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SLA AND LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

A Socioeducational Perspective

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The connection between SLA research and second and foreign language (S/FL) teaching is discussed in this paper, from the viewpoint that such a relationship is desirable and that it is advantageous to see it as one mediated by a variety of factors. At the same time, it is asserted that the relationship is presently often weaker than it should be. The conditions under which S/FL language teaching take place are identified as strongly contributing to this state of affairs, though other aspects of SLA research that might have limited its relevance to teaching are also considered. A call is made for empirical studies into the use by teachers of research.

Whether there is or should be a relationship between SLA and language pedagogy is not something on which SLA researchers agree. Some feel there need be no such relationship or that, if there is one, it is not one for which they have any responsibility. Others, and I count myself among them, originally S/FL teachers, became involved in SLA research out of a desire to improve S/FL teaching—that is, we saw SLA as potentially having a positive relationship with SL pedagogy. At the same time, there has been a long-standing concern, expressed both in SLA literature and perhaps more outside it, over the perceived or actual lack of relevance of SLA research to S/FL teachers and to teaching. In this, our area is typical of any area of research concerning a social practice and practitioners. Education research certainly has this sort of strained relationship with teachers, as do other similar areas.[1] This apparently persistent problem gives rise to intermittent considerations of the relationship, to which the present effort is one more contribution.

Despite the persistence of this concern, there has been little empirical study of it in our field, so in this discussion I will also consider some work in education in the belief that its implications apply to the S/FL area. I will emphasize the role of teachers as the practical link between SLA research and classroom practice, rather

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than consider a relationship in the abstract.[2] That is, I am specifically not going to say, "This is what SLA research finds, and it follows that a certain approach (task type, etc.) should be used in second language teaching." Because much of what actually happens in many S/FL classrooms does depend on the teachers' views of pedagogy and teachers' knowledge (Grotjahn, 1991; Pajares, 1992) within wider societal expectations and systemic constraints (and despite built-in syllabuses and learners' variable attention), I am going to concentrate on teachers and their connection, or lack of it, to SLA. As will become clear, the route this discussion takes is circular. Although I begin with the topic of "teachers," I will not exhaust its possibilities and will return to it after some consideration of the role of SLA in the relationship. The route, however, will skirt issues of classroom practice in the normal sense of applications of SL research (addressed in Ellis, this volume) on the grounds that the role of the people involved in this relationship deserves special and separate emphasis.

TEACHERS' WORKING CONDITIONS AND RESEARCH

The literature on professionalism in teaching, my own experience as an ES/FL (English as a second or foreign language) teacher, and observations I have made of S/FL teaching in a number of countries in the last 20 years, all lead me to believe that the general working conditions and training of many S/FL teachers are unsatisfactory. Whatever reservations one might have about the utilization of the term professional to describe teachers, those conditions all too often seem far from what might be required for any so-called profession[3] and, indeed, in many cases may actually have deteriorated in the last 20 years. As a consequence of those conditions, for many teachers the relationship between teaching and research of any kind is nonexistent. For example, a small-scale investigation of the idea sources of ESL teachers in one "service" English program in the United States found that a number of teachers at the site worked more than one job because of low pay and inadequate benefits at the program investigated. Partly as a result of the long classroom hours and absence of preparation time, these teachers reported little use of published research in developing ideas for teaching. One teacher is quoted as follows (Arakaki & Crookes, 1996):

> I don't have time to look at that stuff you know? It's a waste of time. Because if you have to prioritize what you're going to do, to sit and read a lot of research doesn't help you . . . [b]ecause they don't relate to what you're doing.

Another teacher remarked,

> I think a lot of people feel burned out. . . . So there's a major guilt around here of things like *TESOL Quarterly* and all that. There [are] all kind [of] true reactions to seeing one appear in your mailbox. 'Cause we circulate [the journal] in the mailbox. One [reaction] is serious guilt, and the other is "Don't put anything in my mailbox!"

The first quote suggests a relationship between the teacher and research (in general) that was very limited, because of its perceived irrelevance to a specific

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context and set of concerns. The relationship of the second teacher was characterized by guilt. This teacher felt that there was published work that might be useful or relevant to the classroom, but although it was valuable, because of the work conditions the teacher was unable to give it the attention that as a conscientious professional s/he believed it deserved. This is characteristic of a relation of alienation (cf. Crookes, 1993, 1995a, 1995b).

I do not mean to suggest that these responses are typical of all ES/FL teachers, nor even typical of what the two teachers quoted might have said at other, better, times in their professional careers. Rather, they illustrate what might be found among teachers working under the often exploitative conditions that characterize much of ESL in North America (Auerbach, 1991). Just how miserable these conditions are may be difficult to appreciate for those working in North American universities. Besides workload, physical conditions are also poor. A study of public schools in Washington, D.C., states,

> Many ESOL teachers . . . work with extremely limited space and resources. There is no space to make reading and writing materials available or for students to spread out to write quietly, confer with others . . . or display their writing. One teacher works in the front half of the counselor's office, [another in] a closet. Teachers [have] no money to purchase writing materials, trade books, big books, or cassettes and tape recorders for listening to books; no access to photocopying facilities; and in some cases, no paper. (Peyton, Jones, Vincent, & Greenblatt, 1994, p. 474)[4]

The situation, however, is not so much better among North American teachers in more established positions. Many studies attest to the problems generated by what Huberman (1983) calls the "classroom press." Fullan (1991, pp. 33–34) refers to how it "draws [teachers'] focus to day-to-day effects or a short term perspective; it isolates them from other adults . . . it exhausts their energy . . . it limits their opportunities for sustained reflection" and most seriously, for present purposes, "it tends to increase the dependence of teachers on the experiential knowledge necessary for day-to-day coping, to the exclusion of sources of knowledge beyond their own classroom experience." Under these circumstances, the relationship to be examined here must be weak, at least. These dismal conditions form the overarching context within which the possibility of improving the relationship must be discussed. Arguably, this can be achieved both by working on aspects of SLA research and also through working on the actual conditions of teaching. I move now to the former of these.

SLA AND TEACHING: SOME ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP IN THE 1980s

Definitional

What is SLA? There have been many definitional discussions of the field of SLA (e.g., Ellis, 1992, and Gass, 1992 inter alia; cf. Ellis, 1994, p. 686, for more references); they are either a perennial flower or a hardy weed. SLA is, plausibly, a field in and of

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itself. However, one still common position (contra Gass, 1992; Grabe & Kaplan, 1992) is to see SLA as an important section of applied linguistics. Alternatively, if one can replace "applied linguistics" with a phrase like "second and foreign language learning and teaching," one may see SLA as "inextricably entwined" (Gass, 1992, p. 3) with the study of S/FL pedagogy, but a field of study not subordinate to it, nor a subsection of it. Although, as Ellis (1994, pp. 2–3) says, "SLA research has become a rather amorphous field of study with elastic boundaries," the surveys of SLA he lists (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987; Spolsky, 1989; and his own earlier Ellis, 1985) do not equate SLA with applied linguistics and see it as an area of inquiry separate from that into SL teaching itself, though an area with distinct implications for SL teaching. Indeed, there would be less interest in examining the relationship between SLA and S/FL pedagogy if SLA as generally understood included teachers and teaching.

As a domain of inquiry, SLA is in a continual process of change and reinvention,[5] so for present purposes it is easier to consider SLA as it was in the recent past than as it may be right now. This is the perspective that recent surveys such as Ellis (1994) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) give us: an area of investigation arising out of a concern for naturalistic second language acquisition and leading on to a set of topics that at least during the 1980s seemed a delimitable set.[6] Like any science, however, SLA is also a set of social practices. In this case, they are those of a primarily European or American research community,[7] tending to the traditional (i.e., positivistic) in its use of research techniques. It should also not be overlooked that SLA, like any science, can also be regarded (in the linguistic turn: Ricoeur, 1971) as a body of texts or a collection of discourses. This way of looking at it is relevant to the problems of the relationship because it has often been pointed out that such texts may be difficult to read and may privilege some roles or voices at the expense of others.

Part of the Discussion of the Relationship Is Missing and Some of It Has a Subtext

Those who discussed the relationship between SLA and teaching in the 1980s in print were mainly scholars of SLA (see the references in Ellis, 1994, chap. 15);[8] of these the most pessimistic is that of the academic least associated with SLA, Widdowson (1990). The fact that those outside SLA are largely absent from the published record should indicate its weakness. Informal debates also took place, I believe, but were not committed to print. Those between teachers and academics certainly were not, as the words of teachers rarely appear in academic journals related to teaching or learning—a conspicuous silence with obvious implications. In addition, I believe there were also off-the-record debates between SLA researchers and academics who were not primarily within SLA. They were arguments in which the primary official issue was relevance to teaching and one in which the degree of pessimism or skepticism was greater than the published record attests to.

The arguments advanced in these debates, however, cannot be assessed in terms of their logical strength alone. Rather, they should be understood in context, and

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a key part of the reason for the debate lay, I think, in the contested nature of academic programs associated with S/FL teacher preparation—the most likely sites of employment for an SLA researcher. Then, as now, the departments fly a variety of academic flags: English, Linguistics, Education, Modern Languages, not to mention Applied Linguistics. Whenever the justification for the program and the primary cause of enrollment is teacher preparation, disagreements and struggles will exist among members of such departments who have different disciplinary orientations. Arguably, most research efforts in our field prior to the inception of SLA had in fact concerned S/FL teaching (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 5), but subsequently, for some, the pendulum swung too far in the direction of studies of S/FL learning, rather than S/FL teaching, and the influence of this line became too great in what were de jure, or sometimes only de facto, S/FL teacher preparation programs. Issues of relevance and academic respectability do not remain abstract. Eventually, they also turn on positions, careers, the employment of specific individuals, and the promotion or elimination of educational programs and departments, at least. This, together with the absence of the teachers' voice from the published record, should remind us that discussions of the relevance of SLA to S/FL teaching have a power dimension.

Areas of Relevance?

In my own contributions in the task line of SLA work (e.g., Crookes & Rulon, 1988), I have certainly thought that there were implications from this part of SLA to what forms of classroom interaction, both student–student and student–teacher, might be most productive. SLA research, I have felt, has useful comments to make about the desirable characteristics of learning tasks, particularly as they might be constructed by the materials writer. The whole area of classroom interaction SLA research, within which Ellis places the task studies, is an area he feels "has made a real contribution to improving language pedagogy." He is a little disappointed about what this area has so far contributed "to our understanding of how interaction affects acquisition" (Ellis, 1994, p. 607), that is, to more fundamental (theoretical?) matters—which, of course, may well connect to second language pedagogy much less easily even than SLA studies of classroom interaction (cf. Lightbown, 1985). However, precisely because of the grounding of SLA in the learner rather than in the teacher, their concerns have not been prominent in SLA. Perhaps the return to investigations of the teaching of grammar, which Ellis (1991) sees as another major area for which SLA is of relevance to teachers (along with the individual difference area), is one attempt to address the matter of "how." Nevertheless, this lack of attention to teaching and the teacher's perspective in SLA is a problem for relevance and has led to calls to investigate S/FL teaching on its own terms (e.g., Widdowson, 1990).

One development in our field in the 1980s that brought SLA closer toward educational research was the utilization of a perspective known in education as "classroom research." Taking Chaudron's (1988) survey as still encapsulating most of what was done in S/FL research under this heading, I see it as work conducted before the strength of the "qualitative-interpretive" (Davis, 1995) tradition had begun to penetrate to our field and, despite having been done in classrooms, still preponderantly

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concerned with the learners rather than the teachers. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 8) cite Allwright (1983, p. 196) to the effect that "the goal of classroom-centered research is to describe classroom processes, not to prescribe instructional techniques." In S/FL classroom research, when teachers come in, they have tended to be seen more primarily as a source of input, than as actually engaged in direct instruction. Classroom SLA should prima facie have been more relevant to teachers than experimental SLA. As Chaudron's distillation of this work shows, accessibility and relevance of SLA research could still be problematic for teachers, and, furthermore, it proved quite difficult to do while maintaining the standards of rigor associated with the quantitative tradition.[9]

LIMITATIONS IN SLA FROM MORE RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Changes that began to take place in the vicinity of SLA as the 1980s moved into the 1990s were the development of a metalevel understanding of sciences as social phenomena and cultural constructions and the growth in acceptance, understanding, and utilization of qualitative and critical approaches to research. These have increasingly penetrated applied linguistics and to a lesser extent SLA, mainly from education. They shed additional light on why the relationship between the dominant understanding of 1980s SLA and both teaching and teachers might have been more tenuous than some would have wished.

Individualist Psychology, or Learning as a Nonsocial Phenomenon

Through to the 1970s linguistics still was such an important source discipline for SLA that it almost excluded psychology. When, as a student, I was first exposed to the work of Krashen (e.g., 1977), I found it interesting but was frustrated by the absence of explanation concerning learning and acquisition and the lack of attachment to any more general understandings of human learning. It was a relief to discover cognitive psychology, and I was even more pleased when McLaughlin began introducing it into SLA as a tool to criticize existing work and construct new theories (McLaughlin, Rossman, & McLeod, 1983). At the time, however, I had no idea that this was just one psychology among many. Though cognitive psychology was to be preferred to its dominant predecessor because it was (purportedly, at least) about people (rather than rats), it was a long time before I began to understand that it, like its predecessor, could be seen as a sociocultural construct (cf. Gergen, 1985) that reflected at least to some extent the presumptions of the societies in which it developed. That was why it was fundamentally an individualist psychology that treats people as isolates (cf. Harré, 1984). Treating learning as internal to the learner places it a step or so away from the conditions of the teacher, who works as a partner to learners learning in groups. This conception potentially exacerbates the relevance problem.

A first alternative to the cognitive psychology of learning is the social psychology of learning, which has a group or societal orientation. The most familiar SLA work

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broadly in this tradition is that of Gardner (e.g., 1985). However, this has been criticized precisely because it does not use the understandings of key terms (such as motivation) the way, allegedly, they are used by teachers (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). It clearly does not draw on direct investigations of classrooms or of teaching. More to the point, this field does have a subcategory that should be more directly connected to the interests of teachers (i.e., the social psychology of education), but regrettably the amount of such work that truly relates to specifically classroom contexts is very minimal (Bar-Tal & Bar-Tal, 1986; Schmuck, 1978), and its applications to SL learning are equally scarce. There has been recent growth in popularity of another social psychology of learning, inspired by the reinvigoration of the line of Vygotsky, which may perhaps be considered by teachers seeking implications from SLA to their work (e.g., Lantolf & Appel, 1994). However, neither more explicitly nonindividualist social psychologies (Harré, 1984; Harré & Gillett, 1994; Shotter, 1984; cf. Gee, 1992), nor the related critique of social psychology of Gergen (e.g., 1985; see discussion in Greenwood, 1994) have been utilized, nor have the implications of the work on psychologies based in non-Western cultures (Heelas & Lock, 1981; Shweder, 1991) been taken up by SL scholars.[10]

Social and Rhetorical Manifestations of Positivism

The dominant Anglo-American psychology of adult learning, whether behaviorist or cognitive, is the most accepting of the "naturalist" (Bhaskar, 1979) position: that the social sciences should be constructed on the model of the natural sciences (and that as an unfortunate terminological consequence, it is not naturalistic, in the sense of Lincoln and Guba [1985]). A dominant trend in SLA has followed this line, and so, even though the findings of SLA research were generally characterized as "theory" rather than merely as sets of laws, and rarely articulated as theories in either the logical positivist or realist mode, they certainly fitted in well with the older research and development model of education systems, in which, first, researchers searching for truth do pure science. The rhetorical forms in which their research is dispensed are structured accordingly, in what Bourdieu (1988) calls "magisterial language." Findings, presented in "language [whose] status and authority . . . tends to rule out any question about the genuinely informative efficiency of the communication" (Corson, 1991, p. 232), are handed down to practitioners.

Classic early SLA made considerable use of the case study (e.g., Hatch, 1978), a form that has continued to be used (Duff, 1988), and the language of these reports seems relatively accessible to the lay person. Report formats and metalanguage in the dominant quantitative–experimental paradigm, however, have often been seen as inaccessible to teachers. Many SLA researchers have been aware of this aspect of the relevance problem and tried hard to deal with it. On the one hand, this led to at least one work for teachers based on research in which, however, the research was relegated to extensive footnotes or fine print (Krashen, 1985) and, on the other, to attempts in print (and, of course, in applied linguistics programs) to educate teachers concerning the statistical paradigm and its reports. Introducing one such effort, Brown (1991) observes that "many of the statistical studies on language

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learning and teaching that are found in *TESOL Quarterly* may be incomprehensible to the very EFL/ESL teachers who make up the intended audience" (Brown, 1991, p. 569).

An overarching characteristic of what has been done in mainstream SLA work is its analytic orientation, as opposed to the holistic perspective of the qualitative tradition (Diesing, 1972). In the former tradition, it is axiomatic that phenomena should be isolated for consideration, examined under controlled conditions, and that the elements of explanation thus gained be assembled into a larger whole without danger of misprision thereby. Using this approach tends to mean adopting an orientation to investigating S/FL learning matters by removing them to a greater or lesser degree from their social setting, which again makes transfer by the teacher reading them to specific teaching contexts difficult (though not necessarily impossible). By contrast, a case could be made that qualitative research reports, following from their holistic viewpoint, are a priori more accessible to the reader because they use narrative, which Bruner (1986, 1990) asserts is the ur-format for human discourse. On the other hand, many such reports also are challenging because of academic style, complex analysis, and assumed theoretical background.[11] Nevertheless, the first-person account, detailed descriptions of concrete educational sites and classrooms, and required use of the perspectives of teachers and students in the site may more than compensate for these challenges (cf. Stake, 1986; and discussion in Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994).

Being or Becoming Critical

To oversimplify, the more recent qualitative research tradition brings with it an explicit attention to values that is shunned by the quantitative tradition.[12] Though qualitative work is not necessarily emancipatory[13] or critical in nature, the debates associated with acceptance or rejection of subjectivity (among other things; cf. Guba, 1990) paved the way for the increased visibility and utilization of the critical tradition, first in education and increasingly in "our field." The orientation to SLA I received as a student did not include the view, much more common now than then, that the dominant traditions in linguistics and psychology were not critical,[14] nor the view that being critical (in the sense of critical theory) was even an option in a science dedicated to the pursuit of truth.[15]

In both the British and American applied linguistics communities, struggles between academics and governments have highlighted the political nature of SL-related research. Debate in the United States over bilingual education during the Reagan years reminded many of the extent to which numbers were not objective and that statistics could be lied with (cf. Yates & Ortiz, 1983); in the United Kingdom, "expert opinion on language and education has been treated with growing disdain" (Rampton, 1995, p. 241). The commitment of certain language researchers to oppressed communities (e.g., Delpit, 1986; cf. Peirce, 1995; Toohey, 1995) became a more recognizable phenomenon, although this kind of work has been marginal to SLA thus far.[16] As the EFL business became more clearly seen as unavoidably political (Judd, 1987) and deriving directly from imperialism on the one hand (Phillipson, 1992), yet capable

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of being marshalled in defense of minority groups (e.g., antiracist education in the United Kingdom: Levine, 1990), the sense in which SLA had been brought up in an uncritical research tradition became more apparent. Because of this upbringing, SLA is still inclined to maintain its preferred levels of theory (cf. Manicas, 1982; Wimsatt, 1976) independent from higher, more social levels.[17] Applied linguistics, by contrast, or at least the British part, has become less "autonomous" (Rampton, 1995). Within this development, it is accepted that ESL teachers are an oppressed or marginalized group (Auerbach, 1991; cf. Ellis, 1985). Furthermore, it would be taken as given that theories, and truth, and what passes for accepted knowledge of social life are inseparable from issues of power (cf. Foucault, 1980). The power dimension embodied in SLA research and theory, then (in which it is researchers who say what the truth of the matter is), would be seen as naturally problematic for teachers—the oppressed and the powerful make poor companions.

To summarize thus far: Arguments could be advanced to the effect that the relationship between SLA and pedagogy, though one having potential in the abstract, remains weak in practice because of the lack of uptake of S/FL research in general by S/FL teachers. This situation could perhaps be improved if (a) SLA focused more on learning as social rather than psychological, (b) it were more oriented to the qualitative tradition of investigation and particularly its style of reporting, and (c) it recognized the status of ESL teachers (part, at least, of the presumed audience for the work) in native English countries as generally marginalized representatives of a marginalized constituency and accordingly did research that incorporated issues of power, that is, critical research.

TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS; TEACHERS (DO) RESEARCH; TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

Having looked at the relationship from the viewpoint of weakness in the conditions of teaching and subsequently in terms of limitations and potential problems at the SLA end, I now consider the two sides of this debate as people. Teachers and researchers (and the two are sometimes one) can connect on the matter of research knowledge in various ways, and the recognition that teachers have their own knowledge independent of research is also important.

Teachers and Researchers

In terms of status, the relationship between these two groups is hierarchical. This is generally assumed to be one reason for the distance between the two groups. (Other reasons: The two groups are composed of individuals of different personality types [Moody, 1988] or, less provocatively, the work cultures of the two groups are irremediably different [Wingens, 1990].) Efforts to set up more egalitarian or at least closer relationships between these two groups, particularly in the developed world, have increased steadily in the last two decades. On the one hand, many have advocated or tried a variety of different kinds of teacher–researcher connections; on the other, perhaps similar possibilities might come out of connections at the

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institutional level, such as university–school partnerships. Can these initiatives make a difference to the relationship between teachers and researchers that might also apply to the relationship between S/FL teaching and SLA research?

Teacher–Researcher Connections

Empirical research on the communication networks and contacts between researchers and practitioners involved in a nationwide series of studies suggests that a greater degree of contact among individuals in a network of socially or professionally related educators and researchers increases the likelihood that research findings will be utilized by practitioners (Huberman, 1990). However, in another large research project, in which teachers were directly involved in some aspects of the investigation, direct teacher input in the formulation of reports was required to ensure they took a form that was likely to lead to use (Florio-Ruane & Dohanich, 1984).

Smaller scale partnerships have been widely advocated. One such partnership in the area of language instruction was between academic Shirley Brice Heath and high school practitioner Amanda Branscombe. The partnership came about on the basis of Branscombe having refocused her teaching to make it more exploratory (though she does not use Allwright's 1991 term), inspired particularly by the work of Berthoff (1987; originally published in 1979). Having taken in-service coursework on teacher research and conducted some preliminary work, she invited Heath to her classroom to do a joint investigation of high school writing. It is a noteworthy example because of the prominence of the university researcher, because several reflective accounts exist of it, and because Branscombe has gone on to develop and report independent research (cf. Branscombe & Thomas, 1992) and to further promote such connections (Branscombe, Goswami, & Schwarz, 1992).

Allwright and Bailey (1990) also draw attention to the potential of such partnerships, referring to Florio and Walsh (1981) and Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) as reports even closer to our field. They remark,

> ideally it would be best to have researchers act as local consultants in school systems, just as educational psychologists already do. Classroom teachers could then turn to such a consultant for expert advice in exploring anything that intrigued them about the learners in their classrooms. This would neatly reverse the present unsatisfactory pattern whereby it is typically the researchers who invent their own research projects and then come to teachers for help in carrying them out. (Allwright & Bailey, 1990, p. 198)

Such partnerships are also possible in the area of SLA and might be expected to produce research that would be particularly relevant and meaningful to the teacher and, one might hope, to S/FL pedagogy in general.

We should recognize, however, the many social-institutional obstacles to doing this sort of research. There are few professional rewards available to the individuals on both sides that derive directly from such partnerships. At present, although service is officially part of an academic's responsibilities in the United States, it is rarely the deciding factor in hiring or promotion. And again, for most teachers,

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engaging in research, even if it results in improvements in classroom practice, is unlikely to carry any financial reward or even benefit in terms of promotion or prestige. That is to say, in general, the educational institutions on both sides of the relationship are tacitly supporting the divide rather than helping individuals to cross it. Counterexamples simply reflect the point that, in some specific circumstances, it is of mutual benefit to the two participants. This idea of mutual benefit is central to some efforts to address the relationship at the institutional level.

University–School Partnerships

A strong push for university–school partnerships has come from a number of quarters in the U.S. educational system and elsewhere. The ideas of John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) are notable for, among other things, making use of the idea of mutual benefit. The efforts of Goodlad and his associates have not been directed by an immediate concern about the divide that may separate teachers and researchers but, rather, out of the perceived inadequacies of U.S. public schools and the associated failures of academics in teacher education programs to ameliorate the situation. Once again, it has been felt that the separation between the two sides is too great. In trying to bring the parties together, Goodlad and his colleagues have emphasized the importance of the institutions, recognizing that "schools need better teachers" and that "universities need better sites in which to prepare future teachers" (Goodlad, 1988, p. 3). Once this has been achieved, NNER provides support for teams of administrators, university faculty, and cooperating teachers to come together at various stages of the planning process, leading to the implementation of a closely coordinated teacher education program. As one of many side effects, "collaboration offers long term, sustained staff development that can replace the 'in-service day' that periodically occurs in many districts" (Mellgren & Caye, 1989, p. 557). Although research is not directly targeted in such an approach, the sustained personal contact between teachers and researchers for research uptake is more likely to arise under these conditions. What could add to the likelihood of this outcome? First, such teacher education programs should include on-site teaching of relevant coursework in which cooperating teachers take some of the same courses as their student teachers.[18] At some institutions, arrangements are also made for such courses to be co-taught by experienced cooperating teachers who act as adjunct university faculty. This increases the size of the teacher pool working directly with student teachers and university faculty and strengthens and extends the degree of shared understandings and language for talking about practice. The second point concerns university faculty conception of the desirability of research-related relationships between themselves and teachers and the sort of research and research reporting that goes along with it (as mentioned earlier, cf. Florio-Ruane & Dohanich, 1984).

Teachers as Researchers

A quite separate line of development has been that associated with the term "teacher research," which has been a small part of our discourse for more than a decade (cf. Long, 1983) and in education literature for much longer. Initially, in education,

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teacher research was not necessarily equated with action research, but this has become the more common usage in applied linguistics (but cf. Crookes, 1993). Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (1994) see the growth in this area as connected to other changes mentioned in a previous section: that the teacher–researcher movement has moved forward in parallel with the growth and acceptance of qualitative research in education. Tracing the history of "practitioner research," they state:

> Although the teacher researcher movement in North America occurred later than in Britain and Latin America, it was not derivative of either movement, nor was it a reappropriation of the North American action research movement of the 1940s and 1950s. . . . [T]he movement among North American teachers to do research began with a unique set of circumstances. . . . The dominance of the quantitative, positivistic paradigm of research in education was challenged by qualitative, case study, and ethnographic research from the late 1960s on. Because they more closely resemble the narrative forms already used by practitioners to communicate their knowledge, making qualitative forms of research legitimate helped open the door for practitioners to experiment with more systematic qualitative approaches in studying their practice. (Anderson et al., 1994, pp. 19–20)

How does the foregoing play into the SLA domain? First, it is generally believed that teachers who do action research are more able to make use of published research (e.g., Altricher, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Tikunoff & Mergendoller, 1983; personal accounts support this in Atwell, 1987, and Mohr, 1987). Far more radically, and perhaps optimistically (Roberts, 1993), it is sometimes asserted that it can challenge relations on a broader scale:

> [T]eacher research is a form of social change wherein individuals and groups labor to understand and alter classrooms, schools, and school communities. . . . Because teacher research interrupts traditional assumptions about knowers, knowing, and what can be known about teaching, it has the potential to redefine the notion of a knowledge base for teaching and to challenge the university's hegemony in the generation of expert knowledge for the field. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. xiv)

But in addition—to take a retrograde step—although this general approach assumes teachers will investigate their own teaching, their own classrooms or schools, in the (generally rare) situations in which teachers' working conditions permit them to conduct any research at all, they could do research that is theoretically motivated by the SLA tradition. For that matter, they could do work that generates grounded theory about instructed SLA, from and with the students in their own classrooms.

The discussion of how engaging in research might aid teachers to make use of published research should be informed by a good understanding of what teachers' knowledge is and how it is affected. The conceptions of Schön (1987) have helped to legitimize the idea that there is knowledge arrived at and acted upon in practice that may not be easily articulable nor arrived at through scientific processes but that is legitimate and possibly more useful in practice than scientific knowledge. Biographical studies of teachers' knowledge and of teacher development is a line

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of research being increasingly prosecuted. It begins, most obviously, with Elbaz (1981, 1983, cf. K. Richards, 1994) and addresses the full range of teachers' knowledge, but my concern in the present discussion is with what Elbaz just calls "theory." For her respondent, theory was something primarily acquired within the program of her major (literature) and to a limited extent within other in-service coursework. If a similar pattern were to be found for S/FL teachers, this would lead us to examine critically the role SLA content plays within S/FL teacher education courses (cf. Bolitho, 1991).[19] The concept of "teachers' lore" has been put forward by Schubert and Ayers (1992). This concept further defends as equally legitimate the knowledge of teaching and learning that circulates among teachers without manifesting itself even in the evanescent literature of teacher-research. The claim to better knowing through scientific method made by SLA justifies the hierarchical relationship it has to teachers and to teachers' knowledge. However, this may change if teachers' knowledge is increasingly accepted on its own terms.

Researchers as (Ex-?)Teachers

Finally, it has sometimes been recognized that S/FL research often follows, rather than leads, S/FL teaching (e.g., Ellis, 1991). This is particularly true for SLA studies pertaining to innovations in SL curriculum and pedagogy, which are what Freeman and Richards (1993) call "theory-based" (i.e., in the pejorative sense of theory as something not grounded in facts). It should not be forgotten that, although it is true that many university SLA researchers are not ESL teachers in the sense of being currently involved in classroom ESL instruction, many of them have done ES/FL teaching in the past (Pica, 1994), though only a handful have managed to keep a foot in both camps (Clarke, 1994). In some cases, what was the stimulus for their research has been their own experiences as S/FL learners and teachers. For some researchers, a substantial part of their research begins while they are MA or doctoral students, at which time they are often still doing (E)S/FL teaching. The hints are available in some published work and a historical excavation of the antecedents of specific SLA studies in classroom experience would be desirable. The more general application of this line is what Ellis (1988) calls an "educational" approach to SLA that "seeks to illuminate language pedagogy through studies of what takes place in the name of instruction and how this affects acquisition" (Ellis, 1992, p. 15).

THE TIES THAT BIND: WHAT TRANSMITS OR SUSTAINS THESE RELATIONSHIPS?

Assess the Situation

I addressed the relationship between SLA research and S/FL pedagogy as potentially concretized through the actions and attitudes of teachers. The question "What is the relationship between SLA research and pedagogy?" is susceptible to conceptual analysis, but I believe that it is more important for SLA and for applied linguistics that it now be responded to empirically. If narrowed in a variety of ways it could

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produce a much needed set of investigations concerning specific bodies of SLA research (methodological and conceptually distinguishable), specific individuals or groups of teachers, and, thereby, specific pedagogic and curriculum practices. Regrettably, it is an issue that has hardly been studied by those involved in SLA or (E)S/FL. However, knowledge utilization and information dissemination are empirical fields of study (e.g., Beal, Dissanayake, & Konoshima, 1986; cf. Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; Fullan, 1991; Huberman, 1983, 1990; Tyler, 1988)—both their procedures and conceptual frameworks could and should be brought to bear. The persistent negative chorus on the teaching–research connection in our field deserves more direct inquisition than it has had in the past. (In the absence of such work, of course, my comments in this paper should be seen as tentative and personal.) Subareas that deserve attention are as follows.

Let us return to the quotes from the overworked teachers. Does the fact that they have no time to read the *TESOL Quarterly,* for example, truly mean that they have no relationship with research, or SLA research, or that their pedagogy is really uninformed by it? Bailey's (1992) study of ESL teacher development does mention in passing some role for published literature on teaching and learning in changes in her respondents' teaching. The teachers quoted at the outset of the paper indicated that their major sources for ideas about ESL teaching were other teachers, but they also mentioned textbooks as a source. Do textbooks reflect SLA research? Many do not, of course, but some textbooks in our field do now contain ideas that were not present explicitly in texts in the past and did show up on the horizon of applied linguistics primarily within research (cf. Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). One example would be the role of learning strategies that has finally made its way from the journal literature of 10 and 20 years ago (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975) to handbook (Rubin & Thompson, 1994) and textbook (Chamot, 1987) forms in recent years.

Some of the criticisms of published SLA research have focused on the journal literature (as did one of the teachers quoted). But if teachers are going to get anything from SLA research, are they not more likely to get it from publications that try to provide a more substantial chunk of information than the single piece of the puzzle provided by most journal articles?

> The effects of research on educational practice are seldom straightforward and quick. As in other fields, there are few definitive studies, but rather a gradual accretion of knowledge drawn from overlapping studies in many fields of study, conducted over a long period of time, punctuated by an occasional breakthrough. . . . [D]ecades of basic research provide the seedbed for new approaches and methods. (Atkinson & Jackson, 1992, p. 20)

So one might assert that the relationship between SLA research and the average classroom teacher, if it exists, is almost certainly a mediated one, with various agents (including textbooks) standing between the two groups. It seems that it is still primarily one-way—from the research community to teachers. Because there is comparatively little SL action research going on (but see Edge & Richards, 1993), I do not think there are many cases where pedagogical problems faced by S/FL teachers are solved through their own investigations and concomitant use of re-

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search publications. This is a pity, and if there were such work going on it would fit with the mediated model, in that through administrative support and encouragement research might be being made more use of.

Some Possible Responses

The NNER associates (e.g., Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1988; cf. Fullan, 1993), seeking to improve the U.S. education system following their analysis of the many failed reform efforts, reject single-factor solutions, taking the position that all elements of the education system related to teacher preparation must be changed at once if there is to be improvement. Clarke (1994), in a discussion topically related to the present paper, also advocates a systems-based solution. Seeing SLA research in a system-wide context is desirable, so in entering some suggestions below I am not attempting to isolate them; rather, I think that it is essential to contextualize adequately the problem and see it as a social phenomenon. If knowledge is socially constructed, so (presumably) is the relationship among a group of people, their practices, and a body of knowledge.

If the decontextualized nature of mainstream SLA research contributes to the problem of relevance or uptake, what should be done? The increased visibility of the qualitative tradition seems likely to improve accessibility, so its use should be encouraged. Could SLA become more contextualized by utilizing a more critical vision, either directly or through drawing upon critical versions of the source disciplines of linguistics (Rampton, 1995) and psychology (Sullivan, 1984)? Although it might be argued that this would aid its relevance to some ESL teachers within countries in which the status and working conditions of teachers are under attack, and in which ESL is the need of the refugee, the migrant, or the undocumented, in EFL countries, where English is the aspiration of the middle classes and the power language of the elite, some teachers could find such work inaccessible. Even in these places, however, the working conditions of teachers in elite institutions are by no means always favorable; empirical studies in this tradition would inevitably focus on specific contexts and might thereby avoid this problem.

Most published research, not only in SLA but also in applied linguistics, is done by academics. This is even the case in strongly teacher-oriented journals such as *English Teaching Forum.* True involvement by teachers in research, as already mentioned, should strengthen the relationship between research and pedagogy. Therefore, particularly of interest should be *TESOL Journal,* which was instituted partly because of perceptions of distance between *TESOL Quarterly* and ES/FL teachers, and which has developed a mentoring scheme to induct and support new writers, potentially nonacademics. If SLA researchers are concerned with fostering the relationship, perhaps their journals could learn from this approach too.

Developing a Mediated Relationship

If the relationship, insofar as it exists, is a mediated one, perhaps strengthening the forms of mediation would help, because according to Fullan (1991), "Teachers do

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receive information literature, and most attend workshops here and there, but they do not have the opportunity for continuous personal contact, which would be necessary for becoming aware of and following up on innovative ideas" (p. 53). This could begin, and perhaps is already beginning, in teacher education programs. One of the limitations of older approaches to teacher education often discussed has been the lack of opportunity provided for student teachers to digest the content of academic coursework so as to be able to relate it to their teaching. This is less of a problem when courses are taken during a break in one's teaching career or concurrent with either a formal teaching position or an extended practicum or other practical experience somewhat concurrent with the academic coursework. The importance of this has been raised to an overall organizational level in the recent approaches to reflective teaching in applied linguistics (e.g., Wallace, 1991; cf. Freeman, 1992). It is applied to all content in preservice courses by J. C. Richards and Lockhart (1994), but presumably the argument also applies to the subsection of content that would appear in a course on SLA.

At an elementary level, a simple but recurring problem concerns the physical accessibility of information by teachers. If indeed there are only, say, a handful of studies of a particular problem or issue, the fact that they may be in edited collections or journals not indexed in ERIC or indexed in the primary indices of the field (*SLA/T* or *Language Teaching*), which are not on-line, may mean that relevant SLA research, no matter how accessible the prose, cannot be brought to bear by the teacher.[20] Addressing this problem in one experimental program, a teachers' union (the American Federation of Teachers) supported teacher development by providing financial support to release teachers to stay within schools and assist the local delivery of materials and information. These "teacher linkers" were teachers with responsibility for "finding materials, locating speakers [and] linking teachers who share common interests and needs" (Kent, 1985, p. 31).[21] Extending from this, on a related matter I wrote (Crookes, 1993),

> Other means of information dissemination must be adopted, in which the personal element is involved, either in dissemination alone (Popham 1991; cf. "linking systems," Rogers 1986; "teacher research linkers," Billups and Rauth 1987), or through institutionalizing action research so as to change school staffs into communities of action researchers. (p. 137; cf. Bennett and Desforges 1985)

This sort of orientation needs also to be stressed and supported by school administrations in their responsibility for teacher professional development. The volume of publications addressing staff development in education continues to grow with increasing rapidity,[22] but whether this is truly having any effect has been questioned. Senge (1995) points out that most staff development programs "develop the skills of individuals to do their work better" but what is needed is "enhancing the collective capacity of people to create and pursue overall visions" in "learning communities." Some such schools do exist; for instance, Cazden (1989) reports on a Maori school in New Zealand with a strong second language and culture orientation. She includes this quote from a teacher there:

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> You were always feeling at Richmond Road that *teachers* were learning all the time. I was better prepared for going to the university by what we'd done. A lot of people who go to the university at my age, they go to this New Start program [but I didn't]. Having been at Richmond Road has kept my mind active. When we had to do talks [at workshops and conferences], that prepares you—you've got to do some reading. We had the latest of everything that was out. If there was an article that Jim [the principal] thought we should have, it was discussed at staff meeting. He'd say, "Right. You two people can prepare this." I remember . . . [an anthropologist's report of mathematics learning in Africa]. It made us look at all sorts of culturally different ways children could have mathematics. (p. 147)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although I have suggested that dominant historical trends in the conduct and reporting of SLA research, as well as the restricted way the field has generally been defined, may have to bear some responsibility for what is in practice a weak relationship to S/FL pedagogy, in the final analysis it is not the case that all the aspects of the problem I have considered above should be equally weighted. I agree with van Lier (1990, p. 181) who, in a discussion paralleling the present one, remarks that "the solution is not for [SLA] researchers to simplify their research, or even their reporting (though this can often profit from de-jargonization)"; rather, the work conditions of S/FL teaching, the conception of a teachers' responsibilities, and the conception of schools' responsibilities in sustaining professional practice and development must change. I am, then, returning to the problems I emphasized at the outset of this paper. The present system of education in much of the developed world prevents primary- and secondary-level teachers from exercising reflection and, indeed, prevents them from having careers and professional responsibilities; although it allows this, under pressure, to teachers at the tertiary level (i.e., professors). In much of the "South," we should remember, professionalism is not even allowed under the work conditions of the university (one reason why SLA research is not truly international).

Because of the characteristics of traditional (so-called positivist) SLA research, it is difficult for mainstream SLA researchers to incorporate elements in their research that can directly engage with the roles and responsibilities of teachers. In defense of colleagues, I hasten to point out that (following the locutions of the linguistic turn) the construction of SLA in this form should not be seen solely as a deliberate act of those now senior figures in the field—it was a construction imposed on them, and the embryonic field of SLA, by preexisting discourses. Nevertheless, alternatives are now available.

A number of individuals in SLA and more broadly in applied linguistics have advocated action research (Ellis, Long, Nunan, and van Lier, among others) as a way of breaking down the barriers between teachers and researchers. In addition, if the understanding of action research to be used is critical and participatory (cf. Auerbach, 1993; Crookes, 1993; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), this can take teachers from immediate technical problems to collaborative investigation of the social conditions that prevent them from being professional. Whether this form of action will lead to more and better traditional SLA research, I am not sure, but it might facilitate

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the kind of teacher employment conditions under which more conceptually challenging SLA research reports might be capable of being digested and utilized in pedagogy.

In addition, few SLA researchers are just academics—many are also teacher educators. Insofar as they see the positions of teachers as an oppressed group as part of the problem concerning the relationship between SLA and S/FL pedagogy, they have at least the option not to reproduce the conditions of oppression in their own classrooms. That is to say, they have available to them immediately the possibility of engaging in a critical pedagogy of teacher education, or even of SLA, in courses they teach on that topic. In addition, one who researches SLA also has the option to research other matters. The tools for researching the conditions of teaching may not be those commonly used by mainstream SLA researchers—if so, coursework (in qualitative-interpretive research or critical ethnography) is available on many a campus.

Finally, SLA researchers, as academics, are sometimes potentially influential players in their own or (as expatriates) in host education systems. Some may wish to work for improvement in other aspects of society rather than education or at least, following Freire, recognize the necessity of such work outside the educational sphere if education is to improve, but there is sometimes the opportunity for academics to exert influence on educational systems in favor of teachers. On this point Clarke (1994, p. 19) is pessimistic: "Teachers cannot expect their agendas to be furthered by administrators or researchers" and suggests that they should engage in "specific acts of agitation against the status quo." However, if SLA researchers believe that the relationship between their work and S/FL education is important, besides their role as researchers, they must consider their possibilities for action as engaged intellectuals in civil society.[23] Elsewhere in education, Ladwig and Gore (1994, p. 237) say, "[A]ctivist academics now working in the North American academy have an opportunity to use their positions in a manner that is more politically productive and defensible than ever before (in our lifetimes, at least)."

In short, a practical relationship between SLA research and S/FL pedagogy depends particularly on the conditions of S/FL teachers. If SLA researchers are to take any responsibility for sustaining it in practice, they must either incorporate sociopolitical considerations, particularly as they apply to teachers, into their investigations (which would mean a redefinition, for many, of SLA itself), or they must engage directly, rather than through SLA research, with the educational and political systems that persist in devaluing the knowledge and work of teachers while preventing them from engaging in the sort of reflective practice that would sustain the kind of relationship between research and pedagogy that is most desirable.

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NOTES

1. For instance, see Rice and Richlin (1993) for medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, architecture, and nursing; Wenger (1987) for social work; Morrow-Bradley and Elliott (1986) and Peterson (1991) for counseling.

2. However, here in the absence of specific case studies of teachers relating or not to SLA research, it will be difficult to avoid some overhomogenizing of an enormously diverse group of individuals and contexts.

3. Compare Auerbach (1991), Gitlin (1987), Hargreaves (1992), Huberman (1983), and Wright (1988), among others, but see Smyth (1995) on the limitations of applying the conception "professional" to teaching.

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4. Similar conditions prevail in the United Kingdom—the "makeshift basis" and "unsuitable spaces" of ESL in the United Kingdom as Ellis (1985, p. 2) named them—and obviously, such a description could also apply to the conditions for EFL teaching in the state sectors of less developed countries.

5. As is applied linguistics: compare Rampton (1995).

6. See the contents pages of these surveys, for example, to arrive at something like the following: interlanguage studies, especially of variability, acquisition orders and developmental sequences, the linguistic environment (input and interaction), transfer, SLA theories (cognitive and other), and individual differences, including learners' strategies.

7. "The social sciences develop divergently in different countries, and different core conceptions—up to and including systematic variations in what is understood as 'science'—are found" (Giddens, 1991, p. xiv). Compare Sridhar (1994).

8. A couple of exceptions would be Clarke (1994) and Bolitho (1991).

9. See Eisenhart and Borko (1993) for an extended discussion of what must be done in conducting future classroom research to address the lack of uptake of even this form of research by the teacher.

10. Indigenous psychologies have not been used to explain or understand S/FL learning; but indigenous pedagogies have (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1992); compare Cazden's (1990) criticisms.

11. Eisenhart and Borko (1993, p. 10), worrying about the non-use of both quantitative and qualitative reports, refer to the latter being dismissed if teachers see them as reporting the "obvious" or if teachers "do not have time to read the often lengthy and tedious reports that qualitative researchers think they must produce in order to 'explain' their findings."

12. Though this has not always been the case, as there is not one tradition here, but many—compare Lakomski (1988, p. 54) on the "implicit . . . conservatism of the interpretive school." Note use of the term "positivist ethnography" as synonymous with the anthropology of colonialism. Compare Clifford (1988) and Roman (1992).

13. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that many S/FL researchers working in the quantitative tradition had and still have an emancipatory intent.

14. On the positions that these two are not critical, see, for example, Hodge and Kress (1993) and Sullivan (1984), respectively.

15. A science, that is to say, which was a historical construction, originally of the Enlightenment period, during which science replaced religion as the source of certainty in an uncertain world (cf. Toulmin, 1990).

16. Studies of bilingual education and bilingual classrooms play a very small role in surveys of the field of SLA such as the one in Ellis (1994). Perhaps, given the association between SLA and the quantitative tradition already discussed, this is partly because, as Ellis (1994, p. 569) notes, studies of bilingual classrooms have been mainly associated with the ethnographic tradition. Studies of bilingual education as presented in *NABE Journal,* on the other hand, have been mainly quantitative.

17. A form of reductionism (cf. Schumann, 1993; Manicas, 1982).

18. As happens, for example, at the University of Hawai'i (McEwan, 1996). See Cole and Knowles (1993) for a fuller discussion of the range of relationships and distribution of functions in such "partnership research."

19. At the time of Elbaz's study, she was able to write, "[W]e know little of the role actually played in the teacher's thinking by theory." This has changed for education in general and is changing, to some extent, for S/FL teaching. She continued, "[T]he teacher educator must know a good deal about how teachers actually view theory—how willing they are to make use of whatever theories they have access to, when they are able to see theory as relevant, [and] what kinds of theories they find most helpful" (p. 68).

20. Consider error treatment in the acquisition of a written S/FL as an SLA topic plausibly of concern to S/FL teachers and with direct implications for pedagogy. The experienced scholar, though not a specialist in the area, may fairly swiftly arrive at Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986) through *SLA/T* and Fathman and Whalley (1990) through knowing of the existence of Kroll (1990). But an SL teacher without, say, MA-level training and unfamiliar with specialist bibliographic resources . . . ?

21. For more on the role of teachers unions in promoting change, see Fullan (1993).

22. Even in our field: Impey and Underhill (1995) and White, Martin, Stimson, and Hodge (1991).

23. For Sartre (1966), the engaged intellectual uses writing as a means of action in and on society; "organic" intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) have a direct connection to the institution they are trying to change; Foucault (1980) advises that they be "specific" rather than "universal" intellectuals, in that they address specific aspects of oppression in contexts they are familiar with and not try to claim or coopt movements for social change.

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