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IDENTITY AND SELF IN E-LANGUAGE TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

Language teachers are often called upon to adjust or restructure their pedagogical and professional practices in response to changes in curricula, materials, classes and learners, and in response to shifts in broader understandings of language learning and teaching. In the past decade for example, significant developments in language teaching have occurred as new technologies are used to provide novel ways of configuring and accessing language learning opportunities. In this field an enduring focus for both research and practice has been the development of virtual learning environments and descriptions of their potential for language teaching; only more recently has attention been given to teachers and learners, and the ways they respond to and work within the new learning spaces. And studies of teachers new to technology-mediated language teaching focus primarily on the professional challenges and issues they face, together with changes in their roles and skills. Questions about the internal world of the teacher, about teacher identity and teacher self associated with a re-envisioning of what it means to be a language teacher, have remained largely unasked. The aim of this chapter is to address that gap, drawing on a longitudinal qualitative study of experienced language teachers new to e-language teaching participating in a collaborative teacher learning initiative. Here we examine the subjective and intersubjective experiences of teachers over a period of nine months, noting how they negotiate their identities as part of those experiences; we also explore how the individual, dynamic nature of the self-system (Dörnyei, 2005) shapes and is shaped through the actions teachers take both individually and collectively, impacting dramatically on the course and nature of teacher learning. We argue that the teacher self is an important catalyst for teacher learning impacting on the nature and degree of involvement in teacher learning opportunities, with teachers evidently motivated by ideal and/or ought-to self orientations. To begin with we critically examine prevailing understandings of teacher learning followed by our perspectives on teacher identity and teacher self which together provide the rationale for this chapter.

TEACHER LEARNING

Language teachers – who they are, what they do - have been looked at through their learning processes, their cognition and practices, and more recently through narratives of their experiences and daily lives (see for example, Borg, 2006; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Senior, 2006). Interest in ‘the language teacher’s development’ (Mann, 2005) has generally been expressed in terms of teacher education frameworks and professional development models, accompanied by critiques and acknowledgement of their limitations. Here we examine paradigms which have teacher learning at their core, touching on three interrelated areas central to this study – experienced teacher learning, workplace learning and teacher learning about new technologies.

Teacher learning in relation to technology presents a number of unique challenges, including not only major shifts in technical and pedagogical knowledge and skill areas across a combination of roles (Hubbard & Levy, 2006), but also the ability to orient students to new ways of accessing target language learning opportunities. Further complexities stem from the fact that learning in this domain is not a matter of coming to know what is already known or being oriented to existing practices: there is no codified body of knowledge to access, and technological and pedagogical goal posts continue to shift. And there is uncertainty about how to optimize the development of teacher expertise. Workshops for language teacher development in new technologies, for example, have been critiqued as disaggregated and decontextualised, divorced from contexts of use, with the result that there is often little sustained transfer to the situated practices of teachers (see for example Reynard, 2003). Attempts to address these limitations in learning to use new technologies include the use of experiential learning opportunities (Hampel & Hauck, 2004), collaborative action research (Murray & McPherson, 2006) and the use of reflective journaling combined with observation by a ‘critical friend’ (Lewis, 2006). The advantages of these approaches is that they represent a move away from casting teachers ‘as “technicians” whose job it is to implement defined ‘algorithms’ for teaching’ (Butler *et al.* 2004: 436), opening the door for teachers to develop personalized approaches to using technology which cannot be predefined (Hampel & Stickler, 2005). However, arguably the most crucial challenge for teachers taking up e-language teaching comes not from changes in knowledge, roles, skills and practices per se, but from challenges to teacher identity and teacher self in each of these domains (White, 2007). Thus in this study we adopt an approach to teacher learning based on the notion of intersubjective collaborative autonomy (Ding, 2005) which frames learning as a situated process, emphasizing the social and dialogic nature of knowledge and thought.

Relatively little attention has been given in applied linguistics to either experienced teacher learning or workplace teacher learning. In the general education literature studies at the intersection of these two broad areas suggest that teacher learning is often spontaneous and non-linear, with learning through interacting with others as a common thread. For example, in a study of experienced teacher learning in higher education carried out by van Eekelen *et al.* (2005), the unplanned and unstructured character of most learning experiences of teachers was an important finding. Teacher workplace learning has also been found to be largely unconscious in character (Eraut *et al* 1998; Kwakman, 2001, 2003), often arising from and seeking to resolve a specific problem situation, dependent on individual motives and interests, and shaped by interaction with other people. Kwakman (2003), for example, concludes on the basis of two robust studies that participation in professional learning activities depends to a large extent on the personal characteristics of teachers: that is, while task and work environment do affect participation, this effect is mediated by such personal characteristics as appraisals of meaningfulness and professional attitudes. Kwakman also notes that teachers perceive the task and work environment very subjectively and attributes these differences in perception to differences between individual teachers. What is important in this research from our point of view is that engagement with workplace learning opportunities is seen as interacting with the perceptions and goals of teachers. In identifying and taking account of personal factors affecting teacher participation in professional learning activities, Kwakman's research breaks new ground, though she does not extend this to a consideration of teacher personhood, teacher self or teacher identity. This is the subject of the next section.

TEACHER IDENTITY AND TEACHER SELF

Riley (2006: 295) observes that much has been written about teachers' aims, beliefs, skills, concepts, and practices but 'surprisingly little attention has been paid to the person who is the locus of such notions'. A focus on teacher identity and teacher self addresses this omission, with the potential to extend our understanding of both 'who language teachers are' and 'what language teaching is' (Cross, 2006). Teacher identity has a far greater reach than the notion of teacher role, which is an assigned term concerned primarily with function (White, 2007), whereas identity 'voices investments and commitments' (Britzman, 1992: 29). Identity is multiple, dynamic and conflictual, closely related to sociocultural contexts, and is constructed, enacted and negotiated largely through discourse and interaction.

Research into teacher identity in the wider educational literature has tended to concentrate either on the development of personal beliefs and the effects of these beliefs on the way an individual understands him/herself (Connelly & Clandinin 1999; McCarthy, 2001) or on the institutional role expectations and how these

influence professional identity (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). The formation of teacher identity is seldom conceptualised as a learning process. An exception is the work of Ten Dam and Blom (2006); they argue that a fundamental problem of teacher education is the development of a professional identity, since it involves making sense of and giving meaning to learning, and seeing oneself as a central participant in activities and processes. In this chapter we argue that identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterised as an ongoing process of interpreting oneself as a kind of person and being recognised as such in a given context.

Turning now to the notion of the self, Martin (2007) notes that both expressive and managerial selves underlie the research practices of educational psychology in the areas of self-esteem/self-concept and self-regulation/self-efficacy: both share a common emphasis on the interior functions and processes of individuals. However, our concept of self, that is the organized representation we have of our theories, attitudes and beliefs about ourselves (McCormick & Pressley, 1997), is socially constituted since we encounter and understand ourselves in relation to others, shaped by particular sociocultural contexts and practices. In this chapter we maintain that any notion of self is enriched by taking account of the socially constituted nature of self. Drawing on personality psychology, Dörnyei (2005: 99) identifies the notion of ‘possible selves’ as a compelling construct for understanding motivation – ‘representing the individuals’ ideas of what they *might* become, what they *would like* to become, and what they are *afraid of* becoming’. Life goals develop and are influenced by the individual’s idea of what they are like, and what they may turn out to be, as well as by their hopes, dreams and aspirations about how they would like to be, and what they would want to avoid. While there have been few theoretical models or empirical studies of teacher motivation in applied linguistics, the notion of possible selves is a useful lens to bring to examining how experienced language teachers envision and re-envision themselves in the new domain of e-language teaching.

The relationship between the notions of identity and self in applied linguistics, as in related fields, is blurred and indeterminate. Conceptually the main difference seems to be that identity is understood to be external – negotiated during social intercourse, while self is understood as internal – a set of beliefs about who we are. This distinction, however, is rather contrived and over-simplistic since the self is determined by social relationships, while the social personae we create in interaction are based on our notions of self. Van Lier (2007) differentiates the constructs as follows: identities are ways of relating the self to the world, through cycles of perception, action and interpretation. He continues: ‘ideally the self is in harmony with the environment (including the physical, the social and the symbolic environment) through well-fitting and satisfactory identities that are shaped by both self-perceptions and other-perceptions ... when our lives change significantly ... new

identities (ways of linking the self to new worlds and words) need to be forged that bridge the gaps between the known and the new' (van Lier 2007: 58). In this chapter then we extend van Lier's definition of learner identity and self to the teacher who we see as 'a person with a social, embodied mind, with dreams, worries and beliefs, and in need of forging productive identities that link the personal self to the new worldly demands' (van Lier 2007: 62); in this case the new worldly demands are presented not by a new language, but by the new contexts and practices of e-language teaching.

THE STUDY: TEACHER LEARNING IN E-LANGUAGE TEACHING

This research project took place against a complex and dynamic backdrop: the key role technology plays in universities' internationalisation policies of recruiting and educating a growing body of diverse non-native students; a growing awareness of the importance of e-literacy for both language teachers and students in academic contexts; and the need for language teachers to employ technology in sustained, embedded and pedagogically appropriate ways. The aim of the nine-month E-learning Autonomy Project (ELAP), involving 23 tutors based at three universities in China, UK and New Zealand, was to follow how language teachers collectively and individually explored using technology in their teaching. Key to this project was to identify how innovations in technology impacted on their collective and individual identities and professional autonomy. During the course of the project, it became increasingly evident in interviews and online discussions that teacher engagement with learning opportunities interacted profoundly with aspects of teacher personhood, teacher self and teacher identity; examining these aspects then became an important focus of our enquiry.

The study was bounded by a broad framework allowing teachers to choose a technology (for example, PowerPoint, VLEs, podcasts, multimedia) and to configure it in ways they could explore further in their teaching. In order to facilitate collaboration and capture dialogue a Google group, the E-learning Autonomy Group, (ELAG) was set up. At various stages of the project: the authors carried out individual and group interviews with participants; some participants kept a reflective journal or blog recording their experiences, and the authors exchanged observations, reflections and ideas using a blog. Prompts used in the reflective journal and the online discussion group were open, inviting participants to report and reflect on their experiences, and did not focus directly on questions of identity and self; similarly the questions used in the interviews, included in the Appendix, were wide-ranging and non-specific in terms of identity and self.

Recordings of the interviews and discussions were listened to intensively and repeatedly to develop an understanding of the contents. They were then transcribed noting interruptions, pauses, silence and paralinguistic features such as laughter and

hesitation markers. Where the conversation moved to more tangential issues, these remained in the transcribed material, in case their significance emerged at a later date. Transcripts of the ELAG discussion, of the reflective journals and of the participants' blogs were compiled to complete the data set for the study. Initially this data set was examined and responses were identified and coded according to two broad categories of identity and self. The processes of coding the data for key themes, re-examining the key themes after further background reading, looking for patterns and making interpretations linked to theory all took place as concurrent cycles of activity, until we were satisfied that no new themes or interpretations were available. For the individual case study we asked Lena to read and comment on our analysis to make sure it represented a valid interpretation of herself. Ethical procedures were followed in conducting the research including informed consent, with care taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. We were also conscious of our roles at different points of the project and of potential difficulties in fulfilling these roles with integrity throughout the process. We managed this by sharing our decisions and reflections on a joint researchers' private blog, by remaining open to the wishes and perspectives of participants, and by making our roles explicit at different stages of the project.

In the remainder of the chapter we examine aspects of teacher identity and teacher self that emerged in the project: through the study of an individual teacher, Lena, then through the study of an intact group of four EAP teachers. But first as background to the two studies, we will briefly present excerpts from interviews and discussions with five participants, illustrating something of the range of aspects of identity and self which emerged in this context of teacher learning.

A common perspective by participants was that they were motivated to take part in the project – often somewhat reluctantly – to avoid being seen as a teacher with a limited range of skills, who had not kept up-to-date:

I know I need to do this – things have changed – but it isn't as easy as for some others who have more time. Leslie (individual interview)

One participant clearly motivated by such an ought-to self orientation, took a utilitarian approach to the project:

I have had to develop ... I think ... what do I need from what is available ... this is what I do. Michel (individual interview)

Another participant viewed team work and colleagues from a similar perspective, as the means to endorse actions taken and products produced:

I work well in a team You need people to look at what you have done objectively ... to evaluate what you have done...they are a good resource. Catherine (individual interview)

In this case any sense of group identity did not extend beyond this perspective: working with colleagues was based around personal development and affirming an identity as a materials producer working largely individually:

My strengths lie in producing materials I enjoy those projects most where I am producing something. Sometimes they are used by others. Catherine (individual interview)

A sense of frustration arose when the possibility of realising this identity was curtailed:

I find it difficult.... I have ideas for projects I want to work on but I am not allowed to because it is not seen as a priority ... or I am told you have other things to do. Catherine (individual interview)

Another participant saw e-language teaching as a way of realising his ideal self - as a teacher who projects himself as a real person to the students and who can produce a rich learning environment:

I became interested in online teaching because I wanted the students to have access to experiences in the language that are real and vivid – through music, sounds and images. I wanted them to be able to know me as a person, and for me to gain a full sense of them as learners – I saw that online environments offered the means to that end. It has been a lot of work but I am inspired by that possibility – and I have made that a reality. Peter (group discussion)

Alternation between the combination of ideal and ought-to self orientations was also common in the reports of some participants, as in:

I saw technology as a way to solve a problem associated with certain classes I was teaching ... I found it very frustrating because I couldn't work out how to configure webCT but actually deciding that I was going to have to do it, that made the difference, and really wanting to do it that I really wanted to do it, that was more motivating ... and I could see how I wanted things to be for my classes. Malcolm (individual interview)

From this brief sample of teacher selves as expressed in a new language teaching domain we turn to the in-depth individual case study of Lena.

IDENTITY AND SELF: TEACHER CASE STUDY

The choice of Lena as an individual case study for this chapter was based on the clear personal vision of her ideal teacher self she articulated at different stages of her experience of e-language teaching. Lena's vision was evident in what she hoped to realize and express in both her personal and professional identities. Aspects of her vision are also evident as they emerge, develop and are made over in her interactions

with others. Here, after some background, we focus on Lena's initial motivations linked to her identity and ideal teacher self and then explore how the collaborative context which developed through the project impacted on her. We close with a view of Lena's ideal teacher self as expressed towards the end of the project, noting how it incorporates her learners, her use of technology and the identity she is in the process of constructing as a distance language teacher.

Lena agreed to participate in the project in the first year of her appointment as a university lecturer in German. As an experienced tertiary lecturer in English for Academic Purposes and a researcher of language maintenance among German immigrants to New Zealand, in an early interview she saw her new position as an opportunity to 'rediscover' her roots in teaching German, albeit through a very new medium, online distance language teaching. In the project she chose to explore the possibilities of e-tandems linking tertiary learners in New Zealand and Germany in a series of bilingual activities exploring contemporary issues such as race relations in both contexts. Lena reported and reflected on her experiences over a period of eight months in the ELAG discussion group, in interviews, in small group discussions and in a reflective journal.

Lena's ideal self as a distance language teacher was articulated at the start of the project as being someone who could provide students with authentic online learning opportunities that are 'engaging and interactive'. Lena saw technology as offering possibilities to realise this ideal self, but the experiences required to reach her goals were seen as very challenging:

at the beginning it was very daunting because I was still learning so much about other things because I was new to the institution, it was all coming at once like a big tidal wave - Interview

In her reflective journal she describes the possibilities as 'exciting and frustrating at once, seeing the great potential but also the huge learning curve in front of me'. She continues:

But what a responsibility too, to my students, to whoever might be the 'other' in the tandem I had never done this before, what if it didn't work out? How would I find a suitable group of students in the target language context? Sites facilitating tandems existed, but many of these aimed at pre-University level students. – Reflective journal

Finding a German partner institution took time and she was very aware that much would depend on the relationship with her German counterpart, Karen. 'An intense

dialogue on possibilities' took place with Karen using the same text and voice tools the students would use (WebCT and Wimba), asking:

Who were our learners? What could possibly bring them together - the target languages, topics of interest, other? What were the practical and pedagogical considerations? Who were we, what were our own personal and professional expectations? How could we pursue a relevant research goal at the same time?
-Reflective journal

Here questions about self point to the ways in which notions of self, identity and possibilities were questioned, negotiated and jointly constructed at the outset and throughout the project. All the 'imponderables' in the project were explored through 'the joint approach with my German counterpart', requiring a good deal of collaboration and personal investment from both participants:

At times the project design and planning became quite time consuming and seemed out of proportion with the actual size of the project proper. But at the same time, with every communication between Karen and myself, we would chip away at something, be it the wording of the project description, the setting of tasks, the adoption of a research instrument or the choice of platform.

-Reflective Journal

A number of key values – respect, openness, flexibility – were identified as features of interactions with Karen contributing directly to Lena's identity which aligned with her ideal teacher self:

We were feeling our way not only in terms of developing a tandem project but also in relation to who we are and how we do things at either end. A real strength in this has been the high level of mutual respect, openness and flexibility which I believe has enabled us to do a good job, affording our students a new learning experience.

-Reflective Journal

Lena also emphasised the contribution of colleagues in her Department in affirming the trajectory she was on: one who was more experienced with Wimba Voice tools was helpful in showing her what was possible in the context of his course while '*most of my other colleagues were new to Wimba too so that I didn't quite feel so inadequate*' (Reflective Journal).

For both Lena and Karen a key point in the project was when the students began to engage with the learning environment, the activities and most importantly, to gain a sense of the other participants:

Another breakthrough was when we saw the students talking to each other when things actually started to take shape. They were beginning to get a sense of each other because they were clearly quite different people ...we took some pictures and put them online...then students from the other side responded and they began to emerge as people....

-Interview

And most importantly for Lena this corresponded with her goal of providing authentic, interactive experiences for her students:

it changed everything basically. I am already working in a different way doing distance teaching, but doing the tandem, bringing in the overseas dimension brought more authenticity into it. They were not just partners in a classroom, they were people in different countries talking to each other, in a way emulating everyday life where people talk to each other, join a chatroom....the e-tandem gave us a chance to do things that emulate life, being interactive and collaborative, and that's possible despite the lack of face-to-face contact.

-Interview

An unexpected aspect of the project for Lena was becoming an academic mentor for Karen, an emerging academic in the German context:

Karen is younger than me and has less experience – in hindsight I think she looked for guidance from me – when I was there I felt she was enabled in that she did something that worked well, that gave her professional connections, with someone else who gave her respect - she could really establish herself as someone who could work well professionally and educationally...in a new area, internationally. I met her Professor, he was positive, that gave her some standing

-Interview

This new-found sense of herself as a valued collaborator and academic mentor was made all the more meaningful as it coincided with a return visit to Germany after many years absence:

she [Karen] felt enabled through this as much as I know I was ... and being in that context, in Germany, put me into my own home ground again ... the personal and the private were combined. It was quite different to come into this context as a professional – meeting the students, seeing them interested was a very reassuring experience seeing the learners, in their context

-Interview

Towards the end of the data-gathering cycle, Lena articulated a shift in her sense of how she enacts her identity as a teacher. Through her online experiences she moved from seeing technology as something abstract to seeing technology as the means to construct and project herself as a teacher for her students:

...[the technology tools] constitute part of me, they are no longer abstract things. It impacts on how I see myself as a teacher, not as someone who uses technology in some sort of abstract way but I am someone now for whom technology has a constructing function, it constructs me as a teacher – I can make myself now appear in front of my students, even just my voice, in a way I could not have anticipated in the past. I feel I have been able to add to what I do

-Interview

Lena's closing reflective comment reveals the way her collaborative experiences in the project extended her vision of her ideal self as an academic with acknowledged expertise:

One other very personal aspect of working on the project has been a new emphasis on the German dimension of my role as an academic and pedagogue. German had not been part of my professional domain for a number of years, which only changed after taking up my current position in 2006. The project has meant increasing opportunity to engage in professional and academic dialogue in German and to build networks in Germany, both at a distance and even face to face during my visit to Germany. This is an experience I have found greatly validating in terms of what I do and who I am. In this sense the project has become a bridge for negotiating my own crossings between cultural contexts, similar to those my students will hopefully repeat.

-Reflective Journal

Interestingly Lena ends her commentary, referring not to herself but to her students, confirming again that they are central to her ideal teacher self.

Lena's journey in the project involved negotiating many aspects of her identity in the context she constructed through her activities with other professionals and learners. The stakes for her were great, as a teacher, a colleague, an academic taking part in an international collaborative project, and for herself in the German aspects of herself. Lena's motivation to engage with workplace teacher learning can be best understood through the lens of her ideal teacher self and how that relates to the virtual landscapes

she traversed coupled with the relationships she developed and the identities she managed to negotiate and forge for herself. Through Lena we have insight into how her ideal teacher self was a powerful motivator in the early stages of the project, how it was enhanced by her interactions with her German counterpart, leading ultimately to seeing herself as a teacher for whom technology is essential in enabling her to relate her self to the world of distance language teaching.

IDENTITY AND GROUP: A CASE STUDY

The EAP group is made up of four tutors – Will, Terry, Tim and Paul – whose experience of EAP includes teaching in the UK as well as in Europe, the Middle-East and the Far-East. The group agreed to participate in this project during a period of intense innovation and development of their teaching activities. The articulation and enactment of group identity explored here was forged through collective reflections and actions based on innovations in teaching using technologies. The group shared a number of common concerns and divergent perspectives which surfaced in group and individual interviews, postings on ELAG, and discussions with the authors. The focus here is less on an analysis of the group's collective identity and more on an exploration of the dynamic process of group identity formation. This approach draws on Martin's critical appraisal of conceptions of self, arguing that very little of the work on selfhood attempts to theorize the self as constituted through social interactivity with others (Martin 2004, 2007). Martin suggests further that just because social and cultural contexts are considered 'does not mean that selfhood is considered as a communal rather than a predominately individual achievement' (Martin 2007: 86). In this group case study we provide some insights into how group identity, including ideal group identity, emerges through engagement with and orientation to others and the tools, language, concepts and understandings that are communally shared, even if contested.

Within the context of this study, engagement within and beyond the EAP group was fundamental in shaping the group. In interviews and online discussions a recurrent theme involved exploring and analysing the impact of technological innovations on students.

We tend to do things we see as responding to a [student] need and we use the parts [of technology] that actually do respond and ditch the rest

Will (individual interview)

But if we can give [students] a little bit of extra somehow.... provided through WebCT – they might be encouraged to do it if they think they're going to get a little bit extra to what they get in class.

Will (group interview)

The (ideal) identity of the group and the aims of the group are closely linked to their students and meeting their students' needs; this points to the group's growing awareness of the extent to which their emerging identity and motivation is strongly tied to how students respond to their innovations. It is primarily the students and interactions with students that frame and direct the further activities and reflections of the group.

I think we probably... overestimated students' use of WebCT. From speaking to students I don't think that they use WebCT very much in their departments. I kind of thought they used it a lot more.

Tim (group interview)

Whilst collectively meeting students' needs combined with a growing awareness of the role of others in helping them to achieve this aim are key to understanding the identity formation of this group, the ongoing dialogue within the group was of equal importance.

As a group we all did the basic training and that was good but, more than that, the fact of all being together, experimenting together and being able to tell each other and help each other that was what really pushed it along

Will (individual interview)

A sustained, supportive and open-ended dialogue of competing explanations and solutions runs throughout the interviews (and observations of the group) motivating and engaging the group to explore areas of intrinsic group interest and to find solutions to problems, both on an affective level (to avoid 'demotivation' and getting 'too upset') and on a pedagogical level, without leading to conflict and division within the group.

[T]here are all sorts of issues but at least now we know what we have or haven't achieved so far. And what would be feasible.

Terry (group interview)

From uncertain beginnings ('being the dark', 'going ahead willy-nilly', 'inventing as we went along') the group gained sufficiently in experience and expertise in technology to reach the point where group innovation

has got an autonomous life of its own now ... purely from interest. That seems to be more the way that we work.

Will (individual interview)

Both the group itself and its members widened their horizons not by turning in on themselves but by actively engaging with and attempting to understand their intersubjective world of group members, students, and university colleagues. Perhaps more significantly, the transformation of group identity can be read against a shift from ought-to selves struggling with the imperative to engage with new technologies and failing to fully meet perceived students' needs, towards ideal selves, collectively and successfully shaping (as well as being shaped by) innovations through intra and inter group interaction sustained not only by intrinsic interest, experimentation and motivation but also by a greater awareness of and engagement with others.

CONCLUSION

The ideal teacher self perspective offers a paradigm for understanding how experienced language teachers engage with a new learning and teaching domain, and the ways in which they create, contribute to or resist opportunities for workplace learning. From the close following of teachers' experiences over a period of nine months we can see that 'possible selves' are powerful motivators, shaped and realised within experiences, activities and practices mediated by others. We also have a view of the open, contingent nature of workplace learning experiences comprised of a wide array of encounters, relationships, events and exchanges during which identities were shaped, maintained, challenged and negotiated. At the heart of the study lies the teacher self seen as socially constituted, dynamic, evolving representations of not just the individual self but of others, and of what it may be possible to be or become. In this chapter we have argued that it was the teacher self which acted as a catalyst for the nature and degree of teacher involvement in the project, for the cycles of action, dialogue and reflection - with and through others - which in turn formed the course and nature of teacher learning. Here we focused on those parts of the project which had an evident ideal self dimension, concerned with growth, development and the hope of satisfying professional relationships. In our study there were also instances of participants motivated by an 'ought-to' self: in some cases this was evident in a reluctant concern to avoid being seen as behind-the-times, as a way of protecting a career; in some cases it led to minimal involvement with the project, shielding a sense of self from change; in other cases it led to a sheltering from others; in still other cases it led to a utilitarian view of peers, with project participants positioned as helpers or as experts who could endorse the actions taken or the products produced. And there were also participants motivated by an ideal self based on personal, individual achievement with a minor role assigned to the impact of their actions on learners or on their relationships with others. We mention this because our study should not be seen as a

blueprint for experienced teacher learning. Instead our study highlights teacher self and teacher identity as the core of teacher learning, shaping and shaped by the actions teachers take, their dialogue and reflections. Teacher learning emerged clearly as being contingent, fraught with unknowns and both disruptive and challenging of teacher identities and self concept. And perhaps most importantly our study reveals something of what we may uncover when we manage to access how language teachers envision and re-envision themselves in a new domain, their hopes, dreams and aspirations of what they would like to be, what they would like to become and what they would like to be part of.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What prompted you to take part in ELAP (E-learning Autonomy Project)?
2. What do you expect to gain from taking part in the project?
3. What challenges have you experienced in ELAP so far, in working with new technologies?
4. Can you think of any critical incidents or episodes – a turning point, a breakthrough? What happened? What did you do? What did it change?
5. In ELAP you are in a context where other people are learning about new technologies too – does that have an influence on you? What does that afford you? How might this be different if you were completely on your own?
6. What does the online discussion give you?
7. How does your experience in this project orient you to students' experience trying out new technologies in the classroom?
8. What has been the impact of the project on you so far? On you as a teacher? What has changed?

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