

Chapter Four

Results and Findings

In this chapter, data from classroom observations, participant interviews, student questionnaires, and teachers' personal documents are analyzed to reveal the two participants' attitudes toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum, English teaching and their classroom behaviors. Each case is presented separately with background introduction of the participant. Several issues related to each participant, derived from the coded data, are described. The issues in cases intend to show how teachers implement Grade 1-9 Curriculum in their classrooms and the constraints in their workplace.

The Case of Teacher A

4.1 Background of Teacher A

After graduating from the English Department of one public university in Taiwan, Teacher A was employed as an English teacher in a children's cram school for several months. Her teaching interests were aroused in the cram school and decided to attend a one-year retraining program in order to become a qualified English teacher. And now, she is a certified English teacher in a public junior high school, with less than one year of teaching experience. At school, she is responsible for teaching English to 3 classes of seventh and eighth graders. In her opinion, teaching is duty, not a burden. She likes her job and is always well prepared for her lesson. She is willing to make efforts for her professional growth and development. However, she also has her problems because of her inexperience. Her students give her teaching both their compliment and adverse criticism.

With regard to her understanding of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, she mentioned that she did not hear a lot about the concepts of this new curriculum in the teacher education. Accordingly, she did not know a lot about and express a lot about Grade 1-9 Curriculum. But she considers that nowadays English teaching moves more toward communicative

approach which focuses on not only students' reading and writing abilities but also students' listening and speaking abilities. The English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum is quite consistent with the trend of language teaching and contributes to cultivate students' oral abilities. The problem is she does not think this new English curriculum could offer junior high school students sufficient vocabulary, sentence patterns, and grammatical concepts.

4.2 Teacher A and Grade 1-9 (English) Curriculum

4.2.1 Attitudes toward Grade 1-9 English Curriculum

After one-week observation, I had the first interview with Teacher A. At the beginning, she looked a little nervous. But later, she looked better and started to talk about her opinions in a slow rhythm. Sometimes she would ask for clarification again and then continued her talking. Although her talking often needed my probing, I could feel that she was a sincere person who tried her best to answer all of my questions. During the interviews, Teacher A expressed her optimism toward the implementation of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum. First, she thought the basic concepts of the curriculum reflected social needs and the current situation in which learners were encouraged to communicate with others. She explained,

Concepts of the English curriculum are consistent with the current trend of communicative approach, which puts an emphasis on learning to communicate with others. Students are encouraged to communicate with others in English. ... In this curriculum, students are taught through authentic materials to develop their speaking abilities. When I was in school, we students always read passages in English classes rather than learned how to communicate with foreigners. But now, it's not like that anymore. ... I hold a very positive attitude toward developing students' oral abilities through this new curriculum. (Interview 1, p. 11)

In her opinion, Grade 1-9 English Curriculum offered students opportunities to develop their speaking abilities. She believed this is the right direction to go.

Second, Grade 1-9 English Curriculum motivated her to grow and develop

professionally. She said,

I feel this new curriculum benefits teachers, because the curriculum enriches teaching and enlightens teachers to teach animatedly. ... Teachers indeed have the opportunity to grow and develop professionally. ... The curriculum leads teachers to think about their teaching. It makes me feel that I don't have sufficient teaching abilities and thus motivates me to want to learn more. ... You need to look for some new information, discuss with colleagues, or observe others' teaching to promote the understanding of teaching methods and advance skills and abilities. (Interview 3, p. 2)

Teacher A showed her affirmative attitudes toward Grade 1-9 English Curriculum, especially in terms of her professional growth and development. She thought this was a great advantage for teachers because they not only taught students but also gained professional growth from their job. Teacher A, a novice teacher, is particularly eager to learn more about improving her teaching skills and abilities. Therefore, she appreciates the advantage of professional growth and development associated with Grade 1-9 English Curriculum very much.

Furthermore, she mentioned that the activity-based design of teaching materials benefitted her and saved her time to look for information. She said,

I think teaching materials really influence the method that a teacher uses. If there are activities in the book, I will follow the sequence; on the contrary, if there are no arrangements for activities, I won't do activities in class. I will go on with my routine teaching. (Interview 1, p. 8)

Activities in teaching materials enrich her teaching in the classroom and, most importantly, interest students and develop students' abilities naturally. The activity-based design helps create a positive teaching atmosphere. This advantage is very consistent with the principle she holds for teaching: interesting and fun. Accordingly, she is glad to do activities that come with the textbook. Pair work, group work and games are usual ways used to help students engaged in their learning. Among all the activities, she appreciates the effect of games most. She said,

...In games, I always try to make students find answers in advance. ... I find that if the low-proficiency students have good performance in games, the other

team-mates are always very excited. ... Although the low-proficiency students may give up listening to the lecture, they always become active and positive when I have them play games in class. (Interview 3, p. 1)

What is apparent in the above quotation is that she believes games have the advantages of involvement and active participation. It is helpful to free students from the attention of keeping language in a controlled mode and let them enjoy learning. In short, in interview, she expressed positive evaluation toward the revised teaching materials and activities, which she thought contributes to her teaching and students' learning at the same time.

Although she revealed positive and optimistic attitudes toward the necessity of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum, she was not satisfied with the 1000 productive English words assigned by the MOE for junior high school students. She said,

The contents of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum are insufficient. For instance, the Academic Attainment Testing regulates only 1000 productive vocabularies for junior high school students, but how inadequate they are ! For a junior high school student, s/he should learn much more than 1000 vocabulary words in three years. (Interview 1, p. 11)

After listening to her comment, I tried to explain to her that the 1000 productive vocabularies for the Academic Attainment Testing assigned by the MOE was not to set limitation to the new English curriculum, but only an index of basic vocabulary words for junior high school students. However, she still thought it was not enough. She insisted that students would not learn enough words from Grade 1-9 English Curriculum in this way. She criticized, based on her own experience as a learner, "Students nowadays do not learn as much as before, not to mention that some students will only memorize the 1000 English words for the test." I think her misunderstanding about the 1000 productive vocabularies is because she is a beginner in teaching. As she doesn't have rich teaching experience, she often compares her own learning experience with her students' and makes a judgment subjectively. Although the current trend and situation of language learning have changed from the way she was taught, she can not avoid the deep influence of her previous learning experience.

In brief, her attitudes toward Grade 1-9 English Curriculum can be considered favorable, although she does have some concerns and misunderstanding. Her favorable attitudes should be able to help her teaching behaviors consistent with the guidelines of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum.

4.2.2 Attitudes toward English Textbooks

Teacher A showed a contradictory attitude toward the policy of liberating the monopoly for the compilation of textbooks. New textbooks have advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, she appreciated the multi- versions of new textbooks which allowed her additional time to manage classroom activities. She said,

I am influenced by textbooks very much. I feel new textbooks are more flexible. ... In old days, English teachers often rushed catching up with a teaching schedule. ... However, the amount of teaching materials inside new textbooks is less than that of the previous ones, so I can have additional class time to let students join activities or do worksheets. (Interview 3, p. 4)

On the other hand, she was worried about the problems associated with the adoption of new textbooks. She said,

Once, I taught the concept of future tense which involves 'be going to'. I asked the textbook salesman why there is no related usage of 'will'. He told me, "We will put it in the next edition. After the textbook is revised, we will show it to you." His words let me feel that the publishers haven't set up a complete curriculum design yet. I don't like this situation because I worry that students won't acquire the necessary language abilities they need to have. (Interview 1, p. 11)

The materials in new textbooks are more authentic and students are also more willing to speak English in class. However, I thought the adoption of new textbooks is risky as you don't know whether students learn what they should learn. I think the previous authoritative textbook, at least, had the advantages of insuring students to gain necessary abilities and learn what they should learn... I have a strong feeling of uncertainty about the new textbook. (Interview 1, p. 6)

The problems of textbook edition and possible insufficient abilities of students caused by

new textbooks were her main concerns. She obviously lacked confidence in the new textbooks. The problem is due to the rushing schedule of curricular implementation. As Grade 1-9 Curriculum is implemented in a hurry, the publishers couldn't accomplish the compilation of all the textbooks in time. Thus, Teacher A's annoyance is understandable.

Moreover, she was troubled by another more serious problem: the mistakes in textbooks. She said,

...The version of Book Two¹ is difficult for me to teach because it includes many grammar rules and lacks the function of communication. It's not well organized, almost in a chaotic state. Almost all the lessons have the problem of incorrect usages in discourse, and many of the English teachers also talk about this phenomenon. I thought it's not a good textbook. (Interview 2, p. 4)

Although many teachers found the same problem, the mistakes could not be corrected immediately. She was afraid that students would imitate the incorrect usages, so she needed to spend extra time explaining and reminding students the correct usages repeatedly.

To sum up, adopting textbooks freely seems to bring not only advantages but also troubles for Teacher A. Originally she thought the free adoption of textbooks is better than the traditional way which gave the teacher no choice. But when she is aware of the fact that the overall compilation of textbooks has not been done well enough and there are many disadvantages of uncertainty and mistakes, she starts to hesitate about the diversified textbooks.

4.2.3 Examinations and Tests

Whenever she accomplished teaching the dialogue or reading of each unit, she would give her students a quiz. In the quiz, students in the seventh grade needed to write the whole dialogue or text from memory, whereas students in the eighth grade had to use

¹ Book Two her school adopted in the seventh grade is Nan-I, which is different from Book Four which is

English to translate several Chinese sentences, which were adopted from the dialogue or reading within the textbook. She aimed to enable students to be familiar with the content of each unit. To make sure students' familiarity with the material, she told her students in the seventh grade after each quiz, "If your grades are under 95, stay in the classroom after school." It seemed to me that she wanted to give her students another quiz on the same content after school. This strategy of repetition was often used by school teachers. To the eighth graders, when students exchanged their quiz papers for peer review, she told them, "Please check and score answers according to the sentences in your textbook. Don't ask me if there are other alternatives." Sometimes she would give them an advice, "Keep your grades on quizzes above 95." 95% of correctness in quizzes seemed to be her personal standard for mastery and this standard was closely concerned about the results of school exams.

One day, when I was in her classroom, she explained for her students how to change between comparatives and superlatives. After the explanation, she said, "This concept will not appear in school exams, but it is possible to be seen in General English Proficiency Test² (GEPT) or the Academic Attainment Testing." From her words, I had the impression that she wanted to reinforce the importance of the concept by announcing that the concept was included in standardized tests. Using examinations as the reason, she tried to call for students' attention and motivate her students to remember the concept.

In the following days, when she found new words in the student workbook, she told her students, "Underline the words, because I will test you on these words tomorrow." When she taught the context of the dialogue, she also asked here students to underline important phrases and usages. Even when she discussed exercises from the so-called "reference book," which is actually "cliff notes" to the textbook, she also

Longman that is used in the eighth grade.

² General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), beginning in Taiwan in 1999. The goal of the test is to offer a reliable check for English ability and encourage study of the language. The GEPT is divided into five levels, including Elementary, Intermediate, High-intermediate, Advanced, and Super Levels. Each level incorporates listening, reading, writing, and speaking components.

reminded her students, “You need to learn this usage. I feel it’s an important focus in exams.” She kept underlining important parts for students, mentioning exams in her teaching, and strongly commanding her students to pay more attention to the important concepts in exams. She was afraid that students forgot to memorize the recommended parts and thus influenced their grades on exams. I remembered she told me that,

I don’t know the coverage of exams. ... Even if my colleagues agree to exclude some details in the textbooks from mid-term and final exams, I am still not sure whether the details will appear in the Academic Achievement Test or not. (Interview 1, p. 5)

When I teach the textbook context, I always remind students to underline important parts or ask them to notice grammatical structures of sentences because they will be the focuses of the paper-pencil exams. (Interview 2, p. 2)

For the purpose of getting good grades, she could hardly drop any detail in her teaching.

Examinations seemed to have an overt pressure on her. She said,

Although I feel like improving students’ listening and speaking abilities, I still need to take care of the grammars tested in exams. Because of paper-pencil exams, grammar keeps its prior status. It is impossible for me not to teach grammar as students will be confused easily. That’s the reason why I choose the traditional way: that is, to teach students grammar and keep reminding them important parts of grammar. (Interview 2, p. 3)

In her opinion, grammar-teaching contributed to the abilities of reading and writing and was related to students’ performance in examinations. She stated,

Talking about cultivating students’ abilities of the four skills, I put my first emphasis on writing, and reading is the second one. On listening and speaking, I can just do my best but leave the rest to Heaven. In fact, this is purely because of examinations. In the classroom, I try my best to carry out the listening and speaking activities, but I still need to care about the focus of examinations which are concerned with writing and reading abilities. So, for instance, I give students many exercises and translations compiled by myself for practice after class, and I spend lots of class time checking their answers. (Interview 2, p. 4)

Compared with her portfolio, most of the exercises and translations were drills which aimed to build up students’ familiarity with the details of teaching materials. She told me

that grammatical details which were often ignored in listening and speaking activities, but they were an important factor that could influence students' performance in examinations.

It is clear that examinations guide her teaching. She agreed that acquiring oral abilities was the main task of language learning, but she put more emphases on language accuracy and had a priority to develop reading and writing abilities. With serious concern, I think that the pressure of examinations may lead her to apply the traditional teaching method as in the previous curriculum. Her teaching may have gone far away from the primary goal of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum.

In addition, with regard to reinforcement of students' familiarity with teaching materials, she told me she ordered³ test papers for her students. As textbook publishers had various test papers for different levels of students, she ordered all versions for her students. She said,

I ordered all the test papers that textbook publishers provide, three for the eighth graders and four for the seventh graders. I think the test papers are either too easy or too difficult. As a result, I ordered them all. (Interview 1, p. 12)

When I inquired of her if she gave her students too many exams. She said,

I don't think I give them too many tests because they still don't get better grades after repetitive exams. They still make the same mistakes in exams. (Interview 1, p. 12)

It is clear that Teacher A uses exams and tests as a way to review and to help students learn by correcting their mistakes. She thought if students make the same mistake or are unfamiliar with the contents after repetitive exams, then that is the student's problem, not hers. Nevertheless, repetitive exams may not be a good way to improve students' misconceptions and unfamiliarity with teaching materials. I think if teachers keep giving students so many exams in class or after school and emphasizing important parts in the activities, as in the traditional teaching, how are students expected to enjoy their learning?

³ In our school culture, when teachers order cliff notes to the textbook or exam papers for students, that usually means students need to pay for the books or papers, without financial aids from the central authority

If teachers can not reduce the influence of exams first, what these poor, young junior high school students can do is to continue suffering from the pressure of exams. Most teachers complain about exams, but few can give up exams because most teachers still care about students' grades and performance in exams.

In sum, according to Teacher A's condition, exams seem to interfere her teaching seriously. For exams, she puts grammatical concepts in the first position and repeatedly reminds her students to pay attention to the focus of exams. For exams, she puts more emphases on developing students' reading and writing abilities rather than their listening and speaking abilities. For exams, she gives her students more quizzes and test papers to reinforce their familiarity with the content. Accordingly, she is really influenced by exams very much.

4.2.4 Teaching Skills and Abilities

Although most of the time examination is Teacher A's focus, she does try hard to incorporate activities. Teaching aids such as CDs, vocabulary flash cards, contextual pictures, and posters can be seen very often to build students' background knowledge and enrich her teaching. What she does is to try to create a positive and comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. However, students' response is not always as good as she expects. After a period of observation in the classroom, I found her students were often either too excited to concentrate or lack interests in her English class.

One day, when she taught the concept of the superlatives, her students frustrated her very much. At first, she drew several items on the blackboard and then asked her students questions in English with the superlatives according to the items. Students started to get excited about her pictures because of her poor skill at drawing. Afterwards, for another example, she showed them a poster of S.H.E, which is a famous and popular

or schools. This situation is a little bit different from that in foreign countries.

girls' band in Taiwan. Students became even more excited and began to chat with each other about the poster, totally ignoring their teacher. As making much noise in class, one particularly disruptive student was ordered by the teacher to stand in the back of the classroom as a punishment. When Teacher A followed the sequence to teach her students the sentence patterns of the superlatives, some students still continued their disruptions. So she said to her students in an unpleasant tone, "You need to cooperate with me to have today's agenda implemented smoothly, otherwise we won't have the break." After the teacher's announcement, the students stopped their disruptions but were still occupied with their own business. Afterwards, only several students actually paid attention to her teaching and said sentences after her. Other students seemed to have no interests in the teaching at all. Their English teacher was actually the one who read and said the English sentences the most loudly in class. At the end of the class, their teacher wanted to have them play a game to practice what she had just taught them. While she was explaining the rules, the bell rang. As the students hurried to leave the classroom, they started to shout out loudly, "Drop the game ! Drop it ! Drop it ! " But their teacher insisted, "I will dismiss the class only after the game is over." At last, the activity finished in a chaotic condition. After the class, Teacher A told me,

... I brought my students a poster of S.H.E. I thought my students would be happy to see the three singers. But they showed no interest and seldom participated in the activity. That depressed me very much. (Interview 1, p. 3)

She originally thought the poster and the activity could involve her students more, but the students' response seemed to be far from her expectation. Based on my observation, she really makes efforts to arouse her students' interests and increase their involvement, but there might be something wrong with her classroom management. In fact, while doing activities in the classroom, good classroom management usually presents teachers with many challenges. Because students often become uncontrollably excited during activities and forget about the lessons attached to the activities. Without good classroom

management, students' yelling and fooling around in the classroom will be the results of interactive activities, which are far from teachers' expectation (Lin, 2002).

The next day, she continued teaching the superlatives. After explaining one example of the dialogue exercise in the textbook, she asked her students to complete the other exercises and practice speaking the examples in pairs. However, most of the students stayed in their seats without moving on to practice with one other. So when she picked out some students to perform the dialogue in front of the class, many of them read the dialogue by themselves without any partner. She seemed to feel all right because she said nothing. At the time of demonstration, on the other hand, some of the students started to be disruptive, so she was busy reproofing those unruly students. After calming down their disruptive behaviors, she kicked off next activity. She made her students vote for the most boring subject. During voting, the students started to get excited again and to play with one another noisily, so she said angrily, "I am in the front here. Please respect your teacher!" Ironically, the voting result showed that English was the most boring subject. She said nothing in the class, but later on, after class, she disappointedly mentioned the result to me. Although the students might have voted jokingly, I felt that she really cared about the voting result and was hurt by it. I think I can understand her, because she, a novice teacher, had spent much time preparing every lesson in her office. Whenever there is a class coming, she always stays in her seat for preparation. She hopes her hard work can result in students' enjoyment in their English learning. However, students' response to her teaching is far from her expectation. I think students' constant disruptive behaviors in class and no response to her request may also reflect partially the fact that the students think English is the most boring subject. It is possible that lacking skills and abilities to manage classroom behaviors hinders the efficacy of her teaching activities.

In the following days, similar conditions reoccurred in her classroom. She asked her students to do pair work, and most of her students still remained staying alone in their seats or chatting with others. She just told her students, "If you don't find your partner,

you have to present by yourself.” When she noticed their distraction, she still said habitually, “I will dismiss the class only when I finish the agenda for today.” There were other classroom management problems. Many students did not have any textbooks or materials on their desks. Even if they took out textbooks or materials under Teacher A’s demand, some of them still kept reading comic books, passing note paper to others, chatting in a low voice, playing with their cell phones, or taking a nap. Once when she taught the dialogue from the textbook, the eighth graders kept making much noise and demanding to go to the restroom. Their disruptive behaviors interrupted her teaching and thus irritated her. She shouted, “You had better get out of here if you don’t want to be in my class.” From what saw and heard above, I cannot resist questioning that if she keeps spending time managing the troubles caused by a few disruptive students, how can her teaching ever go smoothly; if she keeps allowing students to do pair work without any partner, how can she achieve her goal of developing communicative competence and increasing interaction among students? Accordingly, I raised my question with her and she said,

Some students don’t like to be in pairs; some students are used to reading quietly. They have their individual learning styles. If they have already had the ability to speak, it seems all right to stay alone. But I think it is better to practice with partners in order to imitate the authentic situation. ... Maybe the reason for this unfavorable condition is that I am not strict enough and lack abilities to force them all to participate in pair-work activities. If I have another chance, I will be more authoritative and stricter. (Interview 2, p. 1)

After listening to her answer, I asked her how to deal with this problem now. She said,

...I don’t know what to do, but I think it is enough if one third of the students are willing to join pair-work practice. Because, on the one hand, some of the students still feel like practicing with partners; on the other hand, I need to apply the activities to balance my dull grammar teaching. (Interview 2, p. 2)

She offered some explanations for her problems, but the above passages reveal that she might be short of some essential teaching skills. If pair work is for increasing students’ interests and balancing dull grammar teaching, as mentioned earlier, there should be large

involvement rather than only one third of the students.

In Teacher A's teaching, students' absent-minded behaviors were more serious a problem when she taught grammar or explained the contexts of each dialogue or reading. She was aware of her students' response and told me that,

I teach the context of each unit traditionally, just as the way my English teachers in school and the director in preservice training did...However, most of the students often sit there absent-mindedly and have no interest in following me. ... Only a few of them sitting in the front are willing to answer my questions. ... To be honest, I feel it's not a good way to cultivate students' learning interests or facilitate their concentration. So I often think about this problem. (Interview 2, p. 2)

When I start to teach grammar, students always lack concentration in class. ... They like to listen to the textbook CD, but they are often distracted when I begin to explain the related grammatical concepts. (Interview 2, p. 3)

Students' negative response led her to exam her grammar teaching. She knew that her method of introducing grammatical concepts and readings was not attractive to her students. Although she said that she wanted to improve the above situation, I did not think she could change it in a short time because, in our interviews, she repeatedly mentioned that her teaching was largely influenced by direct experience, including years of experience being a student and observing her teachers in action. She said,

I think teachers have the duty to provide students with multiple sources of help. Before their graduation, I want to prepare them to be familiar with all necessary concepts. Basically, students should learn all the grammatical concepts in English during the three years in junior high. Later, they can advance lexical abilities in senior high. ... That's also my own learning experience in school. Of course, students will learn more than what the entrance examination requires. But that was the way that my English teacher taught me in junior high school. ... (Interview 3, p. 2)

Another excerpt from the interview also reviews the influence of preservice-training experience on her attitude in grammar teaching.

...The textbook in Grade 1-9 English Curriculum handles grammar concepts differently from that of the previous curriculum guideline. In the previous textbook, sentence patterns or grammar focus were integrated with reading

passage, and students could be taught deductively first to become familiar with general principles of grammar or sentence structure before reading passages. However, the revised textbook doesn't follow the same pattern. Sentence patterns or grammar concepts of each teaching unit are spreaded throughout, without integration. ... I prefer teaching students grammar first, followed by idioms or phrases. After teaching vocabularies, phrases and grammatical structures, I teach students the reading passages. (Interview 1, p. 2)

Comparing what she said with my observation, I found she really put much emphasis on grammar teaching and had an orientation of Grammar Translation Method. When she taught grammar, she used to analyze the sentence structure with grammar terms, such as subjects, pronouns, adverbs, and so on. Sometimes, she would forget about the original purpose of the activity and turned directly to grammar teaching. Once, when she taught a section about a real-life activity in which students were given a passage as an example to practice talking about their school library. The topic sentence of the passage is "There are many books in the school library." After reading the sentence, Teacher A started to compare the usage of "there is" and "there are" with that of "have" and "has". When accomplishing the explanation, she continued explaining the following sentences and vocabulary in the passage. To my surprise, this activity was originally designed for speaking practice, but Teacher A did not reach the purpose of the activity at all. Moreover, she had no other related activity after her grammar teaching. Her students just listened to her and had no chance to talk about their library. At the time, I did not think she was aware of what she missed because she kept focusing on her grammar teaching.

Obviously, her teaching has been influenced by her prior experience in school. Such experience led her to adopt a bottom-up pattern (Brown, 1994) of teaching which focuses on components of spoken language, especially words, phrases and grammatical structures. I think her statement reveals a typical condition of a novice teacher. Because novice teachers, without too much teaching experience, often rely on the familiar teaching techniques and methods used by their English teachers in school to assist in their teaching, rather than apply their professional understanding to teaching (Richards &

Pennington, 1998). It seems that although they have learned many theories about language teaching in the university, they have not integrated theory into practice to form a thorough understanding of what language teaching is all about.

However, the concern is if she holds on to her experience in school, it may be impossible for her to improve her grammar teaching and achieve communicative competence in her students as Grade 1-9 English Curriculum requires. If she dwells too heavily on grammar teaching and language accuracy, her teaching may hinder the development of a learner's automaticity in processing speech. Obviously, based on Teacher A's statement, she is not working toward automaticity at all because of her lack of experience. Although Teacher A understands that language planners adopted a different philosophy to the new curriculum, she still can not avoid the influence of her learning background. Therefore, there is a clear discrepancy between her expressed attitudes and teaching behaviors.

In addition to students' negative response to her grammar teaching and their disruptive behaviors, students' opinions may also offer some feedback to her teaching. Data from students' questionnaires reflect that there are students appreciating her teaching style, but more than half of the students criticize her activities to be childish, boring, and naïve. One of her student wrote, "I don't like her class because she is often late for class and her teaching activity is boring and childish." Another one wrote, "... Actually I feel her activity is childish and boring, so I can use the time to take a break." I think her students' attitudes towards her teaching might explain why her students don't response as well as she expects.

In conclusion, Teacher A's teaching is characterized by lack of good teaching skills and immature techniques of classroom management. Although she approves the viewpoints of developing students' communicative competence, the problems of classroom management and immature teaching techniques decrease her teaching efficacy. Numrich (1996) identifies her condition as a natural process of teacher development. I

think the problems of classroom management and teaching techniques can be overcome and improved. What she needs is to call for assistance and experience.

4.2.5 Teacher Professional Development

When a new curriculum is implemented, it is important to provide teachers with opportunities to exercise control over the curriculum, to become innovative, and to get peer support rather than dwell on self-blaming alone. For novice teachers, to be creative and varied in their teaching is the primary concern (Numrich, 1996). In fact, Teacher A also expresses her wish to learn more about practical teaching techniques. Knowing what works and what does not work in the classroom is particularly important for her. Theoretically, teachers' manuals that come with the textbook and colleagues' help serve as the main resources of professional development which can meet her needs. For a novice teacher, with limited time and experience, supplementary information for textbook helps teaching preparation and contributes to better decision-making. However, she did not seem to benefit from them. She said,

Not all the activities inside teachers' manuals are practical and plausible. Only one third of them can be applied but still need to be revised. Furthermore, the effects of activities are unpredictable sometimes. I prefer the manual design of children's English teaching I used in my previous job. All you need to do in the classroom is following the sequence and suggestions of manuals. (Interview 1, p. 3)

Obviously, teaching directions and activities in the current teachers' manuals did not satisfy her urgent needs for acquiring know-how about planning instruction. She had to spend extra time revising or looking for teaching activities.

On the other hand, senior and experienced teachers are also the best models for teaching consultation (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). But she did not have much interaction with her colleagues, not even with her supervisory director. She said,

It seems that I am always in contact with colleagues, but I usually inquire of them about the usage of one vocabulary. We never discuss about the questions of

teaching techniques, such as how you develop your students' listening abilities, or how you cultivate your students' speaking abilities. (Interview 2, p. 4)

As she is a new teacher and is not used to inquiring experienced teachers actively, she has few chances to exchange ideas or discuss problems with other English teachers. In contrast, her colleagues do not have the habit of offering novice teachers assistance actively either. So she has little assistance and help from her colleagues.

With little opportunities to interact with colleagues, Teacher A told me that she liked to attend seminars for self-sustaining professional development. Unfortunately, her job tired her up too much. Accompanying with the implementation of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, extra tasks increased and she was forced to complete one report under the demand of school administrators. She complained about the burden of clerical work given by school administrators. She stated,

Recently, the requirement of action research exhausted me very much. Originally, the chair of the English committee told my partner and me to write it in any way that we wish. However, the head of the office said, "The action research is for competition and is very important. We English teachers missed the competition last year, but we definitely have to enter the competition this year. You need to report your work every week from now on." Due to time limitation, I spend the whole weekend working on this action research project. I feel it's a heavy burden for me because it is not out of my own choice. I'd be more willing to spend time on looking for teaching materials rather than on this bothersome project. (Interview 1, p. 9-10)

Teacher A was very dissatisfied that the school administrators asked teachers to help accomplish extra tasks but were unwilling to offer assistance. She said,

I don't think this school offers me any help related to this new curriculum. There are not any resource books for use or any consultant to show how to teach according to the new requirement. The only source of help is from textbook publishers. ... I feel I need a counsellor who can give suggestions in time of need. If our school can employ a counsellor in dealing with difficulties that English teachers encounter in classrooms, that would be great. (Interview 3, p. 2)

However, my proposal of employing a teaching counsellor was rejected by the school authorities because of lack of funds. (Interview 2, p. 4)

Teacher A lacks not only school support and colleagues' cooperation but also time to join seminars outside of the school. As a result, she can just teach in isolation in her classroom and develop her professional knowledge on her own. Although Teacher A shows a favorable and positive attitude toward professional development in Grade 1-9 Curriculum, it is impossible for her to maintain strong intention toward professional development if she couldn't improve the situation. To overcome the negative effects of her impoverished teaching environment, it is necessary to provide Teacher A with sufficient assistance.

4.2.6 The Summary of Teacher A

The issues of Grade 1-9 Curriculum derived from the case of Teacher A are concluded in Table 4.1 in this section.

Table 4.1 Teacher A's Attitudes and Behaviors toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum

Issues	Attitudes or behaviors
Expressed attitudes toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum	She did not specifically express her opinion about Grade 1-9 Curriculum. She does not seem to have a thorough understanding of this new curriculum. As she is an inexperienced teacher, she needs time to be familiar with the goal of the curriculum and build her viewpoint.
Expressed attitudes toward the English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum	revealing optimistic attitudes because of the following reasons: 1. reflecting social needs and the current situation 2. motivating her to grow and develop professionally 3. saving her time to look for information 4. offering students more opportunities to develop their speaking abilities 5. enriching teaching and enlightening teachers to teach animatedly 6. benefitting teachers with activity-based teaching materials concern: 1000 productive vocabularies assigned by the MOE

Expressed attitudes toward English textbooks	<p>showing a contradictory attitude:</p> <p>Positive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. being more authentic 2. allowing her additional time to manage classroom activities 3. offering teachers more flexibility in teaching <p>Negative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. unfinished compilation of all English textbooks 2. possible insufficient abilities of students 3. the contextual mistakes within the textbook
Teaching behaviors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. adopting bottom-up instruction, mostly 2. paying more attention to language forms and meanings, especially grammatical concepts 3. putting more emphases on accuracy than fluency 4. lacking necessary teaching skills 5. lacking skills to manage students' classroom behaviors
Constraints in the workplace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. having little interaction with colleagues 2. suffering from the clerical work given by school administrators without assistance 3. gaining no assistance for professional growth and development 4. lacking funds of employing a teaching counsellor
Influence of examinations on teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prioritizing students' reading and writing abilities 2. training students to be familiar with the details of teaching materials with her home-made exercises 3. keeping reminding students to underline important parts or concepts in teaching materials 3. caring about students' performance on examinations 4. ordering exam papers and reference books for practice in more detail

The Case of Teacher B

4.3 Background of Teacher B

Teacher B, originally an overseas Chinese, attended a teacher's university in Taiwan after she was graduated from senior high school in Macau. After completing her studies at the university, she has been teaching in junior high school for eight years. In the year 2001, she interrupted her teaching career temporarily to study for a Master's degree in English Teaching in the United Kingdom. One year later, she got her degree and came back to continue her teaching at the same school. Teacher B claims that she has been interested in becoming a teacher since she was a child because she likes to help people. And now she follows her wish and finally lives out her dream as a teacher.

Teacher B is active in and confident about her teaching. She thought students come to school not only for learning English but also for acquiring teacher's attitudes toward life. Teachers have the responsibility to help and encourage student to develop appropriate viewpoints rather than stick to the textbooks. After receiving her guidance, Teacher B's students always give their compliments on her performance. They feel Teacher B is a diligent teacher, who always works hard and is well-prepared for her teaching. She treats them as her children, not her students. The students are glad to have such a good teacher.

After Grade 1-9 Curriculum is implemented, she says that she has thought about the goal of this new curriculum and has ever discussed it with other school colleagues. But she admits that she and her colleagues are not quite familiar with this country-wide curriculum. In terms of the surface meaning of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, she interprets it as an integrated curriculum which adopts part of Gardner's theory (1983) of multiple intelligences and aims at a curricular connection between elementary school and junior high school. In response to the English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, she is not fully acquainted with the details of it either. But she thought the theory that English teaching has an orientation toward communicative approach, which puts more emphases on

activities, interactions among students, and interactions among students and teachers. Therefore, EFL teachers should pay attention to students' individual differences and communicative competence. It is important for EFL teachers to learn how to bring theory into practice in order to reach the goal of developing students' communicative competence. To sum up, although she can not discuss the details about Grade 1-9 English Curriculum, her words suggest that her teaching philosophy is not far from the essence of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum.

4.4 Teacher B and Grade 1-9 Curriculum

4.4.1 Attitudes toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum

I had an interview with Teacher B in the library and her teaching practice based on Grade 1-9 Curriculum was our focus. She was good at making conversation and talked a lot about her opinions of Grade 1-9 Curriculum in our interview. Often I gave her a question and then she kept talking about her viewpoints excitedly for a long time. She grumbled about the implementation of Grade 1-9 Curriculum and was dissatisfied with the teaching environment. From her words, I could sense that she had real concerns about the new curriculum.

I feel that Grade 1-9 Curriculum has more disadvantages than advantages... Maybe the intention of this reform is good. The plan or the theory behind the policy is also excellent. However, the educational policy is implemented in a hurry, without a thorough consideration. ..., so a lot of people including teachers and parents strongly object to this reform. Students are also disoriented, not knowing which way to go. ... The goals of this curriculum is very ambiguous and even the authority makes unforeseen changes for educational policies sometimes. Consequently, I feel I have no alternatives and students are poor guinea-pigs under such circumstances. (Interview 4, p. 2)

My pessimistic attitudes are caused by many factors. Our educational policy is too political. That our government frequently changes educational officials makes the situation even worse. In this way, how can the government authority connect the policy? (Interview 4, p. 3)

In her opinion, the uncertainty in our educational environment reduces the efficacy of the policy. As a teacher, she could do nothing to improve this situation, so she was very disappointed.

In addition to the political and changeable policy, she continued complaining about the increasing official documents required for the implementation of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, such as designing school-based curriculum, taking part in seminars outside of the school, or joining a competition for good teaching plans. Whenever there were official documents from the authority, as the chair of the school English committee, she was the first one among the English teachers to receive the message. These official documents often brought her extra work and trouble.

I am dissatisfied with the incomprehensible official documents very much. Once the head of the office receives the documents, he immediately disseminates the related job to English teachers without any explanation about its intention. He only says that's an order. I feel this is a burden for me. ... I have had this feeling since last year. ... Do you think teachers will really be more creative because of accomplishing the official tasks?... I feel I have wasted my time on a task which is not helpful to students. (Interview 4, p. 6)

Based on the idea of helping students, she voiced her criticism of administrators' demand. School administrators, who were handed over lots of responsibility by the government officials, reverted to give pressure to teachers. She was not glad to endure such a burden unrelated to teaching. She told me, "Great benefit to students is the primary reason that would motivate me to voluntarily take on extra tasks." Her words reminded me some workshops last semester. Whenever she announced the tasks about Grade 1-9 Curriculum to the English teachers in the school, most of them remained silent and there were no volunteers to share the tasks. So drawing lots was a usual solution to decide who should take the tasks. Sometimes, she did the required task reluctantly on her own because she found no one could offer help. Once she incidentally won a prize in the competition of English-teaching design related to Grade 1-9 Curriculum. As I knew about her prize, I inquired of her "How did you feel about your prize?". She didn't show any pleasure but

said “It’s just luck.”

To be honest, I carry out the task in a perfunctory manner because the administrators often ask English teachers to help complete some extra work such as those bothering official documents, which are not actually devoted to teaching. ... Frankly speaking, I don’t think my task is well-done and certainly deserves a prize. (Interview 4, p. 8)

I previously took a look at her award-winning lesson plan on family tree. The plan allowed the 7th graders to develop a project that integrated four languages skills. Although she was not satisfied with her work and kept complaining about school administrators and the educational authority, I thought her prize, at least, indicated that she did not lack the necessary skills for implementing Grade 1-9 Curriculum.

4.4.2 Attitudes toward the English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum

In contrast to the negative attitudes toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum, she showed a less negative attitude toward the English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum in the following interviews.

...I feel the design of this new curriculum makes students learn English in an enjoyable way. ... Students are glad to do activities in pairs, and they do engage in their learning more. They enjoy English learning and have more smiles in class, too. ... I don’t know whether students in Grade 1-9 English Curriculum have better grammatical concepts or writing abilities, but I am sure that they have better listening, speaking abilities and learning interests. (Interview 6, p. 2)

In her classroom, students were encouraged to use English. I often heard her say “Practice with your partner” to the students. I saw the students practice in pairs effectively and rarely found anybody sitting in his seat without doing anything. They looked pleasant and excited while practicing. Their teacher told me jokingly, “As long as students have a chance to talk, they won’t feel bored in class.” I laughed lightly. I remembered one time when she taught the unit about food, she provided students with some supplementary materials about Taiwanese food, such as tofu pudding, oyster

omelette, and rice tube pudding, which were related to students' authentic experience. Because students were not very familiar with the English names, they started to guess the corresponding Chinese names excitedly, including those students with lower level of proficiency. Thus, an embracing affective climate was created and their classroom was full of laughter. Their cheerful spirits and bubbling laughters infected me, so I also started to laugh with them. That's an interesting experience. Later, their teacher told me,

The curriculum now is more authentic, so students feel more interested, too. For example, they are interested in the unit about food. Although I spent the whole class teaching only one page, they learned how to name oyster omelette or oyster noodles in English. They really learned something and most importantly, they enjoyed learning. (Interview 6, p. 2-3)

Obviously, authentic and activity-based materials helped her get students become more involved in class, especially those with low proficiency. This is a very important advantage for her because she has been paying attention to involve each student in class, especially those with low level of proficiency. She said,

...In old curriculum, students with low level of proficiency often give up learning...But now, in the new curriculum, they dare to speak English in front of the class or in pairs 'cause they have many opportunities to practice in class. (Interview 6, p. 2)

By increasing involvement, students have more interests in learning, particularly those with low level of proficiency. Teacher B, a well experienced teacher, obviously has the ability to make her teaching reach the goal of cultivating students' interests according to Grade 1-9 English Curriculum. In her classroom, students are involved and engaged. Thus, Grade 1-9 English Curriculum is beneficial to the students.

4.4.3 Attitudes toward English Textbooks

In terms of English textbooks, Teacher B agreed that the new textbook with more communicative activities was better than the old textbook. She said,

My attitude toward the new curriculum is a little different from that toward the previous one. I feel teaching methods are really limited by textbooks. The previous textbook, for instance, included few listening activities but many grammatical concepts. What teachers taught in class was grammar, grammar, and grammar. However, the new textbook contains many listening activities. Sometimes when I see songs or dialogues inside the book, I will play the CD attached to the textbook for my students. (Interview 4, p. 7)

I feel teaching is really influenced by materials. In unit 2, for example, there is an activity that asks students to write a poem, which was never seen in the previous textbook. It offers students a chance to review and practice the sentence pattern again, and I feel the activity is both interesting and creative. ... I feel I have more room to be autonomous in this new English curriculum. For instance, in unit 2, when I teach students stress and pronunciation, I ask them to imitate the examples, write their own sentences, and read out the sentences loud in pairs and in front of the class. This idea is entended from the original activity. I feel that one of the advantages of the new textbook is providing me with inspirations which cannot be found in the previous textbook. ... The new textbook puts more emphases on activities, and thus interactions both among students and between the teacher and students increase. (Interview 6, p. 1-2)

In her classroom, I saw one of her activities in which students needed to write a poem and imitating the examples of stress and pronunciation, mentioned in her interview. The poem was used to review and practice the sentence pattern again. The exercise of stress and pronunciation was for speaking English with a correct intonation. She asked the students to imitate the examples to write their own sentences and read the sentences out. She appreciated the ideas which contrubuted to her inspiration, but her students didn't seem to be as interested as she had expected and thought. They didn't have much response about both of the activities. So she demonstrated first and tried to involve the students in the activities. Maybe not all of the activities in the textbooks could bring great response but she thought the new textbook inspired her teaching and offered students some opportunities to brain-storm.

She gave the English textbook her appreciations. Interestingly, she had her criticisms, too. She argued, "The new textbook adopted in Grade 1-9 English Curriculum still contains grammatical concepts and sentence patterns in a large proportion. This is

oriented towards the Notional-Functional Syllabus⁴.” In addition, she was dissatisfied with the evaluation system of textbooks. The diversification of the textbooks brought her not only alternatives but also troubles as there existed large gaps among different versions of the textbooks although the textbooks adopted the same criteria from the MOE authority. Teacher B worried that the gaps among different textbooks would influence students’ academic performance in the Academic Attainment Testing. She said,

We chose this textbook, but another school chose another one. I don’t know how to connect the English curriculum of elementary school and junior high school. ... Students in different elementary schools use different versions of textbooks. When students from different elementary schools enter one junior high school, is it possible for teachers to come up with an appropriate curriculum for all? ... Furthermore, the MOE has no mechanisms for getting publishers revise after the book is published. Students are like guinea pigs. In addition, how can I make sure my students equip all the necessary abilities for the Academic Attainment Testing? Maybe other teachers utilizing different textbooks taught the related concepts needed for the exam, but I didn’t. (Interview 4, p. 4)

The chaos caused by rushing liberation of the textbooks led to her worry but she didn’t have the power to change the situation. As a result, she felt disappointed about the prospect of the new textbooks. She strongly suggested the MOE not only set standard criteria before the book was published but also evaluate or revise the textbooks afterwards.

In conclusion, Teacher B’s positive attitudes toward Grade 1-9 English Curriculum lead her to arrange teaching activities more creatively and abundantly, whereas her less positive attitudes toward the Grade 1-9 Curriculum and the evaluation system of textbooks may lead her to take a wait-and- see attitude toward the educational policy.

⁴ Notional-Functional Syllabus (NFS), beginning with the work of the Council of Europe, initiated to be used in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. NFS takes functions as the organizing elements of English language curriculum. It focuses strongly on the pragmatic purposes to which we put language

4.4.4 Examinations and Tests

During my observation, Teacher B often had a quiz at the beginning of each class. The content of the quiz was usually about the vocabulary or grammar concepts which she had taught in the previous class. At the end of each class, she usually gave students assignments from reference books. After teaching one unit, she would hold one exam which took almost a complete teaching period of 45 minutes. So she often told me in advance, “I’m going to have a big exam for my students in the next class. Maybe you can skip one class.” Her reminder was out of kindness. She meant that she would not have any teaching activities in the class and thus there was nothing to observe. It seemed that examination was considered very important and necessary so that she was willing to drop one class for it. Actually, her routine procedures, such as giving a quiz in class, or ordering reference books and exam papers for students is common among teachers of junior high school. This is a practice that has been extended from the previous curriculum to this Grade 1-9 Curriculum. In the previous curriculum, based on the need of raising students’ grades on school examinations and achievement tests, teachers usually ordered many reference books and exam papers from textbook publishers to give students repeated drills and practice. After the implementation of Grade 1-9 Curriculum, teachers still take this practice for granted and keep their old habits. Teacher B is obviously not an exception. It is hard to find any teachers who do not order reference books or exam papers as long as they teach the subject which is contained in the Academic Attainment Testing.

However, I am a little confused about her attitudes and behaviors toward examinations, because I remember she has complained about the impact of examinations and achievement tests on this Grade 1-9 Curriculum and her teaching. She criticized that examinations and achievement tests within the teaching system were old problems in Taiwan. The existence of examination culture reflected social expectation on academic

degrees. The attitude to look for higher degrees in our society encouraged many students to try their very best in passing examinations. Thus, it was almost impossible to remove the impact of tests on teaching and learning. She said,

When I studied in foreign countries, I saw EFL teachers devote to building students' communicative competence and linguistic response based on students' individual differences and abilities. And I thought that's what English teaching is about. However, I feel our society has put too much emphasis on the results of examinations and students' grades on tests. I am always sad for students who have good talents for language but are not good at paper-pencil exams. In Grade 1-9 Curriculum, this condition still exists without marked improvement. (Interview 4, p. 2)

I think her viewpoint about examinations also reveals why curriculum planners emphasize core competence in Grade 1-9 Curriculum and lower the difficulty of the Academic Attainment Testing with the intention of reducing pressure for students and teachers. Nevertheless, the good intention of curriculum planners is ruthlessly overturned by societal and parental expectation of academic achievements, no matter whether the examination is a traditional entrance examination or a revised competence test.

I think the problem of examinations has been existing in Taiwan for a long time and has strong influence in Taiwan than in other Asian countries. In terms of the pressure of examinations, Japan is number one, and Taiwan is number two. Parents are always worried that their children might not find a good job in the future if their children don't go to cram schools, attend star senior high schools, or enter good universities.... But in other countries, people don't think learning is only for grades. (Interview 4, p. 5)

I am worried that the Academic Attainment Testing will destroy the confidence of the students in Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Because they might have good competence but they don't understand how to have good performance in such an examination. (Interview 4, p. 4)

In spite of that one of the goals of Grade 1-9 Curriculum is to reduce students' academic burden, she never thinks academic competition among students has diminished in our society because most parents still consider good grades represent the possibility of a star senior high school, a good university, and most importantly, a good job in the future. This

logic pushes parents to supervise their children's learning and evaluate teachers' teaching with students' grades. Parents want not only competence but also grades.

Although examinations were considered serious problems, Teacher B also admitted that examinations had great impact on her teaching. She said in an angry tone,

Today, if there are no examinations or the overall tendency to put much emphasis on academic achievement, I will neither teach in this way nor continuously chatter on my students' grades on examinations. I will teach in a more lively way. But the tendency of emphasizing performance on examinations, ranging from schools to the whole society, forces me to meet their needs halfway. (Interview 4, p. 5)

I think this excerpt offers explanations for the discrepancy between her attitudes and behaviors toward examinations. Under the circumstances, she is obliged to compromise and adjust some of her teaching goals. She doesn't appreciate the examination culture, but she can not keep herself away from its impact. Although she told me and her students, "learning attitudes are more important than grades," she still orders reference books and exam papers from textbook publishers to give students repeated drills and practice. In terms of her behavior, what she does is to make sure that students are familiar with the contents of teaching materials and have good grades and performance on examinations. Furthermore, when I review her students' opinions in the questionnaires, I am surprised to find that more than half of them agree that Teacher B cares about students' grades and will be angry if they get bad grades. She often nags her students that they have to study harder for their future. One of them wrote, "She never punished us because of bad grades, but she felt unhappy when we got lower average grades than what other classes got." "She was often angry about our bad grades and sometimes added an extra English class after school to help raise our grades," claimed by another student. Clearly, Teacher B doesn't think she cares about grades, but her verbal reminders and explanations in class are interpreted by students as a proclamation that she puts emphasis on students' performance on examinations. With respect to Teacher B's complaints about examinations within the teaching system, the response from her students also mirrors the

great impact of examinations on her teaching.

To sum up, Teacher B is forced to reach a compromise among societal expectation, parents' critical requests and exams within the teaching system. These external constraints and hindrances leave her incomplete control over her teaching goals.

4.4.5 Teaching Skills and Abilities

On my first day to see Teacher B's teaching in the classroom, I arrived in the classroom a little earlier than her. My presence arose the curiosity of her students. They looked at me silently and seemed to be surprised to see a stranger in the classroom. After Teacher B came, she asked her students to move a chair and a desk for me and explained to her students that I would stay with them in the following several weeks for my observation. After a short explanation about my presence, she started her teaching activity for the day.

Grammar was her focus on that day. She drew a cute light bulb on the blackboard and wrote 'grammar reminder' beside the light bulb. Then she asked her students to bring out the notebooks. Formation and meaning of comparatives and superlatives are the main topics she wrote on the blackboard. She explained the rules in the mother tongue and reminded students not to make certain mistakes. Her students were busy both listening to her and taking notes in their seats. After explaining regular and irregular forms of comparatives and superlatives, she told her students, "I will give you a quiz on these regular and irregular forms of comparatives and superlatives." Her students still said nothing and continued their note-taking. Originally, I thought teacher-centered grammar teaching would reduce students' cooperation in class, but the response of her students wavered my presumption. To my surprise, her students paid a lot of attention to her grammar teaching and were seriously taking their notes rather than doing nothing in their seats as if they were not interested. To Teacher B's demand of a quiz, her students also

accepted peacefully with no opinions. The tacit agreement between the teacher and the students seemed to be very good.

After a lecture on the formation of comparatives and superlatives, she asked the students on duty to erase all the words on the blackboard and said, "OK. I am going to teach you comparatives." She first illustrated a sentence pattern with colored chalk on the blackboard. The different parts of the pattern, for example, A+ beV+ comparative adjectives+ than+ B, were written with the integration of Chinese and English words. Then she gave an example of Chinese-English translation to model the pattern and offered some more explanations in detail. After that, she gave two more examples to her students for practice and asked two students to complete the example sentences on the blackboard. The other students stayed in their seats and wrote their answers in the notebooks. During practice session, she walked around the classroom, checking students' answers or answering their questions. After a short while, she asked her students to say out loud their answers and double-checked the answers just written on the blackboard by the two students. In the end, under her demand, her students read the correct answers again and underlined the comparative form in examples. When she taught another pattern, the same procedure repeated.

After the school bell rang, she gave her students assignments from the cliff notes and I also left the classroom. On my way home, I was thinking about her grammar teaching style and her students' response. It was clear that both Teacher B and her students were totally engaged most of the time in the class. When she taught grammar, long elaborate explanations of grammar were given in the mother tongue, with only a spotted use of English. In addition, Teacher B also asked her students to copy all the grammatical notes and rules from the blackboard to their notebooks to aid their memory and attention. Afterwards, she reminded her students of the rules or requested them to identify the rules repeatedly. Her style of grammar teaching seemed to be consistent with the Grammar Translation Method (Brown, 1994). In response to her teaching,

surprisingly, students didn't feel sleepy, but they were all engaged in listening to her explanations and needed only a little teacher control. Based on my observation, she did not seem to adopt a lively teaching style, and her students spent more time on listening to her lecture in the class. However, she still caught all her students' attention and her students really learned something from her lecture. It was likely that Teacher B focused on promoting her students' reading and writing proficiency rather than cultivating their oral communication competence.

The next day, I was presented in the classroom again. Based on the experience yesterday, the students seemed to become accustomed to my presence, and they moved a chair and a desk for me without the teacher's command. The student leader ordered all the other students to stand up when Teacher B stepped into the classroom. After bowing and greeting, Teacher B asked the students to sit down and reminded them of the quiz she announced yesterday. Before the quiz, she reviewed the content she taught yesterday and gave students a little time to discuss their questions. By the quiz, the motivation of students obviously was high because they discussed questions with each other enthusiastically. To cool down the hot atmosphere in the classroom, Teacher B said, "Ok. Clean your desk top and leave nothing on it" and then she passed out the quiz questions.

After the quiz, Teacher B began to check students' answers to the questions in the reference book and ask them to do more exercises in the textbook. When doing the question-answer exercise in the textbook, she discussed answers with students together first and then randomly selected several students to write answers to different questions on the blackboard. The other students did oral practice with their partners. At the time of their practice, Teacher B walked around the room and offered students necessary assistance. In addition to their practice in pairs, she also selected several pairs to present their paired dialogues to the class. At the end of students' presentation, she, with rich teaching experience, would identify ambiguous and confused concepts from their presentation and then explain these concepts for students in more details. After that, she

asked her students to underline the comparative form in sentences after their practice again. It was amazing to me that the exercise was originally for writing, but she integrated speaking and reading activities into the written exercise to build in some repetition of patterns and to establish fluency and familiarity. Although the situation was highly teacher -controlled, students, at least, had more chances to speak and read English than the day before.

At the end of this class, she did an activity on comparatives. She demanded her students to ask their partners one superlative question about two items of their own. I found students started to reveal interest because they wanted to know what items their partner and classmates showed. Some of them began playing tricks, and one of them even blew air into his sock in his hands. When other students saw his trick, they laughed out loud and thus created a relaxing atmosphere. Teacher B didn't stop the student's naughty behavior but said with a smile, "pose a question with your sock to your partner." From her attitude, she seems to be flexible enough to adapt herself. Because she did not interpret the student's naughty behavior as disruption. On the contrary, she was tolerant of her student and appreciated his trick with her students.

Following the student's demonstration, several students were selected to practice their dialogues to the class, too. In the classroom, I felt they liked this activity and were glad to be a part of it. This activity increased their learning interests and developed their communicative competence with lower anxiety. After the activity, Teacher B asked her students to write down their dialogues in the notebooks and match their sentences with the comparative sentence pattern she taught the day before. Her repeated reminder about grammatical rules aimed to reinforce the students' familiarity with the rules, similar to the way that she asked her students to underline the comparative form.

In this way, Teacher B continued her grammar teaching and increased interaction between students by means of display questions⁵. Obviously, the activity was conducted

⁵ Display questions belong to an activity in which "the teacher or the questioner already knows the

in a controlled situation and her strategy might not lead to an open response or “negotiation of meaning”. However, her structured and controlled grammar teaching built up concrete forms of language for these junior high school students. For beginning language learners, Teacher B’s style of grammar teaching might be necessary because they needed some concrete rules to follow.

After observing the two classes, I dropped one class because of personal reasons. When I came back to continue my classroom observation, Teacher B was still teaching grammar. Superlatives were her topics on the blackboard. She repeated the previous procedure, and I started to be a little familiar with her teaching style. As far as I could observe, Teacher B, an experienced and active teacher, always tried her best to live up her teaching in the classroom. I was curious why and how she adopted such a teaching style. After class, I had an interview with her and I raised my question about her teaching style. She said,

At first, I allowed my students to produce utterances without worrying about errors in class. They did speak English fast and fluently, but the errors in their speaking discourse hindered their meaning seriously. What was worse, their errors in speaking reverted to interfere their writing. As I didn’t correct their errors when they spoke, they naturally thought what they said was correct. However, after glancing the bad grades on examinations, they felt frustrated and started to worry about their mistakes. They didn’t know what was wrong. At the time, I needed to spend double the energy and the time to correct their errors one by one, which made me feel exhausted. ... Students seemed to hang on to their errors, and it was hard to correct them again. (Interview 5, p. 3)

Teacher B originally followed the principle of non-correction, but students’ frustration made her decide to change. To lower students’ anxiety and fear of making mistakes in the learning process, Teacher B decided to use grammar-oriented teaching at the first stage of each unit. She said,

I found my class were afraid of speaking wrong sentences. They were worried about their grammar. So I hoped to lower their anxiety and fear, letting them feel safe when speaking. Through modeling and practicing the sentence patterns in

response or has a very limited set of expectations for the appropriate response” (Crookes & Chaudron, 1991, p.52).

oral repeatedly, they would remember them well and make sure what they said was correct. ... After that, I would offer them some activities or exercises to advance their fluency. ... In their seventh grade, I had tried many ways to fit their learning style. In the eighth grade, I usually stuck to this routine because it seemed useful to advance their proficiency. (Interview 5, p. 3)

Teacher B thought her adjustment, based on students' response, promoted students' English proficiency. In the beginning phase of teaching, she put more emphasis on accuracy than on fluency to match their styles and learning needs. In the following phases, she reinforced students' speaking abilities through paired or group activities. This might not be her ideal teaching model, but it was an acceptable one to her because it was the result of negotiation between her students and her. Her explanation offers the reason for many mechanical drills in her grammar teaching and oral practice. However, to develop students' communicative competence, a few short, helpful drills can be used on students to establish structural patterns or other elements, especially on learners with low proficiency. But moderation is the key. Too many drills controlled by teachers may hinder the possibility of open responses and negotiation of meaning (Brown, 1994). I raised this question to Teacher B, and her reply was:

I admit it is possible to diminish students' ability of critical thinking in controlled situations, especially those with high levels of proficiency. (Interview 5, p. 1)

Adult students, with good language fluency, should basically have a good foundation on grammar. However, it's not the same with these high school age children. Some students, for instance, keep speaking English but the grammar in their utterances is wrong. However, there are also students who spent a considerable time trying to speak out a sentence. So it is difficult to keep the right balance between accuracy and fluency sometimes. (Interview 5, p. 3)

Teacher B admitted that her teaching style might have the possibility of lacking critical thinking abilities, especially for those with high-proficiency level. And she might sometimes put more emphasis on accuracy than on fluency. However, because of the low proficiency level of her students as what she said, she decided to ignore these disadvantages and adjust to adopt a more suitable way she thought for most of her

students. I believed that her adjustment was due to her rich experience with young students. Because, based on my classroom observation, even when she taught conversational sections or reading passages in each unit, she would still remind her students of grammatical concepts. Frankly, she not only spent much time teaching grammar with drills in the beginning stage but also related her activities to reinforce the students' impression on grammatical rules in the following stages. She, of course, had some activities for communication but a large proportion of her teaching still focused on grammar teaching or rule explanation. In terms of grammatical competence, she successfully taught her students forms and meanings of the target language. In addition to her successful grammar teaching, she also made efforts to provide the students with opportunities to practice language skills. I thought her teaching might not fully serve the function of the target language, but she was indeed engaged in cultivating her students' interests in teaching and developing her students' language skills in English. However, if she can design more social contexts to her activities, her students would have not only the knowledge of target language forms and meanings but also opportunities to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning.

Basically, Teacher B is really a good teacher because of her excellent teaching efficiency. She is willing to adjust her teaching style according to students' response. Moreover, her students respect her authority and are pleased to follow her steps to learn. She is aware of the advantages and disadvantages of her teaching style through evaluation by herself. This reveals that she does her job in a conscientious way.

Nevertheless, to achieve the goal of Grade 1-9 English Curriculum, it seems that she still has some room for improvement. Particularly, she seems to focus a lot on grammar teaching and accuracy, rather than fluency and meaning-focused. I think there are two reasons to explain this condition. One is her students' learning style and needs, as she said. They seemed to benefit more from accuracy before fluency, rather than fluency before accuracy. The other reason is that the English textbook might be still less oriented

to communicative approach, although it is more authentic than before. As EFL teachers of junior high schools in Taiwan still largely depend on textbooks instead of materials designed by teachers themselves, the activities within textbooks definitely have impact on teaching styles. Within the textbook, there are many activities to teach students language usages but only few to teach how to use the language. Consequently, EFL teachers, without much time and information, will follow the sequence of the textbook and thus ignore pragmatic aspects of the language easily.

It seems reasonable to conclude that Grade 1-9 English Curriculum brings new tasks for Teacher B to achieve. She needs to pay attention to students' needs and to derive her own personal interpretation and philosophy. These are not easy tasks at all.

4.4.6 Sharing and Cooperation

Whenever I met Teacher B in the office, she was often typing teaching materials with the notebook computer alone in her seat. In accordance with this observation, I took a look at the papers besides her notebook computers and found some interesting activities. Some were for writing practice, and some were for speaking practice. I was very curious about the the source of her ideas because I never found similar exercises in teacher's manuals of any textbooks. Her intention was obviously to design tasks to increase interaction among students. I inquired of Teacher B the source of her ideas and she replied in an enthusiastic tone.

Some are from foreign resource books, and some are from my inspiration. When I studied in a graduate school in the United Kingdom, I learned how to design curriculum. Thus I know how to design an activity or a unit. I have also accumulated much relevant and reliable information. But the compilation of the foreign resource books is more complex, teachers need to revise or change their activities according to students' level. (Interview 4, p. 7)

For a teacher, resources are particularly important when implementing a new curriculum. Fortunately, her experience in the United Kingdom had helped her store enough teaching

information for the job now. Her enthusiasm showed that she enjoyed her teaching very much. According to other English teachers, she was willing to share her teaching materials with other English teachers by means of the bi-weekly English teaching workshop. As the chair of the school English teaching workshop, she tried her best to manage the workshop and be a model of sharing. In fact, Grade 1-9 Curriculum also encourages teachers to share teaching experiences and materials with colleagues.

Accordingly, I raised this matter with her and praised her kindness. However, she didn't seem very happy when she said,

Actually, in the workshops, I tried to share my teaching resources and worksheets with other English teachers. I even told them how to apply these documents in the classroom. I want to create a sharing atmosphere among English teachers through my action. I hope the action will lead everybody to be happy about sharing their ideas and methods. However, all they said was "thank you", without any further question and enthusiasm. ... As the chair, I wish to build a sharing system, changing the original isolated condition and activating English teachers to cooperate with one other. But it is really very difficult for me to raise their enthusiasm. (Interview 5, p. 5)

Teacher B seemed disappointed because she was aware of the fact that her colleagues had no wish to share teaching methods and materials or to exchange ideas or views. They sat in their seats quietly and listened to her report politely, but this didn't mean they accepted her ideas or wanted to have a further discussion with her. Maybe some of them would interpret her sharing as flaunting or showing off. In addition, she mentioned that most of the English teachers were unwilling to take part in school workshops. Whenever there was a school workshop, she could hear someone say, "Oh! No! Workshop again!" although they would still move slowly toward the workshop room. It seemed to her that the English teachers were present reluctantly in the workshop. They signed their names, and wanted to be dismissed right away. She said,

... I feel the relationships among English teachers are not close and intimate enough. Everyone is busy with their own business. ... I feel they always show negative attitudes to the school English workshop held once every two weeks. ... They complain, "Oh! My goodness! It's workshop time again. How bothersome it is." ... They don't want to pay more efforts to do research or share

experience about teaching. It seems that the workshop, for them, is only part of a routine. I feel this condition is a pity. (Interview 5, p. 4)

Teacher B said that this isolated condition was actually worse than before. “At least, the experienced teachers before often concerned about young teachers and inquired of them about their problems and needs in teaching, but now everyone just keeps polite conversations without any sincerity.” She didn’t know the reason of this situation, but she was very disappointed. She said,

I feel lonely in this environment because not many people understand what you think or want to share ideas with you. ... They might pay their respects to your ideas but it doesn’t mean that they will identify with you or use your ideas.
(Interview 5, p. 6)

The isolation among English teachers leads to Teacher B’s loneliness in teaching and hinders the possibility of receiving feedback from colleagues. Teacher B is frustrated by this problem and seems to give up looking for solutions after she had used up all her strength and energy to improve it.

In sum, the lack of sharing and cooperation among colleagues that Teacher B experiences in her teaching environment stops her passion for sharing. Without the environment of sharing, it is impossible for her to keep the action without any feedback or response from her colleagues, even if she shows a favorable attitude toward sharing. When lacking cooperation, she may look for other ways to inspire the English teachers. However, when lacking cooperation for a long time, her intention to engage teachers in sharing and cooperation may, unfortunately, disappear forever.

4.4.7 The Summary of Teacher B

The issues of Grade 1-9 Curriculum derived from the case of Teacher B are concluded in Table 4.2 in this section.

Table 4.2 Teacher B's Attitudes and Behaviors toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum

Issues	Attitudes or behaviors
Expressed attitudes toward Grade 1-9 Curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. being pessimistic because of the uncertain policy and the educational environment influenced by politics 2. being dissatisfied with the increasing official documents required for Grade 1-9 Curriculum
Expressed attitudes toward the English part of Grade 1-9 Curriculum	<p>less negative because of the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. achieving the goal of cultivating students' interests in English 2. benefitting students with low-proficiency level 3. contributing to cultivate students with better listening, speaking abilities and learning interests 4. offering authentic teaching materials
Expressed attitudes toward English textbooks	<p>To have both positive and negative opinions:</p> <p>Positive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. offering more communicative activities 2. providing her with more room to be autonomous 3. inspiring her teaching and offering students some opportunities to brain-storm <p>Negative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. being oriented to the Notional-Functional Syllabus rather than communicative approach 2. being dissatisfied with the evaluation system of textbooks afterwards 3. having large gaps among different versions of the textbooks
Teaching behaviors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. being a well-experienced teacher with necessary skills and abilities 2. putting more emphases on accuracy than on fluency because of the low proficiency level of her students 3. dealing with grammar forms and sentence patterns first prior to oral practice in order to lower students' anxiety and fear of making mistakes 4. applying the strategies of giving a lecture and asking students to take notes in teaching grammar 5. compiling home-made materials to offer students more practice

Constraints in the workplace	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. lacking sharing and cooperation among colleagues because of individual isolation2. being difficult to motivate colleagues to attend workshops or seminars for professional growth
Influence of examinations on teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. chattering on students' bad performance on examinations2. ordering exam papers and reference books for practice in more detail3. adding extra classes after school to help raise students' grades