



2005-07-06

# Teacher Training Via Digital Apprenticeship to Master Teachers of Arabic: Exposure, Reflection, and Replication as Instruments for Change in Novice Instructor Teaching Style

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TEACHER TRAINING VIA DIGITAL APPRENTICESHIP TO MASTER TEACHERS  
OF ARABIC:  
EXPOSURE, REFLECTION, AND REPLICATION AS INSTRUMENTS FOR  
CHANGE IN NOVICE INSTRUCTOR TEACHING STYLE

by

Jeremy Leland Palmer

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Language Acquisition

Brigham Young University

August 2005

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Jeremy Leland Palmer

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Jeremy Leland Palmer in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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## ABSTRACT

# TEACHER TRAINING VIA DIGITAL APPRENTICESHIP TO MASTER TEACHERS OF ARABIC: EXPOSURE, REFLECTION, AND REPLICATION AS INSTRUMENTS FOR CHANGE IN NOVICE INSTRUCTOR TEACHING STYLE

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Master of Arts

The Modern Language Association (MLA) recently reported that from 1998 to 2002 there was a 92% increase in Arabic programs throughout the United States. With the increase in media coverage of current events in the Middle East, more and more students are desiring to learn about the region's languages and cultures. More teachers of Arabic are needed to meet this growing demand for Arabic instruction. This thesis investigates whether deliberate intervention via explicit and implicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with replication thereof, as well as critical personal reflection, positively alters instructor-teaching style (style, defined as behavior and beliefs in Katz, 1996). This thesis is also an

attempt to provide an exportable model for the training of novice instructors of Arabic. One model currently being developed by the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) is based on video footage of Muhammad Eissa, a master teacher of Arabic, made available by Brigham Young University, as well as additional footage from NMELRC's summer teacher development seminars. The model supports the first two semesters of Arabic instruction, including a set of DVDs of Dr. Muhammad Eissa teaching and interacting with students in a live classroom. The model also includes explicit training footage captured on DVDs from a two-week training seminar that took place at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, in the summer of 2003. My thesis investigates two types of training in this model: first, *implicit* training via exposure to Muhammad Eissa, accompanied with various reflective activities; and second, *explicit* training by way of exposure to, and discussion of, specific pedagogical issues via footage from the 2003 training seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College. It is hoped that my research will serve as a training model for teacher trainers and language program coordinators at institutions of higher education that desire to offer Arabic courses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to those who participated in all aspects of my thesis. In particular, I would like to thank my thesis committee chair, Dr. R. Kirk Belnap, for training me to survive and prosper in the academic world. I would also like to thank my thesis committee members, Dr. Mark W. Tanner and Dr. Paul J. Warnick, for their expertise and assistance.

I offer a special thanks to Dr. Melvin J. Luthy, chair of the language acquisition program, for his continuous guidance, help, and patience throughout my degree.

I would like to thank my family members for their interest in what I am studying, especially my wife Bridget. It is wonderful to be married to such a brilliant linguist and excellent editor. Finally, I thank my Father in Heaven.



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## Chapter One

### Introduction

Instructors of foreign language classes come from a variety of backgrounds and teaching experience. These foreign language instructors are found working in many educational settings, from K–12 schools to college language classrooms and beyond. Some of these foreign language instructors have extensive pedagogical training, while others have little. For the purposes of my research, I will refer to all foreign language instructors that are either just beginning to teach or are embarking upon formal pedagogical training for the first time as *novice instructors*. Christensen and Noda (2002) use terms such as “novice” and “expert” to describe the ability of foreign language instructors “to provide instruction toward learner expertise” (p. 38). My research investigates the influence of pedagogical training on novice instructors of the Arabic language.

Novice instructors of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), such as Arabic, infrequently receive pedagogical training specific to their particular language and culture. If the novice instructors are fortunate enough to receive any pedagogical training at all, it is usually quasi-training from an English as a second language (ESL) curriculum. Christensen and Noda (2002) write, “because the vast majority of materials dealing with foreign language pedagogy heavily emphasize cognate languages or ESL orientations, they must be heavily supplemented to make them applicable to non-cognate languages and cultures” (p. 6). For example, Keogh (1998) reported in her research about teaching assistant (TA) training needs in Arabic classrooms that “most of the TA’s had not received formal training in language pedagogy or read professionals [sic] journals on language teaching at the time of being hired” (p. 34). Keogh (1998) also reported that less

than half of the thirty-nine Arabic programs in her research provided in-service training (p. 48).

This lack of pedagogical training in the field of Arabic instruction is exacerbated by the fact that the field itself is experiencing a significant increase in enrollments. The Modern Language Association (MLA) recently reported that from 1998 to 2002 there was a 92% increase in Arabic programs throughout the United States (Welles, 2004). More teachers of Arabic are needed to meet this growing demand for Arabic instruction. Stenson, Janus, and Mulkern (as cited in Johnston & Janus, 2003) reported “at a ‘summit’ of LCTL teachers a few years ago, teacher training was identified as one of the most important needs felt by the teachers” (p. 1). The question then is, how do we offer high-quality pre- and in-service training to novice instructors of Arabic who are working to meet the demand for Arabic instruction?

This thesis is an attempt to answer this question and contribute to the development of a model for effectively training novice instructors of Arabic. One model currently being developed by the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) is based on video footage of a master teacher, Muhammad Eissa, teaching Arabic 101 and 102, made available by Brigham Young University (BYU), as well as additional footage from NMELRC’s summer teacher development seminars. The model supports the first two semesters of Arabic instruction, which includes a set of DVDs of Muhammad Eissa, teaching and interacting with students in a live classroom.

The model also includes explicit training footage captured on DVDs from a two-week training seminar that took place at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, during the summer of 2003. This seminar was specifically designed for novice instructors

of Arabic and addressed modern pedagogy and methodology in the Arabic language classroom. The model, eventually, will also include a handbook for instructors containing instructions for DVD usage, a training program for novice instructors to follow throughout the first two semesters of instruction, and BYU's full Arabic curriculum: lesson plans, homework schedules, and Egyptian Arabic materials (more detail regarding the contents of the model is included in chapter three). This model is designed to serve programs that desire to fully implement BYU's curriculum, though it could be modified to meet the needs of programs with different goals.

The research carried out for this thesis is a case study in teacher training. A novice instructor was provided an electronic apprenticeship to master teachers of Arabic. In the process of teacher training, two types of training were investigated: first, *implicit* training via exposure to Muhammad Eissa, accompanied with various reflective activities; and second, *explicit* training by way of exposure to and discussion of specific pedagogical issues via footage from the 2003 training seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College, primarily led by Mahmoud Al-Batal and Kristen Brustad.

The subject of the study was a female native speaker of Egyptian Arabic who was a novice instructor of Arabic at the four-year college she was attending as a student. She used the DVDs of Muhammad Eissa in class with her students for their learning and out of class for personal training. In large part, she used the BYU Arabic 101 curriculum.

My thesis investigates whether deliberate intervention via explicit and implicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with replication thereof, as well as critical personal reflection, positively alters instructor-teaching style (style is defined as behavior and beliefs in Katz, 1996). I hope

that my research will help refine the NMELRC training model. My research hypothesis in this study is that electronic exposure to the teaching style of master teachers of Arabic, accompanied with practical replication and reflection thereon, will result in positive changes to a novice instructor's teaching style. I believe that the changes in teaching style will be directly observable in her style in her classroom. I believe that the training will cause the novice instructor to use class time better by speaking more Arabic in a highly interactive fashion.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether deliberate intervention via implicit and explicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with replication thereof, as well as critical personal reflection, positively alters instructor-teaching style. This chapter investigates current literature concerning a variety of topics dealing with teacher training, such as the role of novice instructors in higher education and in foreign language classes, novice instructor pedagogical beliefs, defining what good teaching is, the importance of apprenticeship to master teachers, the role of personal reflection, and distance training issues.

#### **Background**

Freeman (1996) writes, “language teaching and language teacher education have long been an ‘unstudied’ problem in which traditional practices, conventional wisdom, and disciplinary knowledge have dominated” (p. 374). Even now, language teacher training is often based upon personal observation and traditional practices of literature and linguistic specialists who have likely had little or no formal pedagogical training. This perpetual cycle of behavior is best described as “conventional practices in language teacher education . . . operated like hand-me-down stories, folk wisdom shared as ‘truths’ of the professions with little other than habit and convention on which to base them” (Freeman, 1996, p. 351). Thus, there is a great need for high-quality models based upon sound principles of education and pedagogy in the field of language teacher training, especially in regard to less commonly taught languages. Keogh (1998) validates this statement in her research examining the training of teaching assistants (TAs) who were



teaching entry-level Arabic courses throughout the United States. She reported that twelve out of the thirteen TAs who participated in her research felt that they needed additional training (p. 39). Keogh's research is particularly important to my thesis because she found that most TAs had not received much pedagogical training, and yet most want it. Some of the TAs who participated in her research were part of large Arabic programs, and others were part of small, isolated programs. The smaller Arabic programs seem to have more difficulty providing quality training. As a part of her research, Keogh also included a few suggestions for dealing with this lack of training. One of the suggestions that fits closely with my research is the suggestion she includes from Belnap (1995) that smaller programs could benefit from larger programs via training workshops. This certainly is a good suggestion. Unfortunately, however, Keogh found that only 38.9% of the supervisors she surveyed would allow their TAs to attend such gatherings due to financial restrictions (p. 35). If TAs are not able to travel for training, how can these needed resources be brought to them? One possible way to provide TAs in various locations an opportunity to receive pedagogical training in how to teach Arabic is through an exportable training model. An exportable model could include both implicit and explicit training via an electronic apprenticeship to master teachers of the target language.

There are a few key terms I use throughout my research as I evaluate and discuss various aspects of teacher training. Some of the most important terms I use in my research are (1) *teaching style*, (2) *change* or *alteration* in teaching style, (3) *implicit training*, and finally (4) *explicit training*.

## Defining Key Terms

1. *Teaching style*: Katz (1996) argues that teaching style is a “slippery construct” that it is “defined by both behavior and beliefs” (p. 61). Katz continues to explain that teachers engage in the same activities—asking, answering, telling stories, and that

A particular teaching style emerges as that set of behaviors is arranged into varying patterns, creating distinctive learning environments for students . . . .

Specific styles result from proportion and frequency of occurrence, as well as the presence or absence of contrasting units. In a similar manner . . . teacher

behaviors [contribute] to a particular teaching style. (p. 61)

This definition is the foundation upon which my research is based. I followed Katz’s characterization of teaching style as I observed the novice instructor teaching while recording changes in her behavior and the activities she employed.

2. *Change in teaching style*: If style is observed by occurrence of specific units, then change in style must occur through the altering of these units. How, then, does change in teaching style come about? How does one influence, or train, teachers in such a manner that they change their teaching ideology and behavior? Pennington (1996) states, “teachers change in areas they are already primed to change, and this priming depends on their individual characteristics and prior experiences, which shape their view of their classroom, their students, and themselves as teachers” (p. 340). Pennington (1996) further states that “attempts to influence teachers’ behavior will have an impact only in areas where the input is valued and salient to the individual, and where it is congruent with, and interpretable within, the teacher’s own world of thought and action” (p. 340). In other words, change in teaching style is most likely to happen when a teacher reflects upon past

experience in conjunction with understandable, yet deliberate, intervention via teacher training. Therefore, teacher input is also valuable and relevant as the novice instructors reflect upon their thoughts and actions. There are two types of teacher training that I employ in my research: implicit training and explicit training.

3. *Implicit training:* Implicit training is promoted through the novice instructor's exposure to the classroom behavior of Muhammad Eissa, a master teacher of Arabic. He has had many years of teaching experience at multiple universities in the United States, as well as at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) at the American University in Cairo. Muhammad Eissa is a person full of intellectual curiosity and desire to constantly improve his teaching expertise, two of many characteristics that a "master teacher" likely possesses. The vehicle for this exposure to Muhammad Eissa is a collection of DVDs containing footage of him teaching a full Arabic 101 course at BYU. This type of exposure is implicit training because the research subject watched Muhammad Eissa teach a real classroom of Arabic learners, without commentary from him, me (the researcher), or anyone else. Muhammad Eissa's main purpose for being in the class was to help his students learn Arabic; he did not provide commentary concerning his technique, nor did he explain his methods for teacher training purposes in the DVD.

4. *Explicit training:* Explicit training is done by having a novice instructor view master teachers, Mahmoud Al-Batal and Kristen Brustad, as well as recorded footage of other master teachers of Arabic who participated in a seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College in the summer of 2003. Mahmoud Al-Batal and Kristen Brustad, both widely acknowledged as Arabic pedagogy experts, led this seminar. They addressed specific pedagogical topics in the footage from the training seminar, which was filmed in

a classroom with novice instructors. Mahmoud Al-Batal has extensive experience in teaching Arabic as a foreign language and Arabic pedagogy ranging from nine years of service as the director of the summer intensive Arabic program at Middlebury College, to serving as the current director of CASA at the American University in Cairo. Both of these positions entail extensive involvement in teacher training. The novice instructor in my research viewed and discussed with me highlights from this footage, paying particular attention to how the training could be applied in her classroom. Walker and McGinnis (1995) write that expert teachers demonstrate their knowledge either explicitly or implicitly, but “when a person becomes a trainer, the demands of the task require that the knowledge be made explicit” (p. 13).

### **The Role of Novice Instructors in Higher Education**

Student novice instructors are common to many campuses and, in particular, to beginner-level foreign language classes. Ellen Wert, the author of the foreword to *The Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants*, notes that novice instructors cover nearly 40% of the teaching load for undergraduates (Marincovich, Prostko, & Stout, 1998, p. xvii). Ironically, yet not surprisingly, many of these assistants have likely received little or no pedagogical training (Keogh, 1998). Fortunately, some departments have begun to recognize the value of investing in novice instructor training for their aspiring teachers. For example, Wert reports that “with graduate students so deeply involved in their institutions’ undergraduate programs, it is necessary to include the graduate TAs in university efforts to implement new curricula, pedagogies, uses of technology, peer evaluation of teaching, and assessment of student learning” (Marincovich, Prostko, & Stout, 1998, p. xviii). This type of thinking is a step forward in

the field of novice instructor training. Unfortunately, as Wert states, “for all too many graduate students” in language and non-language departments “assigned to teach a course or to assist in teaching a course, a brief orientation is the extent of their formal preparation for the semester and beyond” (Marincovich, Prostko, & Stout, 1998, p. xix).

### **The Role of Novice Instructors in Foreign Language Programs**

Many institutions of higher education employ novice instructors to teach their classes to keep the machinery of higher education rolling along. Herschensohn (1992) noted that “language TAs are often given broader administrative duties than TAs in other disciplines (such as complete responsibility for their own class) and must excel in a methodology that is quite discipline-specific” (p. 25). Furthermore, novice instructors in LCTLs may need particular attention and training due to different cultures and customs. Johnston and Janus (2003) write,

In particular, we suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the large number of graduate students teaching LCTLs; though these teachers are even more disempowered than their faculty supervisors, they also bring an admirable energy and freshness to their work, and we argue that their professional development needs should also be taken into consideration. (pp. 13–14)

This energetic yet untrained workforce of novice language instructors is something with which language programs struggle throughout the world. The field of LCTLs has novice instructors ready and excited to teach, but there has been little guidance provided as to how this teaching should take place. In this vein, it is noteworthy that there was only one article published about teacher training specific to Arabic in the 1980s (Rifkin, 1992, p. 49). Fortunately, there are now organizations to advance the field of Arabic as a foreign

language such as the American Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA). This organization “aims to facilitate communication and cooperation between teachers of Arabic and to promote study, criticism, research and instruction in the field of Arabic language pedagogy, Arabic linguistics and Arabic literature” (<http://www.wm.edu/aata>).

The historic lack of research in Arabic teaching pedagogy has put the field at a disadvantage. Fortunately, there are some professors of Arabic, such as Muhammad Eissa, Mahdi Alish, Mahmoud Al-Batal, and Kristen Brustad who are working to address methodological and pedagogical concerns specific to their language. The problem remains, however, that Arabic language departments have been slow to implement action research in Arabic language teaching in the formulation of instructor training programs, thus leaving novice instructors without sufficient training (Keogh, 1998). Thus, the just-in-time cycle of hiring untrained and inexperienced instructors to solve immediate enrollment needs continues.

In fact, I am personally aware of a novice instructor who began teaching a demanding course load of Arabic classes for more than one semester, after having received nothing more than a copy of the text and a wish for good luck. Such a practice is neither new nor surprising. In this example the novice instructor happened to be a native speaker of English. Sometimes however, native or near-native speaking ability in the target language is viewed as the minimal pedagogical credentials to work as a novice instructor. Rifkin (1992) answers this naïveté regarding native speakers’ inherent language ability: “native proficiency in a language is not in itself sufficient preparation for teaching that language” (p. 52). Moreover, “native teachers who are hired from the local community simply because they are native, in most cases, lack even the lopsided

preparation one can hope to gain in one of the graduate program settings” (Christensen & Noda, 2002, p. 11). Another problem is that many native-speaking novice instructors in the field of Arabic pedagogy are often students themselves in unrelated fields such as engineering (Belnap, 1995). These novice instructors, most of them Arab, often teach Arabic as they were taught it at home—and such methods are often not in line with American learning styles and/or needs (Rifkin, 1992, p. 52). Nelson (1991), describing international teaching assistants, writes, “unlike American TAs, they frequently need additional training in language and in the culture of American universities and classrooms” (p. 427). Most novice instructors have not seen good examples of how their language is taught to foreigners, and thus, they cognitively rewind to embrace and use their own past exposure to language as taught in language classes that they participated in themselves. Johnson (1992), in a study of pre-service ESL teachers, found that even after having received extensive pedagogy training in the teaching of English, native-speaker teachers tended to teach using many of the same learning activities they had experienced in the foreign language classes in which they had participated. Such practices reveal that the “pre-service teachers . . . tend to teach in ways that fail to promote learning” and “. . . simply maintain the flow of instruction and classroom order” (Johnson, 1996, p. 45). What, then, can students rightfully expect from their novice instructors? Are there specific skills the novice instructors should be able to use?

There are countless skills and traits that novice teachers could strive to gain in order to better serve their students in the language classroom. James (1992) identifies the following five skills that novice instructors need to be able to perform in the language classroom: (1) teach discourse strategies, (2) give personalized yet focused speaking and

writing assignments, (3) set and guide partner work, (4) encourage interactive reading strategies, and finally (5) integrate authentic audio and video material into the language classroom (p. 135). This is a considerable list of skills for novice instructors to master, and even if they could remember what all of these skills are, “only trained minds can manage to link the why and what, principle and practice, while managing the classroom” (Barnett & Cook, 1992, p. 96). Learning skills such as these “will not only help new faculty be better teachers, but it may very well make them more attractive job candidates” (Christensen & Noda, 2002, p. 11). However, with the widespread contemporary practice of providing only limited training opportunities, such as weekend pre-service sessions and mass TA training meetings, it is not fair to expect novice language instructors to emulate all of the above-mentioned skills. Moreover, novice instructors are likely to not even be fully aware of research pertaining to pedagogical skills and methods. Thus, their ideas of teaching skills may initially be quite different.

### **Novice Instructor Pedagogical Perceptions of Teaching**

Case studies have long been employed as means of investigating instructor learning and teaching. This thesis is the first research to document the training and initial teaching experience of a novice Arabic instructor. Johnson (1992) employed case studies to observe how teachers described their teaching style and how they actually taught in the classroom. She found that the teachers’ descriptions and actual behavior were, at times, very different from each other. Her article shows that novice instructors may not have the ability to accurately describe how they teach in their own classrooms. This lack of ability to correlate beliefs with practice suggests that novice teachers often lack a practical and pedagogical foundation upon which to base their teaching beliefs.



## Qualities of Good Teachers

“Good teaching” is a broad theme, which could be written about to a great extent. For the purpose of this research, I will provide only a few examples of observed expertise in teaching in an attempt to provide a framework in which I can justify principles that should be included in novice instructor training.

Before looking at some of the qualities and skills that good teachers employ, it must be noted that “there have been no commonly accepted criteria or methods for identifying expert teachers” (Tsui, 2003, p. 6). However, “we have no choice but to rely on a combination of criteria such as experience, reputation, and recommendation, as well as classroom observation to identify expert teachers” (Tsui, 2003, p. 6). Although there may not be commonly accepted criteria as far as expertise in teaching is concerned, there is research that can help us define what it is.

Bailey et al. (1996) provide the following observation of good teaching: “One thing that our ‘good’ teachers seemed to have in common is that we felt that they cared about us, that they were genuinely committed to us as students and to their profession,” but the authors also stress that commitment in the sense of niceness is not enough (p. 16). It is not enough to have instructors who smile and are nice to you; they must hold your feet to the fire, so to speak, as you struggle to learn a new language. Richards (1987), as quoted in Bailey et al. (1996), writes that it is such high expectations that characterize teacher effectiveness (p. 17). These quotes add to the breadth of the term “good teaching.” Horace Mann (1840) adds to the description of good teaching in his statement that “he who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common methods for common minds but with peculiar methods for pupils of peculiar dispositions and temperaments;

and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods whereby he can vary his plan according to any difference of circumstances.” In summary, some qualities of good teachers are that they are generally committed people who care for their students, hold high expectations of their students, and are acquainted with principles of teaching methods.

### **Apprenticeship as a Means to Improve Novice Instructor Teaching Style**

Apprenticeship has long been the manner through which a novice becomes a master. Think of the tradesmen, craftsmen, scholars, and leaders who have come and gone in this world. Would they not all attribute some of their expertise to their masters and mentors? These masters and mentors impart knowledge acquired through years of experience to their apprentices while also providing them with critical opportunities for practical application of their training. One must be careful, however, not to perpetuate ineffective traditions and beliefs upon novice instructors. Bailey et al. (1996) observe that trainees come to the training table with hours and hours of observation from their own classrooms. Thus, “teacher education should be about establishing connections with the student teachers’ personal understandings and building on their knowledge” (Almarza, 1996, p. 73).

There are a number of training activities that exist today in teacher education and novice instructor training. Unfortunately, however, “teacher development has often been equated with attending more refresher courses or having more hours of training. Such training is often conducted by people who have a limited understanding of how teachers develop expertise in teaching” (Tsui, 2003, p. 282). Refresher courses as pre-service training for instructors of foreign languages are, perhaps, better than nothing, but Rifkin

(1992) suggests that if you have only a short course at the beginning of the semester, you are saying that all questions and issues should be answerable therein. He argues that such short courses miss the point that “learning and teaching go hand in hand and that learning and learning about teaching are lifelong processes” (Rifkin, 1992, p. 59).

Training programs for novice instructors should consider goals that go beyond the survival of here and now to focus on the lifelong process of teaching and learning. Such skills have wide-ranging application for TAs who plan to pursue a career in academics, as well as those who do not. Wildner-Bassett (1992) offers a gentle reminder for professors regarding their role as dedicated trainers: “Our task as TA supervisors . . . is to guide these bright and enthusiastic people into roles as professional teachers. . . . We want to help them move, in the shortest possible time, from the perspective of a language student to that of a competent professional whose calling is the teaching of language” (p. 153). Wildner-Bassett seems to suggest that it is the responsibility of teacher trainees to consider the long-term impact of their efforts on their programs as well as those who take them. It is important, however, to note that training is not simply the bestowal or imparting of methodology and skills upon a captive audience; in fact, for training to be successful, previous experience of the novice instructors themselves must be incorporated into the training regime.

Many teacher-training programs are examples of explicit training in which methods and skills are presented as solutions to the lack of experience of novice teachers. Other teacher-training programs involve exposure to master teachers and critical reflection as part of the implicit training. We could discuss the issues and particulars of teacher training in our preparation courses for novice instructors in even greater detail,

except that “those of us who train and supervise TAs and foster improved teaching know, rather, that instructors gain most through analyzing their own teaching practices with attention to experts’ insights” (Barnett & Cook, 1992, p. 97). Christensen and Noda (2002) write, “a successful teacher-training program must provide ample opportunity for developing useful procedural knowledge through situated interaction with learners, experiences with learning resources, and guided modifications and repetitions of successful strategies for teaching” (p. 28). It appears, then, that novice instructors should get into the classroom as soon as possible and then have guidance along the way. I therefore continue with the theme of training through progressive apprenticeship toward becoming a master teacher.

### **Exposure to a Master Teacher**

Training good novice instructors is an investment for the language department and the instructors themselves. Faculty and staff employed as teacher trainers would be wise to consider the following comment from Jack Richards’s (1998) text, *Beyond Training*, concerning second-language teacher education (SLTE):

An important goal of pre-service experiences for language teachers is to expose novice teachers to the thinking skills of expert teachers in order to help them develop the pedagogical reasoning skills they need when they begin teaching. While many current resource books in SLTE make extensive use of tasks that student teachers carry out at their own level of pedagogical expertise, the value of these activities can be enhanced if they are followed by presentation of expert teachers’ solutions of the same tasks, together with the thinking that accompanied them. (p. 78)

This type of approach is likely to produce quality training in which novice instructors practice specific pedagogical skills and activities as well as develop the types of sensitivities characteristic of good teachers with essential input and presentation from expert teachers.

It is important to note that “observation is often based on the assumption that acquiring skill in teaching involves learning how to do things . . . , and these are observable in the lessons of good teachers” (Richards, 1998, p. 141). Bailey et al. (1996) write that they learned that it was important for them to offer a model of the behavior that they were encouraging (p. 26). This type of progressive apprenticeship through trial, error, and example is essential for novice instructors to move towards gaining confidence and pedagogical understanding in the language classroom.

This confidence and understanding will not come solely from observation of master teachers; in fact, many master teachers have a very spontaneous and interactive type of aura about them—something that cannot be passed on in training and observation. Brown (1994) writes that “the best teachers always take a few calculated risks in the classroom, trying new activities here and there” (p. 75). Novice instructors gain valuable insight from master teachers as they observe the manner in which they interact with students in language classrooms and then think about the why and not only the how.

In fact, all novice instructors have significant previous familiarity of seeing the how from their own past educational experiences and exposure to their teachers. Novice instructors come into the field with their own understanding, correct or not, of what constitutes both “good” and “bad” language teaching, primarily from their own

experiences in the language classroom. This background of personal learning experiences can be considered a type of pre-service training (Almarza, 1996, p. 73).

Many teacher-preparation and training courses seek to impart practices and methods that are considered “good” to the novice teachers before and during their first experiences in the classroom. More recently, the value of reflective practices has been extensively discussed in literature pertaining to teacher training; the idea of self-reflection, however, is not new. “As Dewey observed in 1904, preparing teachers to be critically reflective about their practice may be more important in the long term than focusing on mastery of the techniques and skills that form the mainstay of much teacher education practice” (Richards, 1998, p. 152). Without such critical reflection, novice instructors may not learn much from their exposure to master teachers. Barnett and Cook (1992) observe that “unreflective imitation, even of the best teachers, is not an adequate way to equip students to establish and maintain effective teaching practice” (p. 97). The importance of reflection is paramount in novice instructor training.

### **Importance of Reflection**

Many novice instructors encounter either an overdose of pre-service lecturing that might not do anything for the trainee, or no training at all, both of which may lead teachers to rely on past experience from their own teachers, whether that experience is good or bad. Other training programs may simply reward teachers for the successful adoption of certain techniques and/or observable behaviors. However, simplistic outward behavior is not the desired result of training. Parrots may learn how to perform certain tricks for rewards, but teachers should be able to critically examine the underlying why of their external behavior. Richards (1998) writes,

Our understanding of the role of classroom observation in teacher education has changed in recent years as a result of a movement away from a technical view of teaching, which focuses on identification of the behaviors and skills employed by effective teachers, to a focus on the complex meanings underlying the observable acts of teaching. (p. 152)

This approach to teacher training makes it difficult for novice instructors to legitimately say, “I do it this way because that is how my teachers did it.” Alas, no more valid intellectual claim to ignorance of observed past example; training programs should encourage the trainees to look deeper.

Falling back onto “past example” is the long-practiced rule of inexperienced teachers—indeed, of human behavior. This behavior may be described as the falling back into the mode of “teach as we have been taught.” In an effort to address this fallacy and to promote a type of academic *perestroika* (restructuring) in teacher training, Bailey et al. (1996) state that

If it is true that “we teach as we have been taught,” rather than as we have been trained to teach, then it would appear that we are bound to perpetuate the models we have learned in our own teaching. How can we go about breaking this cycle?

One way to begin is to bring out past experience to the level of conscious awareness. (p. 11)

Past experience, combined with reflective correction, provides a basis for progressive training. In fact, one of the most important aspects of training is personal reflection on the part of the trainee. Organized input of pedagogical theory and methodology does not guarantee that teacher learning will happen or that teaching style will be altered. It is thus

essential that a progressive record of the teachers' cognitive experiences and thoughts be kept. However, this, in and of itself, does not guarantee there will be alteration.

Permit one more Soviet lexical remnant: How then does this *glasnost* (openness) in teacher reflection, particularly in relation to novice instructor training, improve and alter teaching style? "Reflective approaches to teacher education programs often seek to engage teachers in articulating and examining the assumptions that underlie their teaching. . . . This approach . . . involves teachers . . . developing their own individual theories of teaching . . . and developing strategies for . . . change" (Richards, 1998, p. 2). This articulation and examination causes new development and teaching change. When instructors talk about the why in their teaching style, they may learn that adjustment is needed. Teachers in training may find that becoming familiar with one's own pedagogical strengths and weaknesses may be, at first, a harrowing experience. With time and guidance, however, they may well gain more confidence in themselves and their teaching style. Richards and Lockhart (1996) write,

Teachers who are better informed as to the nature of their teaching are able to evaluate their stage of professional growth and what aspects of their teaching they need to change. In addition, when critical reflection is seen as an ongoing process and a routine part of teaching, it enables teachers to feel more confident in trying different options and assessing their effects on teaching. (p. 4)

Being better informed comes through reflection and training. Thus, reflection and training have the potential to bring about positive change in teaching style.

Bailey et al. (1996) share an example of successful training, combined with reflection, from the comments of a teacher trainee:



Introspection is very important. If not for this class on teacher ed., if not for this assignment requiring me to state my own theory of effective teaching, I might never have thought about this sort of thing and sorted it out in my mind. Often it's only when we're forced to do such activities that we do them and then (possibly) reach new levels of professionalism through self-awareness. (p. 22)

Such training is, unfortunately, not available to many institutions of higher education that teach Arabic as a foreign language in the United States. What can be done when novice instructors are unable to receive quality training at the institution of higher education in which they work and study? Many are trying distance learning to reach students without access. Could some of these same principles of distance learning be applied to training novice teachers of Arabic?

### **Electronic Training for Arabic**

There are few examples of training models for novice instructors of Arabic. One of these few examples was a recent distance-learning training program called "The Arabic Project," in which novice instructors from various participating U.S. universities gathered for a one-week pre-service training seminar at the University of Washington. After the training, the novice instructors returned home to their local universities and took responsibility for coordinating Arabic instruction (Peterson, 2002). This one-week training session was likely a valuable learning experience for the novice instructors; however, what is missing is ongoing exposure to the insights and pedagogical practices of expert teachers. This absence of vital pedagogical training for novice instructors of Arabic at institutions without training programs is a major problem for the advancement of quality Arabic instruction. What can be done? Belnap (1995) writes,

Reaching out to smaller institutions—which up to the present have basically been ignored—is one step that would not require a great deal of time or resources. It is a step that could immediately affect a considerable segment of the profession and, therefore, a large number of students. (p. 68)

Training novice instructors of Arabic is one of the main reasons BYU filmed Muhammad Eissa in the classroom and put the entire footage onto DVDs. This full course model, which can be called an electronic model, may serve novice instructors in their teacher training and students in their Arabic learning. This model would ideally be accompanied with footage from the Middlebury training seminar as well. Thus, novice instructors would then have access to master teachers of Arabic teaching Arabic and discussing Arabic teaching pedagogy. This type of electronic training is a new possibility, thanks to modern technology.

### **Distance Learning and Distance Training**

“There is now a broad interest in innovation in distance learning, both from distance language professionals, and from others who are interested in the possibilities offered by online learning environments” (White, 2003, p. 1). These online electronic learning environments provide opportunities to connect teacher trainers and trainees, regardless of their location.

Distance language learning opportunities are not usually fixed in a particular physical location, and they are based around a course of study, with a cohort of learners. Interaction with teachers and learners is mediated by some form of technology, and there is an increasing emphasis on communication and collaborative learning opportunities. (White, 2003, p. 26)

The cohort of learners could be novice instructors with one or more master teachers at a different location leading them in pedagogical training.

Students, however, are not the only learners in the classroom; teachers also continue to learn and gain experience as they teach. Alesh (2001), writing about learning Arabic through distance learning, includes teachers along with students as those who could benefit from distance learning. He says,

Students on the campus of a small college who are interested in learning Arabic, for example, should have the means to learn via a distance course. Likewise, college instructors with an Arabic background who teach other subjects and want to teach Arabic language courses as well should have access to on-line methods courses with a focus on Arabic to help them teach effectively. (p. 348)

BYU's Arabic 101-102 DVDs were recorded for this purpose: to provide training for novice instructors of Arabic and exposure to a master teacher for students of Arabic.

### **Summary**

How can we use distance-learning initiatives to help provide training to novice instructors of Arabic? Is there a way that this training could be more than a short pre-service gathering of novice instructors? My research evaluates one example of an exportable teaching and training model for novice instructors of Arabic that has the potential of being used at any institution of higher education and certainly in some other contexts as well.

My thesis investigates whether deliberate intervention provided to a novice teacher of Arabic will alter the instructor's teaching style. The intervention comprises three components: (1) explicit and implicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills,

and strategies of master teachers of Arabic and replication thereof; (2) critical personal reflection through the use of journal writing activities; (3) observation of actual classroom teaching combined with one-on-one training and follow-up sessions with the instructor. My hypothesis is that this deliberate intervention will indeed positively alter the instructor's teaching style as noted by observations of the instructor over the course of a six-week Arabic course. As stated in chapter one, I believe that the training will cause the novice instructor to use class time better by speaking more Arabic in a highly interactive fashion. I also believe that personal reflection will cause the novice instructor to think more about the underlying principles of her actions and beliefs.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Design**

In chapter two I established that one of the purposes of teacher training programs is to guide new instructors into their roles as professional teachers (Wildner-Bassett, 1992). In the process of guiding instructors towards the use of effective pedagogy, teacher trainers know that it is important to give instructors opportunities to analyze their own teaching practices with attention to experts' insights (Barnett & Cook, 1992, p. 97). Along with observing expert teachers, instructors are encouraged to reflect on, as well as examine, the assumptions that underlie their own beliefs and practices (Richards, 1998). In this way, they not only develop their own individual theories of teaching, but they also develop strategies for change (Richards, 1998, p. 2).

The present study was designed to be a case study wherein a novice teacher of Arabic is engaged in observing and replicating examples of effective teaching, reflecting on her teaching practices, and responding to questions about her classroom pedagogy and decision-making. The observations of the novice instructor in her classroom were conducted during a normal four-month semester at her institution of higher education. My hypothesis is that this deliberate intervention over the course of six weeks will positively alter the instructor's teaching style. After receiving approval and permission from the appropriate Internal Review Boards (IRBs), I formally began my research with the novice instructor.

#### **Pedagogical Resource Material**

This research study is based on BYU's Arabic 101 DVD set for novice instructors of Arabic. The video footage is designed to be exportable so that it can serve as a model

for both teacher training and student learning for institutions that desire to offer Arabic courses, even if they lack sufficient faculty. The model contains the first two semesters of Arabic study, including a set of about fifty full-length DVDs of Dr. Muhammad Eissa, a master teacher of Arabic, teaching and interacting with his own real class of Arabic learners. At BYU, novice instructors of Arabic first watch these DVDs before preparing each day's class (as the novice instructor in my research was asked to do with the 101 DVDs) and then choose portions of the DVDs to show in class during different types of interactive activities. Novice instructors should not simply rely on the DVDs as the source of all instruction and just sit back and relax during class; they must be actively engaged in learning from Muhammad Eissa and enhancing their teaching skills "as observable in the lessons of good teachers" (Richards, 1998, p. 140). The instructional model will eventually include directions for novice instructors of Arabic on using the DVDs and BYU's comprehensive Arabic 101-102 curriculum.

In addition to a media collection of masterful teaching, the training curriculum also contains explicit teacher training footage collected on DVDs from a two-week training seminar specifically for instructors of Arabic that took place at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, in the summer of 2003. This seminar was designed for novice teachers of Arabic and addressed pedagogy and methodology in the language classroom. Two of the nation's leading Arabic teaching experts, Mahmoud Al-Batal and Kristen Brustad, directed this training seminar. The majority of the footage used in this project was of Mahmoud Al-Batal. The rationale for including explicit training specific to instructors of Arabic is twofold: (1) the lack of pedagogical methodology research on the teaching of Arabic, one of the larger LCTLs in the United States, and (2) as stated by

Barnett and Cook (1992), instructors need to analyze their teaching while paying “attention to experts’ insights” (p. 97). Without such explicit training, teachers may never reach their potential. Barnett and Cook (1992) add that

Too often the learning about teaching that supposedly happens by osmosis when one takes a master teacher’s course is vague, if not imaginary. Serious graduate students are conditioned to pay the greatest attention to subject matter and much less to teaching techniques or style—except when they find the latter annoying. Unreflective imitation, even of the best teachers, is not an adequate way to equip students to establish and maintain effective teaching practice. (p. 97)

Novice instructors, therefore, must have exposure to the teaching and thinking of master teachers, combined with critical self-reflection, to have the best training experience possible.

### **A Case Study**

My research design employed a case study as the research format. This type of research format allows for the in-depth observation and recording of a teacher’s teaching style over a period of time. I wanted to investigate a novice instructor’s teaching style over the course of a semester to see if changes occurred as intervention took place. I desired to gather enough data from this study to be able to demonstrate that training in the form of electronic apprenticeship has the potential to change and/or enhance the teaching style of novice instructors. Richards (1998) reports that

Case materials, including both written and videotaped cases, provide another rich vehicle for helping student teachers develop the capacity to analyze situations, to explore how teachers in different settings arrive at lesson goals and teaching

strategies, and to understand how expert teachers draw on pedagogical schemas and routines in the process of teaching. (p. 79)

During my research I observed how the novice instructor in my case study understood and learned from Muhammad Eissa and Mahmoud Al-Batal's pedagogical practices.

Yin (1994), as quoted in Tsui (2003), points out that case studies do not aim at making generalizations about populations or universes, but rather at expanding or generalizing theoretical propositions (p. 67). The use of a case study in my research provided an opportunity to see if the approach used here with one instructor could be a model that might be employed in institutions that offer Arabic courses without any in-house training programs, or as a supplement to other training programs. The approach does not assume that the trainee has had any past formal pedagogical training.

### **Research Subject**

The subject for this case study was a female Egyptian and native speaker of Arabic in her early twenties who had been assigned to teach one section of Arabic 101 at the institution of higher education she was attending. This novice instructor had worked previously as a tutor in one-on-one sessions for students learning Arabic at the university level, but she did not have any previous classroom teaching experience. The instructor's native language is Arabic, though she has lived extensively in Europe and the United States. While my research focused primarily on the novice instructor, I did gather comments from college students attending her Arabic class towards the end of the semester. This qualitative data provided valuable input regarding the students' opinions of the novice instructor's performance.



## **Research Instruments and Procedures**

The duration of my research observations was six weeks. I did not formally gather data during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday in November. Therefore, I formally gathered data for approximately five weeks, not considering the final journal entry, which I actually received after the training. I gathered data using the following instruments: classroom observations, interviews, journal writing assignments, one-on-one training session notes using footage from the seminar at Middlebury College, and an interview activity with the students in the Arabic class called a “Small Group Instructional Diagnosis” (Diamond, 1998). An electronic survey was also used in which data was gathered from the novice instructor about her teaching style and beliefs. This electronic survey is discussed later on.

These multiple sources of data were collected in order to broaden the data pool available to the researcher. Almarza (1996) states, “the use of interviews, together with observational records, has proven to be invaluable in exploring student teachers’ knowledge, particularly by providing evidence that teaching is more than an observable behavior” (p. 75). The multiple sources of data were also gathered in an attempt to see if systematic change occurred in the instructor’s teaching style as a result of deliberate intervention via exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with in-class replication thereof. The research instruments used are closely tied to the implicit influence and effect of the Muhammad Eissa DVDs on the novice instructor’s teaching style, as well as the explicit training footage from Mahmoud Al-Batal at the seminar at Middlebury College. Each of the means for collecting data will be described hereafter.

## Interviews and Surveys

I conducted pre- and post-training interviews, as well as one pre-training electronic survey, which was designed in a similar manner to the interviews, as a means of gathering data from the novice instructor regarding her views, beliefs, and practices involving language and the teaching of Arabic. The questions in the electronic survey are similar to those in the interviews. The electronic survey, however, provided an additional opportunity for the novice instructor to describe her teaching style and views. The data from the electronic survey is included in the chart in appendix A, along with the pre- and post-training interviews. The questions asked in the pre-training interview were almost the same as those used in the post-training interview. A list of the questions asked in the interviews is given in appendices B, C, and D. The second, or post-training, interview was deliberately designed similar to the pre-training interview in an attempt to provide data before and after the explicit and implicit training. The novice instructor sent me the post-training interview electronically. Thus, the pre-training interview was done in real-time, and the post-training interview was done by e-mail. The pre- and post-interviews portray a functional picture of the novice instructor's teaching style before and after the majority of the training. The novice instructor had only minimal exposure to the DVDs of Muhammad Eissa before my research began. I conducted the pre-interview in a one-on-one question and answer session with the novice instructor. I typed quickly as I recorded her response. Realizing this was not the best way to record an interview, I asked the novice instructor to answer the post-interview at her leisure in written format, which she then sent to me via e-mail. The interviews were deliberately designed to compare and contrast the novice instructor's responses before and after training. The questions for

each interview were nearly the same. The interview and survey questions are contained in the appendices B, C, and D. Many of the questions were taken from the first chapter of the book *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (Richards & Lockhart 1996).

As mentioned above, I administered one electronic survey to the novice instructor near the beginning of the training that elicited data in a manner similar to the pre- and post-training interviews. I received the novice instructor's responses to the survey on October 30, 2003. I planned to conduct more surveys to elicit more feedback; however, the questions were excessively repetitive. Therefore, I chose not to conduct the remaining two surveys. Data from the journal assignments and interviews provided the necessary reflective data from the subject.

### Journal Writing

I asked the novice instructor to answer questions about her teaching and learning experience two times per week in a journal-writing assignment. The instructor was to answer questions such as "What did I learn about myself as a language teacher this week?" and "How did viewing the Muhammad Eissa DVDs influence my teaching this week (if at all)?" These journal assignments were to be e-mailed to me immediately upon completion in order to preserve her current thoughts and feelings about her teaching.

These writing assignments were designed to help the novice instructor reflect upon her own teaching style and learning that took place in and out of the classroom each week. Richards (1998) writes, "The goal of activities like journal writing is to engage teachers in a deeper level of awareness and response to teaching than they would achieve by merely discussing teaching in terms of teaching procedures and lesson plans" (p. 162).

Thus, outside of our personal training sessions and interviews, the novice instructor had the opportunity to deeply reflect on what was taking place in the classroom concerning her teaching style and student learning.

#### One-on-One Training Using Footage from Middlebury Training Seminar

I met with the novice instructor about once a week, during which time I asked the novice instructor to view and comment on a pre-selected clip of Muhammad Eissa's class. The novice instructor was supposed to view these clips in advance, which did not happen; thus, we usually viewed them together at the beginning of the training. The novice instructor may not have had the most convenient access to a DVD player, and was thus unable, perhaps, to view these specific clips in advance. She did report, however, that she was viewing the DVDs once or twice a week. I discuss this issue more in the section concerning limitations in chapter five.

During these training sessions we viewed clips of Muhammad Eissa and Mahmoud Al-Batal on DVD. We sat together in a quiet room as we viewed and discussed the pedagogical principles being demonstrated on the DVDs. During the training sessions, I would often ask open-ended questions such as "What is taking place here?" or "Why do you think he is doing that?" Generally, the research subject was able to accurately identify the pedagogical principles illustrated in the video clips. For example, during the last training session we viewed Muhammad Eissa relating a story to his students. The research subject was able to identify that Muhammad Eissa wanted his students to answer in Arabic and recall details from the story. Next, we viewed explicit training from Mahmoud Al-Batal in which he discussed the importance of listening activities and how to do them well.

I chose clips of Muhammad Eissa's class that illustrate specific pedagogical principles or specific teaching skills. While Muhammad Eissa is an experienced teacher of Arabic, he does not necessarily always follow every recommended pedagogical principle. For example, he sometimes spoke more English in class than some Arabic professors would recommend. This however, did not significantly detract from his overall teaching expertise and would not be a major cause for concern. Therefore, I chose clips from his teaching that would easily correspond with the principles that Mahmoud Al-Batal, another master teacher of Arabic, advocates in his training for instructors of Arabic. In one out of the five training sessions, we did not view a particular clip of Muhammad Eissa; rather, we discussed general trends in his teaching style before viewing video footage from the training seminar at Middlebury College.

As mentioned above, after viewing the short clips of Muhammad Eissa's class, I showed footage from the 2003 training seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College that contained explicit dialogue and instruction on the same pedagogical principle or teaching skill practiced by Muhammad Eissa. There were five DVDs containing explicit instruction from the training seminar at Middlebury College led by Mahmoud Al-Batal and Kristen Brustad. I viewed these DVDs before the training sessions and found a corresponding clip from the DVDs containing Muhammad Eissa's class. The five DVDs from the training seminar for instructors of Arabic contained the following topics: (1) error correction; (2) the role of grammar and vocabulary in the language classroom; (3) appropriate use of classroom language, setup, and body movement; (4) the history of teaching methods; and finally (5) listening activities.

These five topics were not chosen arbitrarily; rather, they were five of the principles that were either frequently discussed or well covered during the training seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College. I compiled a list of fourteen possible training topics, from which I chose five to use for our one-on-one training sessions. This list is contained in appendix E. Most importantly, however, I chose topics that seemed to be most suitable for the novice instructor. While conducting my observations I noticed gaps in the novice instructor's pedagogical know-how that were explicitly addressed in the seminar at Middlebury College, which I therefore considered before choosing the next training topic. For example, after covering the first two training topics, I noticed that the novice instructor did not move around the class much or use language clues to help students. Thus, I chose a topic for the subsequent training that might help the novice instructor use class time and teaching opportunities more effectively. I chose the fourth training topic concerning historical teaching methodology because of her overuse of grammar-translation activities in class. I hoped that exposure to the past and present use of different methodologies would help her understand that there could be more effective methods to help her students' learning of Arabic. I chose listening activities as the final training topic because the novice instructor did not speak Arabic to the students for more than a few words at a time. I hoped that listening activities would help her to speak more Arabic and stop providing translations for words prematurely. Unfortunately, I was not able to include all of the training topics from the Middlebury tapes, because of limitations described in chapter five.

After each one-on-one session I invited the novice instructor to practice the pedagogical principle from that day's training in her next class. Immediately following

the next class, or soon thereafter, I conducted a brief interview to elicit feedback concerning the novice instructor's experience with the said principle. I recorded these interviews and the training sessions themselves on tape, which I later transcribed, or I simply entered the novice instructor's responses into my computer as she spoke. During subsequent classroom observations I attempted to record any change in teaching style that may have been influenced by the various one-on-one training sessions. The questions I asked in these follow-up interviews were based upon similar questions from Richards and Lockhart (1996). The questions are contained in appendixes F and G of this thesis.

#### Small Group Instructional Diagnosis

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) is the only instrument I used to gather data from a source other than the novice instructor herself. I utilized the SGID group activity as described in Diamond (1998). The activity is used for gathering data from the students themselves in an attempt to see how they interpret what is happening in their classroom. This instrument can be used to see if students are aware of their instructor's teaching style. Towards the end of the data collection period, I chose one day where the novice instructor was asked to leave class about fifteen minutes early. During this time, I put the students into small groups and had them answer three specific questions regarding the Arabic course. Each question was open-ended to allow students to provide as much information about their experiences in the Arabic classroom as possible. These questions are listed in appendix H.

#### Classroom Observations

Observation is one of the most essential instruments for assessing behavior. Genesee and Upshur (1996) write, "Observation is basic to assessing human skills and

behaviors. In fact, all methods of collecting information for second language assessment can be thought of as specialized methods for eliciting behavior, attitudes, or skills to be observed under specific circumstances” (p. 77). I conducted ten formal observations, usually two per week, during the course of my research. The notes I took during these observations consisted of dates and time codes with accompanying comments concerning class activity, particularly focusing upon the actions and teaching style of the novice instructor. The notes I took in these observations were somewhat general, though I did try to consistently keep track of the following: activities used, presentation techniques, correction and feedback techniques, and student behavior.

### **Data Analysis**

I deductively categorized data into general trends and practices as observed in the novice instructor’s classroom. I did this by first examining the pre- and post-interviews for trends in the novice instructor’s responses that indicated a change in her teaching beliefs. I then used these changes as a basis for examining each of the in-class observations. Thus, while examining the observations, I looked for trends that would indicate the novice instructor’s beliefs that coincided with or contradicted the pre- and post-interviews. After making note of these results, I classified the data into categories of observable change. These categories of change are listed in chapter five. The data were analyzed in a manner very similar to the method described in Almarza (1996):

Data analysis consisted of, first, coding one of the student teacher’s data both deductively by using the general categories derived from the literature and the research questions, and inductively by identifying the concepts which formed these categories as they emerged from the data. . . . The data do not fit categories



neatly because the human consciousness is far from neat and has many implicit and ill-defined connections. (p. 53)

My research design and research instruments provide the foundation on which my hypothesis can be tested and measured. My thesis investigates whether deliberate intervention via explicit and implicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with replication thereof, as well as critical personal reflection, positively alters instructor-teaching style. In the next chapter, the results and data from my research are presented.

## Chapter Four

### Results and Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether deliberate intervention via implicit and explicit exposure to the instructional behavior, skills, and strategies of master teachers of Arabic, combined with critical personal reflection and actual implementation of the modeled teaching positively alter an instructor's teaching style. Because of the intensity level of the training sessions, observations, and reflection activities, a case study design was used to gather data.

In chapter one I stated that my hypothesis in this study was that electronic exposure to the teaching style of master teachers of Arabic, accompanied with practical replication and reflection thereon, would result in positive changes to a novice instructor's teaching style (again, teaching style is defined as behavior and beliefs in Katz, 1996). In this chapter I will present the results and data gathered via my research instruments.

If my hypothesis is found to be correct, my thesis will provide one possible solution to address the need for high-quality pre- and in-service training of novice instructors of Arabic. This possible solution is an exportable model containing a comprehensive curriculum for the first two semesters of Arabic language instruction, which includes a set of full-length DVDs of Dr. Muhammad Eissa, a master teacher of Arabic. The model also includes explicit training footage on DVDs from a two-week training seminar for instructors of Arabic that took place at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, in the summer of 2003. This seminar was specifically designed for novice teachers of Arabic and addressed methodology in the Arabic language classroom.

## **Research Instruments Results**

This chapter presents the results and discussion of my case study following a general assessment containing the results of the research instruments (excluding the explicit training notes, which are presented in the discussion thereafter).

### Journal Assignments

Journal writing assignments provide the opportunity to gather data through the vehicle of critical reflection in the cognitive realm of the novice instructor's behavior and beliefs. As described in chapter three, I asked the novice instructor to complete two journal entries each week. I had planned to prepare specifically chosen questions for the novice instructor to answer in each assignment; however, she did not complete the twice-weekly journal assignment. I planned to systematically send her some of the same questions, along with a variety of others, for the assignments in an attempt to gather data about her beliefs for the extent of the training period. Unfortunately, the novice instructor completed only a total of three journal assignments during the training. Appendix I contains the questions from the journal assignments as well as a table containing abridged responses from the novice instructor.

### Interviews and Surveys

Appendix A contains data from the pre- and post-training interviews that signify a change in teaching style of the novice instructor as a possible result of the implicit and/or explicit training. The question numbers in the table correspond to those in the post-training interview, which did not contain a few of the questions in the pre-training interview. Abridged responses from the survey are included underneath the number to

which they correspond. The questions on the survey were very similar to those in the interview.

Some of the changes in teaching style may come directly from either or both types of training. It is important to note, however, that some of the responses in the post-interview reveal change that is inexplicable in relation to either or both types of training. I have, therefore, separated the observable changes in teaching style into two categories: change that I cannot explain in light of the training, and change that could likely be attributed to explicit and/or implicit training. I corrected some of the novice instructor's spelling mistakes in the tables to make the data more comprehensible. Appendix J contains this information.

### Observations

Observations are critical to my research in establishing whether the novice instructor's teaching style changed during the training period. During my observations, the novice instructor was not able to stop class in order to deeply reflect and think about what she should be doing; class moves too quickly for this. Thus, the novice instructor had to simply teach in a manner that she deemed effective, without time to make major adjustments to her teaching style. This type of atmosphere provided fertile ground for recording true behavior and beliefs.

I conducted ten in-class observations over the five-week period. The observations provided opportunity to closely investigate the novice instructor's teaching style in light of the explicit training and other research instruments. Appendix J contains significant data harvested from the ten observations. The data is presented in a table containing two columns. The first column contains notes regarding general behavior and activity as

observed in the classroom. The second column contains observed behavior that suggests the novice instructor experienced some sort of positive influence resulting from the implicit and explicit training. I have also included the dates and topics covered in the five explicit training sessions and journal assignments at the appropriate chronological points in time. Many of the notes from the observations provide no insight to the research questions regarding change in teaching style and thus have not been included. I left blank any cell in the table in which the observations do not reveal any data that could be classified as possible results from implicit and/or explicit training. This table allows us to see the impact of explicit training, reflective journal writing, and in-class teaching style of the novice instructor.

The notes from the observations reveal that choice of explicit training was a progressive process. As I monitored the novice instructor throughout my research, I noticed certain patterns appearing in the way she taught and acted. These patterns were, at times, cause for concern in regard to student learning and teacher instruction. Therefore, before choosing a topic from my pre-selected list for explicit training, I reflected upon these trends and concerns as I strove to decide which topic would best enhance student learning and the novice instructor's teaching style. Appendix J contains some of these general trends from my observations. The right column of the table provides information concerning possible explanations of the observed trends in the novice instructor's teaching style.

#### Small Group Instructional Diagnosis

I was able to conduct only one SGID activity with the students of the novice instructor's class because of the limitations placed upon me by the institution's

department chair. With the approval of the department chair and the novice instructor, I conducted the activity towards the end of the semester, on December 04, 2003. On the designated day, I asked the novice instructor to leave the class about fifteen minutes early so that I could conduct the activity with her small group of six students. The SGID activity involved pair work in which the students answered three simple questions about the nature of their experience thus far with Arabic at their institution and in their classroom. When the students were finished discussing in pairs and had written down their answers to the questions, they shared their responses and discussed them with the other students in the room. Appendix H contains the questions and the items discussed in the SGID activity (explained in Diamond, 1998).

### Summary

The results and discussion will next be presented, beginning with a description of the novice instructor at the beginning of the training week and followed by a chronological narrative of the training and its influence on the novice instructor. After the narrative, the pre- and post-interviews are discussed in an attempt to identify specific changes that occurred in the novice instructor's teaching style over the course of the training. Care was taken to distinguish between changes in teaching style that may be a result of either implicit or explicit training; at times, however, it was difficult to differentiate between the two. This chapter concludes with a general discussion concerning the novice instructor's teaching style.

### **Introduction to the Novice Instructor**

As described in chapter three, the novice instructor did not have any formal pedagogical training when she began to teach Arabic. The only exposure to teaching of

any kind was her limited experience as a private tutor for students learning Arabic. It is clear from my early observations that the novice instructor was unsure how to deal with various problems and issues that come up during class time. For example, in my first two observations, the novice instructor used English much more than Arabic during class time. It seemed that the novice instructor viewed her use of Arabic as an obstacle that got in the way of learning. In fact, the novice instructor stated in the pre-training interview that the use of Arabic in the beginning of the semester is unreasonable and that one must use English to guide students. The idea of the teacher guiding the students is not without merit. The novice instructor, however, seemed to have a unique understanding of what it means to guide the class. Responses to questions 4 and 5 in the pre-training interview, concerning student learning of vocabulary and grammar, show that the novice instructor assumed that her students would learn these items primarily in class, thus she showed signs of a teacher-centered orientation. Interestingly, the teacher did, every once in a while, allow students free reign to ask any questions they wanted. The novice instructor generally answered these questions, regardless of lesson topic; this activity may have been related to a lack of preparation. However, as will be seen, after the first two training sessions the novice instructor did not always allow irrelevant questions in class.

This idea of the teacher being in control, generally, of student learning and use of class time is more evident in the novice instructor's response to a question in the pre-training interview concerning error correction. Her response to student errors in the language was to stop the students, explain what their mistake was, and tell them how to say it correctly.

The following week-by-week presentation of the various research instruments and training activities allows us to view the development of novice instructor's teaching style. This development can be seen through my observations as well as the novice instructor's own critical reflections and attempts to improve her own teaching style with guidance from master teachers of Arabic.

### **Week One**

During our first one-on-one training session, I chose to focus on the topic of error correction. I selected two video clips (one by Muhammad Eissa and a second by Mahmoud Al-Batal) that showed examples regarding these teachers' techniques for error correction. In the clips we viewed, neither master teacher immediately corrected their students' errors. Rather, they repeated the word to the student with rising intonation as an indirect way of suggesting that something was wrong in the student's performance. If the student with whom the teacher was working was unable to correct the error, they solicited help from other students. As I showed these video clips to the novice instructor, she commented that she did notice that neither teacher immediately corrected his students. The novice instructor felt that this might help students learn the vocabulary better. She noted that if the students knew that they had to figure it out, they may well memorize their vocabulary better. When asked how she would use the principles of good error correction in class, she remarked, "I will write sentences on the board and ask students for words, and I will speak more *Fusha* [Modern Standard Arabic] with them and speak in Arabic to them." The opportunity for students to hear more Arabic, assuming that it was at an appropriate level of comprehensibility, would provide a more language-rich environment for the students.



Her comment about writing sentences on the board and then having students translate them was an activity that I had observed her use quite frequently in class. This particular approach appeared to be reminiscent of the early Grammar-Translation method of teaching foreign languages. A method that has been shown to be of limited success when it comes to oral language development. This would be an aspect that I would need to address in a later training session. My goal in this first session was to help the novice instructor begin using a technique for error correction demonstrated by the master teachers.

During our follow-up interview, after the novice instructor had practiced error correction as seen in the classrooms of master teachers of Arabic, she reported that she waited that day to make corrections, doing something similar to Muhammad Eissa and Mahmoud Al-Batal, which she thought would help. More specifically, the novice instructor said she thought the training helped her to see how the students think, “and that it made the students think.” When asked if she would continue to practice the principles concerning error correction in the future, as discussed in the explicit training, she responded in the affirmative. The novice instructor also said that “by not spoon-feeding the students the answers, it caused them to think—as well as the other students who were listening.” The novice instructor hoped that this might “turn on some lightbulbs.”

The novice instructor wrote her first journal entry after the opening session of the explicit training about error correction. The response to question 7 in the first journal entry, concerning the influence of her discussion with me, the researcher, shows that the novice instructor learned that immediate correction of student errors in class is sometimes

a humiliating experience for them. The novice instructor also stated in the same entry, “the training has made her pay more attention to the psychology of teaching.”

The day after the first explicit training session, I came back to the novice instructor’s class to conduct an observation. This observation shows that the explicit training had an immediate influence on the novice instructor’s teaching style in her classroom. My notes from the observation describe how the novice instructor did not immediately correct student mistakes, but rather repeated the student’s mistake in an attempt to allow the student to figure out the correct response. Subsequent investigation during my observations allowed me to track the longer-term influence of the training on the novice instructor’s teaching style.

## **Week Two**

During one of my first observations in the second week, I noted that the novice instructor used Arabic for about 70% of the class time. This was a large step forward as far as use of Arabic is concerned. Although the use of more Arabic caused some student communication challenges, the novice instructor tried to help them figure out correct responses without giving them the answer in English. The training from the previous week seemed to still be on the novice instructor’s mind.

The explicit training during the second week was about the role of grammar and vocabulary in the language classroom. I chose this topic based upon the novice instructor’s teaching practices I observed that were different from what I had seen the master teachers of Arabic doing. Specifically, I noticed that the novice instructor spent a significant amount of class time explaining grammar and vocabulary that the students could have learned at home. Moreover, these explanations were primarily in English.

When viewing a clip of Muhammad Eissa teaching in his own classroom, the novice instructor commented that Muhammad Eissa was attempting to quiz the students' comprehension by using questions in Arabic. This is exactly what I wanted the novice instructor to notice: namely, that the teacher does not have to explain grammatical principles and new vocabulary in English. The novice instructor was aware that Muhammad Eissa was trying to encourage the students to come up with an answer while using context clues to help.

After viewing footage of Muhammad Eissa, we turned to Mahmoud Al-Batal for more explicit discussion concerning the role of grammar and vocabulary in the language classroom. This discussion originally took place at the training seminar for instructors of Arabic. After viewing clips from the discussion, the novice instructor said she understood that Mahmoud Al-Batal, as the teacher, "is only a guide for students and that they must prepare before coming to class, or it will be a waste of time." The novice instructor also expressed that her students want to know everything immediately but that the teacher may need to express the following:

look, if you want to know more, then come in the private time, and I have no problems to explain or to discuss other things, but, however, I choose not to do that as well because I want everybody at the same level—cause it's not fair if one person understands more than,—I mean, there are already people understand more than others.

The novice instructor is saying that she needs to teach everyone in the classroom, not just one or two students who might be excelling beyond the others. Students who want to know extra details should use the teacher's office hours, although she would probably

rather spend her office hours with struggling students. The novice instructor also commented on the importance of the students themselves preparing for class, and that she would no longer create materials similar to those that the students had already been given. The explicit training seemed to help the novice instructor develop a desire to be a guide for her students in their learning, instead of being the only source of knowledge, which is quite similar to what Mahmoud Al-Batal had discussed. The novice instructor concluded that “such practices would help the students to depend on themselves and cultivate the will and the desire to learn more.”

When asked how the training influenced her teaching, during the follow-up interview, the novice instructor reported that it “expanded her awareness.” When asked if she would use it in the future, she responded in the affirmative, saying, “it is the only way to learn a language.” The novice instructor also added that “she doesn’t want to promote laziness because the students will not learn if she spoon-feeds it to them.” The explicit training concerning the role of grammar and vocabulary in class, and how and when to present them, seemed to connect with the novice instructor.

### **Week Three**

Early in the third week of training, I returned to the novice instructor’s classroom for a formal observation. One of the first things I noticed in this observation was that the novice instructor was still using better error correction techniques, but that she was less patient and was resorting to English to hasten the process. The novice instructor seemed to know that using Arabic to teach and help students learn is better, yet she switched to English, perhaps in an attempt to save time and energy.

The issue of saving time was also apparent in the novice instructor's responses to student questions that were off topic. At least two times during this observation, the novice instructor asked students to wait until after class to discuss questions that were not related to the topic at hand. This behavior is similar to what Mahmoud Al-Batal discussed in the explicit training concerning the role of grammar and vocabulary. It is thus apparent that the novice instructor was becoming more conscious of the need to stay on task and avoid irrelevant questions.

Later in the week during another observation, the novice instructor was again consciously trying to use more Arabic. Unfortunately, however, she was swift to use English to help in explanations. After students had finished presenting their dialogues in front of the class, the novice instructor had the students translate and diagram sentences she wrote on the board. In spite of the use of English and the grammar-translation activity, the novice instructor did encourage and compliment her students in their strivings to learn Arabic.

Immediately after this second observation, I met with the novice instructor for our third explicit training session. I chose this training session hoping that it would help her to realize the advantages of using technology, such as the DVDs of Muhammad Eissa, to improve her learning as well as the learning in her class. I also hoped that the explicit training would help the novice instructor to move around the classroom more and solidify the importance of speaking Arabic with her students. During this training session, we viewed a clip of Muhammad Eissa in his class when he was, as the novice instructor said, "trying to get his students to understand his question." Muhammad Eissa was repeating questions in Arabic over and over, hoping that the student(s) would understand. I asked

the novice instructor why Muhammad Eissa did not simply tell them the word in English, to which she responded, “he wants them to think and does not want to spoon-feed them.”

When asked about the classroom in which Muhammad Eissa teaches, the novice instructor said, “it looks good because everyone can sing along [participate].”

After viewing Muhammad Eissa and listening to Mahmoud Al-Batal discuss the role of technology in the language classroom, I asked the novice instructor what Al-Batal was talking about, to which she replied that “if technological appliances [devices] are used correctly, it can open endless possibilities.” After viewing additional footage concerning the use of body movement, spoken clues, and encouragement in the language classroom, we watched three instructors of Arabic teaching at Middlebury College in real classrooms. I asked the novice instructor, before showing these clips, to determine whether these teachers were correctly practicing the principles Mahmoud Al-Batal discussed in the explicit training. After discussing the clips and determining that the teachers were in fact practicing these principles well, I asked the novice instructor how such principles could help her as a teacher. She replied that “it would help me help the students to feel more comfortable, more active, uh, make class more—I don’t know—lofty? To bring good energy in, a good flow.” This discussion seemed to indicate that the novice instructor generally comprehended the training. However, during the follow-up interview the novice instructor admitted that she had not paid much attention to this particular training session, but that she would in the future.

#### **Week Four**

Comments from my first observation in the fourth week show that the novice instructor was making students figure out answers to their questions more and more. For

example, during the lesson a student asked a question about a grammatical principle, to which the novice instructor did not respond but instead looked to the other students for the answer. This type of teaching skill was discussed in the explicit training.

Unfortunately, however, the novice instructor used more English during class that day, combined with an excessive amount of sentence diagramming activities. The importance of employing varying classroom activities and methods was becoming a topic that I knew I needed to address in the next explicit training session.

A few days after the first observation, I met with the novice instructor for explicit training about teaching methods. During this training we discussed some of the methods that have been used throughout the past century and the importance of learning from each of them. In this particular explicit training session, we did not view a specific clip of Muhammad Eissa; rather, we discussed his teaching style. The novice instructor described what she thought of Muhammad Eissa's teaching style with the following statements: "He's very, um, keen on, he's very repetitive, he's very patient. He wants his students to think, use his mind, use their minds a lot. Very friendly, optimistic, cheerful, very cheerful, not strict. He's fun." After discussing Muhammad Eissa's teaching style, I asked the novice instructor what types of activities usually take place in his class. She responded with, "speech, grammar, and pronunciation."

Next, we viewed footage from the training seminar for instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College, in which Mahmoud Al-Batal discussed specific historical teaching methods in detail. We viewed footage with reference to the methods known as the Traditional Way, the Berlitz method, and the Audio-Lingual method. We then discussed the Grammar-Translation method and how it influenced teaching methods throughout

history. When I asked the novice instructor about the content of this footage, she replied that,

these are kind of like the ancestors of the methods of the way we teach today. So he's discussing the different types throughout time, methods of teaching and how they've evolved to then encompass all of these things and end up with that. So he wants us to be aware and [asks,] how can you create your own method of teaching if you don't know the history of the methods of teaching?

As I was preparing to end the training session, the novice instructor volunteered the following:

You can't teach Arabic the way you've learned it because some people learn Arabic as Americans and some people learn Arabic as being native Arabic speakers, so you have to focus on how you teach people—you can't expect them to learn the same way you did—cause they're not native in it. And you have to make it simple and keep it simple, and every single time you teach you'll notice how you've learned something new yourself and your philosophy of teaching, your method of teaching changes, and—and it improves, and if you sit in other linguistic classes, you can learn something from the way they teach their language and basically pick up everything that you can to improve your method of teaching.

These comments indicate that the novice instructor was aware that developing a personal teaching style and philosophy requires time, patience, and training. They also show that the novice instructor was aware that simply being a native speaker of Arabic does not mean that you know how to teach foreigners, as mentioned in chapter two in a quote from



Rikin (1992). This statement from the novice instructor, to her credit, also shows that she was able to comprehend and express her understanding regarding the importance of this training topic in a detailed explanation. When asked how it could help her teaching, she replied that

it will make me pay attention to the, like, things we take for granted, like how much do I focus on everything—how do I, you know, convey the language through my performance? Um, how much focus do I put on grammar? How much do I put on pronunciation? How do I teach? And how can I better teach to convey a language to my students so that they don't go through any unnecessary difficulties, at the same time as making them work for it? I don't want to be like—on a silver plate.

Knowing that the novice instructor leaned heavily towards a grammar-translation type of syllabus in her classroom, I hoped that this training would help her to experiment with other teaching methods.

Immediately after this explicit training session I conducted my second observation of the week. During this observation, the novice instructor used much more Arabic with her students. The novice instructor used Arabic as the general means of communication, even when students were struggling through the language activities. Unfortunately, the novice instructor had her students do more sentence diagramming for the majority of the class time. During the explicit training, Mahmoud Al-Batal discussed the Grammar-Translation method, which is basically what the novice instructor was asking her students to do, and commented that it was a method of the past. I had hoped that the exposure to a variety of teaching methods would cause her to think of doing something other than

sentence diagramming. In the section regarding limitations in chapter five, I discuss this further.

During the follow-up interview after her next class, I asked how she used the training in her class. The novice instructor first said that she “did not use it consciously”; however, she said that she “used grammar, audio and linguistics and my performance by acting things out; and I used direct form.” I then asked her how it went, to which she responded that it “went well—was fun. They are visibly conjugating better when I speak Arabic. The look on their faces—ah, I understand what she [is doing]. It is visible on their face that they are not as confused as before—they are remembering things.” These comments indicate that the novice instructor was reflecting on her teaching style.

The novice instructor wrote her second journal entry after she had been exposed to a total of four explicit training sessions as well as an additional three weeks of implicit training through exposure to Muhammad Eissa. Question 2 in the second journal entry inquires about the novice instructor’s perceptions of her own teaching. Her answer shows that the novice instructor has learned, probably from the explicit training, that the more techniques a teacher uses, the more helpful it is to the students. The response to question 7, regarding her conversations with me, shows that the novice instructor had also become more aware of her body language and speech and how they play a role in student learning. The novice instructor expressed a desire to use these principles in her future teaching experiences. These comments show that the novice instructor was reflecting upon her own teaching style and her exposure to the explicit training.

### **Week Five and Beyond**

After a one-week break for the Thanksgiving holiday, I returned to the novice instructor's classroom to conduct my first observation of the fifth week. This class period was spent reviewing vocabulary and doing reading drills in Arabic. The novice instructor was very patient with student language production. The novice instructor had written about her desire to be more patient with her students in her second journal entry. Moreover, the novice instructor made a similar comment in the last explicit training about Muhammad Eissa—how he was very patient with his students.

Towards the end of the class I asked the novice instructor to leave so that I could conduct the Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) activity with her students. I conducted this SGID activity with the students towards the end of the semester in order to give them sufficient experience with classroom practice and the Arabic materials to answer the questions. The students were, for the most part, excited about learning Arabic. As noted in the third question regarding suggestions, the Arabic course they were in was the only one offered at the institution. Had there been a developed Arabic program at the institution for the students, they may have found more motivation to do homework and learn Arabic.

Such comments from the students provide additional data concerning the novice instructor's teaching style. The responses, however, to the questions in the SGID activity are perplexing. Some of the responses seem to confirm that the novice instructor learned something during the training, and others cause me to question what happened. Students however, may not always be the most qualified to make informed decisions concerning pedagogical practices in their language classroom. For example, the responses from the

first question, concerning what helped them to learn, show that the students considered the sentence diagramming and in-class dialogues helpful, both of which I hoped to curb through the explicit training. The responses in the second question, concerning what was not helping them learn, show that the students wanted more help with vocabulary and grammar in class, both of which the explicit training advised should not be presented in class. These comments suggest that the students were content with some of the behavior and activities of the novice instructor that the training actually discouraged. A follow-up SGID activity would have provided more data from the students that may have allowed me to determine whether their opinions had changed over time. This is discussed in the section concerning limitations in chapter five.

The next day, following this SGID activity, I conducted the fifth and final explicit training session. Throughout the course of my observations, it was apparent that the novice instructor was using far too much English in the classroom. Therefore, I chose listening activities as the final pedagogical training topic. I hoped that this topic would help her to speak more Arabic and vary the type of activities she used in the classroom.

At the beginning of this explicit training session, we viewed a clip of Muhammad Eissa telling his class a story of his rafting trip to southern Utah. Muhammad Eissa used very little English during the story. After telling the story, he asked his class questions about his trip in Arabic. I asked the novice instructor what was happening in the clip, to which she replied: “Now he wants to see how much they understood of what he said—and he wants them to explain to him in Arabic what they remember of his conversation, and then he asks them to put together a reminiscent [sic].” After viewing the footage of

Muhammad Eissa and discussing it, we then watched Mahmoud Al-Batal training other instructors about listening activities in the Arabic language classroom.

In addition to watching Mahmoud Al-Batal train instructors about listening activities, we viewed clips of two instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College performing examples of listening activities in their classrooms. The novice instructor noticed that one of the teachers played a clip and then asked general questions about the passage before playing it again. The other teacher presented a smaller clip and then asked the students questions to help prepare them for the larger segment.

After viewing the clips from classrooms at Middlebury College, I asked the novice instructor for her final comments on what Mahmoud Al-Batal said is important in listening activities. She replied,

To create pathways for your students to listen so that they you don't just hand them this blah, like, because, yeah, their comprehension will be limited, so create a pathway in which they can enter and infiltrate into whatever he wants you to listen to. And so then, because they are paying attention to that they will understand more, rather than if you just present it as a whole.

These comments suggest that the novice instructor contemplated what she viewed in the training. Before ending our training session, I asked the novice instructor if she would tell a story in class as a listening activity, to which she agreed.

Immediately after the explicit training, I observed the novice instructor's class for the last time. The novice instructor performed quite well in her class. She told a story in Arabic from her childhood and then asked the students questions to check their understanding. After this activity the novice instructor asked the students to do the same.

The students struggled through some simple stories but seemed to really enjoy the experience and the practice with the language. As discussed in the explicit training, she did not give the students new vocabulary for this activity unless it was absolutely necessary to their understanding.

During our final follow-up interview after this class, I asked the novice instructor how she used the listening assignment. She replied that she used a listening activity “to see how well they listen and understand. They understood pretty much everything and answered the questions I asked.” After telling her story in Arabic and asking questions, the novice instructor asked the students to share some stories. The novice instructor thought this activity would have been better had she emphasized to the students the importance of using vocabulary that they already know, instead of asking for a great deal of help with translation from her.

The last question I asked the novice instructor was whether she planned to use the principles we discussed in the training in the future and why. She responded that she would continue to do this in the future,

because it makes, if you give the students the opportunity to know what they should look for, they will do so naturally and will be attentive, and it will reflect on what they do in class on homework[.(?)] It will affect their overall participation and everything they do when it comes to learning the language.

This response indicates that the novice instructor learned the importance of preparing students for participation in listening activities. I only wish I could have conducted more observations to investigate how she would use this in the future.

The novice instructor's final journal entry sheds light on what she had learned from the explicit training. The novice instructor wrote this entry on December 10<sup>th</sup>, after we had finished all of the explicit training sessions. The response to question 7 in this entry, regarding her conversations with me, shows that the novice instructor knew of the need to try different approaches in her teaching. She stated that she believes,

the conversations help improve my teaching skills in the sense that just as I create pathways for my students to be more attentive because I teach them what to look for, these conversations have helped me become a better teacher because they steer in the direction that I need to teach, and I am more aware of how to do certain things, and expect results.

This response indicates that the novice instructor was aware that she could become a better teacher through change and variation of teaching methods and techniques.

### **Pre- and Post-Training Interviews: Bringing It All Together**

The post-training interview provides a more detailed look into the novice instructor's teaching style. Comparing the pre-training interview with the post-training interview shows the teaching style of the novice instructor before and after the explicit training. As noted earlier in this chapter, I separated the observable changes in teaching style into the following categories: change that I cannot explain in light of the training and change that could likely be attributed to explicit and/or implicit training. Appendix A contains a table that presents the responses from the pre- and post-interviews. The paragraph following the table discusses changes that could likely be attributed to the explicit training. It should be noted, however, that I was not able to distinguish changes that could have resulted from the implicit training independently from the explicit

training. The main reason for this is because any changes that may have resulted from implicit training could, perhaps, also be attributed to the explicit training. The third paragraph in this appendix section discusses this issue.

Responses 7, 11, and 19 reveal changes in teaching style that are likely results of the explicit training sessions. Response 19, concerning error correction, for example, shows similar ideas to the recommended methods of error correction that Mahmoud Al-Batal specifically addressed in one of the explicit training sessions. In the pre-training interview the novice instructor wanted to correct mistakes immediately, while in the post-training interview she seemed more hesitant to do so—and even wanted to have the student find the answer. This is just one example of an accepted principle in modern pedagogy as confirmed by Brown (1994) in his book about principles of teaching:

Your classroom feedback to students should give them the message that mistakes are not “bad,” rather that most mistakes are good indicators that innate language acquisition abilities are alive and well. Mistakes are often indicators of aspects of the new language that are still developing. Some mistakes in the classroom should be **treated** by you, but when you choose to treat them, do so with kindness and empathy so that the student will not feel thwarted in future attempts to speak. (p. 29)

Responses 7 and 11, about student participation, also show modern pedagogical thinking concerning student questions in class and how they should be addressed. This type of thinking is quite similar to the recommendations concerning the same issues in the DVDs from Middlebury.



As noted in the beginning of this section, I combined changes that could possibly be attributed to implicit training with changes that could also, perhaps, be attributed to the explicit training. Therefore, differences in the responses 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 20, and 22, as contained in appendix A, may possibly be attributed to both the implicit and explicit training. Both the implicit and explicit training contained examples and/or discussion of the pedagogical issues involved in these questions. For example, the novice instructor first seemed to think that being a native speaker would provide an easy solution to the students' lack of knowledge and culture. In the post-training interview, however, the novice instructor wrote that the role of the teacher is more of a guide. Mahmoud Al-Batal plainly discussed during the Middlebury training that the teacher is a resource for help, not an unquenchable source of knowledge. Moreover, he discussed the importance of student preparation at home using their resources, because class time is time to practice what you learned at home, not to present that which you could do on your own. Muhammad Eissa also stressed the importance of student learning and preparation before entering the language classroom. The novice instructor's responses provide evidence that the training helped the novice instructor to place learning responsibility on the learner. Both Mahmoud Al-Batal and Muhammad Eissa emphasized the importance of self-reliance as a language learner and the necessity of student preparation before coming to the language classroom. Both professors also demonstrated good examples of a teacher acting as a guide through various activities.

The responses that show some sort of change in teaching style that is not explainable in relation to the training are responses 8, 13, 14, 17, and 18. Question 8, for example, about the role of technology in the language classroom, is a topic that we did

not discuss in great detail. Responses to questions 13, 14, 17, and 18, about personal teaching and learning style, reveal the novice instructor's reliance on teaching grammar and pronunciation—two skills that might be easy for her to perform as a native speaker. Response 17, specifically concerning how foreigners learn Arabic, is, perhaps, a quick and simplistic response that does not consider the many other processes involved in language learning.

### **Discussion**

The pre- and post-training interviews provide an informative view of the novice instructor's teaching style before and after her exposure to the master teachers of Arabic. In addition to the interviews, each research instrument provided unique data that help to depict the teaching style of the novice instructor throughout the course of my research.

In the early stages of my research, the novice instructor portrayed herself as an enthusiastic beginner with her own ideologies of how to teach Arabic. After the explicit and implicit training, the picture changed in some ways. For example, one of the most prevalent trends throughout my research is the manner in which the novice instructor used Arabic and English in the classroom. From the very beginning, the novice instructor talked about Arabic in English, rather than using Arabic to practice speaking. Most student errors were corrected in English, grammatical questions were answered in English, and even general class functions were performed in English. The first two explicit training sessions addressed the issue of overuse of English in the Arabic classroom. In later observations I found that the novice instructor consciously tried to use more Arabic to help with errors and explanations. Thus, I noted that towards the end of November the novice instructor was consistently using Arabic much more than in

October. It is interesting, however, to note that during the fourth observation the novice instructor used Arabic for the majority of class time, only to slip back into more English for a few weeks and then back to more Arabic.

Another change is noted in the novice instructor's second journal entry of November 19<sup>th</sup>, in which she wrote that the training she received had helped her become more aware of her body language and verbal language in class and how it can help or hinder the students.

In addition to these issues, the novice instructor's perception of error correction visibly changed from the pre- to post-training interview. In the pre-training interview the novice instructor stated that she should be the one to correct them, whereas in the post-interview she wrote that she is not in a hurry to correct them and would encourage the student to find an answer.

Another general trend was the manner in which the novice instructor used class time. There were two activities that the novice instructor conducted repeatedly in class: dialogue presentation and sentence diagramming. The use of dialogue presentation in class is not undesirable, per se. The problem is that the novice instructor was often using large amounts of class time to have students stand in front of the class and read papers that were actually supposed to be dialogue presentations. As far as I was aware, the dialogues were to be presented on Fridays and Mondays; however, even two out of five classes per week is probably still too much to have students do nothing but take turns listening to their peers struggle through canned dialogues. Towards the end of the semester, the novice instructor lessened the frequency of such activities, at least on the days I was observing. This can, perhaps, be attributed to the explicit training about

listening activities and teaching methods that may have provided insight into other activities and ways of teaching a language.

Knowing that the novice instructor leaned heavily towards a grammar-translation type of syllabus, I hoped that the explicit training from Middlebury about teaching methods would help her to experiment with other methods in her classroom and curb her reliance on sentence diagramming. Indeed, throughout the semester the novice instructor used a great deal of class time for sentence diagramming on the board. I hoped that the explicit training would have helped her to use other activities more consistently. This training, however, came late in the semester and may not have been overt enough in pointing out that always using the same activity is less effective in language teaching. It is satisfying to report, however, that during my last observation the novice instructor used an effective speaking and listening activity, not sentence diagramming. It is also encouraging to note that in the novice instructor's last journal assignment, written December 10<sup>th</sup>, she stated that the DVDs have helped her realize that she should try new approaches. I am optimistic that she will do this in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Claims to observable changes are more legitimate and accurate when more than one research instrument provides evidence that changes in teaching style resulted from the implicit and/or explicit training. These research instruments provided data concerning the teaching style of the novice instructor and how it developed and changed over the course of the training. These changes were visible through the novice instructor's teaching style as observed in class, as well as in the out-of-class assignments. The research instruments also allowed us to view the process of self-reflection as the novice

instructor wrote her journal entries and verbalized her teaching style in interviews and training sessions. This chapter has presented the results, accompanied with discussion, of the data gathered in my research. The next chapter will discuss implications of the findings.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions

The number of institutions teaching Arabic throughout the U.S. has increased dramatically over the past six years (Welles, 2004). Much of this increased interest in studying Arabic has been fueled by world events, increasing numbers of students who have a desire to learn about the Middle East and its language, and employers needing to hire individuals who speak the language of this region. As the number of students has increased, so has the demand for instructors. Unfortunately, the training for new instructors has been severely lacking (Belnap, 1995; Keogh, 1998). The focus of this study was to follow one novice instructor as she taught her first semester of Arabic 101. My research hypothesis in this study was that electronic exposure to the teaching style of master teachers of Arabic, accompanied with practical replication and reflection thereon, would result in positive changes to a novice instructor's teaching style. I believed that the changes in teaching style would be directly observable in her style in her classroom. I believed that the training would cause the novice instructor to use class time better by speaking more Arabic in a highly interactive fashion.

I used multiple means for collecting data as I sought to capture the process of decision making and change that occurred over the course of six weeks. In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the results in light of my hypothesis, as well as discuss the implications of these results for the training of novice instructors of Arabic. This chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations of my research, along with suggestions for future research and, finally, recommendations for teacher training programs.

## **Changes in Teaching Style**

My research hypothesis in this study was that exposure to the teaching style of master teachers of Arabic, accompanied with practical replication and reflection thereon, would result in positive changes to a novice instructor's teaching style. The research subject, or novice instructor, in this study was a native Egyptian teaching her first semester of an Arabic 101 class at an institute of higher education. The novice instructor was exposed to implicit and explicit types of training from video clips of master teachers of Arabic. I used interviews, observations, journal assignments, and the SGID activity to track the novice instructor's teaching style. These research instruments allowed me to record changes both outside and inside the language classroom.

In the sections that follow, I summarize the most apparent changes noted in the novice instructor's teaching style, based upon the implicit and explicit training that occurred. Each of the changes shows that the training, whether implicit or explicit, was valued and interpretable within the novice instructor's "world of thought and action" (Pennington, 1996, p. 340), as mentioned in my review of the literature. For example, after the training concerning error correction, the novice instructor said she considered the training helpful in that it helped her to see how the students think "and that it made the students think." Her newly gained understanding caused her to change some of her behaviors and activities in her teaching style. The following changes show that much, though not all, of the training was, as Pennington (1996) describes, valued and interpretable by the novice instructor (p. 340).

### Change 1: Language Use in the Classroom

One of the most vivid changes in the novice instructor's teaching style was a conscious change in the way she used English and Arabic as languages of instruction. Over the course of six weeks, she gradually shifted from providing grammatical explanations, introducing vocabulary, and correcting errors in English to making greater use of Arabic for these tasks. Both the implicit and explicit training provided examples that demonstrate the importance of using Arabic in classroom activities. In these activities, the novice instructor clearly improved throughout the course of my research, and her teaching behavior gradually seemed to be more closely aligned with the pedagogical practices exhibited in the video footage that she watched independently and in the one-on-one training sessions.

The observation notes and journal entries recorded how the novice instructor gradually switched from using excessive amounts of English to using Arabic in her classroom. It must be noted, however, that this change was somewhat erratic, with a few occasional slips back to old habits of using too much English. The change in teaching behavior was further supported by the instructor's own words. In the pre-training interview, the instructor said that no Arabic should be used during the beginning of the semester, whereas in the post-training interview, the novice instructor changed her statement to 90% English and 10% Arabic in the beginning of the semester. In accordance to what was viewed and discussed in the training, such a statement is a welcome change. While a slight shift is noted here, there still appears to be room for change as she becomes more experienced in teaching Arabic.



### Change 2: Error Correction Practice

The second major change that was noted was the way in which the instructor handled error correction. There was a noticeable decrease in the frequency with which the novice instructor immediately corrected student errors. In my observations, I noted that over the course of the training, the novice instructor stopped immediately correcting student errors; instead, she paused and used visual clues to help the student find the answer. Methods concerning good use of error correction technique were discussed in the explicit training. Such techniques were also present in the implicit training resulting from viewing Muhammad Eissa's teaching. Responses to questions during the pre- and post-training interviews again help identify a shift in attitude and behavior on the part of the novice instructor regarding how to address student errors. In the pre-interview, the novice instructor explained that it is her job to correct the students, whereas in the post-interview she commented that she is not quick to correct them but is interested in helping them figure out the answer.

### Change 3: Learner Responsibility

A third change noted during the training was in the novice instructor's perception of learner responsibility in the language classroom. During the pre-interview, she answered multiple questions with responses that depicted a teacher-centered and -controlled classroom. For example, question 11 in the survey and post-interview asks what students should do during class time, to which the novice instructor initially answered, "students should be attentive to what the instructor is saying." This response illustrates the instructor's attitude toward the level of control the teacher should have. In the post-interview, however, she said, "if there is one student that does not know or

understand a certain concept, the class as a whole should try to help him or her out.” This type of behavior is very similar to what was seen in Muhammad Eissa’s classroom as part of the implicit training. Muhammad Eissa often expected fellow students to answer each other’s questions. Again, through the teacher’s own words, we see a shift in attitude toward allowing students to be more involved in helping each other learn.

During the third week of training and observations, the novice instructor asked students more than once to wait until after class to discuss questions that were not related to the topic at hand. Moreover, the novice instructor referred her students to materials they already had been given that would help them answer their own questions. The explicit training addressed these same strategies. Such behavior from the novice instructor shows that the novice instructor became more conscious of the need for her students to take responsibility for their learning and stay on task.

Journal entries from the instructor also provide consistent data concerning this change in perception of learner responsibility. For example, the response to question 4, regarding the viewing of the Muhammad Eissa’s DVDs, in the journal-writing assignments shows that the novice instructor was learning that she needed to be more patient and allow the students to speak. These comments show that the novice instructor was reflecting upon her classroom activities and learning from master teachers of Arabic.

#### Change 4: Teaching Methods

A fourth change that was observed involved the use of different types of teaching approaches in the classroom. This change was not as dramatic as some of the other changes that occurred. While the novice instructor did not experiment much with new approaches, she did, at some level, understand the importance of using different methods

and techniques in her classroom. For example, the novice instructor's journal entry of November 19<sup>th</sup> stated, "the more varied the techniques of teaching, the more perspectives students will get on learning a certain concept." In addition to this, the novice instructor wrote in her last journal entry of December 10<sup>th</sup> that she felt she needed to try different approaches. Thus, it is apparent that the novice instructor was at least cognitively considering the importance of varying her teaching techniques, even though the in-class observations do not strongly support her claim.

Towards the end of my research, we discussed and viewed footage of Muhammad Eissa and Mahmoud Al-Batal concerning the importance of trying different methods and approaches in the language classroom. After viewing footage that specifically addressed in-class listening activities, during our final explicit training session together, the novice instructor copied the master teachers in her own class and had an encouraging experience. Once again a slight shift is noted here, though there is still room for change as she becomes more experienced in teaching Arabic.

#### Change 5: Grammar and Vocabulary Presentation

A fifth area of change involved the instructor's presentation of grammar and vocabulary in the class. The novice instructor's views on the presentation of grammar and vocabulary in the language classroom changed over the course of our training. During the pre-interview, when asked how and when students learn grammar and vocabulary, the novice instructor responded that the students learn grammar in the classroom during conjugation activities and the vocabulary when she "asks or gives them sentences." During the post-interview, however, the novice instructor's answer was the opposite: learn at home and come to class prepared to practice what you studied on your own. This

comment is very similar to the explicit instruction from Mahmoud Al-Batal concerning the topic. For example, during the training seminar at Middlebury College, Mahmoud Al-Batal often said that he does not present grammar and vocabulary to the students. Mahmoud Al-Batal also said that the students have resources at home that can help them learn these things before coming to class. Therefore, as far as grammar learning is concerned, the novice instructor did change her teaching style in that she stopped answering many grammatical questions in class; rather, she referred her students to their materials. This behavior shows that the novice instructor desired to stay on task more often, as well as avoid irrelevant questions. As for vocabulary learning and presentation, however, the novice instructor did not display any observable change in her teaching style. Although the novice instructor did mention that vocabulary should be learned outside of class, she often used class time to go over pronunciation of new vocabulary with her students.

### No Change

It is important to note that even with all of the training on effective pedagogical techniques and practices, there were some areas where the instructor made no change in her teaching style. For example, the novice instructor continuously used sentence diagramming as a classroom activity. I tried to help the novice instructor become aware that there are many other activities that could be employed in the classroom. With this in mind, I decided to show the novice instructor footage from Mahmoud Al-Batal, in which he discussed listening activities—something very different from a grammar-translation activity such as sentence diagramming. After viewing this explicit footage concerning listening activities in the classroom, I asked the novice instructor to do a similar activity

in her class. This activity went fairly well in her class and seemed to interest the students in speaking and listening to live Arabic. Unfortunately however, this topic came at the end of our training, and I was therefore unable to track any further change in classroom activities.

In addition to the overuse of sentence diagramming, the novice instructor also used considerable amounts of class time to present vocabulary to the students. The explicit training specifically addressed these issues as activities that should not take up a significant amount of class time. The implicit training also showed that Muhammad Eissa did not do sentence diagramming, nor did he use large amounts of class time to present vocabulary to the students.

I do not know why the novice instructor did not show significant change in behavior for these issues. These topics were, perhaps, neither valued nor interpretable in the novice instructor's world of thought (Pennington, 1996, p. 340). Further training, observation, and inquiry might reveal why the novice instructor was resistant to the influence of the training in these areas. This issue is mentioned in the section concerning the limitations of my research.

### **Training Model Implications and Recommendations**

The purpose of this research study was to examine one possible solution to the lack of widespread high-quality training for novice instructors of Arabic. This research was designed to analyze the implementation of an exportable model of teacher training based on a comprehensive curriculum for the first two semesters of Arabic. The model includes a set of full-length DVDs of Dr. Muhammad Eissa, a master teacher of Arabic, teaching and interacting with his own real class of Arabic learners. The model also

includes explicit training footage on DVDs from a two-week training seminar that took place at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, in the summer of 2003. This seminar was specifically designed for novice teachers of Arabic and addressed pedagogy and methodology in the language classroom. The model, eventually, will also include a handbook for instructors containing instructions for DVD usage, a more comprehensive training program for novice instructors to follow throughout the semester, as well as lesson plans, homework schedules, and Egyptian Arabic materials.

Such a model has the potential to provide a type of electronic apprenticeship for novice instructors of Arabic, regardless of their geographical location. The results of this study showed that change in the novice instructor's teaching style did occur over a six-week period. The change that occurred was also cumulative. With each training session, the instructor became more aware of her teaching style and how it contrasted with that of the master teachers of Arabic. The extent to which these shifts in teaching philosophy and pedagogy are long-term was not the focus of this study. It should be noted that this research seems to indicate that for an electronic apprenticeship-training program to be successful, explicit training does need to be part of the overall program. One apparent need is to have a language program coordinator at each location where the program would be operated who would hold the novice instructor trainees accountable for their training and who would report successes and failures to a master trainer. Another option is to have a master Arabic teacher supervise a trainee from a distance, ideally someone like Mahmoud Al-Batal or Muhammad Eissa. These details are currently under review.

With this in mind, an additional requirement for successful training programs would be frequent journal assignments, interviews, and other means for purposes of

accountability. Such materials provide a training experience in which novice instructors of Arabic would likely be able to reflect upon their own teaching, which would likely lead them toward experimentation and change. Such materials alone, however, are not enough to provide the best possible training. I also suggest that footage of other novice instructors using the Muhammad Eissa DVDs should be included in the exportable model. Simply talking about using the Muhammad Eissa DVDs in class is not explicit enough. Thus, including footage of other novice instructors using the DVDs would provide practical visual demonstrations of how the trainees could use the Muhammad Eissa DVDs in their own classroom.

In addition to specific assignments and research instruments, the novice instructors must have access to observation of master teachers of Arabic, whether live or via technology. "Observation of experienced teachers has always played an important role in teacher education" (Richards, 1998, p. 141). Novice instructors must have plentiful opportunity to observe master teachers in live classes. Moreover, the novice instructors must critically reflect upon such observations and attempt to replicate the lessons learned in their own classes. Such replication should be videotaped and sent to the training coordinator for review, evaluation, and feedback. Mere passive exposure to master teachers of Arabic is not enough. Novice instructors must also be given opportunities to actively teach during training. However, neither extensive training nor practice will necessarily change or enhance teaching style. A judicious balance is the key. For example, Richards (1998) writes,

However, additional teaching experience will not in and of itself solve the problem. . . . What is needed is more teaching practice combined with strong

guidance and reflection on the relationship of the elements of the teacher education course to the teacher's classroom experience. By explicitly and consciously relating the classroom experience to the theories and approaches learned in the teacher education course, the teacher will not simply reproduce the existing context but rather will bring new ideas to bear on that context. (p. 189)

Guidance and reflection are critical components of an effective training program for novice instructors. "The issue of how . . . teachers make their understandings of classroom practice is a critical one if the aim of teacher education programs is not simply to transmit explanations of teaching but to support teachers-in-training in developing their own understandings" (Freeman, 1996, p. 236). Through implicit and explicit training, combined with replication and reflective exercises, teacher-training programs will allow novice instructors to receive guidance as they reflect upon and change their own teaching style.

### **Summary of Change**

The observations, overall, show that training and change are progressive, with some digression to be expected. The observations also show that the novice instructor changed over time. This change can be attributed, at least partially, to the novice instructor's exposure to the implicit and explicit training.

### **Limitations**

One of the principal limitations on my research was a lack of time. I had planned to start the observations and training weeks earlier, but I encountered more delays than expected working with the IRBs at the beginning of my research. Had I had more time, I could have included more explicit training topics, more interviews and surveys, and more



observation periods. Including more of these activities might have allowed me to understand why the novice instructor did not change in all areas discussed in the training. More time and proper approval would have also allowed me to conduct a follow-up SGID activity. Such an activity would have provided more data from the students that may have allowed me to determine whether their opinions had changed over time. As explained in chapter three, departmental restrictions did not allow for this.

Another limitation was the fact that the novice instructor did not understand the importance of consistent and frequent journal writing. Even though the instructor did not make journal entries on a regular basis as requested, the insights gained from those journal entries she did send were very helpful in better understanding the instructor's attitudes and feelings regarding the training she was receiving. If this study is replicated, the participating novice instructors need to have impressed on them the importance of reflecting upon their classroom performance and individual teaching style as they take part in the training. The best arrangement would be to have participation in all aspects of the training, including watching the DVDs and journal writing, a mandatory component of employment.

A third limitation in the data collection was the tracking of the novice instructor's use of the Muhammad Eissa DVDs. It would have been helpful for me to have asked her which segments she had viewed by herself and what she had learned from watching these clips each week, if not even more frequently. Although the novice instructor agreed to use and view these DVDs, and in fact reported to me that she viewed them weekly, there is uncertainty about how much she actually used the DVDs prior to her teaching. The novice instructor could have used the DVD player and television sets in her classroom to

assist in her teaching and training. As far as I know, however, the novice instructor used the DVDs of Muhammad Eissa in class only one time. It is interesting to note that in the post-interview, the novice instructor wrote that technology should play an extensive role in the language classroom. Unfortunately, she by no means took advantage of using the DVDs in class with her students as a means of classroom learning. One possible reason for this is that the novice instructor was unsure about using the technical equipment and the time it might take to set up. In spite of these issues, the novice instructor was excited to learn how to teach better.

Yet another limitation to my research was that I did not record the novice instructor's comments as carefully as I should have. For example, as I wrote this thesis I was not able to include a few of the comments from the novice instructor because I was not sure if my notes contained her own words or just my recollection of what she said. Fortunately, this problem was resolved in subsequent note taking, after I decided to use a small voice recorder.

Finally, due to the volume of data collected in this study, this research involved tracking the teaching practices of one novice instructor of Arabic. In order to gain more generalizable data, additional instructors would need to be included in a training program that occurred over the course of several weeks using the same intervention techniques as used in this study.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

As noted already, future research should include as many research subjects as possible. More research subjects would add to the reliability of the results and provide a clearer view of how this particular type of training model influences teachers with

different backgrounds and different levels of teaching experience. A second suggestion involves conducting the training over a long period of time, covering additional training topics to see if additional changes occur.

A third suggestion for future research is that the training should be more explicit in nature. When I conducted the one-on-one explicit training sessions with the novice instructor, I wanted her to figure out how she could apply the principles we covered in her own classroom. Unfortunately, even though she did, generally, learn proper pedagogical principles from the training, she did not always use them as I had hoped. For example, the novice instructor commented that she should try using different techniques and approaches in her teaching, but when I observed her teaching, she rarely put into practice the approaches she advocated in our discussions. At some points I wanted to directly say (in the nicest way possible), “Stop doing the dialogues and the sentence diagramming so often!”

Future research could also examine the value of, and differences between, the implicit and explicit training more closely. The contemporary literature in the field of teacher training suggests that training programs need both types of training; however, a study would need to be designed that would more accurately record which type or what mixture of the two had more of an influence on the instructor.

A fifth topic for future research is that of understanding what principles underlie the way a master teacher teaches. It would be of great worth to work with a highly experienced teacher like Muhammad Eissa and ask him why he taught the way he did. This could be accomplished by asking him to provide some detailed commentary on the videotaped teaching segments currently recorded on the DVDs. He could describe his

teaching style and the philosophy that shapes the techniques and activities he uses in his classes. It would be especially useful for trainees to hear a master teacher critique himself, demonstrating that no teaching is perfect and that a master teacher is constantly striving to do better.

Finally, future research should include some sort of personality assessment of the novice instructors who pass through this type of training. Such assessments may provide data regarding personality types that are most likely to embrace and implement the pedagogical principles presented in the training.

### **Conclusion**

I hope my research will contribute toward the development of an effective training model for teacher trainers and language program coordinators at institutions of higher education. My research suggests that deliberate intervention via electronic apprenticeship, combined with in-class replication, as well as critical reflection, can positively alter the teaching style of a novice instructor of Arabic. Where there is currently a lack of implicit and explicit training materials being used in training Arabic instructors, an approach such as the one described in this study can provide novice instructors of Arabic with an opportunity to be exposed to implicit and explicit training from master teachers of the language. This study is just the first of many studies that should be done to investigate the impact that this type of training can have on novice instructors of Arabic as well as teachers of other languages.

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## Appendix A

### Pre- and Post-Training Results and Survey

1. Describe your role as a teacher in the Arabic language classroom.
2. What should be accomplished in the 50 minutes of class time?
3. How much control should students have over what happens during class time?
4. How and when do students learn grammar?
5. How and when do students learn vocabulary?
6. What is the role of textbooks in learning Arabic?
7. How do you handle questions that are not related to what is happening in class?
8. What role should technology play in the language classroom?
9. Describe your teaching style and philosophy.
10. What type of teaching techniques do you use in class?
11. What should students do during class time?
12. What should teachers do during class time?
13. How much Ammiyya vs. Fusha should be used in the classroom?
14. What are you most comfortable with in your teaching?
15. How do you assess student knowledge?
16. How do you determine that learning is taking place?
17. How do foreigners learn Arabic?
18. How do you teach Arabic?
19. What do you do when a student makes a mistake?
20. How much English vs. Arabic should be used in the classroom?
21. What role does the textbook play in the classroom?
22. Describe any general concerns you have about your teaching.

#### *Abridged Pre- and Post-Training Interview Responses*

No.	Pre-Training Interview	Post-Training Interview
1.	Teacher was thinking about the nice experience of being an exotic cultural novelty.	Teacher is now a guide to assist students as they learn Arabic.
2.	Questions should be asked and answered.	It seems as if the novice instructor is suggesting more of a learner-centered role, rather than teacher domination.
3.	About 50%.	NS
4.	In-class conjugations (with hints of needing to do it at home).	Come to class prepared.
5.	When I ask or give sentences.	At home with their resources.
6.	Explain, practice, emphasis.	NS
7.	She will address it if it helps learning, even if it is football or politics. Cultural questions can be a part of the	If the question deals with the better understanding of the people and their culture, I will give the student a quick

	lesson.	answer and invite him or her to stay with me after class for further discussions.
8.	10–20%, but not completely necessary.	Technology should play a rather extensive role in a language classroom; however, it should not take over completely.
9.	In a very personal manner.	More specific activities are listed . . . almost as if she is more aware of learning skills.
S	My teaching style is definitely that of ask and answer style. My philosophy is that I should not spoon feed my students with all the answers, otherwise they will not ask any questions, and therefore that eliminates any form of necessity that could be a progressor to them learning a language.	
10.	Be strict but friendly. Help and strengthen students	NS
11.		if there is one student that does not know or understand a certain concept, the class as a whole should try to help him or her out
S	Students should be attentive to what the instructor is saying, work hard, be on time with their assignments. And keep an open ear for new knowledge.	
12.	Encourage students to talk with one another and in class.	NS
S	Teachers should find ways in which they can get certain information across to the students. Teachers should find ways in which students are constantly mentally involved in what they are learning, and that they are actively participating in the process of learning a language. Their responsibility is to guide the student as far as they can to the goal of learning Arabic.	
13.	50/50, depending on what student is going to do with it, but much of the culture comes from Ammiyya.	Since Fusha is the basis of all Arabic dialects, it is important to learn it. However, in the beginning one should teach either (one or the other). It is confusing for students to be learning two “different” languages at the same time. But if one must include both of them

		together, I believe you should teach students the foundational Arabic first, which is the Fusha, so that students understand the spine of the language, and then go over to Ammiyya. So 50/50.
14.	Everything.	Teaching grammar.
15.	Homework, dialogues, testing.	NS
16.	“A-ha” moments.	“A-ha” moments, plus quantity of questions asked and participation.
17.	They learn it with an English mind-set but must change that to an Arabic mind-set and not simply apply Eng rules to Arabic. They must know Vocab, and then grammar will come.	Grammar and pronunciation are the most important.
18.	As if I were teaching an Arab, but softer.	As an Arab. I teach it the way I understand it and feel. The way I understand is conveyed through grammar, since grammar is the cerebral part of the language. Then I teach the feeling/emotion behind sayings, words, as an Arab would feel them. So that the student knows what he or she is saying and what it actually means.
19.	I correct them. I explain why it is wrong and how it should be done.	I definitely am not in a hurry to correct him or her, but I do make a significant gesture that something is either missing or is not quite right, and encourage him or her to find the right answer.
20.	It is ludicrous to use Arabic in the beginning—in 101. They don’t understand Arabic yet—you should guide them in speaking it in class. Use English the whole time in the beginning—you have to be their living dictionary.	In the beginning probably 90% English and 10% Arabic, then as we move on, the amount of English used in class should decrease. It should decrease to the extent that students will understand most things, but not everything, because that fuels them to ask, and in asking you receive, and in receiving you learn.
21.	I already took [answered] that one.	The textbook in the classroom is the apprentice of the teacher. If the teacher wants to emphasize a certain concept or feels that the concept is explained in a way that is beneficial to the students, the teacher should be able to fall back on the book. It is the teacher’s accompaniment in the class.
22.	Not teaching clearly.	Hmmmm . . . I need to be tougher, more organized, and more patient. Because just

		as students want to learn the language fast, I want to see them learn it fast, to see progress. However, I must be careful and more patient with my students, just as I would want a teacher to be understanding with me.
S	I am quite satisfied with the way I teach; rather, I always look for ways that I can improve and become more efficient for the needs of any prospect students. OH!! I need to prepare lesson plans.	

Notes: Questions that showed no significant changes are labeled NS. Surveys are labeled S in the first column under the corresponding question number.

## **Appendix B**

### **Preliminary Interview Questions for Novice Instructor**

#### **Pre-Training**

1. Describe your role as the teacher in the Arabic language classroom.
2. What should be accomplished each day during your 50-minute class?
3. How much control should students have over what happens during class time?
4. How and when do students learn grammar?
5. How and when do students learn vocabulary?
6. What is the role of textbooks in learning Arabic?
7. How are students introduced to the next lesson in the book and/or packet?
8. Do you encourage students to ask questions during class?
9. How do you handle questions that are not related to what is happening in class?
10. Why do we meet as a class for 50 minutes a day?
11. What role should technology play in the language classroom?
12. Describe your teaching style and philosophy.
13. What type of teaching techniques do you use in class?
14. What should students do during class time?
15. What should teachers do during class time?
16. How much Ammiyya vs. Fusha should be used in the classroom?
17. What are you most comfortable with in your teaching?
18. How do you characterize your teaching of Arabic?
19. How do you assess student knowledge?
20. How do you determine that learning is taking place?
21. How do foreigners learn Arabic?
22. How do you teach Arabic?
23. What do you do when a student makes a mistake?
24. How much English vs. Arabic should be used in the classroom?
25. What kind of training did you get before starting to teach this class?
26. Have you ever taken a methodology class?
27. What role does the textbook play in the classroom?
28. How do you prepare lesson plans? What do you include in them?
29. Describe any general concerns you have about your teaching.
30. Tell me about how you got this job.
31. Who creates the syllabi for your class, etc.? If it is you, how do you do it?

## **Appendix C**

### **Survey Questions for Novice Instructor**

1. Describe your personal teaching style and philosophy.
2. What should students do during class time? What are their responsibilities?
3. What should teachers do during class time? What are their responsibilities?
4. Describe any general concerns you have about your teaching.
5. How do you prepare lesson plans? What do you include in them?
6. How do you see your role as the teacher in this Arabic class?

## Appendix D

### Post-Training Interview Questions for Novice Instructor

1. Describe your role as the teacher in the Arabic language classroom.
2. What should be accomplished each day during your 50-minute class?
3. How much control should students have over what happens during class time?
4. How and when do students learn grammar?
5. How and when do students learn vocabulary?
6. What is the role of textbooks in learning Arabic?
7. How do you handle questions that are not related to what is happening in class?
8. What role should technology play in the language classroom?
9. Describe your teaching style and philosophy.
10. What type of teaching techniques do you use in class?
11. What should students do during class time?
12. What should teachers do during class time?
13. How much Ammiyya vs. Fusha should be used in the classroom?
14. What are you most comfortable with in your teaching?
15. How do you assess student knowledge?
16. How do you determine that learning is taking place?
17. How do foreigners learn Arabic?
18. How do you teach Arabic?
19. What do you do when a student makes a mistake?
20. How much English vs. Arabic should be used in the classroom?
21. What role does the textbook play in the classroom?
22. Describe any general concerns you have about your teaching.



## Appendix E

### Possible Topics for Training With Novice Instructor

1. Error and mistake correction: Novice instructor said she needs to speak Arabic more in class.
2. Role of homework, grammar, and vocabulary.
3. Classroom movement and body language + Language use in the classroom.  
Muhammad Eissa tape 33 beginning speaks all in Arabic.  
Tape 42, 43, 39, 25, 31 (this is Mahmoud Al-Batal teaching, all in Arabic), 33?, 55.
4. Historical teaching methods.
5. Listening and reading activities in class.
6. Using the text in the classroom.
7. Reading-assignments tape 51 Kristen Brustad.
8. Al-Kitaab video passage in class as listening (next week).
9. Lesson plans
10. Native learner ideology about foreigners learning Arabic.
11. In-class activities.
12. Listening—ME “ismau” (listen) wow, Ahmed’s class, tape 53.
13. Group work tape 32.
14. Unprepared students and how to deal with them, tape 26, min 50.

## Appendix F

### Training Protocol With DVDs

**Thursday's training:** After novice instructor has viewed the DVD

1. What did you learn from viewing the DVD last night?
2. How did Muhammad/Mahmoud, etc., handle situation x? (x = training topic)
3. What are your feelings concerning x?
4. How could x help you teach more effectively?
5. How could x help your students learn more effectively?
6. Will you try x tomorrow?
7. How will you do x?

## Appendix G

### DVD Follow-up Protocol

#### Follow-up

1. What were the goals and objectives of the lesson?
2. Where you able to accomplish your goals?
3. How did you use x in class today?
4. How did it go?
5. Describe the effect it had on your teaching today.
6. Describe the effect it had on your students today.
7. Would you teach the lesson differently if you taught it again? If yes, how so?
8. Do you plan on doing x in the future? Why?

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Based upon Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*.

## Appendix H

### Student Survey Questions and Responses

Error!

*SGID results*

Question	Response
1. What is helping you learn in this class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetition</li> <li>• Learning the alphabet quickly</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Translating sentences on the board</li> <li>• Doing assignments</li> <li>• Quizzes</li> <li>• Constructing sentences as a class</li> <li>• Student dialogues in class</li> <li>• Translating dialogues</li> <li>• Tutor sessions with instructor</li> </ul>
2. What is not helping you learn in this class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of help with vocabulary</li> <li>• Lack of time</li> <li>• Speed of course</li> <li>• Lack of time to speak</li> <li>• Fast over grammar</li> <li>• <i>Al-Kitaab</i></li> <li>• Lack of structure—firm deadlines, assignments not handed in—a more structured/focused atmosphere.</li> </ul>
3. What suggestions for change do you have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More evenly spaced tests that cover smaller chunks of material</li> <li>• Firm deadlines</li> <li>• More focused atmosphere</li> <li>• More assignments</li> <li>• More quizzes</li> <li>• Some kind of reckoning</li> <li>• Have more Arabic classes</li> <li>• Brighter colors in text</li> </ul>

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Based upon Diamond, N. (1998). S.G.I.D. (small group instructional diagnosis): Tapping student perceptions of teaching. In E. C. Wadsworth, L. Hilson, & M. A. Shea (Eds.), *P.O.D.: A handbook for new practitioners* (pp. 89–93). Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

## Appendix I

### Journal Assignment Questions

1. What did I learn about myself as a language teacher this week?
2. What did I notice about the teaching that took place in my class this week?
3. What did I notice about the learning that took place in my class this week?
4. How did viewing the Muhammad DVDs influence my teaching this week (if at all)?
5. What am I doing well as an instructor?
6. What challenges am I experiencing as a teacher?
7. How did my conversations with Jeremy influence my teaching this week (if at all)?

#### *Abridged Responses*

No.	October 30	November 19	December 10
1.	I learned that I am very passionate about my subject and that I care tremendously on how my students fare in the class.	That you can never learn enough grammar to be a better language teacher.	
2.	I notice that the more advanced the class gets, the more time and organization I have to put into my lessons in order to get what I want to teach the students across.	That the more varied the techniques of teaching, the more perspectives students will get on learning a certain concept.	
3.	I noticed that my students learn and are learning a lot of new things; however, that they are slightly overwhelmed.	Concepts are muddled in my students' minds, but slowly they seem to be grasping new concepts and are able to recognize certain grammatical patterns.	It's starting to decrescendo because we are coming towards an end. However, I find some of my students are still attentive and that they are trying to learn everything to the last drop.
4.	I have not watched Muhammad at all this week. I need to watch him more often because he helps a lot.	I have to let students talk more, and I definitely have to be more repetitive. More patient . . .	Muhammad really is a great teacher and constantly reminds me that I need to be more patient and cheerful. He

			is also keen on making the students think, and I like that.
5.	I feel that I do well in explaining the Arabic language rather than teaching it. Students have to feel a language rather than learn it. So I feel that explaining or transferring the Arabic emotion to my students is my strength.		
6.	A challenge that I could be experiencing is an internal challenge of attaining patience with some of my students, and to gain balance when it comes to “rebuking” them, that I am firm with—yet direct in a way that is not too “nice” so that an unappreciated action does not occur repeatedly. Should I teach differently? I don’t feel that I should teach differently; rather, I should enhance my teaching.		
7.	It made me pay attention more closely into the psychology of teaching. I learned that everything I say or do results in a wave that will affect my students. I must be clear, sincere, and not humiliate my students, and I am responsible for activating them. I believe that students have a 50% responsibility to learn Arabic, but at the end, the students will only learn however much I want	It makes me sink into more methodological details. Often we take concepts such as body language and speech for granted. It’s good to learn that there is a way I can move and speak that will definitely affect the way I teach and the way my students learn. I hope to implement all things . . . future teaching.	DVDs . . . make [me] realize how I should improve my teaching skills. This week it has influenced me in the sense that I need to really try out different approaches. . . . I believe that the conversations help improve my teaching skills in the sense that just as I create pathways for my students to be more attentive, because I teach them what to look for. These

	them to learn.		conversations have helped me become a better teacher because they steer in the direction that I need to teach, and I am more aware of how to do certain things, and [I] expect results.
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## Appendix J

### Observations and General Overview

	Date	General Trends	Possible Training Influences
1.	10/24/03	Novice Instructor (NI) is having students perform dialogues in front of the class. NI is correcting almost every mistake immediately and doing a great deal of explaining in English. NI explains and translates a drill in the <i>Al-Kitaab</i> book.	Muhammad Eissa sometimes invites students to stand and perform similar activities.
2.	10/27/03	Students discussing topics not related to Arabic; NI asks them to do that after class. Students take turns reading each other's personal essays from their homework while everyone else tries to guess the author. NI corrects mistakes immediately, using English mostly.	
<b>10/30/03 Explicit Training: Error Correction</b>			
<b>10/30/03 Journal Assignment 1</b>			
3.	10/31/03	Students take turns standing to read written dialogues. The students are making lots of mistakes. When a student makes a mistake, NI repeats it and waits. After a few tries she tells the student. NI explains many grammatical details in English. NI tells students to listen to when she corrects other students—it will help them. NI mentions that beginning November 1 she will speak more Arabic with them and expect the same from them. Students often ask NI how to say various random words. Today NI says not to try and use unknown words in the dialogues they write. NI says something in Arabic using a	NI is using some of the techniques from the explicit training yesterday. Later in the lesson, however, the next set of students are reading their dialogues and making many mistakes. NI looks as if she wants to use some error correction techniques, but I don't think she wants to take the time. Moreover, the explicit training discussed how the instructor should use other students to help their peers correct themselves, which NI did not do. Towards the end of the class period, she uses a bit more Arabic in



		construct unknown to the students. NI begins to explain it and then says "Never mind, OK. It's not important."	explanations and corrections.
4.	11/06/03	NI speaks much more Arabic with students at the very beginning of class. NI quizzes vocabulary and has students help each other figure the meaning of this vocabulary out. Students are not doing well with this; NI expresses frustration. NI used Arabic for about 70% of class today. NI answers a question by referring students to a chart they have. NI is trying to quiz on some grammar about personal pronouns.	Students experienced difficulty with the amount of Arabic spoken in class. NI is obviously trying to use more Arabic for speaking and error correction. NI writes in journal number 1 that she must be clear and not humiliate students. NI is trying to be as clear as possible, but some of the students have not mastered the vocabulary as they should have.
<b>11/06/03 Explicit Training: Grammar and Vocabulary in Class</b>			
5.	11/10/03	A student is reading a dialogue. At first NI tries to have the student do self-correction but quickly slips into giving answers. NI begins to ask grammatical questions about the structure of Arabic. A student asks about active participles, to which NI says that they talked about that on Friday, and they can talk about it later. After further confusion, NI explains active participles and verbs in present tense. Another student asks another question to which NI says that is an exception, and they can talk about it later. Class time is almost up, and most students have been sitting and listening. Towards end of class NI is helping a student and using Arabic to communicate and help the student figure out the answer.	NI seems to know that using Arabic to teach and help students learn is better, but time consuming; thus, switching to English is easier and faster. NI does not answer grammar questions two times in class, saying that they can do it later. A few days earlier we had explicit training in which we viewed Muhammad and Mahmoud doing this. Mahmoud explicitly said that he tells students to come to his office to ask grammar questions.
6.	11/14/03	A student is reading a dialogue. NI tries minimally to have the student correct himself but does a good deal of correcting herself. Other students try to read their papers written in Arabic and make many mistakes. After some time NI takes the papers and says she will correct them herself.	NI uses minimal Arabic in helping the students with speaking and error correction. NI compliments and encourages students.

		NI writes English sentences on the board (grammar translation). Students are supposed to translate them, and NI writes what they say on the board. After finishing, NI goes back over to see how they did. This discussion is in English. Towards the end of class NI speaks more Arabic.	
<b>11/14/03 Explicit Training: Classroom Language, Set up, Movement</b>			
7.	11/17/03	Two students are reading their dialogues and making many mistakes. NI stops them and says this will take too long. NI instructs them to rewrite them and do it again on Friday. Next, a bit more grammar explanation and vocabulary presentation. A student asks a grammar question. NI asks the other students for the answer. Now, more sentence diagramming on the board. Some grammar explanations.	NI is making students come up with answers more, instead of simply telling them. NI is somewhat frustrated but does show patience towards students and their learning.
<b>11/19/03 Explicit Training: Historical Teaching Methods</b>			
8.	11/19/03	NI starts class with sentence diagramming. NI is speaking in more Arabic today for communication and error correction. Most of class is sentence diagramming, but at least more Arabic is used.	Arabic use is getting better. In today's explicit training, Mahmoud discussed grammar translation among other historical teaching methods. Muhammad never does sentence diagramming.
<b>11/19/03 Journal Assignment 2</b>			
9.	12/04/03	NI spends about 15 minutes reviewing vocabulary from lesson 10. Students are repeating along. NI reads a drill to them so they "can hear it once." Next class takes turn reading another drill one at a time in a circle.	NI wrote in journal number 2 that she desires to be more patient like Muhammad. NI is much more patient in waiting for student responses today.
<b>12/05/03 Explicit Training: Listening Activities</b>			
10.	12/05/03	NI tells a story from her childhood in Arabic and asks questions about it in	Error-correction improvement. Mahmoud doesn't give new

		English and Arabic. Now she allows her students to try. When the first student needs help, NI asks the students questions in English. NI encourages another student to use vocabulary with which they are familiar.	vocabulary unless it is critical to the situation.
<b>12/10/03 Journal Assignment 3</b>			