

**Multi-level language teaching in a New Zealand secondary school. A
practitioner research study.**

Anne Passmore

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Applied Practice

Unitec Institute Technology, 2019

Abstract

Effective teaching of multilevel language classes is considered problematic and stressful by many language teachers. However, studies investigating ways to improve the learning experience in a multilevel language class in New Zealand secondary schools are few and far between. This study explored a shift from teacher-led practice to a learner-centred approach, in an attempt to make the learning experience more positive for both teacher and student.

The study involved a qualitative approach using practitioner research, notably action research self-study. The data gathering methods included a reflective journal, questionnaires and lesson observations. Regular entries into a reflective journal were made to record observations, reactions to, and reflections on, what was happening in the classroom. The participants were surveyed before the change of practice was introduced and again afterwards to ascertain their opinions on the effectiveness of the different approaches. Colleagues in the role of critical friends observed lessons pre and post change of practice to provide rich and live feedback.

The key findings of the study revealed a need for changes in role for teachers and students in a learner-centred environment. Students in this study preferred learning in a learner-centred environment which resulted in improved confidence and self-regulation skills. Teacher workload was perceived to be heavy in both teacher-led and learner-centred approaches, although lessons in the latter were less frenetic due to careful curriculum design.

The recommendations of the study suggest that the challenges teachers experience when faced with multilevel language classes could be overcome by a new approach to teaching. However, this would necessitate new roles and attitudes for both teacher and students. For change to occur, it is imperative that there be more support and professional development opportunities available for language teachers. Furthermore, moving towards a learner-centred approach would require additional time to plan an effective programme.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis was a huge undertaking and could not have been achieved without the help and support of others.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Unitec Institute of Technology staff for their help and guidance, in particular, my principal supervisor, Dr Lisa Maurice-Takerei, who supported and challenged me, and helped me maintain motivation. Her encouragement and belief in me were so appreciated. Thanks, also, to Dr Jo Mane for taking over from Lisa as my principal supervisor for the final sprint to the finish line.

I would like to thank my Principal, Board of Trustees, and colleagues for their ongoing support and encouragement. I would especially like to acknowledge my appreciation to the participants of this study for the time and effort they gave to help with this research.

I want to formally thank and acknowledge the funding support I received from the Ministry of Education's Study Support Grants and the New Zealand Association of Language Teachers.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband for his constant support and encouragement, and my family for their patience while I completed this study.

Definitions

A number of terms are used in this thesis and it is important at the outset to ensure that there is clarity around the use of these terms. For this reason, I have provided some definitions below of key terms that I will be using.

Multilevel refers to having two or more groups of students in the same class who are studying at different curriculum levels at the same time as each other.

Self-regulated learners refer to learners who set themselves goals, monitor their progress towards attaining the goals, and self-evaluate during the learning process.

Task based learning is a method of learning a language which requires learners to function as language users to complete the task.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABSTRACT | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ii |
| DEFINITIONS..... | iii |
| CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| BACKGROUND..... | 1 |
| CONTEXT..... | 1 |
| RATIONALE | 2 |
| RESEARCH AIMS..... | 4 |
| RESEARCH QUESTIONS | 4 |
| THESIS OUTLINE | 5 |
| CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW | 6 |
| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| SCOPE AND CONTEXT | 7 |
| FACTORS INFLUENCING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION | 7 |
| <i>Language teaching methods</i> | 7 |
| INPUT..... | 8 |
| <i>Learner talk</i> | 8 |
| REPORTED ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF MULTILEVEL LANGUAGE CLASSES..... | 9 |
| REASONS WHY TEACHING MULTILEVEL LANGUAGES CLASSES IS CONSIDERED A PROBLEM..... | 10 |
| <i>Pedagogy</i> | 10 |
| <i>Two separate lessons within one class</i> | 11 |
| <i>Teaching all levels as one class</i> | 12 |
| STRATEGIES TO MANAGE THE TEACHING OF MULTILEVEL LANGUAGE CLASSES. | 12 |
| <i>Learner-centred practice</i> | 12 |
| <i>The teacher's role</i> | 13 |
| <i>Intrinsic motivation</i> | 13 |
| <i>Power sharing</i> | 14 |
| <i>The role of the learner</i> | 14 |
| <i>Change in relationship between teacher and learner</i> | 15 |
| <i>Curriculum design</i> | 15 |
| <i>The role of direct instruction</i> | 16 |
| <i>Developing self-regulated learners.</i> | 17 |
| <i>Grouping</i> | 18 |
| <i>Task-based learning</i> | 19 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 20 |
| CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 21 |
| INTRODUCTION | 21 |
| EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY | 21 |
| PRACTITIONER RESEARCH | 22 |
| <i>Self-study action research</i> | 22 |
| DATA COLLECTION | 24 |
| TOOLS | 24 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Observations</i> | 24 |
| <i>Questionnaires</i> | 26 |
| <i>Reflective journal</i> | 27 |
| DATA ANALYSIS | 28 |
| <i>Validity</i> | 31 |
| ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS | 32 |
| <i>Access and acceptance</i> | 32 |
| <i>Voluntary informed consent</i> | 33 |
| <i>Confidentiality and anonymity</i> | 33 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 34 |
| CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS..... | 35 |
| INTRODUCTION | 35 |
| TEACHER-LED TO LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH..... | 36 |
| <i>Teacher-led approach</i> | 36 |
| <i>Learner-centred approach</i> | 37 |
| STUDENT CONFIDENCE | 39 |
| SELF-REGULATION | 41 |
| GROUPING AND DIFFERENTIATION..... | 42 |
| CHALLENGES | 44 |
| <i>Change in role for the students</i> | 44 |
| <i>Change in role for the teacher</i> | 45 |
| <i>Teacher frustrations</i> | 46 |
| <i>Teacher workload</i> | 46 |
| <i>Contextual nature of language teaching</i> | 47 |
| SUMMARY OF FINDINGS | 48 |
| CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 50 |
| INTRODUCTION | 50 |
| THE CONTEXTUAL NATURE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING | 50 |
| <i>New approaches to language learning</i> | 50 |
| <i>Lack of support</i> | 51 |
| <i>Need for input</i> | 52 |
| CHANGE IN ROLE FOR TEACHER AND STUDENTS IN A LEARNER-CENTRED ENVIRONMENT | 53 |
| <i>Role of the teacher</i> | 54 |
| <i>Role of the student</i> | 55 |
| CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESSFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MY MULTILEVEL LANGUAGE | |
| CLASS..... | 57 |
| <i>Teacher attitudes</i> | 57 |
| <i>Student confidence</i> | 59 |
| LIMITATIONS | 61 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY | 61 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 62 |
| REFERENCES | 67 |
| APPENDICES..... | 73 |
| APPENDIX A - INFORMAL SURVEY TO NEW ZEALAND LANGUAGE TEACHERS | 73 |
| APPENDIX B -STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1..... | 75 |
| APPENDIX C - STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2..... | 77 |

APPENDIX D - OBSERVATION GRID 79
APPENDIX E - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM 81
APPENDIX F - PARENTAL ASSENT FORM..... 83

Chapter One – Introduction

Background

Language learning in New Zealand high schools is declining significantly. Figures from the Ministry of Education (2018) show that in the past 10 years the number of language learners overall in New Zealand high schools has decreased by 20%. French is still the most common international language but has suffered a 45% decline in learners since 2008. Despite languages being introduced as the eighth learning area in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), languages remain an optional subject and the number of students choosing to study languages here is in decline. To continue to be able to offer language classes to small numbers of students there has been a need for schools to provide a financially viable solution, and this has been achieved by combining multiple curriculum levels into the same class, thereby creating multilevel language classes.

However, teaching a multilevel language class requires a different approach than for a single level class and New Zealand teachers are struggling with the demands associated with changing their practice. The literature highlights the difficulties teachers are facing, and it is acknowledged that there is little support available to help teachers deal specifically with teaching a multilevel language class (Ashton 2017 a & b; Badenhorst and East, 2015).

Context

This study was conducted using a practitioner research approach which involved a self-study action research in a New Zealand secondary school. The study involved one teacher and the senior French class, which consisted of one Year 13 student, 3 Year 12 students and a native French International student. The Year 13 student was studying towards the Level 3 National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA), and the Year 12 students were working at NCEA Level 2. With such a small number of students this study was deep rather than broad.

In order to present some context for the findings of this study it is important to provide a brief history of language learning at this school. For almost all students in Year 9 the study of two languages for a half a year each is compulsory. From Year 10 onwards language study is optional. Students in Years 11 to 13 study French for three or four hours per week, depending on the size of the class. Smaller classes have reduced hours, and this was the case for the class in this research project. Their fourth hour was timetabled as a study period where they worked on French tasks assigned by the teacher. Traditionally at this school, numbers of students choosing to continue with languages have been healthy, and pre-2011, the school offered six languages. Post 2011, there was a significant drop in numbers in language classes after the school suffered a considerable decrease in roll, a factor that led to the loss of three languages. Consequently, over the last few years the numbers of students choosing French has been declining which has resulted in the combination of two year levels in one class.

Traditionally languages have been taught in a teacher-led way with the teacher deciding the content, delivery and timeframe of each topic. Adopting this approach in a multilevel class situation creates issues in workload and accessibility to all students in the class. Anecdotal evidence shows that students are happy with a teacher-led approach and are reluctant to engage in student-led learning as it requires more effort on their part and a move out of their comfort zone. However, teachers of multilevel language classes have confirmed that teacher-led instruction in their classes is not ideal.

Rationale

This area of research was chosen as it is pertinent to my teaching practice and that of many of my colleagues. I carried out a survey with a group of New Zealand language teachers to ascertain their thoughts on the major challenges faced by teachers of multilevel classes, and what they are currently doing to try to address the issues (Appendix A). According to this stakeholder group, there is much dismay amongst the language teaching community as numbers of students choosing

to study languages is so low that classes need to be combined to be viable. Unfortunately, this is a self-perpetuating prophecy as small numbers results in a combined class, where the teacher may struggle to cope with the extra demands and is unable to give the students the attention and quality learning experience they deserve. As a consequence, students may not achieve the results of which they are capable and may not continue with the language the following year. Thus, the cycle of small classes continues.

Research by Ashton (2017 a & b) confirms New Zealand language teachers' feelings of frustration and suggests the need for more practical help and professional development for teachers. There is a definite cry for help from colleagues nationwide to find a solution to cater to a diverse group of students whilst creating a positive learning experience for all. In response to my survey 17, out of 19 teachers said they would be willing to incorporate a new pedagogy to try and find a solution.

There is research available on the issues of teaching multilevel or combined classes (Bell, 2004). Although much of the research is in the area of English as a second language (ESOL), the issues identified are similar to those found in language classes in New Zealand and can be applied to this context. In addition, there has been research undertaken in New Zealand into ways to best manage the teaching and learning in a multilevel language classroom. One such example is research by Badenhorst and East (2015) who carried out a single class case study on hybrid learning in a multilevel German class. Carr (2005) has highlighted issues amongst Australian language teachers and suggested strategies, such as using task-based learning (TBL), to best cope with teaching a multilevel language class.

Although there is some research available on teaching multilevel language classes, this study addresses the gap for research into implementing a learner-centred practice in a multilevel language class, by examining the theory base on learner-centred pedagogy and introducing the new approach into my practice. This study also aims to evaluate the extent to which the learner-centred approach contributes to improved teaching and learning in my multilevel French class.

The outcomes of this study will be of particular interest to all teachers of multilevel language classes and also those who wish to adopt a more learner-centred approach in their language classes, whatever the age or level of their learners.

This study explores my experience, and that of my students in the senior French class, as we move away from a teacher-led approach to a more learner-centred approach. The study was guided by the following research aims and questions:

Research aims

- 1) To examine the theory base on learner-centred pedagogy and apply new teaching strategies in my practice.
- 2) To evaluate the extent to which my new practices are contributing to improved teaching and learning.

Research questions

1. What are the challenges and advantages associated with teaching and learning in multilevel language classes?
2. How can learner-centred practices contribute to improved teaching and learning in my multilevel language class?
3. What recommendations can be shared for improvements in multilevel language learning in languages classes?

Thesis outline

Chapter One - Introduction

In Chapter One, the context of this research project is discussed in relation to the French class at my school and in regard to my own practice. In addition, the rationale for the study is provided, the research aims, and questions are stated, and an outline of the thesis is given.

Chapter Two - Literature review

The literature review chapter outlines the literature on issues encountered in the multilevel language class. The literature explores learner-centred practice and investigates teaching strategies in a multilevel language class.

Chapter Three - Methodology

This chapter outlines the rationale behind the research methodology and the chosen methods. It describes the data collection tools used in this study and then explains the data analysis process and how. Finally, ethical and validity issues are addressed.

Chapter Four – Findings

Chapter Four outlines the findings of the study. The findings are themed and were generated from the questionnaire responses, observation notes and reflective journal entries.

Chapter Five- Discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations

Chapter Five discusses the key themes that emerged from the findings with reference to the literature from Chapter Two and includes suggestions for effective teaching of multilevel languages classes. This chapter also outlines the limitations of the study and recommendations for further study related to teaching multilevel languages classes.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

Bell (2004) claims that one of the biggest challenges faced by a language teacher is effectively teaching and managing a multilevel class. According to a New Zealand language teachers' group, catering to a diverse range of learners in combined level language classes is a problem faced by many. Numbers of students choosing to continue with languages in the senior school are often low, and to make viable classes, schools combine students from years 11, 12 and/or 13 into the same class, yet provide the same time allocation for a single level class. As languages are acquired cumulatively, having multiple curriculum levels in one class can pose problems for teachers who cannot simply teach one unit of work to everyone without it being too easy for some and too challenging for others.

Teacher-directed learning is common in language teaching, but this is not necessarily the best way to teach multilevel classes (Carr, 2005). Bell (2004) claims that “Teachers generally identify their biggest problem with multilevel classes as being one of techniques” (p.22) and this is supported by the group of 19 New Zealand language teachers who responded to an informal survey I conducted in 2017 on teaching multilevel language classes (Appendix A). So, would a shift in pedagogy from teacher-directed to learner-centred reduce teacher workload while maintaining a positive student learning experience in a multilevel language class?

This area of research was chosen as it is pertinent to my teaching practice and that of many of my colleagues. The informal survey completed by a group of New Zealand language teachers ascertained their thoughts on the major challenges for those with multilevel classes and collected data on what they are currently doing to try to address the issues. According to this group, there is much dismay amongst the language teaching community because numbers of students choosing to study languages is so low that classes need to be combined to be viable. There is a definite cry for help from colleagues nationwide to find a solution to cater to a diverse group of students whilst

creating a positive learning experience for all. In response to the informal survey 17 out of 19 teachers said they would be willing to try a new pedagogy to try and find a solution. Research has been undertaken on teaching multilevel language classes in New Zealand secondary schools by Badenhorst and East (2015) and Ashton (2017 a & b). However, there is more research available on the issues of teaching multilevel or combined classes in the area of English as a second language (ESOL) (Bell, 2004; Hess, 2001; Treko, 2013). Many of the issues identified in the ESOL research are similar to those found in language classes in New Zealand, and therefore, draws some alignment to the context of this study.

Scope and Context

The scope of this literature review is to a) investigate the problems faced by teaching multilevel classes, b) develop an understanding of these problems, and c) investigate whether, and how, a change in pedagogy might address these problems.

Factors influencing second language acquisition

Language teaching methods

Over the centuries, language teaching has experienced a number of teaching methods ranging from strictly non-verbal, grammar focused learning to communicative, functional use of authentic language (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). At the end of the 18th century the grammar translation method was employed to explicitly teach reading skills through the medium of the learner's first language. By the end of the 19th century language teachers had adopted the Direct Method in an attempt to prioritise oral expression. This method was popular in small language schools, but it was not so effective in large public schools (Kumaravadivelu, 2008) and so the Audiolingual Method was introduced. This method again focused on oral skills but was criticised for not teaching real conversations. The Total Physical Response Method followed and was popular in the United States in the 1960s. Whereas this method focused on responding to oral instructions, its main emphasis was on listening skills. By the 1970s the Communicative Approach was becoming popular. This

learner-centred method prioritized the development of learners' communication competence with the use of authentic materials. However, there was a lack of grammar instruction in the Communicative Approach and so TBL was introduced. This current trend attempts to bridge the gaps of its predecessors by focusing on interaction and grammar, as well as placing an importance on rich input (Ellis, 2005).

Input

It is widely recognised that a key factor in learning a language is input (Ellis, 2003; Hummel, 2014; Krashen, 1982; Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Indeed, Krashen (1982) advocates the need for comprehensible input as a means to effective second language (L2) acquisition. This argument is further supported by Flege (1995) who concludes that the type and quantity of input received is the most important factor in L2 speech acquisition. Comprehensible input can be provided by teacher talk and/or carefully selected reading and listening texts. Kumaravadivelu (2008) refers to this kind of input aimed at language learners as “simplified input” as opposed to ‘non-simplified input’ which comes from competent speakers and the media. Referring to L2 learners, he asserts that “input should be linguistically and cognitively accessible to them” (p.26). Furthermore, Hummel (2014) asserts the importance of language learners being regularly exposed to large amounts of language input. Despite TBL promoting more use of the target language by teachers as a form of rich input, there is evidence of a significant use of first language particularly for relationship building, behaviour management, grammar instruction and explanations (Macaro, 2000; Hawkes, 2012).

Learner talk

Krashen (1982) attests that it is possible to learn a new language without speaking it. Nevertheless, TBL places importance on oral proficiency and teachers are encouraged to use the target language in class. Hawkes (2012) believes that the role of the teacher in promoting spontaneous learner talk in the classroom is important but does not necessarily lead to learner talk. Macaro (2000) asserts a teacher-led environment is not conducive to learner talk. This is because the teacher controls the

situation by deciding the language used, the questions asked, and the length of time spent on the activity. Ellis (2003) agrees with this and suggests that a teacher-led classroom cannot be completely interactive. He suggests a need for students to interact in order to acquire the language.

Reported issues in the teaching of multilevel language classes.

Teachers are overworked and overwhelmed by the demands of planning a curriculum for multilevel classes (Bell, 2004). This was concurred by Dr Karen Ashton, senior lecturer at Massey University (personal communication, January 27, 2017). Her research highlights language teachers' frustration at dealing with the complexity of planning a programme for a multilevel class. The need to cater for a range of ability levels as well as covering the relevant grammatical content for each different level were factors that the teachers found particularly challenging.

As the preparation for multilevel classes is very demanding, teachers are spending disproportionate time on managing and planning a curriculum for these classes. Bell (2004) states "There is no doubt that a multilevel class makes heavy preparation demands on the teacher" (p.25). Lataille-Demore (2007) concurs and suggests that "Studies also stress the importance of careful planning and organisation in combined grades classrooms" (p.3). Furthermore, a survey undertaken of language teachers revealed that in New Zealand language classrooms preparing for two or more levels of the national examination, NCEA, in one class is particularly demanding (Ashton, 2017b).

Within any classroom there will be the challenge of addressing the needs of all the learners in the group. This is acknowledged by Alton-Lee (2003) who states that "Quality teaching for heterogeneous groups of students....is a fundamental challenge for NZ schooling" (p.5). However, within a multilevel class, the range can be so much wider. Indeed, managing diverse learners is challenging and requires careful planning (Laitalle-Démoré, 2007; Tomlinson, Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Moon, Brimijoin, Conover & Reynolds, 2003; Alton-Lee, 2003). These authors also acknowledge that many teachers do little to adjust their teaching to the specific needs of their students. Responses from the informal survey to gather feedback from New Zealand

language teachers undertaken at the start of this study confirm that they perceive meeting various needs of their students as one of the most significant challenges they face. This is an issue highlighted by Badenhorst and East (2015) who suggest “a key challenge of the reality of combined classes is ensuring the students receive the support and input they need at the required level” (p.64). A number of the New Zealand teachers surveyed attempt to address the diverse needs of students by pitching the lesson high and having lots of one-on-one conversations and small-group teaching time. They attest that it appears to work well for the students but is time consuming and tiring for the teacher.

A survey carried out by Dr Karen Ashton in 2016 was responded to by 63 teachers of multilevel language classes in New Zealand. Of this group, only 10 teachers had received any type of professional development to help them improve their pedagogy for teaching multilevel classes. Furthermore, more than half of the group felt unsupported by their school. There was a general feeling of frustration at the de-valuing of languages in New Zealand as a whole, and a feeling of guilt at not having enough time for each of their students. This resulted in them feeling emotionally and physically stressed (personal communication, January 27, 2017). Bell (2004) sums up the feeling of the majority of teachers when she says, “Many of us feel we should be able to teach any class we are given and come out smiling” (p.26).

Reasons why teaching multilevel languages classes is considered a problem

Pedagogy

The biggest problem teachers associate with multilevel classes is technique (Bell, 2004). According to the informal survey results and Ashton’s (2017a) research, teaching multilevel language classes in a traditional teacher-led way results in teacher and student frustration. This is possibly a result of many teachers teaching a multilevel class in the same way as they would teach a single level class. Carr (2005) believes that teachers need to discontinue teaching in their traditional ways to better serve their learners. She claims that “while teachers are ‘thinking’

functional communicative language, they are in fact continuing to employ fairly traditional ways of teaching” (p. 34).

In research undertaken by Nilson (2014) it is suggested that few students demonstrate self-regulation, and they consider the quality of instruction more important to their learning than their own effort. They see the teacher’s job as making learning happen for them. Badenhorst and East (2015) concur that not all students are naturally self-directed and do not freely participate, problem solve or relate to other students without guidance and training. They suggest that students “need time, probably more than one year, to gradually mature into these habits” (p.73).

Two separate lessons within one class

As evident from the responses to Ashton’s (2017b) research, one third of teachers surveyed deliver the content for the two levels separately. They state that this method creates a huge workload and they feel overworked and exhausted as they plan and deliver two lessons within one class allocation. They claim that, in class, students are not receiving enough of the teacher’s time or getting enough practice on listening and speaking skills at their level. Some would argue that this is because teachers are trying to maintain control of what, when, and how content is delivered. In a single level class this is manageable, and this is how traditionally teachers have been trained to deliver a language programme. However, teacher-directed learning does not work in a multilevel situation (Carr, 2005; Rosas, 2016; Lataille-Démoré, 2007). Lataille-Démoré (2007) states that the practice of teaching one level while assigning individual work to the other level raises concerns, notably, teachers trying to teach each level too quickly. This can result in students feeling unmotivated and not fully understanding the new learning. Teaching two groups separately can also lead to a lack of unity within the group, with students reluctant to interact with others (Badenhorst and East, 2015). Bell, (2004) asserts that in a multilevel class the teacher needs to work hard to ensure a group feeling amongst the class.

Teaching all levels as one class

Another strategy evidenced through my informal survey (Appendix A) and Ashton's research (2017b) is one of teaching the whole class as one group, using the same theme whilst providing differentiated resources. Several teachers from my informal survey stated that they use this strategy. However, there are many pitfalls with this approach, for instance, the lesson is not always pitched at an appropriate level for all learners (Ashton, 2017a). Furthermore, trying to teach the same grammar to both levels is challenging. Ellis (2005) believes that students have their own in-built syllabus and "learners follow a natural order and sequence of acquisition" (p.37). He clarifies this by stating that students "master different grammatical structures in a relatively fixed and universal order and they pass through a sequence of stages of acquisition en route to mastering each grammatical structure" (p.37). This natural process of acquisition means that if a teacher tries to teach a grammar point for which students are not ready, for instance, teaching a Level 2 structure to a class of Year 11 and 12 students, then there is a high possibility that the Year 11 students will not grasp the concept. Carr (2005) agrees in principle with this idea, confirming that "language acquisition happens according to its own inner logic" (p.32). However, for teachers to cater to the natural order of acquisition it would involve creating individual programmes for students, which Ellis (2005) concedes would be impractical and time-consuming.

Strategies to manage the teaching of multilevel language classes.

Learner-centred practice

The goal of learner-centred teaching, as defined by Weimer (2013), "is the development of students as autonomous, self-directed, and self-regulating learners" (p.24). Cullen, Harris and Hill (2012) support this definition adding that empowering learners is essential for learners to develop autonomy. They also suggest that learner-centred practice enables the creation of a learning

community. Nunan, Lai and Keobke (1999) assert that catering to a group of diverse learners in a learner-centred curriculum is different to catering to them in a more traditional classroom environment. They claim that a learner-centred approach enables more variety in the sequencing of learning activities as well as a more flexible use of assessment tools for individuals. Nunan (1988) asserts that a learner-centred curriculum is a partnership between teacher and learner where learners are involved in the decision-making process.

The teacher's role

Traditionally, the teacher has held all the knowledge, power and decision making in the classroom (Weimer, 2013; Doyle, 2008). Students and teachers alike have assumed this authority and teachers have taught what they considered their students needed to know. Weimer (2013) concurs with the idea that the teacher's role is no longer to impart all their knowledge to their students whilst being authoritarian classroom managers. Rather, they need a "carefully packed tool box" consisting of a "repertoire of material" (p.26). Furthermore, Tomlinson (2004) describes the teacher's role in a differentiated classroom as "organizers of learning opportunities" (p.16).

Learner-centred practice requires a shift in power and decision making from the teacher to the learner (Weimer, 2013; Cullen et al., 2012). This process is complex, and both parties need to adjust their thinking and their skills. Traditionally, teachers have felt comfortable and enjoyed sharing their hard-earned knowledge, but most recognize that they cannot share everything they deem important within the constraints of a few hours a week (Doyle, 2008). This realization can be a difficult transition for teachers, and they need to adjust their teaching style in order to develop activities which give students the opportunity to work on their own (Doyle, 2008).

Intrinsic motivation

For learner-centred practice to be effective students need to be intrinsically motivated. Cullen et al. (2012) argue that students are more likely to see themselves as competent and intrinsically

motivated if they see their teacher valuing and modelling these attributes. They assert that when learning is relevant, intrinsic motivation is increased, thus enabling students to show more creativity and innovation. This view is supported by Langer (1997) who acknowledges that student creativity is enhanced by teachers modelling autonomous and self-directed attitudes and behaviour. Cullen et al. (2012) also claim that the teacher's behaviour is crucial in encouraging students to be creative problem solvers.

Power sharing

Another key factor in successful learner-centred practice is power sharing between students and the teacher. Cullen et al. (2012) believe that students' engagement and motivation are enhanced by having the opportunity to choose activities relevant to them. Although learner autonomy can be grown from empowering learners, power sharing is not easy to implement as, traditionally, teachers have held all the power in the classroom and have decided what and how the students need to learn (Weimer, 2013, Doyle, 2008). Weimer (2013) believes that it requires a shift in conceptual thinking for teachers to be aware of the authority they hold. Doyle (2008) supports this view and acknowledges that students will need guidance to prepare for the new responsibilities and for a change in their thinking and behaviour, adding that it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure they develop the necessary skills. It is essential that the teacher designs the curriculum, but with input from the students (Nunan, 1988). Tomlinson (2004) argues that students should not always have free choice of activity and working environment as they may need guidance in making their choices. Furthermore, she suggests that teachers must equip learners with the skills to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

The role of the learner

In a learner-centred environment it is not only the teacher's role that changes but also the role of the student (Doyle, 2008). Accustomed to passively receiving information chosen by the teacher, students in a learner-centred environment need to become more active and take responsibility for their own learning (Blumberg, 2009; Doyle, 2008; Weimer, 2013). According to Doyle (2008),

students need to be doing the work in order to learn, and teachers need to inform the students that the teacher's role is not just to give students information for them to repeat back. Learning can be so much more attractive to the student if they have an input into what and how they are learning, and so they need to be engaged in the design of their learning by creating goals and making connections between courses (Cullen et al, 2012). Students teaching one another is a common sight in learner-centred environments as, according to Doyle (2008), it is by teaching that deep learning can occur.

Change in relationship between teacher and learner

Relationships between the teacher and student in a learner-centered environment are different to those in a more traditional teacher-led environment. McCombs and Whisler (1997) maintain that there is more trust and respect that comes from teachers and students working collaboratively, and from enabling students' voices to be heard. They also claim that teachers in learner-centered environments take the time to get to know their students and build good relationships and a positive classroom climate.

Curriculum design

Cullen et al. (2012) assert that constructing a well-designed course for a learner-centred environment involves careful planning with student input. Students' prior knowledge should be assessed so that teachers can provide content relatable to the students, and students can link knowledge from their other courses (Cullen et al., 2012). Content is still required but it is used to develop a knowledge base and improve learning skills rather than being taught overtly (Weimer, 2013). According to constructivist theorists such as Dewey (2009), students need to actively construct their own knowledge rather than passively receive it, they need to do something with it rather than just recognize it. Therefore, a learner-centred course needs to provide opportunities for students to do this by researching information, asking questions, solving problems and thinking critically (Cullen et al., 2012; Weimer, 2013; Blumberg, 2009). Additionally, teachers need to move away from trying to teach a set amount of content within a certain timeframe. Cullen et al.

(2012) believe that teachers should focus on learning outcomes, rather than time, as a unit of measure, that is, not expecting students to spend a set amount of time on learning specific content but allow them to complete the task at their pace. They recognise that some students will need longer than others to achieve the learning outcome. However, Benson (2012) believes that “effective learning is often viewed in terms of personal relevance than in terms of reaching standards of proficiency set by others” (p. 32). Nunan (1988) suggests that it is unrealistic to expect to teach students all the language they need to know within the constraints of the timetable, therefore, it is preferable to focus on the aspects that the students want to learn. This way student will be more motivated to learn.

The role of direct instruction

Classrooms in New Zealand schools include a diverse range of abilities, attitudes and cultures (Alton-Lee, 2003). Thus, implementing a learner-centred environment has its challenges. As previously mentioned, students must accept the new role they have in their learning, and teachers need to show and model how they can do this. Many factors will determine how successfully learner-centred teaching can be implemented, such as class size, content rich subjects, students’ age and maturity, ability, attitude, and culture. There are many societies where teacher-led instruction is the norm, incorporating an authoritative teacher role and obedient student role, or cultures which favour group goals over individual needs (Clifford, 2015). Students who are used to this way of learning may have difficulties adjusting to a learner-centred environment.

Advocates for learner-centred teaching accept that there are cases when other approaches to teaching are more effective. Blumberg (2012) acknowledges that not all courses can be fully learner-centred, but she argues that all courses can have elements of learner-centred practice. Furthermore, Hattie’s (2008) study of meta-analyses concludes that teacher-led practice, which he refers to as Direct Instruction, is highly successful when the seven major steps are followed effectively. These steps are:

1. learning intentions
2. success criteria
3. commitment and engagement
4. presentation
5. guided practice
6. closure
7. independent practice

He asserts that this is a highly effective pedagogy so long as the teacher makes clear to the students the learning intentions and success criteria, and that the seventh step, independent practice, has been completed.

Developing self-regulated learners.

One strategy to manage the teaching of multilevel language classes could be to shift the pedagogy from teacher-directed to learner-centred. For this to be achieved, it is suggested that teachers train students to be independent and self-regulated learners, so that the emphasis is on the learners taking control of their own learning (Nunan, 1999). A study conducted by Nunan (1999) with undergraduate Arts students in Hong Kong investigated the effect of strategy training on the ability of students to reflect and monitor their own learning processes. The results showed that, when given opportunities to self-monitor, self-assess and develop strategy, students' learning behaviour shifted from a linguistic focus to a communicative and applied focus. Students began to take greater control of their own learning processes. This is supported by Seker (2016), who states that "Studies show that incorporating self-regulated learning strategies into foreign language teaching encourages the development of autonomous learners" (p.600). His study involved 51 teachers and 222 undergraduate foreign language students and explored the correlation between self-regulated strategies and achievement in language learning. He interviewed the teachers and, for the students, used their examination result and a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire on self-regulated language learning where the questions had been adapted from previous models. The results showed a low-level use of self-regulated learning but did show a correlation between language achievement and self-regulated learning.

It is crucial that the teacher helps, guides and advises students on their journey towards being self-regulated learners. It is suggested by Seker (2016) and Zumbunn, Tadlock & Roberts (2011) that training students to be self-regulated learners involves some time and preparation on the part of both teacher and learner, however, once the learners are confident with the required strategies they will be able to work more independently, and this will help reduce the workload of the teacher. Zumbunn, et al. (2011) claim that it is unrealistic to expect students to know how to set goals, monitor, evaluate and persist without structured guidance from teachers. They recommend that teachers should allow students time to practise and learn these new skills. However, a lack of teacher focus on self-regulated learning was highlighted in a study carried out by Seker (2016), whose interviews with language teachers at a Turkey University revealed that most do not use self-regulated learning in the classroom.

Nilson (2014) asserts that self-regulated learning involves “conscious planning, monitoring, evaluation, and ultimately control of one’s learning in order to maximize it”. She also believes that self-regulating students demonstrate characteristics such as being mindful, reflective, introspective, self-aware, self-disciplined, and, ultimately, self-directed. This view is supported by Schunk and Zimmerman (1998), who state that “Academic self-regulation is not a mental ability, such as intelligence or an academic skill, such as reading proficiency; rather, it is the self-directive process through which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills” (pp.1-2). Furthermore, a study by Lai (1999) examined the effect of guided critical reflection on learners’ capacity to organise their learning of a language skill. This 13-week pilot project with 30 undergraduates compared the learners’ responses at the beginning of the project to those at the end to determine their change in approach to learning a task. During the project, learners completed a questionnaire on learning listening skills, and kept a journal and a diary which aimed at raising their awareness on selecting materials, reflective skills and self-perception as a learner. Comparisons of the learners’ responses revealed positive movement in the three focus areas.

Grouping

Bell (2004) suggests that another strategy which could work simultaneously with developing self-regulated learners is the appropriate grouping of students across the levels. This would allow

students to act as teachers, create a sense of community and belonging to the class, as well as promoting interaction amongst different ages and developmental stages. Care is needed when organising groups as they do not have to be the same for all activities. In terms of language teaching it is suggested that accuracy is best practised in same level groups and fluency in mixed (Ellis, 2005; Bell, 2004). Ellis (2005) further emphasises that focusing “the instruction on explicit rather than implicit knowledge as explicit knowledge is not subject to the same developmental constraints as implicit knowledge” (p.38). He also proposes that by allowing students to have control over the discussion topic then language acquisition will be optimised (Ellis, 1999, as cited in Ellis 2005). This could be facilitated by introducing small group work into a lesson which would enable students to interact at their own levels. However, Ellis argues that care must be taken to minimise student interaction in English.

Bell (2004) suggests that the real challenge of working with one group whilst the other works on a different task is devising a task that is challenging but does not need teacher input, so that the teacher can work uninterrupted with the other group. However, she suggests that if the students are taught self-management skills such as using online dictionaries and forums, they will manage to understand challenging texts without the teacher having to adapt them. This will mean less pressure on the teacher and more independent learning from the students.

Task-based learning

TBL is student-centred learning with the main goal of language learning being meaningful communication. In terms of TBL, Willis and Willis (1996) outline that learners are encouraged to test hypotheses about language and experiment in the safe environment of pair or small group work. The teacher’s role is to plan and design an authentic task that requires students to use the target language to negotiate meaning and to fulfil the requirements of the task. Using TBL in a multilevel class would allow students to work in groups, negotiate meaning and complete the task using authentic language (Carr, 2003). It is very much student-focused, and the teacher’s role is to observe and take note of how well the students are completing the task and what language and structures they will need to focus on in the post task stage. In addition, learners will need help with

approaching the tasks, and this is where self-regulation and goal setting will help. Rubin and Associates (2015) suggest that “Promoting goal setting and task analysis will add value by helping learners plan how they approach a task” (p. 70). It has been well-documented (Castrillon, Jaramillo & Lopez, 2013; Clementine & Rubin, 2008; Tutistar Jojoa del Rosario & Ballesteros Munoz, 2013 as cited in Rubin, 2015) that if teachers need to take the time to help students learn how to set goals they will see a transformed learning environment where students will be more motivated, have increased self-esteem and self-efficacy, be able to problem solve, take control of their own learning, have a greater focus on the learning process as well as use these newfound skills in other areas of their lives.

Conclusion

In summary, the literature reviewed in this section suggests that a change in pedagogy could positively impact on the workload and demands of teaching multilevel language classes. In particular, Nunan (1999) and Seker (2016) outline the benefits of training students to be more self-regulated and Carr (2005) suggests that TBL enables students to interact at different levels in authentic situations. This review has explored the literature that outlines some of the problems faced by language teachers of multilevel language classes and established the reasons why they are occurring. The literature also suggests that a change in pedagogy from teacher-led to learner-centred suggests a way to alleviate these problems along with the use of self-regulated learning, TBL and grouping. Overall, much of the literature reviewed identifies that there is a need for students to take control of their own learning and be more self-regulated (Nunan et al., 1999; Rubin, 2015; Chamot, 2014; Bloom, 2013; Seker, 2016). The shift from teacher-led to learner-centred practice can be facilitated by teachers modelling self-regulation and providing opportunities to learn through TBL. Moreover, to optimise learning outcomes, teachers could consider appropriate groupings across the age and ability range. All these strategies suggest a more effective way of teaching and learning and could be applied to the multilevel language classroom context. However, the literature does highlight a need for more training for teachers of multilevel language classes, and Ashton (2017b) calls for more professional development opportunities.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology used in this research project. To begin, the ontology and epistemology will be considered in relation to this study. An overview of self-study will be followed by an account of the data collection tools used, namely, observations, questionnaires and reflective journal. The data analysis process will then be explained. Finally, validity and ethical factors will be examined.

This research project explores a change in pedagogy from teacher-led to learner-centred and the extent to which it contributes to improved teaching and learning in a multilevel French class. The project was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges and advantages associated with teaching and learning in multilevel language classes?
2. How can learner-centred practices contribute to improved teaching and learning in my multilevel language class?
3. What recommendations can be shared for improvements in multilevel language learning in languages classes?

Action research self-study was chosen as a way to develop the specific knowledge needed to address the research questions in this particular context. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) affirm that action research “is a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level” (p. 344).

Epistemology and ontology

As all researchers make assumptions about what exists, how it is known and what represents valid knowledge, it is important to have an understanding of the different paradigms of research. A paradigm is a group of notions that describe how a certain subject is understood at a certain time. Davidson and Tolich (2003) assert that paradigms are used in social science to describe a way of

viewing the world as a whole and that this involves ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontology is the branch of philosophy that deals with questions about what is real in the world, and epistemology is the theory of knowledge and what constitutes legitimate knowledge (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Researchers will choose the paradigm which aligns the closest to their values and the way they view the world.

For this research project an interpretive approach was favoured over a positivist approach. A positivist approach asserts that the social world can be broken into parts and each part understood in isolation, whereas the interpretive paradigm adopts naturalistic research believing that a problem needs to be addressed within its natural environment (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Wellington, 2015). As educational research is carried out in a social setting, involving people and complex human behaviour, it proves to be a challenge for the positivist researcher who supports a logical, deductive system seeking stable pre-existing patterns based on repeatable observations (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Cohen et al, 2011). As this research project involved self-study, an interpretive stance was required to enable the researcher to make sense of what was taking place in the classroom, and to understand and describe participants' behaviour whilst engaging in fluid social interactions (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

Practitioner research

Self-study action research

Noffke and Somekh (2009) claim that “self-study works from the postmodernist assumption that it is never possible to divorce the ‘self’ from either the research process or educational practice” (p.40). The ‘self’ is an integral and essential component of practitioner research. Equally, self-study is not to be conducted alone (Hamilton, 1998). Personal involvement may hinder the ability to see the bigger picture, so it is imperative to involve others who can challenge and scrutinize assumptions so that the researcher may arrive at better understanding and clarification. It is for this reason that critical friends and a validation group were invited to participate in this research study. There were four participants selected from the researcher's professional circle, two were

critical friends and the other two were the validation group. The roles of these two groups will be discussed further in this chapter.

Action research transpires when a problem is identified, and a solution is needed, as asserted by Loughran and Northfield (1998): “in self-study, recognizing the dissonance between beliefs and practice is fundamental to action” (p.7). Russell (1998) believes that “self-study is about learning from the experience that is embedded within teachers’ creating new experiences for themselves and those whom they teach” (p.6). Change is at the centre of self-study, and Mutch (2013) corroborates this idea by confirming that teachers explore changes in their own practice as well as changes in education itself. Noffke and Somekh (2009) suggest that self-study is used when referring to inquiry into the practice of teacher education. In fact, it is widely recognized that self-study is a form of practical inquiry and a reflection on one’s practice. Furthermore, Loughnan and Northfield (1998) acknowledge that “self-study is thus seen as an indication that a professional is willing to accept that experience is a major source of improvement in personal practice” (p.8). According to Noffke and Somekh (2009), self-study acknowledges that those working within a certain setting have expertise and perspective of that particular context and thus, can generate new knowledge from within, instead of applying knowledge acquired by others from outside the educational context to their setting.

It was for the reasons stated that self-study was considered the most appropriate methodology to inquire into the research questions. However, it must be acknowledged that self-study is not without its constraints. Loughnan and Northfield (1998) opine that as it is a study of the self, one must be able to accept one’s vulnerability and that for the study of one’s practice to be a worthwhile experience, a degree of self-confidence is a prerequisite.

Data collection

Tools

To conduct the research in this study three methods of data collection were used; observations, questionnaires and reflective journal. There were three observations that occurred at various points in the two-month research period and were conducted by two critical friends. Observations 1 and 3 were carried out by critical friend 1, and Observation 2 was conducted by critical friend 2. Questionnaire 1 was completed at the end of the first topic before the introduction of a learner-centred approach. Questionnaire 2 was completed at the end of the second topic after the introduction of a student-centred approach. Journal entries spanned the two-month period, therefore recording data from the teacher-led period through to the student-centred approaches.

Observations

Observations were chosen as a means of gathering rich data. Morrison (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011) affirms, observations allow data gathering on several aspects; the organization of the physical environment, the people, the interactions that occur, and the resources and pedagogy used. Observations are considered preferable to interviews as they are less time consuming (Cohen et al., 2011). They also give the researcher ‘live’ data which is valid as it has been acquired in an authentic and real-life situation. There is less predictability, therefore, new and unexpected data may be discovered. Another advantage that observation has over interviews is that details may be observed that may not have been discussed in an interview. As Cohen et al. (2011) acknowledge, observation “is a highly flexible form of data collection” (p.456). Bryman (2012) believes that the data obtained from observations is more effective than data from self-reported behaviour in questionnaires.

However, observation as a research method has its constraints. The observer will see things in their own way and, what they see depends on when, where and for how long they observe. This means that data observed can be biased and not necessarily clear evidence (Cohen et al., 2011). This is

further discussed in Denzin and Lincoln (2011) where Angrosino and Rosenberg claim that post-modernists believe that in order to interpret the products of their research it is imperative to understand the researcher's stance as regards gender, social class and ethnicity. Bryman (2012) argues that the observer cannot always understand the meaning of the behaviour they see in a structured observation. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011) maintain that for observation to be an effective means of data gathering, the observers need to practise observation techniques such as data entry, where they position themselves, and how to observe discreetly. As the observers chosen for this research project are long-established teachers with senior leadership experience, with experience in observation for evaluative purposes, it was considered that they had effective observational skills to enable them to be valuable and trustworthy observers.

The observations in this study were carried out by non-participant observers, which means that they did not take part in any activities associated with the study other than observing and completing observation data. The observer role was solely to observe and record what they saw and heard. These structured observations were conducted by critical friends who were invited to be the non-participant observers. McNiff and Whitehead (2005) suggest involving critical friends as they "can offer critical and constructive feedback" (p.11). Two critical friends were selected from the researcher's professional circle and their role was not only to observe lessons but also critique the questionnaire and observation template (Appendix D), and distribute the student questionnaires, and the information to parents and students. In addition, they were invited to question and offer critical insight into the study.

There were three observations of one-hour lessons, one pre-intervention during the teacher-led approach, and two post intervention, during the learner-centred approach. The overall goal of the observations was for the observer to note examples of behaviour occurring during the lesson in order for the researcher to determine whether the lesson was teacher or student-led. The focus for the observation was predetermined and the observers were provided with a template. This pre-prepared observation schedule took more time to prepare than one for a free observation and was more selective, however, it proved more straightforward to analyse. The criteria for the observation template came from themes identified in the reviewed literature that the researcher considered

crucial to be able to address the research questions. In addition, criteria about student and teacher talk and questioning came from my journal reflections.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a widely used means of collecting information to obtain a sense of trends and perspectives. Moreover, Mutch (2013) states that questionnaires can be used to study a specific group and the responses can be used for improvement. As one of the aims of this study was to evaluate the extent to which new practices contribute to improved learning experiences a questionnaire was deemed an appropriate tool.

The questionnaires (Appendices B and C) were sent to each participating student of the class to seek feedback from the students on their experience of the teaching and learning in the multilevel language class pre and post intervention. According to Hopkins (2002), there are many advantages of using questionnaires as a tool for data gathering, namely that they are relatively easy to administer, complete and follow up. In addition, direct comparisons can be made, and feedback on attitudes and opinions can be collected.

As shown in the literature (Mutch, 2013; Cohen et al., 2011), it is essential to spend time developing, piloting and refining a questionnaire. Indeed, McNiff and Whitehead (2005) warn against the use of questionnaires claiming they are “difficult to construct and should be used with caution” (p. 65). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) admit that planning, devising and refining a questionnaire is time consuming but the payback is that it is relatively straightforward to analyse. With this in mind, the questionnaires in this research project were developed after several iterations with input from experienced researchers and critical friends. Furthermore, as Hopkins (2002) claims that the “effectiveness of the questionnaire depends on reading ability and comprehension of the respondent” (p. 118), consideration was given to the wording of the questions which was designed to be accessible to all students in the class.

The questionnaires in this research project included a mixture of closed and open questions. The closed questions offered a range of responses enabling comparisons to be easily made across the respondents. The open questions were used to elicit respondents' opinions and ideas. As open questions take longer to answer, and respondents may provide irrelevant information (Cohen et al., 2011), it is important not to have excessive open questions, especially in this research project, as the respondents were secondary school students.

The sample size of this project was small, and this permitted the inclusion of questions which were more open, and word based. (Cohen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there was no obligation for respondents to answer all questions so if they had no opinion or did not want to answer particular questions, there was no compulsion. Equally, there was no assumption on my part, as the researcher, that all respondents would be able to give answers to all the questions.

Reflective journal

Hopkins (2002) states that there are many advantages to keeping a reflective journal. On the practical side, it involves only the researcher and is relatively simple to maintain. It acts as an aide-memoire and the information recorded in it can be read and analysed at the researcher's convenience. It is now widely accepted that qualitative research includes the use of reflexivity as a strategy (Ortlipp, 2008). According to Wellington (2015), reflexivity is a subset of reflection. Reflection is the process of thinking critically throughout the research process, whereas reflexivity is the act of reflecting on oneself and thinking about how actions are shaped by who one is, one's influences and where one stands theoretically. One such way to facilitate reflexivity is by keeping journals, or field notes.

Reflective journals, also referred to in this research project as field notes, are a means of recording one's observations, reactions to, and reflections of, what is happening in the classroom. Hopkins (2002) notes that the entries should be written up as soon as practical after the lesson to maintain accurate representations and to "retain conscious awareness of one's original thinking" (p.103).

He also claims that a valid reason for keeping a reflective journal is that it provides a biographical account of a teacher's ongoing journey of development. Mutch (2013) claims that journals are an essential tool to help researchers "articulate frustrations, work out problems, as well as highlight the joys and rewards of conducting research" (p.146).

Ortlipp (2008) argues that keeping a journal allows the researcher's thinking process to be visible to all. The researcher can also reflect on how the project is progressing and make changes to the research design if considered necessary. She also adds that her reflective journal showed her readers that all was not neat and linear in her research, contradicting an assumption that all research occurs in a linear fashion. Bryman (2012) and Wellington (2015) reinforce the idea that social research can be messy.

Nonetheless, there are some disadvantages to using a reflective journal as a tool. Despite being a relatively simple way of recording what is seen and heard, Hopkins (2002) states that there are occasions when reflective journaling requires other aids such as a sound recorder or a question analysis sheet. In addition, it is not possible to record conversations in field notes, taking notes in a large group can be difficult and keeping a journal is subjective and can be time consuming at the beginning. In considering these challenges, I surmised that keeping a reflective journal was an appropriate and manageable method of recording data. It was decided that, for the purpose of this study, data from conversations with the participants was not required. It was acknowledged that the time invested in making notes and critically reflecting on them would be beneficial to the study.

Data analysis

A variety of research tools appropriate to the research design were used in this project. As previously stated, for the observations a pre-prepared observation schedule was given to the observers (Appendix D). This template consisted of eight sections designed to focus the observers' attention on the pedagogy and teaching and learning styles being used in the lessons. The

completed observation schedules provided rich data that was then sorted and grouped into salient ideas.

The second tool used was a questionnaire distributed to the students as a Microsoft Form (Appendices B and C). The first questionnaire was completed before any changes were undertaken in the teaching and consisted of a mixture of 15 open and scaled questions. The second questionnaire was administered after a series of changes to teaching. It asked the same questions as well as two additional open questions, which asked for students' preferences on teaching styles. To maintain confidentiality, the questionnaires were anonymous. Students randomly selected a number between one and five that they put on their questionnaires. This information was used solely to make comparisons across the two questionnaires. To eliminate students feeling undue pressure from me as their teacher, to complete the questionnaire, the critical friends introduced it to them and emailed them the link.

The third research tool employed for the duration of the research was a journal. I kept reflective notes as soon after class as was practical. Entries were made in a notebook on a regular basis over a period of two months. There was no particular structure to the notes, however, they included my observations, reflections and questions which were later sorted and coded. In order to accurately assess how much of the lesson was teacher-led or student-directed, one lesson was sound recorded and comprehensive notes were made and added to the journal.

To analyse the data gathered from all methods, thematic analysis was employed. Bryman (2012) asserts that thematic analysis is amongst one of the most common approaches to analysing qualitative data. He concedes that as a strategy, it is still underdeveloped and does not have the heritage of approaches such as grounded theory and critical discourse analysis, nevertheless, it has become more widely used in the last two decades. Thematic analysis, as the name suggests, involves looking for themes within the data. Bryman (2012) refers to the use of a matrix to "construct an index of central themes and sub-themes" (p.579) whilst reading and re-reading the data. Mutch (2013) suggests LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) seven steps of constant comparative

analysis as a way to analyse data thematically. The steps are: perceiving, comparing, contrasting, aggregating, ordering and establishing linkages, relationships, and speculating.

Wellington (2015) suggests that the categories, or themes, used to organize the data can be determined in one of three ways:

- (1) A priori, which means that the themes have been predetermined by the reviewed literature.
- (2) A posteriori, which means that the themes emerge from the data.
- (3) A combination of a priori and a posteriori.

He claims that the third method is the most common and most rational. Indeed, the data from this research project was analysed with themes determined a priori and a posteriori.

In this study, the data were examined, and the core themes were identified. For the reflective journal the entries were first sorted into three categories suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) in Mutch (2011): reflective, descriptive and analytic. The reflective entries recorded my responses to what I saw or experienced, whereas the descriptive notes were solely a record of what was seen and heard. The analytical entries identified emerging themes and patterns and my interpretation of them. After sorting the data, the entries were coded, which means that they were broken into parts and then labelled (Bryman, 2012). Data were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet under the relevant codes and then LeCompte and Preissle's steps were applied for a thorough analysis of the data.

Wellington (2015) recommends that data analysis begins early in the research process and is not left until the end thereby potentially enabling the data to influence the research design. The data analysis in this research project was a continuous process and began after the completion of the first questionnaires. I reflected on the responses and this enabled me to more effectively plan the intervention. I also read and re-read my notes in the reflective journal on a regular basis to ensure that the research questions were being addressed.

Validity

In a quantitative study it is essential that the research design allows for the collection and analysis of data that will confirm that the study is valid and reliable. In other words it is important that it measures what it intended to measure, and it could be repeated at another time and obtain similar results (Bryman, 2012; Mutch, 2013). However, as this is not feasible in a small qualitative study such as this one, it is more appropriate to discuss validity of this research project in terms of trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Kincheloe, 2012). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) stress the importance of action researchers “justifying their claims to knowledge by the production of authenticated and validated evidence” (p.2). To verify the trustworthiness of the process and the findings in this study the following steps were taken.

Firstly, the concept of triangulation was used to ensure credibility. Bryman (2012) describes triangulation as “using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena” (p.392). It is the overlapping and layering of data from different sources that enables the data to be compared and contrasted, therefore providing a deeper understanding. The methods employed in this study were student questionnaires, teacher observations and teacher journal. The data obtained from these three methods provided three different perspectives on the same case and was used to cross-check and, ultimately, validate the findings.

Secondly, the critical friends and a validation group mentioned earlier in the chapter were essential for providing legitimacy to the study. McNiff and Whitehead (2005) affirm that to be seen as valid “research must be seen by the wider community to have been subject to stringent critique” (p.16). The research design for this study underwent a rigorous committee process and an ethics process. As previously stated, for this study two critical friends were selected from the researcher’s professional circle and their role was to observe lessons and to question and offer critical insight into the study. To further validate the research, a validation group was created with two colleagues chosen who were also undertaking further study and thus considered to have the ability to offer critical insight. The main purpose of the validators was to provide feedback on the validity of the

study by reading and questioning the findings. Hamilton (1998) stresses the importance in self-study of checking data and interpretations with others and thus obtaining others' perspectives.

Ethical considerations

According to Snook in Davidson and Tolich (2003) “the point of research is to improve the situation of human beings” (p.73). He explains this further by highlighting the need for a research project to be carried out in an ethical fashion as “both means and ends must be subjected to ethical appraisal” (p.73). As educational research deals with the study of people, ethics play a significant role. Wellington (2015) stipulates that the principal criterion of educational research is that it must be ethical. Research is not ethical if it harms participants physically, emotionally or developmentally (Bryman, 2012). As suggested by Wellington (2015), all participants in this study were approached with consideration, respect and honesty. In addition, all care was taken to ensure that participants were not subject to harm. Furthermore, to ensure this research project was ethically sound, the following concerns were addressed throughout the research process: access and acceptance; voluntary informed consent; confidentiality and anonymity.

Access and acceptance

As stated by Cohen et al. (2011) consent to work in the target community must be sought and, in accordance with the requirements of the Unitec Human Ethics policy, written consent was obtained for this project from the school Principal. Even though I was a part of the target community, it was still important for me to communicate my research intentions and establish my own ethical stance at the beginning of the project (Cohen et al., 2011), which allowed me to be granted access and given permission to undertake the study within the school.

Voluntary informed consent

For research to be ethical participants must give their informed consent (Snook, 2003). In this study, all participants were given accurate information in writing about the research project and their role in it. They also signed a consent form (Appendix E). The information letter for the students was written in language suitable for their age group and level and it was given to them by one of the critical friends. This provided the students the opportunity to ask for clarification and, as the information was not given to them by their teacher, this helped to avoid any undue pressure to participate. As the students were under the age of 18 years old parental consent was required (Appendix F). Snook (in Davidson and Tolich, 2003) maintains that there is a possibility of conflict of interest in this situation as parents may deem participation valuable even when it is not in the best interest of the child. Fortunately, in this study there was no conflict of interest with parents and students both granting consent or assent. Students and parents were informed that participation was optional and that they were free to opt out at any point without any repercussions. However, it was made clear to them that, as the survey responses were anonymous, it would not be possible to withdraw information collected from completed questionnaires.

Confidentiality and anonymity

It is widely acknowledged that protecting participants' privacy is crucial and one way of ensuring this is to promise confidentiality (Cohen et al., 2011; Mutch, 2013). One of Wellington's (2015) rules concerning ethics is to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity are maintained throughout the research, but most importantly in publication. All effort is made but organizational anonymity cannot be guaranteed. In order to protect all involved in this study, participants acting as critical friends and validators were given information about the project and signed a confidentiality agreement.

As previously stated, the questionnaires completed by the students were anonymous. They were identifiable only by a number known only to the participant. The purpose of attaching a number to the participant was to allow comparison of responses pre- and post-intervention.

Conclusion

The methods employed in this research study were consistent with an interpretive paradigm. The tools developed were considered the most appropriate to collect qualitative data from three different sources to enable a deep investigation into the research questions, validated by triangulation. Ethical approval was obtained from the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and adherence to the approved application ensured that there were no ethical dilemmas throughout the study.

Chapter Four – Findings

Introduction

This research project involved an exploration of a change in pedagogy to improve my teaching and the learners' experience in a multilevel French class in a New Zealand secondary school. This chapter will discuss the findings of the data generated from the research into a change in pedagogy from teacher-led to learner-centred, and the extent to which it contributes to improved teaching and learning in a multilevel French class. The project was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges and advantages associated with teaching and learning in multilevel language classes?
2. How can learner-centred practices contribute to improved teaching and learning in my multilevel language class?
3. What recommendations can be shared for improvements in multilevel language learning in languages classes?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there were three teacher observations which occurred at various points in the two-month research period. These teacher observations were undertaken by two critical friends, who had some interest in the outcome of this study. Observation 1 was carried out before the change in teaching approach by critical friend 1. Observations 2 and 3 were conducted after the change in teaching approach; the second one by critical friend 2 and the third one by critical friend 1. Questionnaire 1 was completed at the end of the first topic before the introduction of a learner-centred approach. The learner-centred approach took place during the teaching of the second topic. This specific time will be referred to as the intervention period. Questionnaire 2 was completed at the end of this topic. Journal entries spanned the two-month period.

Also discussed in the previous chapter was the ways in which the data for this study were examined, and how the core themes were identified. For the reflective journal, the entries were first sorted into three categories: reflective, descriptive and analytic, as suggested by Bogdan

and Biklen (1992) in Mutch (2011). The reflective entries recorded my response to what I saw or experienced, whereas the descriptive notes were solely a record of what was seen and heard. The analytical entries identified emerging themes and patterns and my interpretation of them. After sorting the data from all three sources, they were organised under headings from which themes emerged. The themes provide the key findings of this study which are: teacher-led pedagogy, learner-centred approach, student confidence, self-regulation, grouping and differentiation, and challenges. These challenges include a change in role for teacher and student, teacher frustrations, teacher workload and the contextual nature of language teaching.

Teacher-led to learner-centred approach

Teacher-led approach

Bell (2004) claims that a major problem encountered by teachers of multilevel language classes is one of technique. The data gathered during the pre-intervention stage of this study backs this up. There is evidence from all three data sources that the pedagogy was predominately teacher-led, with the class split into two groups and being taught separately, in particular when new grammar learning was occurring.

Entries from the reflective journal note that in one lesson “I was spoon-feeding the information on grammar for an hour”. Another entry a week later stated that there was a period of “fifty minutes spent explaining grammar points to the Year 12 students”. For this to occur it was considered necessary “to split the class into two levels so that I could teach the grammar separately” while the other student worked independently on an assigned activity.

The teacher-led approach to the teaching of grammar structures was also noted by students in the survey responses, where all respondents maintained that the teacher-led approach was indeed occurring, not only during the first topic but also during the second topic when a more learner-centred approach was being introduced. Nevertheless, despite grammar having been taught mainly in a traditional way, there was an attempt to shift from teacher-led instruction to a more student-centred approach. This occurred when students were asked to teach their peers a grammar structure

using a method of their choice. This allowed students agency over their learning as they could choose the method of delivery.

An observation comment during the intervention stage states that “students were teaching other” and this is corroborated with a journal entry that states “students taught each other last week’s grammar point”. The journal entries highlighted the dichotomy of my feelings whilst students were completing this task. Recorded in the reflective journal is my frustration at the length of time students took to teach each other a grammatical structure: “the exercise took a lot longer than if I had taught it” (12/03/18), which is quickly followed by a feeling of pride at the observation that students were taking the lead and teaching their peers. Furthermore, one student commented that she knew the grammar structure that she taught better than the one taught to her by the other group, confirming that one learns by teaching. This finding indicates that tasks take longer to complete in a student-led environment, particularly in the initial stage when students are adjusting to a new way of learning. However, student-centred learning can further strengthen leaning in terms of embedding the new learning through peer interaction. Nevertheless, there is an obvious tension here between ensuring that students have been given access to the required content in the amount of time available and allowing students the time to delve further and acquire a deeper understanding of the new knowledge.

Learner-centred approach

The data collected in this study suggest that there was limited learner-centred practice occurring prior to the change in teaching approach. However, all three data sources show some student choice, agency and ownership during the teacher-led approach. In addition, students reported that there were a variety of teaching strategies used to deliver the curriculum during the first topic. One student responded to a question that asked about the ways they were taught French, stating that they were “both self-directed and teacher-directed” (Questionnaire 1). Nevertheless, both the journal entries and teacher observation suggested that there was little evidence of learner-centred practices occurring in the lessons during this period.

A significant finding is that students reported learning in a learner-centred environment was preferable to teacher-led learning. Responses from Questionnaire 2 relating to how students' learning has been affected by the learning style included: "...made me more engaged and forced me to manage my time better" and "...having a variety of ways to approach learning like having collaborative tasks, independent tasks, games etc is effective for my learning". In addition, not only did students admit to feeling more confident in their reading, speaking and writing of French, but also appreciated having more time to "get stuck into" the learning. These responses, together with journal entries and comments from Observation 2, are strong evidence that firstly, learner-centred methods were evident in the pedagogy and secondly, that students could name these and reported enjoying them.

The data highlight a significant increase in the implementation of student-centred practice during the second topic. Journal entries noted that "students were asked to prepare a mini lesson to teach to the others" (07/03/18), "all resources are on One Note and can be accessed whenever the students want" (11/03/18), "students taught each other last week's grammar points" (12/03/18), "students worked through the resources at their own pace with a choice of reading or listening activity" (14/03/18). The shift to a learner-centred approach is confirmed by the observation notes where "preparation of material to teach each other" and "choice over how they scaffolded the lesson" were observed (Observation 2). Indeed, the combination of students teaching each other, the availability of all resources, and students working on activities of their choice for as long as they needed shows that student-centred practice was occurring. Furthermore, Questionnaire 2 responses indicated that the students themselves perceived that there was a shift in pedagogy towards student-centred learning with the majority of responses declaring that the lessons were less teacher-directed.

An interesting observation in the journal (07/03/18) was the way in which students approached the teaching task assigned to them. One group taught, their structure in a traditional teacher-directed way. It is interesting to note that students needed guidance in how to teach. It can be challenging

for students to be given the freedom of choice, especially when they have been used to a teacher-led style of learning where the teacher has made decisions for them in terms of what, when and how to learn. When given the opportunity to take the teacher's role, it is normal for students to model how they have been taught, therefore imitating the direct instruction they have experienced as language learners, suggests a belief in the teacher-led approach.

In summary, this finding shows that there was a definite shift to learner-centred practice during the second topic as evidenced by student agency and a decrease in teacher-directed learning. Opportunities for students to take the role of the teacher, choose activities appropriate to their style of learning, and manage their own time, resulted in better student engagement.

Student confidence

A significant finding in the data is an idea relating to student confidence. A lack of student confidence is evidenced in responses to the questionnaire. When the students were asked to suggest other ways that they would have preferred to learn French there was very little response. In both questionnaires the majority of students did not respond to this question, and those who did expressed satisfaction with the way they were being taught. One student in Questionnaire 1 stated "I engage well with X's teaching and don't see any other methods for learning" and this was corroborated in Questionnaire 2 with another student claiming: "The way we do it now is fine". In the second quotation "now" could be interpreted that this student finds the learner-centred approach "fine" as opposed to the teacher-led approach. However, as this student did not respond to this question in Questionnaire 1 it is not possible to know for certain. The paucity of suggestions of other ways in which to learn French highlights either the students' lack of exposure to other learning approaches, or their inability to transfer learning approaches from one discipline to another. Another explanation for this is that they do not know what they do not know and this is especially the case if they have only teacher-led examples to refer to. In addition, they may not be accustomed to sharing their ideas and therefore may not be equipped with the skills to do so.

It is assumed that a lack of confidence is manifested in students being unwilling to participate in class. Entries from the reflective journal note that “students are not comfortable giving answers aloud” (12/02/2018) and “there were a lack of responses to my questions especially when being asked in French” (21/02/2018). This was corroborated with observation notes which stated that students were quiet and hesitant and that not all students participated equally (Observations 1, 2 and 3). In the lesson which I sound recorded and then made notes in the journal I dominated the class by questioning the students in French and then answering the questions myself when there was no response from the students. The journal entry for this lesson included “I’m getting one- or two-word answers. I end up reading out the sentence with the answer” (21/02/2018). Notes from Observation 1 corroborate this by stating “The teacher asked the majority of the questions”. The lack of talking in French could be attributed to students feeling self-conscious when speaking a foreign language, and also to their inability to express themselves adequately in French with the limited language that they possess.

Student lack of confidence was also evident in some collaborative tasks. One such example is a lack of participation in the online language community, as noted in the journal (14/02/2018). Students were asked to post articles that they found interesting for others to read and comment on. Certain students were very active in this task, but others never posted or commented, suggesting a possible lack of confidence in either their language skills, self-confidence, technological skills, or simply a lack of interest in the task. Another instance noted in the journal (09/04/2018), which could be attributed to a lack of student confidence, was when students were each asked to contribute to a different aspect of a collaborative task. Some chose to work on an aspect that was out of their knowledge realm, which meant that they needed a lot of teacher support to complete it. This could be seen as students choosing to challenge themselves, or an example of students not knowing their own strengths and weaknesses.

Despite evidence of lack of student confidence, the data showed that students demonstrated more confidence when they had a second session to revisit the same task. An entry from the journal states that after reflecting on the students’ learning from the previous lesson I gave the students the opportunity to continue with the speaking task from that lesson. “This time they were more

confident” (11/4/2018). Recapping on the previous lesson showed gains in learning and increased confidence. In Observation 2, when students were working on planning a mini lesson that they had started planning the previous lesson, it was noted that “students asked questions for clarification and didn’t rely on the teacher too much” as they were “working together to clarify the material”. Furthermore, it was evident from journal entries that students were feeling more confident as they became used to the new teaching approach. They were developing their self-regulation skills and taking charge of their own learning.

Self-regulation

The theme of self-regulation emerged in the data findings of this study. The data show that students became more self-regulated the more they engaged in learner centred activities. It is evident from journal entries prior to the change in approach that the students were not particularly self-regulated. Despite evidence of student self-regulation in Questionnaire 1, where some students stated that they had set their own learning goals for French, and Observation 1 notes stating that students were “motivated and organised”, there were several entries in the journal alluding to the fact that students were not doing the necessary preparation at home to be able to contribute to class discussions (15/02/2018, 26/02/2018).

As the teaching approach became more learner-centred students were given the opportunity to develop their self-regulation skills. This is highlighted in Observation 3 with the comment “Lesson developed students’ ability to work independently with less input and support from the teacher”. This is supported by Observation 2 where it was noted that students “did not rely too much on teacher”. However, it was the students themselves who recognised that they were becoming more self-regulated, as all responses in Questionnaire 2 alluded to them setting their own goals and tracking and reflecting on their progress.

Overall, the opportunity afforded to the students to manage their own learning led to students becoming more invested in their own learning. They were able to learn to be more self-regulated through the learner-centred tasks.

Grouping and Differentiation

The data show that student groupings varied throughout the research period. Journal entries outline teaching methods during this time which included examples of students working as a whole class, as a year group and in a small mixed level group. Despite attempts at different grouping arrangements, it was acknowledged in the journal that “I need to work on grouping better and not expect everyone to do the same thing at the same time” (22/03/2018). Comments from both Observations 1 and 3 alluded to students having no choice over the task with all students working on the same task. However, during the first topic, when the teaching approach was mostly teacher directed, all students recognised that they were expected “sometimes” to do the same task as the other level. They all found this to be “very” useful, citing reasons such as liking the repetition, solidifying knowledge, learning grammar at a higher level, and extending their language knowledge (Questionnaire 1).

During the first topic the teaching approach catered for two different levels by organising students into the two levels on occasions and teaching different content to each group. There is an example of this in the journal where I spent 50 minutes with the Year 12 group while the Year 13 student worked through a Power Point presentation. I then spent 15 minutes with the Year 13 student while the Year 12 group worked through an exercise to practise the new content. I found this demanding and felt torn between the two groups. Another example was noted in the journal where I had prepared a translation activity with the mini whiteboards and had two different sentences, one with a Level 2 (Year 12) structure and one with a Level 3 (Year 13) structure, on each slide. The journal entry confirmed that the students appeared engaged in this activity and that there were options for further differentiation such as including a pronoun or translating both sentences (21/02/2018). Again, my frustration with dividing my time between the two levels was expressed. A significant

issue with preparing individual activities for the two levels was the workload that it created, and this was alluded to in both journal entries.

The second topic employed a more learner-centred approach and focused on the students being taught as one group with differentiated activities to cater for the different levels and abilities within the class. The students reported that they appreciated being taught together as they acknowledged that it provides reinforcement of knowledge for the older students and extension for the younger ones. Students attested that they enjoyed working together saying that “it stretches you further”, “gave me an insight into higher level French” and “it helped me to extend my knowledge and vocab” (Questionnaire 2).

Students were aware of the different curriculum levels of language used in various activities, as this was regularly indicated verbally by me or it was mentioned in writing on the tasks. Observation notes concur this: “Activity is shared but expectation and clarifications range between the four students in terms of questioning and language use by the teacher” (Observation 2). It was evident that students were conscious of the need to differentiate the language used at both levels and it was observed that the older student purposely chose language from the younger students’ vocabulary list when devising an activity for them (Observation 2). In the same observation it was also noted that there was “an awareness in class amongst students of [the] importance of differentiation”.

An interesting finding is the students’ response to how useful they found doing the same task as the rest of the multilevel class. During the first topic where learning was more teacher-led, all students responded to Questionnaire 1 that it was “very” useful to do the same task as everyone else. After the second topic where they had experienced more student-centred learning, the vast majority of students thought that doing the same task as everyone else was only “quite” useful (Questionnaire 2). This could be attributed to the fact that the second topic included a variety of differentiated material from which students could choose tasks appropriate to their level and interests, and therefore they perceived this to be more useful than all doing the same task. It is another example of students not knowing what they do not know.

To conclude, before they had been offered differentiated tasks, students stated that they preferred working as one group on the same task. When they become more aware of the different levels of language required for each curriculum level, they began to choose their tasks appropriate to their level and enjoyed this more than working altogether as a class. From the teacher's perspective, teaching the class as one group and offering students differentiated tasks was preferable to grouping the students into curriculum levels and teaching them as separate groups.

Challenges

The findings of this research project highlight that changing to a learner-centred approach is not easy. There are challenges faced by both teacher and learner. One challenge pertinent to both teacher and student is a change in role. Other challenges encountered in this study were student monitoring and workload. The data shows that good student-centred learning creates a demanding workload for the teacher.

Change in role for the students

The data show that students needed time to learn and adjust to their new role as self-directed learners. According to Questionnaire 1 responses, students reported being content with the way they were being taught French prior to a change in approach and had no suggestions for improving it. While this may be a result of a conflict of interest, as students may not feel comfortable challenging the teacher's methods, it could also indicate that the way they were being taught was effective for their learning. When a learner-centred approach was introduced students had to rely less on the teacher and become more self-regulated.

It took time for students to embrace this change in role. On several occasions, as noted in the journal that, when given the choice of task, students regularly chatted in English before focussing on their chosen task. One such example from the journal stated that "It took the students some time

to settle into this. They were chatting in English off-task for a while before settling into a reading exercise” (14/03/2018). Nevertheless, with time and practice students demonstrated that they were embracing their new role. A journal entry notes that “It was good to hear X asking Y for some vocabulary help” (11/04/2018) and a comment from Observation 3 confirms that students were becoming less reliant on the teacher.

Change in role for the teacher

A major challenge is that a learner-centred approach requires a change in role, not only for the learner but also for the teacher. A pre-study interview with a member of the senior leadership team underlined the fact that not all teachers like change and if they see something as working for them, they are reluctant to try a new approach. She attested that there needs to be a change in teacher mindset and perspective on how learning happens before they can attempt to move from teacher-led to student-directed learning (M. J. Lynch, personal communication, March 6, 2017). Journal entries confirm that in this research project I needed to move from my comfort zone of a teacher-directed approach to be able to effectively implement a student-centred learning environment. One such example from the journal is: “I find it very hard to sit there and let them get on with it. It’s very tempting to interrupt and give them my knowledge” (11/04/2018). I acknowledged that I needed to find the right balance between giving students too much freedom to organise their own learning and intervening to direct them. This was echoed by a student comment in Questionnaire 2, stating that she enjoyed the learner-centred teaching style but would have liked “more teaching time than self-directed learning”. This infers that, whilst there are elements of the learner-centred approach that she enjoyed, she would like to have more direct teaching as well, thus endorsing a need for more balance in the teaching approaches adopted.

My new role included facilitating student learning and modelling how to be self-directed. Journal entries indicate that students were advised and guided in their choice of activities and I modelled how to manage workload. (14/03/2018, 22/03/18, 09/04/2018) This was reinforced by a student response in Questionnaire 2 who wrote “She advised me what tasks would be best for me”.

Observation 2 notes corroborate this idea as it was observed that “The lesson developed students’ ability to work independently with less input and support from the teacher”.

Despite moving towards a more learner-centred environment there were occasions recorded in the journal and in the notes from Observation 3 where a teacher-led approach was still apparent. Entries from the journal acknowledged that I found sustaining a completely learner-centred approach difficult and, consequently, resumed my comfortable direct teaching role at times.

Teacher frustrations

Journal entries (10/04/2018 and 11/04/2018) suggest that there was some significant frustration in allowing students to work through material at their own pace. Firstly, they were taking a lot longer to work through the content. In a teacher-directed environment the teacher is in control of the content and is used to covering a certain amount in a certain timeframe. In a learner-centred environment, students choose the tasks and manage their own time. This inevitably means that students are working on different tasks for different periods of time. I needed to accept that students were covering less content but in more depth. Journal entries confirm my dissatisfaction. A second frustration was monitoring students’ progress in a learner-centred environment. This is evidenced by a journal entry: “As students are all working on different tasks at different speeds, I’m feeling frustrated that I don’t know who has done what and whether they have understood it” (10/04/2018). There is an obvious need for me to develop an effective monitoring system.

Teacher workload

A significant challenge in adopting a learner-centred approach is the increased workload it creates for the teacher. There are many journal entries which allude to this issue such as “I spent two hours planning one lesson to offer differentiated resources for the lesson” (03/04/2018). Other entries discuss the time taken for unit planning when incorporating two levels of the curriculum. It is not only the planning which was time consuming for the teacher but also the feedback and marking

process. As students were working on the different tasks for different time periods it was difficult to monitor students' progress and know "who's done what and whether they have understood it" (10/4/2018). Checking work as a class was not practical and some students were recording their work on One Note whereas others were working in their book. This created a workload issue for me as I tried to locate the students' work and then check it individually.

Contextual nature of language teaching

A final, yet significant finding in this research project relates to the contextual nature of language teaching. Language learning requires quality input for learners to be able to produce quality output (Ellis, 2005). Input can be in the form of written texts, sound files and videos, preferably authentically sourced materials. However, journal entries confirm that finding input at the correct level for students in a multilevel language classroom requires a significant amount of time. There are no specific resources available for multilevel language classes so either I had to find resources and then adapt them so that they could be used by either level or find two resources on the same topic but with differing levels of language complexity. Another important source of input in a language classroom is the teacher. The use of the target language in the classroom is an effective way of ensuring students are being exposed to the level of language that they need, and during both topics I spent a lot of time speaking in French to the class. Evidence from all three observations confirm that there was a lot of teacher talk in French. However, entries from my journal highlight my feeling that spending time talking with the class to model the language that I wanted them to produce was not conducive to a learner-centred environment. As Ellis (2003) suggests, it is not possible to have a fully interactive classroom when the teaching style is teacher-led. I felt that I was taking control of the learning away from the students. Again, this suggests the necessity for the right balance of teaching approaches. It is important to note that learner-centred language teaching provides less opportunity for the teacher to model language to the whole class, but it does enable students to learn the language by using it themselves.

Summary of findings

The data demonstrated that there was an increase in learner-centred practice during the second topic and that the students' perception was that they preferred it to the more teacher-directed approach. However, there was still a blend of teacher-directed and learner centred approaches evident throughout the second topic and both the students and I felt comfortable with this.

Students' confidence during the first topic was low in terms of contributing in class and being aware of how they wanted to learn. Their confidence improved when they were exposed to the same content or task for a second time and when working collaboratively where they were willing to ask for help from their peers.

Students became more self-regulated the more they engaged in the learner-centred approach. As regards grouping, it was found that teaching two groups separately created a huge workload for the teacher. Doing the same task as the rest of the class in the first topic was perceived to be very useful by all students, but they changed their minds for the second topic, where they attested that they enjoyed working as one group with differentiated activities from which they could choose. There is not one single way to learn French and, when exposed to other ways of learning, students approached language learning in the way that suited their own style.

A number of challenges were highlighted in the findings. Firstly, a change in role for the teacher and the learner was identified as a challenge but it became less of an issue after time and practice. As the teacher, I found monitoring the students in a learner-centred environment demanding as they were all working on different activities for different amounts of time. I also had to come to terms with students learning less content than with a traditional teacher-led approach but possibly learning it in more depth. This will, nevertheless, require careful planning and flexibility in terms of teaching.

To conclude, a significant issue for the teacher adopting a learner centred approach is the heavy workload involved in planning and feedback. In addition, the question of providing enough appropriate authentic input in a learner-centred approach was raised, which suggests a need for more professional development for teachers to explore new strategies.

Chapter Five – Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The three key themes that have emerged from the findings of this study are:

- 1) The contextual nature of language teaching.
- 2) Change in role for both teacher and students in a learner-centred environment.
- 3) Conditions contributing to successful teaching and learning in a multilevel language class.

The contextual nature of language learning

New approaches to language learning

The literature suggests that there is a variety of approaches to teach multilevel language classes. My informal survey (Appendix A) revealed that some teachers teach the class as two separate classes, preparing and delivering two lessons in one. Others divide their time between the two levels, leaving one group to work independently whilst the other has teacher contact, and others attempt to teach the class as one group but admit to having difficulty pitching the lesson to cater for all abilities. Teachers responding to the survey did not consider any of these approaches to be satisfactory. The findings of this study show that introducing a learner-centred approach, rather than adopting a specific language teaching method, is one way of addressing the issues associated with multilevel language classes.

This study revealed that language teachers need new ways to teach multilevel classes. Over the centuries, language teachers have adopted a variety of different methods in an attempt to best serve their learners. Kumaravadivelu (2008) claims that language teachers have exhausted all available methods and they are now in what he calls the “post method condition”. Carr (2005) recognises that language teachers are change-weary, yet they are “committed to the imperative of working in a way which provides professional satisfaction to themselves” (p.34). Ashton’s (2017b) finding reinforces Carr’s perception. She found that teacher guilt and frustration at not being able to

provide students in multilevel classes with enough of their attention was a major concern for teachers. This is further supported by Badenhorst and East (2015) who describe the unsatisfactory teaching of a combined Year 12 and 13 class as “deeply traumatic” (p.68). Moreover, Ashton (2017a) considers teaching multilevel language classes as “a complex endeavour for experienced teachers let alone less experienced” (p.1).

Lack of support

Research by Ashton (2017b) revealed that there is a lack of professional development for teachers of multilevel language classes. In fact, nearly 85% of teachers who responded to her survey had never received any specific professional development (PD) for teaching multilevel classes. Teachers expressed a need for more help with planning and delivering a programme and the opportunities to explore new techniques. Indeed, there was no specific PD available to me to help and guide me to develop an effective pedagogical approach or a programme of study for my multilevel French class. Nunan (1998) claims that teachers need the time, skills, and support to develop a curriculum. This view is shared by Carr (2005) who further suggests that there is a need for teachers to support each other by exchanging resources and ideas. Creating programmes and adapting teaching methods takes time and expertise. Journal entries from this study make reference to the considerable amount of time I spent planning the programme and finding resources, with very little support from others. Nevertheless, this study showed that time spent in preparing a programme with differentiated activities and resources allowed me more time in class to observe and facilitate the students’ learning (Journal entry, 11/04/18).

In this study I was the only French teacher with senior classes, therefore, there was no one with whom I could share ideas and ask advice. Journal entries show my frustration at not being able to discuss my ideas (10/04/2018). Ashton (2017b) confirms that isolation is a significant issue amongst language teachers in New Zealand who are often the only teacher of that language within a school. There were a small number of teachers in her study who felt supported, however, they were more likely to be working in a department with other teachers of the language. Despite having more than 20 years’ experience of language teaching in schools, journal entries in this study

expressed my discontent at being the sole teacher of senior French and my feeling of isolation. There were other teachers in my school with multilevel classes each with their specific issues pertinent to their subject area. Some managed the demands of multilevel teaching better than others as they acknowledged that NCEA assessment is an important driver. Teachers of certain subjects, such as History, can teach the same module to both levels and then assess the work at the appropriate level, thus avoiding a significant increase in workload. Bell (2004) suggests the best approach for teaching a multilevel language class is a thematic approach based on the interests of the majority of the class, which incorporates a variety of differentiated resources and activities. In this study, I attempted to adopt this approach, taking care to ensure students used the language and structures required at their level. It was also crucial that I designed the assessment tasks to allow the students the opportunity to produce language and ideas at their specific curriculum level.

Need for input

In this study, I felt that my students were not always getting enough aural input at their level. During teacher-led instruction I observed that students develop an ear for the language by listening to it spoken by me at a level comprehensible to them. However, this study showed that there were fewer opportunities for the teacher to address the whole class using the language when a learner-centred approach was adopted. This was because students were working independently on their chosen task and there were fewer opportunities to address the class as a whole and expose them to the same amount of language input. The learner-centered environment was more conducive to individual conversations which meant that students were receiving the language input only for themselves. Badenhurst and East (2015) suggest that “a key challenge of the reality of combined classes is ensuring that students receive the support and input they need at the required level” (p.64). Language input can be aural or written, and rich, comprehensible input is fundamental to effective language learning (Krashen, 1982; Flege, 1995; Carr, 2005; Ellis, 2005; Hummel, 2014). In a teacher-led environment the teacher speaks to the whole class and so they are all exposed to the same language and modelling from the teacher. It is acknowledged in the literature that language learners need comprehensible, or simplified input, in order to produce the language for themselves. However, Macro (2000) and Ellis (2003) believe that a teacher-led environment does

not enable spontaneous learner-talk as the teacher is controlling the conversation. Notably, the critical friend noted in Observations 1 and 2 that most of the talk during the lessons was teacher talk and directed, closed questions, whereas in Observation 3, during a more learner-centred lesson, there was less whole class input and more individual conversations. The amount of teacher-talk in Observation 1 and 2 could be construed as too much teacher-talk by non-language teaching colleagues. However, teacher talk in the target language is an essential way of providing students with language structures at their level, as it helps students to improve both listening and oral skills. In a language class it is a necessity to model the language consistently.

Language classes can be noisy as students interact with each other to practise the new language. In this study, when students worked in a learner-centred environment they tended to work independently at their own pace or in small groups, depending on the task. This resulted in me having less opportunity to talk to the class as a whole in French and model the language and structures I wanted them to use. I was able to talk to individual students in French but as this was spontaneous, I did not have the time to carefully prepare the exact language I used and so it proved more difficult to incorporate the language that I wanted them to replicate. Teacher input is crucial to model key structures and facilitate longer, more complex interactions. Jones, Halliwell and Holmes (2002) stress the importance of teachers planning their use of the target language in class with a view to students borrowing the structures to use in their own interactions. Nevertheless, unrehearsed interaction is crucial to learning a language. Hawkes (2012) highlights the importance of spontaneous interaction in developing confident language speakers. However, language teachers surveyed by Ashton (2017b) claim that they do not have the time or the opportunity to focus on spontaneous interaction in multilevel classes.

Change in role for teacher and students in a learner-centred environment

The findings from this study highlight the fact that for a learner-centred approach to be effective it is important to acknowledge that there is a change in traditional student/teacher roles. The

literature suggests that, traditionally, the teacher has held the power and made all decisions relating to what, when and how to teach (Weimer, 2013; Cullen et al., 2012). This was indeed the case in this study as I began the study teaching in my traditional teacher-led way, deciding what topic to teach, choosing the order of activities and tasks and ensuring that students all worked on the same activity at the same time. Doyle (2008) and Weimer (2002) suggest that traditionally, teachers have enjoyed holding onto the power and sharing their knowledge with their students. However, researchers have found that for learner-centred practice to be effective, there needs to be a shift in power and decision making from the teacher to the student (Weimer, 2013; Cullen et al., 2012; Doyle, 2011). Carr (2005) acknowledges that a change in practice is not easy and requires risk-taking, which can be challenging for both teacher and student.

Role of the teacher

A key finding from the study was that the role of the teacher needs to change. Journal entries provide evidence of the need to move out of my comfort zone and embrace change. My comfort zone was a teacher-led approach where I had control of the learning. However, I recognised the necessity to let go of the reins and give more control to my students. Carr (2005) supports this finding as she asserts that learners are better served when teachers move away from their traditional teaching approach. This view is shared by Weimer (2013) who claims that teachers should no longer be transferring their knowledge to the students nor organising all the content.

The literature states that a key role for the teacher in a learner-centred environment is to help students develop the necessary skills to become independent learners (Doyle, 2008). In this study there were instances of this occurring. Notes from Observation 2 provide evidence that I was offering students activities that allowed them to work independently and develop their self-managing skills. There were also entries in the journal to confirm that I was modelling self-directed learning. Furthermore, students acknowledged in their questionnaire responses that I helped and advised them.

This study shows the changes I made to my practice in a learner-centred environment, were notably, guiding and facilitating learning. Journal entries, observations and student questionnaire responses all provide evidence of the kinds of changes required. The literature supports this idea, with Tomlinson (2004), referring to teachers as “organisers of learning opportunities” (p.16). Bell (2004) and Doyle (2008), recommend the need for learning tasks to be developed which do not require considerable teacher input and allow students to work on their own. Although my role had become more of a facilitator and guide, there were instances of too much freedom or too much teacher control and finding the right balance to support learning in a student-centred way was a challenge and concern throughout.

This study supports the findings of Tomlinson (2004) who suggests that students may need guidance in making their choices. Comments in the journal and student responses from the questionnaires highlight that the teacher’s role involved guiding the students and helping them to choose the tasks appropriate to their needs and learning style.

Despite efforts to change my pedagogy to a more learner-centred approach, the findings show that I found sustaining a learner-centred environment challenging. There are journal entries and notes from Observation 3 which allude to the fact that, on occasions, my practice reverted back to being teacher-led. However, some parts of the course were more suited to a teacher-led approach. This finding is supported by Blumberg (2012) who acknowledges that not all courses can be fully learner-centred, nonetheless, there can be elements of learner-centred practice in all courses.

Role of the student

This study revealed that in a learner-centred environment it is essential that the students take responsibility for their own learning. This finding is echoed in the works of Blumberg (2009), Doyle (2008) and Weimer (2013) who all maintain that students have to adapt to being more active learners and take ownership of their learning. This finding is further supported by Cullen et al.

(2012) who affirm that empowering learners is essential for them to develop into autonomous learners. Although the findings show that I could see that the students needed to become more in charge of their learning, it was clear that they needed time to learn and adjust to their new role. Journal entries from the beginning of the learner-centred topic showed that the students took time to settle into their chosen task, regularly chatting off-task in English. Notably, I observed that it is unrealistic to expect students to be able to move into their new role straightaway. I discovered my own role as one that could train and guide them to be to be independent learners. The findings of this study indicate that the students did in fact become more independent and responsible for their own learning over time. Journal entries noted that they began to rely more on each other and less on the teacher by seeking help from each other before asking the teacher. Furthermore, student survey responses confirmed that students had become more engaged and managed their time better.

A key finding in this study highlights how students learn better when they take on the role of the teacher. In this study the students taught their peers a grammar structure. It was acknowledged by the students themselves that they felt they had a better understanding of the structure they taught than the ones taught to them. This is supported by Doyle (2008) who asserts that deep learning occurs when one teaches others. The learning was deeper, but it took longer for the students to gain the new understanding, a frustration highlighted in the journal. Doyle adds that students need to be doing the work in order to learn. Nevertheless, teaching is a skill and does not come naturally to all students, so, as suggested by Doyle (2008), they needed guidance and suggestions on how to teach.

Despite the literature claiming that a learner-centred approach is beneficial to student motivation and engagement, students in this study were not dissatisfied with a teacher-led approach. Responses from Questionnaire 1 confirmed that students thought the teacher-led approach they were used to was effective for their learning.

Conditions contributing to successful teaching and learning in my multilevel language class.

The study suggests that managing the demands of a multilevel language class can be achieved by adopting a learner-centered approach. Nevertheless, in order for learner-centred teaching to be successful both teacher and learner need to adopt an open mindset and be willing to change the ways in which they work. Weimer (2013) and Cullen et al. (2012) assert that both parties must adjust their thinking and their skill set. Carr (2005) confirms that shifting paradigms and changing one's practice is not easy and teachers have to be willing to try new things and move away from their comfort zone. She also supports the idea that a change in practice is challenging for both teacher and student.

Teacher attitudes

Entries in the journal show that I was frustrated by the status quo and was committed to trying something new in order to improve the overall experience for teacher and learner in the multilevel French class. With reference to the introduction of a more individualised approach to language teaching in a multilevel class, Book (1986) stresses that "Teachers must believe that the concept will work, or else it is futile to try" (p.5).

Furthermore, Weimer (2013) believes that teachers need a shift in conceptual thinking to be aware of the power they hold. I was surprised by the students' complete acceptance of my teacher-led approach. Responses to the Questionnaire 1 revealed that they were content with the way that they were being taught and had no suggestions for improvement. However, students are not always confident to challenge their teacher's practice, especially if they are not accustomed to offering their ideas around the teaching and learning. As schools and teachers generally decide the rules, the curriculum content, as well as the requirements and deadlines for assignments, it is not surprising that students are not comfortable challenging the teacher's ideas or authority. Weimer (2013) asserts that the authority of teachers is taken for granted by teachers and students alike and, therefore, there is a power imbalance in the classroom. For this imbalance to be addressed, teachers need to allow their students some choice and input into the curriculum content and delivery.

However, she acknowledges that such decisions cannot be made straightaway, but students should be allowed some choice in order to help them develop into mature learners. This is corroborated by Boyle (2008) who suggests that students need guidance to be able to learn how to manage their new role. Once they are accustomed to their new role, students will be more confident at making decisions about their own learning, thus accepting to share the power with the teacher.

In this study, evidence of my behaviour encouraging the students to be creative problem-solvers was apparent in responses to the questionnaire, where students noted that they were provided with a planning sheet to organise their learning. There was also evidence of scaffolding students into the new way of learning. Students acknowledged that they were given examples of how to approach tasks in individual tutorial times. The literature reviewed suggests that teacher attitudes can influence their students' attitudes. Langer (1997) proposes that teachers can help students to improve their creativity by modelling autonomous and self-directed attitudes, an idea supported by Cullen et al. (2012).

Another important consideration reported by the students was the influence of the teacher in developing the students' intrinsic motivation (Questionnaire 2). Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something for one's own enjoyment whereas extrinsic motivation refers to doing something for a separable outcome. An aim of the teaching in these sessions was to encourage students to manage their own learning and to be intrinsically motivated.

Extrinsic motivation is used by students and teachers to encourage learning, however, Cullen et al. (2012) argue that the shift to intrinsic motivation must be modelled by the teacher. Sullo (2009) suggests a number of strategies for increasing students' intrinsic motivation, such as building positive relationships with students, developing relevant lesson plans with students' needs in mind, creating realistic expectations of student performance, teaching students to consciously self-evaluate, and teaching less but in more depth. The study shows that all of these strategies were incorporated into the teaching that was occurring, thus enabling students to develop intrinsic motivation. Observations, questionnaire responses, and journal notes show that differentiated

resources were provided, that students had choices in regard to how and what they learned, and how they were involved in the curriculum planning.

Student confidence

A finding of this study relates to a lack of student confidence, which manifests in two ways: firstly, that students are not participating in class, and secondly, that they have yet to develop the skills to query how things might be done differently. Journal entries and observations highlight the fact that students were not participating fully in whole class activities, nor contributing to the online forum. This could be interpreted as a lack of confidence, a lack of know-how or even a lack of interest in the activity, as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, as more of a variety of activities were offered in the second topic and students input into the topics studied improved, it is likely that the lack of participation stemmed from a lack of know-how or knowing their options.

Students were asked to suggest other ways that they would like to learn French, but they could not give any suggestions. They appeared content with the status quo. This finding is supported by Benson (2012) who states “As learners may initially lack the capacity to make decisions about their learning, it is also up to the teacher to decide on the extent to which learners will be involved in decision-making processes, and how this involvement will increase as they become more experienced” (p.33). Students are not always enabled to be critical about the teaching style and this can be attributed to the whole school culture. However, in this study when the teaching style was learner-centred the students were provided with other opportunities of learning. This allowed their thinking to shift in considering other ways they may prefer to learn.

Self-regulation

This study highlights that students became more self-regulated the more they engaged in learner-centred activities. Students recognised that they were becoming more self-regulated during the second unit of work when a learner-centred approach was introduced. They all noted in

Questionnaire 2 that they had set goals and tracked their progress. One student stated that the learner-centred teaching style “forced me to manage my time better”. Entries in the journal echo this finding as I noticed an obvious lack of self-regulation during the first topic which was predominantly teacher-led. Entries during the second unit of work, in a more learner-centred environment, showed that students were developing their self-regulation skills. This finding is supported by Seker (2016) who claims that “studies incorporating self-regulation learning strategies into foreign language teaching encourages the development of autonomous learners” (p. 600). This is further backed up by Nunan’s (1999) claim that students take greater control over their learning when presented with opportunities to self-monitor, self-assess and develop strategies for their learning.

Seker (2016) and Zumbrunn et al. (2011) suggest that students need to be trained to become self-regulated and this involves time and preparation by both teacher and student. Furthermore, they claim that it is unrealistic to expect students to be able to set goals and monitor themselves without guidance from their teachers. This was indeed the case for the majority of the students in this study as they showed signs of being more self-regulated after they had been given opportunities to reflect on their progress and provided with a tool to help them monitor their progress. Journal entries indicated that students were guided in their choice of activities and also in managing their workload. Observation 2 alluded to the fact that the lesson design developed the students’ ability to be more self-regulated. This finding is supported by Cullen et al. (2012) who suggest the need for students to be involved in the design of their learning, including setting themselves goals. Furthermore, Nilson (2014) confirms that self-regulated learners need control over their own learning, and to achieve this must plan, monitor and evaluate consciously. However, there was one student who acknowledged that although during the first unit of work we had not talked about goal setting as a class, she had already set her goals for what she wanted to achieve in French. An important observation is the conflict between teaching the students self-regulation skills and the use of French as the means of communication in the classroom. To effectively teach students about self-regulation would mean speaking in English and thus compromising the use of French in class.

Limitations

The findings of this study are limited in a several ways. Firstly, the study related to one teacher, one class and one school. Therefore, the findings are specific to this particular context.

While students were learning how to be more self-regulated and embracing their change in role in a learner-centred environment, the monitoring process was not robust enough for me to know confidently where each student was in their learning. The new way of learning involved mostly self and peer assessment which meant that I had lost some control over the assessment process.

Although there is a lot of research on learner-centred teaching, there is little available relating to multilevel language classes, and there is a definite lack of support and PD available to New Zealand language teachers.

As this was practitioner research self-study, every effort was made for the participants, students and critical friends to feel at ease giving their opinions. However, despite the student questionnaires being anonymous, the small number of participants made it difficult to ensure anonymity.

The critical friends were not language teachers and therefore could not fully understand the specifics of language teaching. Furthermore, as they had extra responsibilities in school, other than teaching, it was difficult to find enough time to fully discuss their observations.

Recommendations for future study

As highlighted by the literature and through this study, there exists a need for further study in the area of teaching multilevel language classes.

1. Research on how to develop effective monitoring tools in a learner-centred environment multilevel language class.

2. Further research on task-based learning in multilevel language classes, including case studies that include specific examples for teachers to use.

Conclusion

This research project developed from a desire to better meet the needs of my multilevel French class. The overall aims of the research were to examine and implement learner-centred pedagogy and evaluate its effectiveness in relation to improved teaching and learning. The research questions evolved from the aims and are listed below, and they are followed by summarised responses.

What are the challenges and advantages associated with teaching and learning in multilevel language classes?

The research findings suggest that the challenges outweigh any advantages associated with teaching and learning in multilevel language classes. This study highlights a number of challenges faced by teachers of multilevel language classes which result in them feeling overworked, dissatisfied with their teaching, and guilty for not meeting the needs of all the students.

The findings of this study show that the most significant challenge faced by teachers is the increased workload created when teaching a multilevel language class. Bell (2004) and Lataille-Demore (2007) both allude to the fact that careful planning and preparation is needed for a multilevel class which is very demanding on the teacher. There are several journal entries that confirm that I was spending a disproportionate amount of time on lesson planning. Furthermore, Ashton's (2017b) research and my informal survey conducted with New Zealand language teachers concur that workload is a considerable issue.

A second issue that has emerged from the findings of this study is the difficulty in meeting the needs of all the learners when there is such a diverse range of level and maturity in the class. Again, the responses to my informal survey highlight teachers' concerns that they could not adequately cater to all the students in their multilevel class, an issue echoed by Badenhorst and East (2015).

Journal entries reveal that some activities were not pitched at the right level to include all learners in the class. However, it also showed that the activities that worked well and catered for different abilities took a long time to prepare, and therefore, were a workload issue.

Thirdly, a major challenge for teachers, especially less experienced teachers, is the lack of training and further PD available specifically for teaching multilevel language classes. Ashton's (2017b) research confirmed that New Zealand language teachers have not had enough PD in this area. In fact, almost 85% of her survey respondents had received no PD to prepare them for teaching a multilevel class. Furthermore, my informal survey revealed that almost 90% of respondents would be willing to try new ways of teaching multilevel classes. Not only is a lack of PD opportunities cited as a major challenge, but so too is the feeling of isolation experienced by many language teachers. Studying a language at NCEA level is not compulsory in New Zealand and the number of students choosing to study languages is small. Consequently, the number of language teachers is small, and it is not unusual for a language teacher to be the only one in the school (Ashton, 2017b). Therefore, isolation is an issue as they have no-one to help and support them plan and teach a multilevel class.

A final challenge highlighted in Ashton's (2017b) study is managing oral and aural work in a multilevel language class when the teaching approach is teacher-led. In a single level class, it is common for the whole class to be working on the same listening or speaking task at the same time, but when there are two levels in the same class this becomes more complex.

As previously mentioned, the literature and findings of this study reveal that the challenges of teaching and learning in a multilevel language class heavily outweigh the advantages. Nevertheless, one advantage is the opportunity for students to learn from each other. Students acknowledged in their survey responses that working in a multilevel group provided reinforcement of knowledge for the older students and extension for the younger ones. There was also evidence of students extending themselves and producing and understanding language and structures from

the higher level. Moreover, the older students were able to deepen their knowledge by teaching the younger students, an effective strategy suggested by Doyle (2008).

A second advantage of teaching and learning in a multilevel language class is the ability to create a diverse learning community. Bell (2004) suggests that appropriate grouping of students across the levels can help build a sense of community and belonging to the class. The findings of his study show that the creation of a community did not occur naturally, and, at the start of the course, I had to encourage students and create opportunities for them build their relationships with each other.

How can learner-centred practice contribute to improved teaching and learning in my multilevel language class?

It has been acknowledged in the literature reviewed in this study that a traditional teacher-led approach is not an effective way to teach two different levels in one class. Those who have been teaching in this way have complained of being overworked and feeling frustrated at not being able to reach all their students.

The research findings suggest that one way to manage the demands of teaching multilevel classes is to move away from the teacher-led approach and adopt a more learner-centred approach. A learner-centred approach shifts the focus of learning from the teacher to the student. Furthermore, students are encouraged to take an active part in decision making (Weimer, 2013; Nunan, 1998) thus empowering them to be responsible for their learning. This empowerment can enhance student motivation (Cullen et al., 2012).

This study concludes that learner-centred practice can contribute to improved teaching and learning in multilevel language classes in a number of ways. Students confirmed in their survey responses that they preferred learning in a student-centred environment. They acknowledged feeling more engaged and enjoying the variety of ways to approach their learning. They also referred to feeling more confident in their language skills and appreciated having extended periods of time to complete the tasks they were doing.

What recommendations can be shared for improvements in multilevel language learning in languages classes?

This study has concluded that a significant recommendation for improving teaching and learning in a multilevel language class is to adopt a learner-centred approach. For this to occur, it is essential that the teacher and the learners accept that there needs to be a change in their roles and their mindsets. Teachers must move away from imparting all their knowledge to the students and move towards the role of facilitating so that their students can construct knowledge for themselves. Teachers should allow students some input into their programme of study as this will empower and motivate them. However, it should be noted that students may lack the ability to make decisions about their learning. Moreover, change does not often happen quickly as there may be some degree of resistance from teachers and students alike.

For a learner-centred approach to be effective for students' learning, the students themselves need to accept a more active role than they may be used to. To progress in a learner-centred environment, students must display some self-regulation skills. Students are not all naturally self-regulated and so it is the teacher's role to model self-regulation and provide learner-centred tasks to help their students develop these skills. When students are self-regulated the issue of teacher guilt can be addressed, as students assume ownership of their learning and achievement outcomes, therefore reducing the pressure felt by teachers to provide everything for everyone.

The findings of this study show that a carefully planned unit of work which provides a range of differentiated tasks is an effective way to manage the demands of a multilevel class. The findings of this study reveal that teaching both levels of students as one is effective in terms of planning for the teacher, cohesion and unifying the class. However, planning a unit of work on one theme that contains a bank of differentiated resources is time-consuming and it may not be realistic for a teacher to create one for every unit straightaway. It may be more practical to choose one or two units per year. Another recommendation is to be aware of giving too much freedom of choice of

learning activity (Tomlinson, 2004) and remember that the teacher's role is to guide students in their choices. It must be noted too that students in a learner-centred environment will most likely cover less content than in a traditional teacher-led environment. However, they will be experiencing deeper learning as they construct the knowledge for themselves.

This research resulted from, not only from my need to better serve the students in my multilevel class, but also the needs of my colleagues in the language teaching community. Many of us had expressed our angst and frustration at coping with combined level language classes and the lack of research and support available to us.

I wanted to find a way to teach my students that allowed them to work at their individual levels whilst still maintaining a feeling of unity within the class. To do this I reflected on my own practice and explored other ways of learning approaches for my students.

I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of moving my practice from teacher-led to learner-centred, and this involved investigating new ways of helping my students learn. Discovering alternative ways of teaching impacts everyday practice within the classroom. A major impact of this study has resulted in me introducing more learner-centred practice to all my classes across the range of year levels.

The research from this study shows that self-regulation is key to successful learning in a learner-centred environment. As it takes time for students to develop their self-regulation skills, they should ideally be trained from a young age. If students were introduced to self-directed learning strategies earlier in their schooling, they may be better prepared to adapt to a multilevel class setting, thus alleviating some of the frustrations outlined in this study.

References

- Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington, New Zealand: Medium Term Strategy Policy Division, Ministry of Education.
- Ashton, K. (2017a). Approaches to teaching in the multi-level language classroom. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*. DOI: 10.1080/17501229.2017.1397158
- Ashton, K. (2017b). Exploring teacher views of multi-level language classes in New Zealand secondary schools. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 69(2018), 104-118.
- Badenhorst, G., & East, M. (2015). Hybrid learning in a multilevel German class: making the most of the reality of combined classes. *The New Zealand Language Teacher*, 41, 64-77.
- Bell, J. (2004). *Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL. 2nd Edition*. Toronto, Ontario: Pippin Publishing Corporation.
- Benson, P. (2012). Learner-centred teaching. In A. Burns, & J. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching* (pp. 30-37). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bloom, M. (2013, July/August). Self-regulated learning: Goal setting and monitoring. *The Language Teacher*, 37(4), 46-50.
- Blumberg, P. (2009). *Developing learner-centred teaching: A practical guide for faculty*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Book, L.C. (1986) Teaching Multi-Level Classes: A lesson from the Past. *Second Language Acquisition: Preparing for Tomorrow*. ERIC.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Carr, J. (2005). More thoughts on the usefulness of tasks in the multi-level language classroom. *Babel*, 39(3), 31-36, 38.

- Chamot, A. U. (2014). Developing self-regulated learning in the language classroom. Retrieved from https://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cls/CLaSIC/clasic2014/Proceedings/chamot_annauhl.pdf
- Clifford, I. (2015). Do learner-centred approaches work in every culture? Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/do-learner-centred-approaches-work-every-culture>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Cullen, R., Harris, M., & Hill, R. (2012). *The learner-centred curriculum: Design and implementation*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Davidson, C. & Tolich, M. (eds.) (2003). *Social science research in New Zealand: many paths to understanding*. Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). California, USA: SAGE Publications.
- Dewey, J. (2009). *Works of John Dewey*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Doyle, T. (2008). *Helping students learn in a learner-centred environment*. Virginia, USA: Stylus Publishing.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2005). *Instructed second language acquisition. A literature review*. Wellington, New Zealand: Research Division, Ministry of Education.
- Flege, J. (1995). Second language speech learning: Theory, findings, and problems. In W. Strange (Ed.), *Speech, perception and linguistic experience* (pp. 233-277). Baltimore, MD: York
- Hamilton, M. L. (1998). *Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice. Self-study in teacher education*. London, UK: Falmer Press.
- Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

- Hawkes, R. (2012). *Learning to talk and talking to learn: How spontaneous teacher-learner interaction in the secondary foreign languages' classroom provides greater opportunities for L2 learning* (unpublished doctoral thesis). UK: University of Cambridge.
- Hess, N. (2001). *Teaching large multilevel classes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hopkins, D. (2002). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Hummel, K. M. (2014). *Introducing second language acquisition: Perspectives and practices*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Jones, B., Halliwell, S., & Holmes, B. (2002). *You speak, they speak: Focus on target language use*. London: CILT
- Kincheloe, J. (2012). *Teachers as researchers. Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2008). *Understanding language teaching. From method to post method*. New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Laitalle-Démoré, D. (2007). *Combined grade classrooms*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Demore.pdf>
- Langer, E. (1997). *The power of mindful learning*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. California, USA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Loughran, J., & Northfield, J. (1998). A framework for the development of self-study practice. In M. L. Hamilton. *Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice. Self-study in teacher education* (pp. 7-18). London, UK: Falmer Press.
- Macaro, E. (2000). Issues in target language teaching. In K Field (Ed.), *Issues in modern foreign languages teaching* (pp.171-189). London: RoutledgeFalmer

- McCombs, B.L., & Whisler, J.S. (1997). *The learner-centred classroom and school: Strategies for increasing student motivation and achievement*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2005). *Action research for teachers. A practical guide*. London, UK: David Fulton Publishers Ltd.
- Ministry of Education. (2018). Secondary School Subjects 1996-2016. Retrieved from <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/student-numbers/subject-enrolment>
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media
- Mutch, C. (2013). *Doing educational research. A practitioner's guide to getting started* (2nd ed.). Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Nilson, L. (2014, June 16). The secret of self-regulated learning. *Faculty Focus*. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/secret-self-regulated-learning/>
- Noffke, S., & Somekh, B. (2009). *The SAGE handbook of educational action research*. London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum*. Glasgow, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D., Lai, J., Keobke, K., (1999). Towards autonomous language learning: Strategies, reflection and navigation. In S. Cotterall & D. Crabbe (Eds), *Learner autonomy in language learning: Defining the field and effecting change* (pp.70-75). Frankfurt, Germany: Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report* 13(4). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/ortlipp.pdf>
- Rosas, B. (2016). *Multi-level teaching strategies for ESL/ELL classrooms*. [Video]. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=URyCVWhiv2Q
- Rubin, J. (2015). Using Goal Setting and Task Analysis to Enhance Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching. *Dimension* 2015. 70-82. Retrieved from files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080303.pdf

- Russell, T. (1998). Philosophical perspectives. In M. L. Hamilton. *Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice Self-study in teacher education* (pp. 5-6). London, UK: Falmer Press.
- Schunk, D., & Zimmerman, B. (1998). *Self-regulated learning: From teaching to self-reflective practice*. New York, USA: The Guilford Press.
- Seker, M. (2016). The use of self-regulation strategies by foreign language learners and its role in language achievement. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(5), 600-618.
- Sullo, B. (2009). *Motivated student: Unlocking the enthusiasm for learning*. Virginia, USA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tomlinson, C. (2004). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Moorabbin, Australia: Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Tomlinson, C., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C., Moon, T., Brimijoin, K., Conover, L. & Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to students readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: A review of literature. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 27(2/3), 119-145.
- Treko, N. (2013). *The big challenge: Teaching large multilevel classes*. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary studies, 2(4), 243-251. Retrieved from www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/article/download/128/284
- Willis, D & Willis, J. (1996). *Doing task-based teaching*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centred teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Weimer, M. (2013). *Learner-centred teaching: Five key changes to practice* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Wellington, J. (2015). *Educational research. Contemporary issues and practical approaches* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Zimmerman, B. (1990). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: An Overview. *Educational Psychologist*, 25:(1), 3-17. DOI: 10.1207/ s15326985ep2501_2

Zumbrunn, S., Tadlock, J. & Roberts, E. (2011). Encourage self-regulated learning in the classroom. *VCU Scholars Compass*. Retrieved from http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=merc_pubs

Appendices

Appendix A - Informal survey to New Zealand Language Teachers

January 2017

1. Email address

*

2. Given that we have to deal with teaching students different levels of the curriculum within the same class how do we best do this?

3. What challenges you the most about teaching multilevel classes?

4. Can you suggest any other factors that make teaching multilevel language classes more challenging than single level classes?

5. How open are you to try new pedagogy to teach multilevel classes?

6. Would you be willing to be a part of a focus group to help me trial ways of teaching multilevel classes and feed back your experiences? If so, please provide your email address.

7. What do you think are the potential issues I may encounter while investigating teaching multilevel language classes?

Appendix B -Student Questionnaire 1

What is your number?

1 To what extent do you feel that your teacher directs what you learn in French, and how and when you learn it?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely

2. To what extent do you feel that you have control over your own learning in French?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely

3. In what ways, if any, do you help the teacher decide what you will learn in French?

4. Describe the ways you are taught French.

5. What are your favourite ways that you currently learn French?

6. What other ways would you prefer to learn French in class?

7. What element of choice do you have in the tasks and activities you do in French?

- A lot
- Some
- Not much
- None

8. How interested are you in the topic you have just studied in French? (More stars equals more interest)

9. How often are you expected to complete the same tasks as the other year level?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes

- Rarely
- Never

10. How useful is this to you?

- Very
- Quite
- Not very
- Not at all

11. Please explain why it is or isn't useful.

12. How do you receive feedback from the teacher?

13. What is your experience of goal setting and reflection in the French class?

14 Did you find the tasks and activities you completed for this topic real and useful in helping you develop language fluency?

- Yes, all of them
- Some of them
- None of them

15. Is the teaching and learning in your multilevel French class at the right level for you?

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Appendix C - Student Questionnaire 2

What is your number?

1. To what extent do you feel that your teacher directed what you learn in French, and how and when you learnt it in the topic you have just studied?

- A lot
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

2. In the topic you have just studied to what extent do you feel that you had control over your own learning in French?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely

3. In the topic you have just studied in what ways, if any, did you help the teacher decide what you will learn in French?

4. In the topic you have just studied describe how you were taught French.

5. In the topic you have just studied what were your favourite ways of learning in French?

6. What other ways would you have preferred to learn French in class?

7. In the topic you have just studied what element of choice did you have in the tasks and activities?

- A lot
- Some
- Not much
- None

8. How interested were you in the topic you have just studied in French? (More stars equals more interest)

9. How often were you expected to complete the same tasks as the other year level?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

10. How useful was this to you?

- Very
- Quite
- Not very
- Not at all

11. Please explain why it was or wasn't useful to you.

12. How did you receive feedback from the teacher?

13. During the topic you have just studied what was your experience of goal setting and reflection in the French class?

14. Did you find the tasks and activities you completed for this topic real and useful in helping you develop language fluency?

- Yes, all of them
- Some of them
- None of them

15. Was the teaching and learning in your multilevel French class at the right level for you?

16. Did you prefer the teaching style for the first or second topic? Please explain why.

17. In what ways has the teaching style affected your learning?

Appendix D - Observation grid

Observation of Anne Passmore on _____ by _____
Thank you for observing my teaching. Could you please focus on the following areas:

| |
|---|
| Teacher talk (amount, quality, French/English?) |
| |
| Teacher directed aspects of lesson |
| |
| Student talk (amount, quality, French/English?) |
| |
| Student led aspects of lesson |
| |

Questions (Who is asking them? Who is answering them?)

Amount of student choice in the lesson

Evidence of differentiation

Evidence of student self-regulation

Other comments

Appendix E - Participant information and consent form



February 2018

Dear Students,

I am currently enrolled in the Master in Applied Practice degree at Unitec, New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course.

The aim of my project is to investigate my current practice of French language teaching in a multi-level class setting. The class will be structured a little differently this year as we trial a more student-centred approach to learning, and you will be asked twice to give your feedback in an anonymous questionnaire, which will take approximately 20 minutes each time. In addition, there will be another member of staff observing me on a few occasions, and on a couple of other occasions, I will sound record the class to help me self-critique my teaching. During this project I will be keeping a reflective journal. It is my practice, not yours, that is being observed and evaluated.

If you agree to participate, please complete the bottom part of this letter. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. Your parent/guardian can also ask for you to be withdrawn.

Regards,

Mrs Anne Passmore

I understand that I _____ do not have to participate in this research and I may withdraw at any time. However, as the survey is anonymous, if I choose to withdraw after I have completed a survey then I understand that it will not be possible to remove my responses.

I understand that my questionnaire responses are anonymous and none of the information I give will identify me. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that I can request to see the finished research document. I also understand that the final thesis may be shared within the language teaching community and at conferences.

I have had time to consider everything I assent to completing the questionnaires.

Student's Signature: *Date:*
.....

Project Researcher: *Date:*
.....

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2017 1092

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 01/02/2018 to 01/02/2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcom

Appendix F - Parental Assent form



February

2018

Dear Parents/ Caregivers,

I am currently enrolled in the Master in Applied Practice degree at Unitec, New Zealand and seek your daughter's help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course, which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to investigate my current practice of French language teaching in a multi-level class setting. The class will be structured a little differently this year as we trial a more student-centred approach to learning, and your daughter will be asked twice to give her feedback in an anonymous questionnaire, which will take approximately 20 minutes each time. In addition, there will be another member of staff observing me on a few occasions, and on a couple of other occasions, I will sound record the class to help me self-critique my teaching. During this project I will be keeping a reflective journal. It is my practice, not the students', that is being observed and evaluated.

Please sign below to give permission for your daughter to complete the questionnaires .
Do contact us if you need more information about the project, and any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact my supervisor:
Lisa Maurice-Takerei : phone 815-4321 ext.7338 or email mauricetakerei@unitec.ac.nz

Kind regards,

Anne Passmore

I understand that my daughter _____ does not have to complete the questionnaires, and should she chooses not to participate, she may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project. However, as the survey is anonymous, if she chooses to withdraw after she has completed a survey then I understand that it will not be possible to remove her responses.

I understand that her questionnaire responses are anonymous and none of the information she gives will identify her. I also understand that all the information that my daughter gives will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my daughter can request to see the finished research document. I also understand that the final thesis may be shared within the language teaching community and shared at conferences.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent for my daughter to complete the questionnaires.

Parent's Name:

Parent's Signature: *Date:*
.....

Project Researcher: *Date:*
.....

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2017 1092

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 01/02/2018 to 01/02/2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcom



Institute of Technology
TE WHARE WANANGA O WAIRAKA

Full name of author: Anne Passmore

ORCID number (Optional):

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):

Multi-level language teaching in a New Zealand secondary school. A practitioner research study.

Practice Pathway: CISC 9090.....

Degree: .Master in Applied Practice

Year of presentation: 2019

Principal Supervisor:Jo Mane

Associate Supervisor:Hayo Reinders

Permission to make open access

I agree to a digital copy of my final thesis/work being uploaded to the Unitec institutional repository and being made viewable worldwide.

Copyright Rights:

Unless otherwise stated this work is protected by copyright with all rights reserved.
I provide this copy in the expectation that due acknowledgement of its use is made.

AND

Copyright Compliance:

I confirm that I either used no substantial portions of third party copyright material, including charts, diagrams, graphs, photographs or maps in my thesis/work or I have obtained permission for such material to be made accessible worldwide via the Internet.

Signature of author:

Date: ...27... / ...06... /2019...



Declaration

Name of candidate: Anne Passmore

This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project **entitled** Multi-level language teaching in a New Zealand secondary school. A practitioner research study.

is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master in Applied Practice.

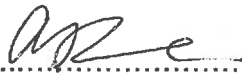
Principal Supervisor: Dr Jo Mane
Associate Supervisor/s: Dr Hayo Reinders

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2017 1092

Candidate Signature:.....Date: 28 June 2019

Student number: 1471342