: YES / NO

Classroom activity	Use of technology	Reflections/questions to follow up

Appendix 3: Email from Danny



Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

I am studying for a part-time PhD at the University of Huddersfield. I would like to invite you to consider taking part in my study which explores ESOL teachers' beliefs about, and uses of technology. Before deciding whether or not you would like to participate, it is essential that you understand;

- why the research is being conducted
- what taking part will involve

Please do read the information below carefully and feel free to ask me any questions that you have.

What is the aim of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore if and how ESOL teachers use technology, and the beliefs they hold about this. I am interested in what experienced teachers think about technology and its advantages and disadvantages in teaching ESOL. I am also interested in the ways ESOL use technology in their teaching and the factors which affect this.

Is participation compulsory?

No. you are not required to take part in this research and there will be no disadvantage to you if you don't take part. If you do take part, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

What does the research involve?

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to:

- Record a monologue about your experiences using technology
- Be observed teaching your usual ESOL classes
- Take part in approximately 5 interviews, each lasting 30 minutes.

Are there any risks involved in taking part?

Your participation in this research will not be made public. All data will be kept securely, anonymised and care taken to ensure your confidentiality.

What will happen to the findings from the study?

The findings will form part of my PhD thesis and any subsequent, associated publications.

Who can I contact if I need more information?

If you need any additional information, please contact me at the University of Huddersfield: s.munro@hud.ac.uk

I agree to take part in this study:(signed) Date:

Appendix 5: Exemplar of coding - extract from a recorded monologue (Aisha, A-RM)

This extract is taken from the beginning of Aisha's recorded monologue.

impact of
childhood on
later prof
practice

Okay Sonia, here goes, this is my story.

So, I'll tell you a bit about my background if that's okay, you know, my family and things, because I think it's probably quite relevant to my current work as a teacher. Well, I think so anyway.

As you know, I'm Asian and my family is originally from Bangladesh. My parents were born here, and me too of course, so it was my grandparents who came here first. And they came because they thought it would give them a better life, like lots of people at that time. And for me, I feel very fundamentally British, but I think that when you're a child of immigrants, that has a really big impact on you because even though you're British, there are aspects of your life that are different to a lot of the kids you're at school with, the white British kids I mean. For me, a big part of that difference related to language because Bengali was always part of my life from being a kid. My grandparents had been here since the '60s but my grandmas in particular didn't speak much English. My granddads were better, mainly because they had to be because they had jobs while the women were stuck at home. So, my childhood was one of two languages because I was brought up speaking English as my first language, but I had this ongoing exposure to another language at home. My parents were adamant that English should be my first language and to be honest, I don't think they were that keen on me learning Bengali but it couldn't be avoided as I was

British
Asian
identity

Informal
early
language
experience
at home

exposed to it so much. Neither of my grandmas liked speaking in English, because of their confidence really, so they'd only speak in English if it was absolutely necessary, like when we were out shopping or on a bus and no-one spoke Bengali. They never really spoke to me in English unless my parents were there and they encouraged them. Or maybe forced them is more accurate, I'm not sure really. They would probably all view that differently. But anyway, because of that background, I learned Bengali from a really early age.

And I should really say at this point that I wouldn't describe myself as bilingual. A lot of Asians growing up in a similar environment will be properly bilingual, but I don't think I am. Although I'm quite fluent, I'm not always that accurate. Also, Bengali isn't second nature to me in the way that English is. I have to think about it a lot more and there are things that I struggle to say sometimes, especially if it's a new topic, or a complicated one.

Linguistic
proficiency
in Bengali

But the reason I'm talking about this, and I really hope this is okay Sonia, is because I think learning a language at such a young age had a really big influence on me personally and later professionally. So, first of all, I think it impacted me in school a lot because speaking another language was normal to me so that meant that I approached French and German lessons in school in a really positive way, with a confidence that I probably wouldn't have had otherwise, and that I certainly didn't have in other subjects. What it boiled down to was that because I was used to speaking in another language already, it wasn't a stretch to be asked to do the same in another one. My classmates were all really shy and never wanted to talk in French or German in class but I was quite happy to chat away. And of course, in turn, that

POSITIVE
impact
of early
informal
language
learning

helped me to learn better, and that success made me enjoy it more, and that made me more successful again. You get the picture. What I'm saying, quite clumsily probably, is that learning a language at home as a child helped me to feel positively about languages and do well in them at school. What I would also say though, is that it was a double-edged sword though because I also found the way we were taught really boring at times and it made me quite critical of some of my teachers. My German teacher was great because he spoke in German a lot and got us talking in it as well. In contrast, our French classes were so dull. Although the curriculum and materials were based on what I now know as CLT, the teacher never spoke in French and neither did we, and it was deadly boring. She also did a lot of grammar, which I hated. I spoke really good Bengali and I'd never learned any grammar so why did I need it for French? That was the question I kept asking myself. Looking back, it's really obvious that I preferred the classes which reflected how I'd learned Bengali: listening to the language and then using it myself to communicate. In contrast, I didn't like the lessons which focused on grammar and didn't involve interaction. Even at that young age, my experiences of language learning at home led me to forming certain opinions about how a language should be taught, or learned maybe, and I wanted my teachers to conform to my understanding of that. I'm not completely bilingual, but I'm still a highly proficient language user so that reinforced those beliefs that I had. Those experiences had to influence me when I became a teacher, because **I absolutely know and understand the importance of exposure to language, of communication, of using a language and not just learning grammatical rules.** All of that influences how I see language and the goals of

Negative experiences of language learning at school

Development of early beliefs about language learning

Impact of childhood on later prof practice



learning a language. And to bring us full circle, that then influences me as a teacher because **I value communication above all else.**

Current beliefs:
value of
communication

Appendix 6: Exemplar of coding - extract from an interview (Danny, D-I3)

Sonia: Thanks so much for letting me watch your sessions this week.

Danny: You're welcome, you're welcome. I hope it's been useful.

Sonia: It really was, thank you. What I'd like to do today is talk a bit about those sessions. Thinking back first of all to Monday's class which was the session in the computer room where students were using Excel to practise managing household bills, can you talk me through the aims of that session?

Danny: Yeah, so that lesson was really about helping students to develop their own computer skills, or digital skills, whatever you want to call them. My goal was for students to learn to use a basic Excel spreadsheet to manage finances. And my goal was quite basic in many ways, I just wanted them to be able to input data, do a basic calculation using the Sum icon, and then for the better ones, be able to sort the data.

Lesson
aim: digital
skills

Sonia: And was there a language focus or were you just concentrating on the IT side of things?

Danny: Yeah, no, it was really just about the IT stuff. I wasn't teaching new language or anything like that. Although, that lesson followed a series of lessons about house and home. You know the kind of thing I mean, vocab about houses, things that go wrong in a house and who can help you with that. And we've also been talking about bills, cheery stuff like how to read a gas bill, what council tax is and if you have to pay it and so on. So although the lesson wasn't teaching new language, I did definitely want them to use language that we've been focussed on recently so there were lo

Secondary
lesson aim

of opportunities for students use, to practise that language in a task. That was important, it's always important to me, though maybe not the main focus in that session.

Sonia: And why did you decide to focus on using Excel specifically.

Danny: Good question. So I'll be honest and say that I don't always feel that confident teaching IT skills so I do things that know if at all possible. Things that I use in my own life and that I think are relevant. And obviously, that extends to my students, I try and do things that I think will be useful for them. And also, I do ask them at the start of the course what they'd like to do and this was mentioned by one of the students, Sometimes they don't really know what they want to do and that's when I have to take over and use my judgement. I think Excel is such a useful little tool. You know, most of my students don't have much money, they're either asylum seekers who survive on barely nothing, or they're on minimum wage so it's really important that they can manage their money and this can help them do that. But also, Excel is so ubiquitous now that students might just need it if they get a job, or to help their children with their homework so I just think these kind of IT skills are really important.

Link between confidence and teaching choices

Importance of digital skills

Sonia: Does the college have any kind of digital skills syllabus that you have to work through?

Danny: Well that would involve planning and forethought, a workable strategy, consideration of student needs and staff capabilities. So no.

Lack of support in college

Sonia: So what you do is completely your choice?

Danny: Well yes and no. **What is do is my choice but I am obliged to embed digital skills into my teaching, they just don't help us with the how.**

Mandated
pedagogy

Sonia: One of the interesting aspects for me was how you followed up the IT part of the session with a group task where students had to look at a household budget and then find ways to reduce it by 10% and then amend the spreadsheet accordingly.

What was the rationale for that?

Danny: Well it's a very deliberate decision. It's definitely something I do a lot. I always try to integrate language learning and technology together because **it's important that students don't feel that I'm robbing them of their ESOL time.**

Integration
of language
and
technology

Also, some students can be a bit scared of IT because it's new for them so

I try and make everything relevant to the kinds of tasks that they could use in their everyday lives and show how technology can help them and make their

Impact of
student
expectations

lives easier. It's no good teaching them how to use a spreadsheet but not link it to their lives. What's the point? You know, Sonia, I think the best kinds of lessons are the ones where you do a bit of everything, and like I say, link whatever they're doing to their lives.

Importance
of relevance
to everyday
lives

Sonia: You mention not wanting students to feel robbed of their ESOL time? Are there students who don't want to do digital skills? How do students generally respond to these lessons?

Danny: I think the vast majority of students appreciate developing their IT skills because a) they don't have these skills already and b) they know how important they are. And so the feedback is generally really good and you know, they say that the sessions are useful and talk about how they actually used those skills in their real life.

Positive
student
feedback

Negative
student
feedback

But having said that there are some students who don't respond so well and they're usually women who don't work, don't want to work and don't think IT skills are that useful. They're few and far between though.

Appendix 7: Exemplar of coding – observation (Sally, S-O)

Name: Sally **Lesson topic and level: Entry 2 – Free time, hobbies and interests**

Date: 6th Feb **Lesson plan provided: NO**

Classroom activity	Use of technology	Reflections/questions to follow up								
<p>9.00 – 9.10 Students trickle in slowly and only two students are on time. Sally welcomes the students and asks about their plans for the weekend. Relaxed atmosphere and students keen to talk to Sally about their plans. 13 students present</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Sally links her informal chat to the topic of the lesson. Classroom resources; IWB, teacher's desktop PC; data projector; flipchart</p>								
<p>9.10-9.30 Sally explains the aims of the lesson: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend vocabulary about hobbies 2. Talk about your own hobbies 3. Ask questions about other people's hobbies 4. Do a class survey about free time and hobbies <p>Sally asks the students to work in pairs/small groups and brainstorm vocabulary about hobbies. Students are all on task, making lists of vocab and sharing ideas. Sally monitors from a distance, listening but not intervening.</p> <p>After 10 mins, Sally asks students to stop and conducts group feedback, eliciting from each pair/group. She writes up the lexis on a small flipchart which is moved in front of the IWB.</p> </p>	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>By whom</td> <td>Teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planned or unplanned</td> <td>Planned</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tech used</td> <td>PPT on IWB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Purpose</td> <td>Sharing information</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	By whom	Teacher	Planned or unplanned	Planned	Tech used	PPT on IWB	Purpose	Sharing information	<p>Why not use the IWB to collate the lexis? It would be easier to save the work and distribute it later. Follow up in interview.</p>
By whom	Teacher									
Planned or unplanned	Planned									
Tech used	PPT on IWB									
Purpose	Sharing information									

<p>Students are interested and engaged, lots of lexis is suggested. Sally corrects pronunciation only if it impedes understanding.</p>										
<p>9.30 – 9.40 Sally puts students in new pairs. She shows a new PPT slide with instructions. The slide shows 2 questions that students could be going to ask their partner about what they do in their free time: What do you do in your free time? How often do you do this?</p> <p>Sally asks students to think of other questions which they could ask for more information. Students make suggestions e.g. How long have you been x-ing? Why do you like it?</p> <p>Sally gives instructions: work in a group of three and ask each other questions about what they do in their free time. Make notes about partners' answers.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>By whom</td> <td>Teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planned or unplanned</td> <td>Planned</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tech used</td> <td>PPT on IWB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Purpose</td> <td>Sharing information</td> </tr> </table>	By whom	Teacher	Planned or unplanned	Planned	Tech used	PPT on IWB	Purpose	Sharing information	<p>New sentences written on the flipchart, not added to the PPT – why?</p>
By whom	Teacher									
Planned or unplanned	Planned									
Tech used	PPT on IWB									
Purpose	Sharing information									
<p>9.40 – 10.00 Students start work on activity. Sally monitors, walking around the class listening. (10 mins in to task) a male student calls Sally over and asks for help. He asks if she knows what Buzkashi is. She doesn't and asks what it is. The student explains it's a famous game in Afghanistan and that 'people ride horses and it's like football but with a goat'. Lots of laughter in the group, Sally seems confused, as do the other group members. The male student tries to explain but it's quite confusing. He asks another Afghan student to help and the class stops and listens. Lots of</p>		<p>Students start task positively, lots of chat (all in English)</p>								

<p>bewilderment at the mention of a goat and a goal. The students asks if he can find a video and show everyone what it is and Sally agrees. The student uses his phone to google a Buzkashi video.</p> <p>Sally shows this on the IWB.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>By whom</td><td>Student</td></tr> <tr><td>Planned or unplanned</td><td>Unplanned</td></tr> <tr><td>Tech used</td><td>Mobile phone</td></tr> <tr><td>Purpose</td><td>Searching for information</td></tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr><td>By whom</td><td>Teacher</td></tr> <tr><td>Planned or unplanned</td><td>Unplanned</td></tr> <tr><td>Tech used</td><td>PPT on IWB</td></tr> <tr><td>Purpose</td><td>Sharing information</td></tr> </table>	By whom	Student	Planned or unplanned	Unplanned	Tech used	Mobile phone	Purpose	Searching for information	By whom	Teacher	Planned or unplanned	Unplanned	Tech used	PPT on IWB	Purpose	Sharing information	
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Planned or unplanned	Unplanned																	
Tech used	PPT on IWB																	
Purpose	Sharing information																	
<p>10.00-10.20</p> <p>The group watches the video. Students are fascinated by the video and ask to watch it multiple times. With Sally's support (and the video) the Afghan students are able to describe the game (i.e. how it is played, rules etc.) Other students ask questions - lots of interest generated through the use of the video.</p>	<p>As above</p>																	
<p>10.20-10.40</p> <p>Sally asks the students if they also have sports or passtimes in their countries which might not be known or popular elsewhere and if students would like to talk about these in their groups. Students agree and Sally sets a time limit of 10 minutes and says the groups will be asked to give feedback at the end.</p> <p>Sally rearranges the groups to ensure a mix of nationalities.</p> <p>She monitors and actively gets involved in groups discussions, supporting students with lexis and linguistic support where needed,</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>By whom</td><td>Student</td></tr> <tr><td>Planned or unplanned</td><td>Unplanned</td></tr> <tr><td>Tech used</td><td>Mobile phone</td></tr> <tr><td>Purpose</td><td>Searching for information</td></tr> </table>	By whom	Student	Planned or unplanned	Unplanned	Tech used	Mobile phone	Purpose	Searching for information	<p>One of the students reminds his group to use the college wifi and not their own data when searching Google. Is this something Sally considers when using MALL in class?</p>								
By whom	Student																	
Planned or unplanned	Unplanned																	
Tech used	Mobile phone																	
Purpose	Searching for information																	

<p>10.40-10.55 Sally conducts plenary feedback, asking students to report back on what they learned/discussed. She uses the IWB to show a video of cricket which is not familiar to some students.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>By whom</td> <td>Teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planned or unplanned</td> <td>Unplanned</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tech used</td> <td>PPT on IWB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Purpose</td> <td>Sharing information</td> </tr> </table>	By whom	Teacher	Planned or unplanned	Unplanned	Tech used	PPT on IWB	Purpose	Sharing information	
By whom	Teacher									
Planned or unplanned	Unplanned									
Tech used	PPT on IWB									
Purpose	Sharing information									
<p>10.55 – 11.00 Sally brings lesson to the end. She says they will carry on with the topic in the next lesson as she hasn't done everything she intended to. Students leave.</p>		<p>The lesson did not cover the objectives outlined at the start of the lesson. It appears that the lesson changed course due to the after the 'buzkashi' incident. What WAS the plan? To what extent would technology have been used in the lesson?</p>								

KEY TO CODING

Who technology is used by:	Teacher
	Student(s)
Style of use:	Planned
:	Unplanned
Type of technology used:	IWB
	Mobile phones
Purpose of technology use:	Sharing information
	Searching for information