Computer Assisted Language Learning
Vol. 20, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 5–19

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Learning to Orchestrate Online Instructional Conversations: A case of faculty development for foreign language educators[1]

Carla Meskill* and Natasha Anthony
State University of New York at Albany, USA

In the past decade, providing language instruction via computer-mediated communication (CMC) has seen tremendous growth throughout the world. With this increase in asynchronous instruction have come questions concerning the role of the instructor as it determines the quality and impact of learning and of what optimal faculty development might consist. This study addresses the question: Can simulated instructional conversations using CMC be used effectively in faculty professional development? An online professional development course for foreign language higher education faculty was designed, implemented, and its processes and outcomes documented and examined. Results indicate that readings, discussions, simulated practice, and reflections concerning engagement in instructional conversations can indeed foment awareness of the anatomy of effective online instructional conversations for foreign and second language instruction.

Introduction

The challenges associated with faculty development in instructional technology in general, and for teachers of world languages in particular, have been well documented in the past decade (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Meskill, Mossop, DiAngelo, & Pasquale, 2002). In the broad area of teacher professional development, when, how and why emphasis should be placed on integration and intelligent uses of computers and telecommunications for teaching and learning are questions that have received a good amount of empirical attention (see especially Becker, 1999, 2000; Cuban, 2001;

---

*Corresponding author. Department of Educational Theory and Practice, State University of New York at Albany, ED114, Albany, NY 12222, USA. Email: cmeskill@uamail.albany.edu

ISSN 0958-8221 (print)/ISSN 1744-3210 (online)/07/010005–15
© 2007 Taylor & Francis
DOI: 10.1080/09588220601118487

Kabilan, 2005). Studies of teacher implementation of instructional technology generally indicate that (1) instructional technologies without appropriate accompanying teacher professional development are of very limited value to student learning (Cuban, 2001); and (2) 'appropriate' professional development is content and context dependent (Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002). This study of faculty development focuses on the design and outcomes of content- and context-specific faculty training activities. The content is foreign language instruction; the context is computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Design and implementation of this foreign language faculty development initiative and accompanying self-study respond to a recent study on research priorities for educational technology (Pollard & Pollard, 2004) which points to the following elements of educational technology as having top priority in the next 10 years:

- Develop models for preparing in-service and pre-service teachers to be more effective users of technology.
- Examine approaches that apply technologies to individualise teacher development based on real problems and opportunities in the teacher's classroom (p. 152).
- Investigate the online collaborative learning process.
- Examine the challenges faced in moving from teacher-centric transfer models of learning to the design of rich, web-based learning-centered environments (p. 156).

This study of faculty development sequences and outcomes responds directly to all four of these priorities. First, we have developed a research-based model of faculty development, field tested it with language educators, and have determined via follow-through that this form of faculty development may impact positively on teachers' uses of technology in their teaching. Second, the model responds directly to "real problems and opportunities in the teacher's classroom" in that participant-based problem posing and collaborative problem solving formed the basis of the majority of faculty development activities. This participant-centered approach also directly addresses both the importance of, and the affordances of CMC technology in supporting productive collaborative learning processes—this being reflected in both the focus of the faculty development activity (designing and orchestrating online collaborative learning opportunities for participants' students) and in the faculty development learning processes themselves. Finally, the design of the faculty development model and its follow-through investigation of participants' learning were tightly guided by the desired transition from teacher-centered to learning community-centered forms of instruction and recognition of the roles technology can play to support the latter. The faculty training took place entirely at a distance, online, and, except for one session that was conducted synchronously to demonstrate virtual classroom technology, asynchronously.

The aims of our online faculty development course were multiple yet centered chiefly on the vast possibilities for human-human communications that online environments represent. A central premise was that participants may need to be

disallowed the presumption that technologies in language education were about the machine taking on traditional foreign language teacher roles of assign and assess, drill and test, otherwise known as the 'transmission mode' of language instruction (Meskill, 2002). Another premise was that conceptual connections between the special affordances of CMC and current research in second language acquisition can be nurtured through modeling and reinforcing instructional conversations. The overall goal of the majority of the faculty development activities, then, was to make every effort to help participants understand the power of instructional conversations and the features of CMC that make these unique and powerful for language learning and teaching. Based on earlier research that points to the power of CMC to engage language learners in highly motivating communicative practice while employing instructional strategies to focus learner attention on target language forms in their, and in their online classmates' output (Meskill & Anthony, 2004, 2005), the design of the online faculty development activities focused on the same. The question of what learning activities might compel foreign language teaching professionals to make use of such instructional conversations steered the design, development, and self study of two online workshops for foreign language faculty wishing to learn about the many roles of telecommunications in language teaching and learning.

Instructional Conversations

One of the central issues for faculty development involving language educators is that of knowledge about language (linguistics) versus knowledge about teaching (pedagogy) and where priorities should be placed (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Our position in this regard is that language is the essential tool and target of foreign language instruction and that, consequently, instructional conversations are the essential venue for teaching and learning. As defined by Tharp and Gallimore (1988, 1991), the term 'instructional conversation' refers to the genre of productive, interactive verbal strategies used by educators to engage their learners in active thinking, negotiation of meaning, and, consequently, learning. The instructional conversation is "dialogue between teacher and learners in which the teacher listens carefully to groups of students' communicative intent, and tailors the dialog to meet the emerging understanding of the learners" (1991, p. 1). Both formally in classrooms, and informally through conversations outside of school, it is through participation in conversations that learners acquire language and accompanying concepts in ways that are social, powerful, and pleasurable.

In learning a second or foreign language, instructional conversations take on an added dimension. As Tharp and Gallimore point out, in language teaching the content *is* the instructional conversation; it is that with which the learner's mind interacts and consequently learns. Current theory and research in the field of second language acquisition see active conversation as the central locus of learning; indeed, it is not until and unless learners make active attempts at comprehension and productive use of target language forms, functions, and lexical items that these become part of learners' growing internalised repertoires (Celce-Murcia, 2002).

Such active attempts on the part of learners, moreover, are optimised when the context and imperatives of language use are authentic; that is, the target language is being used for genuine communication. While Tharp and Gallimore's definition of instructional conversation does not explicitly include this dimension germane to second language learners, it is nonetheless implicit in the other portions of their definition, especially as regards the role of instructional conversation in assisted performance. Their claim that "teaching occurs when performance is achieved with assistance" (1991, p. 2) might be modified for language teaching to read *acquisition occurs when learner performance (both comprehension and production) is assisted by instructional conversation*. Where Tharp and Gallimore envision the instructional conversation applying widely through the posing of questions, sharing of ideas, and the sharing of knowledge, second language acquisition, which feeds richly on the same, includes a particular kind of assistance in the form of conversational support that is linguistically tailored to be just beyond learners' current levels and that will elicit the same, thus pushing them *linguistically*.

Fundamental to the rationale behind instructional conversation is the Vygotskian notion of *joint activity*, or what Tharp (1993) calls 'jointedness'. For learning to occur, there must be mediation. Mediation is, in effect, instructional conversation: the sociocognitive activity that joint problem posing and problem solving entail. This mediated experience and its accompanying thinking are, according to Vygotsky, the bridge to internalisation, to learning (Vygotsky, 1981). Thus, if instructional activity is to result in learning, collaboration with others is necessary. If the instructional activity itself is indeed about teaching, modeling mediation is even more critical. The foreign language faculty development activities were thus designed and orchestrated as shared activities where collaborative interaction was both the primary faculty development activity *and* the instructional focus.

Role of the Teacher

In order to guide and assist learners in their learning through such conversations, teachers must have specific objectives in mind while knowing what learners are ready to take on in the way of challenge. "Strategically, the teacher (or discussion leader) questions, prods, challenges, coaxes—or keeps quiet ... clarifies and instructs when necessary" (Goldenberg, 1991, p. 3). Goldenberg's practical model of the instructional conversation for teacher education provides guidance in the ways teachers determine learning objectives on the fly and respond in a number of tailored, instructional ways, all of which cohere with foreign and second language education. In the context of second language learning, for example, Swain (2002) calls instructional conversations 'collaborative dialogues'. Anton calls these 'discursive devices'. Indeed, Anton found that through the use of such discursive devices in the foreign language classroom teachers could "lead learners to become highly involved in the negotiation of meaning, linguistic form, and rules for classroom behavior during classroom activities" (1999, p. 314). In her study of classroom instructional conversations, however, Goldenberg found that "instructional conversations are professionally and

intellectually demanding teaching/learning events that do not come easily or naturally to teachers'' (1991, p. 10). How indeed do foreign language educators acquire the complex skills involved in orchestrated instructional conversations?

Goals and Processes of Teaching Foreign and Second Languages

In second language learning and teaching, teachers are most often viewed as having the primary responsibility of mediating the target language—the comprehension and production of that language. Strategies for doing this are typically fashioned on a moment-by-moment basis with teachers' goals, knowledge, and experience shaping the mediation strategies: the instructional conversation. For many experienced language educators, the instructional conversation forms the lynchpin of their instructional practice. When teaching syntax, new lexical items, pronunciation patterns, or language functions, language teachers typically incorporate these into authentic target language discourse and guide learners to use the targeted language themselves in conversation. For language learners, this is the main locus of learning, their opportunity to actively and meaningfully use, and thereby acquire the language targeted by the instructor. It is the place where learners can ''stretch their interlanguage'' through collaborative dialogue (Swain, 2002, p. 99). Indeed, there is growing evidence that optimal formats for language acquisition are those that emphasise the active negotiation of meaning while drawing learner attention to targeted forms (Long & Robinson, 1998).

CMC represents a venue where progress in the interlanguage can be directly observed and instructionally/conversationally responded to (Meskill & Anthony, 2004, 2005). Indeed, for teacher development modeling purposes where teachers can see, experience, and reflect on instructional conversation, CMC represents an optimal medium in that not only can they experience the *learner end* of instructional conversations, they can also study and reflect on that conversation for as long as they wish as it is in archived text form. This online faculty development course focused chiefly on CMC as a tool and asset for teaching languages in asynchronous and hybrid courses and how to take advantage of such features. At the same time, CMC served as the main medium of instruction as the course was delivered asynchronously online.

Context

The fully asynchronous, online faculty development course was offered twice through the State University of New York (SUNY) central administration to system-wide as well as non-system faculty. The course was advertised and managed through the University system's teaching and learning with technology (TLT) office. Participation resulted in a certificate of completion. Six foreign language faculty members around the Northeast US participated in the first course, thirteen in the second. The following languages were represented by both faculty groups: Chinese, ESL, French, Japanese, Italian and Spanish. Motivation for taking the course was fairly uniform. Ten of the 19 faculty members had definite plans to teach in an online format in the

very near future. The others foresaw teaching online or in a hybrid format at some point, but had no specific timeline for doing so. Two faculty members had been specifically asked to take the course by their dean who had asked that they both develop and deliver an online Spanish and an online French course.

The chief question that guided the design, orchestration, and analysis of this faculty development experience was: Can simulated instructional conversations using CMC be used effectively in faculty professional development? To attempt to address this broad, guiding question, archived transcripts of the course were examined, participant questionnaires and follow-up interview data were reviewed, and our observations concerning the content of these documents compiled.

Simulating Assisted Performance: Foreign language faculty development in CMC instructional conversations

We designed the faculty development sequences based on a number of assumptions. First, for higher education faculty to be comfortable integrating technologies into their everyday teaching, they would need to experience for themselves the positive learning effects such integration can achieve. The faculty development course was, then, based on "the assisting classroom"—one where the instructional conversation is central and productive (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991, p. 2) and that can be simulated so that instructors can experience firsthand what CMC instructional conversations from a student's, as well as an instructor's point of view. Our instructional activities thereby set out to not only model integration techniques, but also involve participants directly in simulated instruction from a learning as well as a teaching perspective. Second, an emphasis on process was consequently modeled and simulated as a way of demonstrating forms of continuous assessment such as implicit feedback embedded in authentic conversation. This emphasis echoed throughout the faculty development sequences. Finally, techniques for promoting an awareness of the anatomy of instructional conversations were also infused throughout activities and assignments.

During the two courses, tasks for participants included reading, thinking about, and discussing with online colleagues readings on the many roles of technology in foreign language teaching (see Appendix A). In addition, faculty engaged in a great deal of professional development dialog concerning their beliefs and practices regarding classroom instruction and the sharing of resources. Follow-through consisted of a series of activities whereby participants actively designed web-based tasks and materials. They also orchestrated simulated CMC language learning activities for one another. Participants engaged one another in simulated instructional conversations in English—the target language (the one common to all) being English. For these simulation/role plays, online colleagues were assigned the role of language learners who played the role of students struggling with learning the English language. The leader of a given discourse thread would set up a task and respond to 'students' employing instructional conversation strategies that fit the teachable moments they crafted. These sequences continued for at least a week, in some cases much longer.

The following is a brief example of such a participant-led instructional/ conversational task. In this sequence a participant (Instructor) is setting up the language learning task and orchestrating instructional conversation around that task. Her instructional aim is correct use of the past tense in English in a playful, communicative conversation:

Instructor (J): A crime was committed yesterday and a detective is trying to find the criminal. In order to clear your name, please answer the following two questions in great detail (the answers should be no less than 25 words). Where did you go and what did you do yesterday? [LT][2]

M: Yesterday as usually I waked up early in the morning and drinked my coffee the size of my head because I waked up early and wanted to sleep. After then I goed to school where I studed for three hours. I taked class then I teached my own students. After than I comed back home and eated my dinner.

Instructor: Dear M, thank you for your reply. Could you kindly answer the following questions?
When did you wake up yesterday (You woke up at 5? 6? 7?) [IM & COR]
What did you do before you drank your coffee?
What did you do before you went to school?
At school you studied for three hours and took classes, correct? Could you tell me the timeframe for when you did these things?
What did you do after you came back home and ate your dinner? [LT]
Thanks.

M: Sure, I would love to answer your questions.
Yesterday I wake up at 10:00 am.
I checked my email before I drank my coffee.
I puted some make up on my face ☺ before I went to school.
I took classes from 9:00 to 12:00 then I studied from 12:00 to 1:00
After I came back home and ate my dinner, I runed for a half an hour. I'm trying to lose weight ☺

Instructor: Thanks a lot. You woke up at 10:00 a.m. You put some make up on. You ran for half an hour. [IM & FFF] What did you do after you ran? [COR]

M: I don't remember. I probably taked off my make up. It's not very good for one's skin to got to bed with make up on. It gived my wrinkles.

Instructor: What was the time when you took off your make up? My make up gave me wrinkles. Now I don't wear it. [IM & SAT]

Other participant-generated simulated language learning activities included: comparing the wedding practices in one's own country to those in the target culture, reporting an imaginary trip to New York City, describing your perfect mate to a match-making agent, and the following:

> I really need your help. We are having a big debate in my family and we can't find a solution. We finally decided to adopt a pet. The problem is that we all want something different! My husband wants a cat, I want a dog, my older son wants an iguana, and my younger son wants a parrot. We can only adopt one pet. What do you recommend and why? Thank you for any advice you can give us.

Participants readily responded to these tasks with a clear willingness to suspend disbelief and become language learners themselves. This is illustrated in the crime investigation task (above) and in all of the other simulated instructional conversations generated and orchestrated by course participants. In the sample above, the instructor for this task, J, uses various ingenious means in her attempt to elicit correct forms of past tense verbs from her student, M. She employs these various strategies while simultaneously focusing on authentic conversational interaction. This is one of multiple instances where participating faculty practiced designing and orchestrating instructional conversations for language learning and thus experienced as both instructor and learner the anatomy and impact of online instructional conversations. CMC afforded the participants time and static text, both of which allow for carefully constructed teacher and learner responses. Other course participants also had the opportunity to observe these conversations when and for however long they wished.

Faculty Reflections

In another recent study on teacher attitudes towards instructional technology, professional educators who readily integrate technology into their instruction were more likely to report constructivism as the mainstay of their teaching (Judson, 2006). This was also true of these two groups of foreign and second language faculty. In their pre-course questionnaire, all, save one, responded that they ascribed to student-centered, communicative (aka constructivist) approaches in their teaching. Their open-mindedness to the many possibilities communications technologies represent and their many and varied reports of using computers in their teaching indeed appeared throughout in their participation in course activities, their assignments, and their final reflections. Interestingly, the one faculty member who initially reported a more teacher-centered, authoritative approach to instruction eventually came to talking about the potential of CMC using the discourse of communicative language teaching: "The students can use

language freely in CMC when communicating with me and with the others. This is not always possible in the live classroom'' (TR).

In addition to being asked broad, open-ended questions about their experiences in the online professional development course, participants were guided to share their written reflections in a more structured way through reference to specific instructional conversation strategies they had read about and experienced (Appendix B). Having experienced the targeted processes (form-focused conversational practice) through participation as both teachers and students in online conversation, and having apprenticed to one another's task design and orchestration techniques, participants were asked to articulate these pedagogical techniques and whether or not they felt these held potential for effective online teaching. Participants were asked to comment on the value of instructional conversations as discussed, modeled, and practiced in their online faculty development course. Categories of instructional conversation strategies germane to communicative language instruction with focus on form served as their guide.

When asked to describe their sense of CMC and the possibilities the medium held for foreign language teaching, three of the respondents highlighted the faulty reasoning that they and/or their administrators had had in conceiving online foreign language instruction as mirroring that of a live foreign language classroom. One teacher of Spanish (L) commented:

> ...the college is trying to build an online course to meet the same objectives as a traditional course (in terms of speaking, reading, writing, hearing the foreign language) so that the direction of my thinking is, perhaps, 'backwards' (trying to fit CMC into the old model instead of imagining new possibilities and new goals and objectives based on the style of CMC). (L)

This faculty member points out initial conceptual constraints regarding the use of CMC in her teaching. The constraint—the notion of retrofitting the technology to mimic face-to-face (f2f) classroom activity—persisted in her later reflections. When prompted to share her thinking about using CMC instructional conversations to focus learner attention on target forms, she initially expressed the following concern: ''Very important to do so [correct student errors] (students, I believe, expect to be corrected and encouraged). I find this particular 'issue' one of the most difficult in the online environment'' (L).

Indeed, in the initial, pre-course questionnaire, 10 of the participants expressed concern that immediate feedback on student oral production and assistance with comprehension would be impossible online and would, therefore, render the medium an inferior one to f2f instruction. The visual, affective, and contextual aspects of f2f teaching and learning were often cited as obstacles to effective use of CMC. One faculty member cited the need for online learners to be self-motivated and self-sufficient in order to learn well in such an environment. By contrast, most expressed enthusiasm for the vast accessibility to authentic materials they and their students could use to learn the target language and culture. None reported initially seeing

actual communication via CMC as a potentially positive aspect of teaching technologies. L's observation (below) was typical:

> They [students] may also fall back on what they already know, instead of attempting to use the new form. Without the instructor physically there to prompt and encourage (with immediacy), I feel the teachable moment is 'lost'.

Turning to the specific affordances of CMC for instructional conversations, once having read the course readings and having participated in the simulated instructional conversations with their peers, all participants reported the potential of at least one CMC affordance. In terms of providing feedback to students, something the majority came to the course seeing as an impossibility with technology, several commented on the positive trade-off between the immediacy of f2f and the luxury of static text for students to study and reflect upon:

> When I teach in a live class, I tend to use explicit types of negative feedback such as clarification requests more than implicit types such as recasts because classroom exchange is rapid and I am afraid that students may not notice my implicit feedback. As I was participating in this role-play forum game, I realised CMC would allow us to use implicit types of feedback more effectively compared to live classroom exchange. Students have plenty of time to process input while communicating naturally without being interrupted what he/she wants to communicate. (S)

Also pointing to time as a critical affordance of CMC, another faculty member reflected: "The ability for students to have the time to respond by seeing the language in writing. That is why I think that CMC activities online can compliment a traditional classroom face-to-face course" (E).

During the actual simulated role-plays, the technique of saturation was a common one and this was recognised by several participants in their reflections. The technique is, as one respondent stated, "a mainstay of classroom foreign language teaching". The following was typical of reflections regarding saturation:

> I noticed most of us used saturation. In our responses to our students we tried to use the targets we wanted them to use such as I wanted the students to use the simple present tense and frequency adverbs, so I made sure I used those two targets in my questions and responses. (B)

Likewise, a great deal of recasting was used during the simulations. Several reflections pointed this out and to the fact that CMC is a particularly amenable medium for recasts to be constructed (by the teacher) and responded to (by the student). One participant noted, for example:

> By recasting B's answer, she corrected the form but kept the emphasis on communication real. It is likely that B will notice her error but not feel stupid about the error, but rather feel encouraged that she can make errors and still communicate. (S)

When asked to comment on a more traditional concept—providing lists of vocabulary to students, a tried and true practice in live foreign language classes—participant

reaction was positive. Under the instructional conversation category providing linguistic tools, the faculty member who initially described herself as teacher-centered and authoritative was clearly more comfortable with the idea of providing information to students than in engaging them in authentic conversation:

> It is very practical to post vocabulary lists (that students can access as needed), online dictionaries, online grammatical lessons, and realia. I will direct the online student to look up these connections in my list as we come across them. I think that this may help them remember the vocabulary. (R)

M, a teacher of French, reported having gained "the knowledge and confidence to emphasise content over form" in her teaching. The participating instructor of Chinese, J, concurred that she too had come to realise the rich potential of CMC for "real conversations". When asked specifically about the utility of instructional conversations, M commented:

> Their pedagogical utility is priceless since every step in learning a language is scaffolded upon the previous ones. This is something I learned from this class. Modeling the correct answer instead of just correcting. I had not done that before and at first I wasn't really sure how to go about it but when I caught on it became easier. (M)

> The dynamic synergy of collective, interactive, and continuous exchanges has much more of a home in online teaching. (C)

The Chinese instructor, J, echoes this new understanding of how to exploit the CMC medium for authentic, form-focused language practice when commenting on her planned use of linguistic traps in her future online teaching: "Get their attention. I will draw their attentions to the words and forms I plan to teach. Give many examples. I will try to ask questions to trap students in using certain words and formats" (J).

Finally, unprompted, half of the participants indicated that they did indeed plan to make use of these CMC instructional strategies as part of their online instruction: "I envision these types of discussions and conversations will be part of my online course next year" (T).

One participant from the initial course went on to teach language courses online directly following the professional development course. She found the instructional conversations to be very beneficial. As instructor of a beginning-level French course she reports:

> I find teaching online really fun. I enjoy the conversations one-on-one, the Q/A one-on-one. I can spend as much or as little time as I want each day, explaining and responding.

> I do believe that online students have more time to formulate their answer. No one is waiting for them to speak up. In the f2f classroom, I also encourage students to compose their sentences in writing first, but they often feel pressured to produce quickly. Online, the chance of getting embarrassed is less. (F)

The overall reaction to the concepts of asynchronous CMC as a tool for social and collaborative language learning was positive. Participants clearly expressed an enriched understanding of the medium's potential as a communicative language teaching tool. Having experienced this directly from both an instructor and a learner perspective appears to have served this goal well. It should also be mentioned that in addition to actively designing, participating in, and reflecting on uses for instructional conversations, that both groups of professional educators also generated a great deal of discussion concerning other uses of online technology features of which CMC instructional conversations were the only portion treated here. A professional development course that dealt solely with orchestrating effective online interaction was not a possibility at the time this course was delivered; faculty desired a range of instructional experiences with a range of language teaching technologies, not just CMC. In the future, a course that exclusively treats the anatomy of asynchronous online instructional conversations may be an enticing professional development opportunity for advanced language teaching faculty.

Conclusion

While in their study of language teaching behaviors Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004) found "a somewhat tenuous relationship between the teachers' practices and stated beliefs regarding focus on form" (p. 243), this examination of seasoned language educators' shifts in beliefs regarding the potential of CMC for communicative focus on form appear to have taken hold even in the early stages of implementation. Through directly experiencing instructional conversation "in a public manner, to solve the problems of understanding" (Moll & Whitmore, 1993, p. 53) participants had direct experience with the very anatomy of Vygotskian internalisation. The design and orchestration of these faculty development sequences were grounded in the concept that to learn about instructional conversations, one must engage in instructional conversations and develop a metalinguistic and sociocultural awareness of the anatomies and affect of these conversations. As described by Andrews (2003), language teacher awareness "encompasses an awareness of language from the learner's perspective, an awareness of the learner's developing interlanguage, and an awareness of the extent to which the language content of materials/lessons poses difficulties for students" (p. 86). One strategy to help language educators to exercise these forms of awareness was to model and then have faculty simulate form-focused, communicative language learning activities and thus experience these from both a learner and instructor perspective. Results of this study indicate that faculty can indeed increase their awareness of the anatomy of online instructional conversations and their vital role in orchestrating powerful CMC teaching and learning.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at 2005 AERA Conference, Montreal, Quebec.
2. Note code definitions—e.g., LT—in Appendix B.

References

Andrews, S. (2003). Teacher language awareness and the professional knowledge base of the L2 teacher. *Language Awareness*, *12*(2), 81–95.

Anton, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second-language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *83*(iii), 303–318.

Basturkmen, S., Loewen, S., & Ellis, R. (2004). Teachers' stated beliefs about incidental focus on form and their classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics*, *25*(2), 243–272.

Becker, H. (1999). *Teaching, learning, and computing, 1998: A national survey of schools and teachers.* University of California at Irvine: CRITO.

Becker, H. (2000). Findings from the teaching, learning and computing survey: Is Larry Cuban right? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *8*(51), retrieved May, 20, 2004, from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n51/

Celce-Murcia, M. (2002). Why it makes sense to teach grammar in context and through discourse. In E. Hinkel, & S. Fotos (Eds.), *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms* (pp. 119–133). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Egbert, J., Paulus, T., & Nakamichi, Y. (2002). The impact of CALL instruction on classroom computer use: A foundation for rethinking technology in teacher education. *Language Learning Technology*, *6*(3), 108–126.

Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*, 397–417.

Goldenberg, C. (1991). Instructional conversations and their classroom application. Educational practice report: 2, National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved July 12, 2004, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs /ncrcdsll/epr2/index.html

Johnston, B., & Goettsch, K. (2000). In search of the knowledge base of language teaching: Explanations by experienced teachers. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *56*(3), 437–468.

Judson, E. (2006). How teachers integrate technology and their beliefs about learning: Is there a connection? *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, *14*(3), 581–597.

Kabilan, M. (2005). Online professional development: A literature analysis of teacher competency. *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*, *21*(2), 51–57.

Lam, Y. (2000). Technophilia vs. Technophobia: A preliminary look at why second-language teachers do or do not use technology in their classrooms. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *56*(3), 389–420.

Lantolf, J. (2001). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1–26). New York: Oxford University Press.

Long, M., & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on form: Theory, research, practice. In C. Doughty, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 15–63). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Meskill, C. (2002). *Teaching and learning in real time: Media, technology, and language acquisition.* Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Meskill, C., & Anthony, N. (2004). Teaching and learning with telecommunications: Instructional discourse in a hybrid Russian class. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, *33*(2), 103–119.

Meskill, C., & Anthony, N. (2005). Foreign language learning with CMC: Forms of online instructional discourse in a hybrid Russian Class. *System*, *33*(1), 89–105.

Meskill, C., Mossop, J., DiAngelo, S., & Pasquale, R. (2002). Expert and novice teachers talking technology: Precepts, concepts, and misconcepts. *Language Learning & Technology*, *6*(3), 846–857.

Moll, L., & Whitmore, F. (1993). Vygotsky in classroom practice: Moving from individual transmission to social transaction. In E. Forman, N. Minick, & A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 19–42). New York: Oxford University Press.

Pollard, C., & Pollard, R. (2004). Research priorities in educational technology: A Delphi study. *Journal of Research on Technology in Teacher Education*, *37*(2), 145 – 160.
Swain, M. (2002). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97 – 114). New York: Oxford University Press.
Tharp, R. (1993). Institutional and social context of educational practice and reform. In E. Forman, N. Minick, & A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 269 – 282). New York: Oxford University Press.
Tharp. R., & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning and schooling in social context.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1991). The instructional conversation: Teaching and learning in social activity. Research Report: 2, National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved July 12, 2004, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs /cnrcdsll/rr2.htm
Vygotsky, L. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144 – 188). Armonk, NY: Sharpe.
Wells, G. (1996). Using the tool-kit of discourse in the activity of learning and teaching. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *3*(2), 74 – 101.

Appendix A. Course Readings

Goldenberg, C. (1991). Instructional conversations and their classroom application. Educational practice report: 2, National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved July 12, 2004, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs /ncrcdsll/epr2/index.html
Meskill, C. (2002). *Teaching and learning in real time: Media, technology and language acquisition*. Houston, TX: Athelstan.
Meskill, C., & Anthony, N. (2005). Foreign language learning with CMC: Forms of online instructional discourse in a hybrid Russian class. *System, 33*(1), 89 – 105.
Meskill, C., & Anthony, N. (2004). Teaching and learning with telecommunications: Instructional discourse in a hybrid Russian class. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems, 33*(2), 103 – 119.
Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1991). The instructional conversation: Teaching and learning in social activity. Research report: 2, National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Retrieved July 12, 2004, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/cnrcdsll/rr2.htm

Appendix B. Participant Questionnaire

Thank you again for agreeing to provide feedback on the telecommunications in foreign language teaching professional development course. We enjoyed working with you this semester and look forward to continued online collaborations in the future. Please take a moment to respond to the following questions. Your responses will help us to further develop and refine this and other offerings.

1. What led you to select to participate in this course?
2. What were your expectations concerning its content and processes?

3. Were these expectations met? What could we have included? Done more of? Done less of?
4. How have your perceptions and understandings of the potential role of CMC in FL instruction changed?
5. Do you see yourself integrating CMC activities into your teaching in the near future? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. For each of the following online instructional conversation strategies, please share your thoughts concerning (1) their practicality; (2) their pedagogical utility; and (3) if and how you plan to integrate these into your teaching.

SAT: Saturation: When a particular form (sets of vocabulary items and/or syntactic forms) is introduced in the f2f classroom, the instructor uses the CMC portion of the course to saturate the conversation with these forms.

PLT: Providing linguistic tools: When a topic comes up in the CMC portion of the course, the instructor provides the vocabulary items and/or other forms that students would logically need to participate in discussion of that topic.

IM: Incidental modeling: The instructor models forms that learners appropriate and used in their f2f and online communications.

CAF: Calling attention to forms: The instructor points out forms learners would either be using or need to be using.

FFF: Providing meaning/form-focused feedback: The instructor integrates form-focused feedback into the communicative stream (frequently in the form of recasting).

PA: Prompting assembly: The instructor provides learners with models and tools that equip them to combine target language forms of their own.

LT: Using linguistic traps/corralling learning: The instructor corrals or traps learners into using specific target language forms under study (by asking questions, providing topics and tasks, etc.).