

Broadening the Cultural Frame on Recent Master's TESOL Graduates

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A broadened definition of the cultural frame is central to understanding the preparation of English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors in light of their classroom experiences after graduation from master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs. This view is the result of the preliminary data analysis of an "instrumental collective case study" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) conducted on community college ESL faculty who are TESOL graduates of the last five years.

ESL teaching is unique in that it requires, more so than other fields, that the teacher be able to communicate across multiple cultures—national, ethnic, linguistic, class, socio-economic, racial, power, age, gender, educational, role, etc. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher have the ability to view her own cultural boundaries from a distance. To be able to see herself as a culturally situated individual, the totality of the teacher's experiences must be considered: including before, during and after the TESOL training. Based on the study, of special importance are the teacher's personal cross-cultural, foreign-language-learning, classroom observation and actual teaching experiences.

An example of a broadened definition of cultural situatedness includes the myriad of presumptions about the nature of teaching and the role of the teacher. All teachers-in-training have been influenced by their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), that is having observed their own teachers during their school years. However, teachers-in-training differ greatly in the amount of classroom teaching experience they have accumulated by the time they finish graduate school. This makes experienced and novice teachers vastly different culturally (understanding "culture" in this broader sense), and, thus, in how they view the efficacy of their graduate studies while in school and after graduation, once they enter their own ESL classroom. This, therefore, has implications for how we think about the field of ESL/TESOL and how teacher trainers prepare the next generation of teachers for the profession.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

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