

HONG KONG URBAN CLASSROOM CULTURE

LOCAL DILEMMAS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EMI-BASED MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS



Miguel Pérez-Milans

with the collaboration of Carlos Soto & Wang Hang

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The underlying approach and philosophy in this material draws on the following resource published by King's College London, which has been adjusted to the realities, needs and concerns of teachers in the Hong Kong context:

Harris, R., A. Lefstein, C. Leung & B. Rampton (2011). *Urban Classroom Culture: Realities, Dilemmas, Responses*. London: King's College London Centre for Language Discourse & Communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. REFORM AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN HONG KONG, FROM THE BOTTOM

Contemporary classrooms are a major focus of public debate in contemporary world, particularly in the current context of Hong Kong where wide-ranging educational reforms have been undertaken since the early 2000's. In this context of on-going reform, language education policies have been the centre of a controversial debate which involves all administrative levels and societal actors, from politicians to educators, families and youngsters. Thus, official guidelines and public demands are increasingly emphasizing monitoring of curriculum and pedagogy from a top-down perspective. As a result, Hong Kong teachers, students and school heads find themselves under great pressure to apply abstract guidelines designed outside the confines of the schools with no guidance or consideration on how are they supposed to be localised in everyday lives of their specific school communities.

Against this background, the aim of this material is to provide a systematic set of classroom-based naturally occurring data, complementary activities and materials for educators to reflect upon Hong Kong's contemporary reforms of its language education policies, from a bottom-up perspective which takes into consideration real and localised experiences of teachers and students who are supposed to make such reforms a reality. This is not an academic book in which classroom data are analyzed against or in relation to a given theoretical framework; rather, this package attempts to allow Hong Kong teachers to reflect around the provided classroom materials under the guidance of a facilitator, on the basis of which further interpretations and (academic/non-academic) discourses/perspectives available in wider society are progressively brought into being. Indeed, these complementary perspectives are

introduced in a way that seeks consolidation / re-consideration / challenging of initial interpretations by teachers and, therefore, opens new paths for discussion and reflection.

1.2. THE FOCUS SCHOOL (AT THE TIME OF THE RESEARCH): REPRESENTATIVENESS AND DISTINCTIVENESS

The school participating in this study was a government-aided band-3 secondary school which, in response to declining enrolment, had recently implemented an English-medium-of-instruction-based division aimed at teaching working-class ethnic minority students (i.e. with Nepali, Filipino and Pakistani background), while maintaining a local division serving the school's majority ethnically-Chinese student population. Classroom materials and interactions in this teaching package have been collected from the International Division, where students had a wide range of linguistic and educational backgrounds. While some of them had previously studied in a Cantonese-speaking primary school and therefore were able to speak and write Chinese, most had limited knowledge of this language and used mainly English, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Nepali in their everyday lives.

In fact, a great majority of these students from the International Division stated that they hardly had opportunities to use Cantonese in their local neighbourhoods because of isolation from the ethnic Chinese community, even though they were all born in Hong Kong and had only intermittently travelled to their parents' hometowns in India, Nepal and Pakistan. Students were not the only ones in this study having varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds; teachers in this division also had previous teaching experiences in different contexts, including Hong Kong, Pakistan, Nepal and USA. Such demographic characteristics of the focus participants might make some

readers doubt the usefulness of this teaching package since they may think that this reality does not match their concerns/difficulties and dilemmas. However, this is a resource targeting at educators working in Hong Kong urban classrooms, irrespective of ethnic backgrounds of their students and colleagues.

In particular, the classroom episodes and activities in this teaching package are designed as a platform to discuss issues affecting teachers working under contemporary institutional conditions of increasing monitoring where government's extensive programmes for assessment and inspection are contributing to create a scenario in which perceived failings of urban secondary schools are routinely attributed, by politicians and media outlets, to bad teaching and bad teachers. In addition, this set of materials also addresses some of the concerns of educators who nowadays face the challenges, contradictions and tensions of having to deal pedagogically with the digital culture and digital devices in the classroom context.

1.3. HOW TO USE THIS PACKAGE

This resource is primarily designed to be used for professional development of urban secondary teachers in Hong Kong, either as part of continuing professional development or initial teacher education. Thus, the text has been organised for use by groups of teachers led by a Facilitator or Chair.

1.4. NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

This teaching package is organized around three major episodes involving different types of data which range from an audio-recording of classroom interaction to a *Facebook* dialogue to a video-recorded classroom activity. Episode A guides the users

through the way a teacher and a group of multilingual students negotiate tensions in the context of an educational activity oriented towards the preparation of tests. Although a first look at the transcript of the classroom interaction gives the impression that it is all about lack of cooperation and misconduct on part of the students, a closer analysis shows that in reality it is a more complex setting in which mocking and teachers-students collusion are intimately linked to each other, as a result of an activity in which none of them (teacher and students) believe.

In line with this rationale, activities described in Section 2.3 are intended for users to share their first reactions. It is recommended at this point not to discourage interpretations in which the students are seen as very naughty and abusive of the teachers, in order for these ideas to be challenged later on. Section 2.4 presents an extract about the IRE/IRF 'classroom ideal' so as to show how problematic can be this way of conceptualizing the space of the classroom since it does not allow accounting for moments in which participants negotiate social relationships and identities, i.e. pedagogy and social relationships cannot be detached from each other if we are willing to understand how collaboration and co-construction of meaning are situationally negotiated. In particular, the IRE/IRF 'classroom ideal' does not allow here to describe the emergence of collusion between students and teachers under conditions where they are all pushed to gear their teaching/learning towards testing/streaming – with the resulting boredom and lack of personal investment.

Follow-up activities described in Section 2.4 progressively guide users' attention to the fact that the IRE/IRF model cannot be easily applied to the transcript in Episode A, which in turn may be explained by the fact that there might be other things going on in the course of the action apart from instructional moves. Section 2.5 offers a more complex interpretation of Episode A, followed by a few more activities which may allow users to digest it and to offer their agreement/disagreement through further debate and discussion. Section 2.6 includes an extract from an article published in

South China Morning Post, giving way to a complementary debate on the tensions and dilemmas that neoliberalization of education brings for teachers and students, as well as on the possible connections between this panorama and what happens in Episode A. Special emphasis should be placed at this point on discussion of the ways in which educators can deal with all these institutional and classroom tensions in their everyday lives, with special attention to possible pedagogical designs which allow them to do what they are institutionally expected to do while meeting their students' and their own personal interests.

Episode B is based on the sequence of postings, dialogues and photographs shared by a classroom teacher and his students through a *Facebook* group (3.2). Activities reported in this part guide the user through the challenges of introducing digital technologies in the classroom, including the related dilemmas and opportunities for both teachers and students (3.3). Users are first asked to share their first reactions with respect to the educational value of these dialogues, which may be perceived as not relevant in pedagogical terms. Section 3.4 contains an extract from the wider culture addressing the use of digital media in schools from a perspective in which these resources are considered as distracting for young people, leading to activities in which users are asked to give their opinions in favour of or against that line of argument – with explicit reference to specific moments in Episode B.

Section 3.5 introduces a summary interpretation of Episode B, from the teacher's perspective, after which subsequent activities are described to provide users with a platform to engage in further discussion on the teachers' interpretation and on the related pedagogical implications, with a focus on how to incorporate moments like these into teachers' pedagogical designs and unit lessons. The central message to be conveyed in this Episode is that digital technologies are not good or bad in themselves; rather, considerations of their appropriateness should be based on their local use within specific educational contexts. There needs to be structure, pedagogical

purpose and sequential scaffolding on the one hand, and activities proposed should be in accordance with youngsters' realities and concerns on the other.

Episode C focuses on the challenges of creating space for talks in the (language and non-language subject) classrooms. After providing the transcript of a video-recorded classroom activity (4.2), activities described in Section 4.3 ask users to share their first reactions, with special attention to their opinions on this activity which, as in Episode B, might be initially perceived as pedagogically non-relevant. Section 4.4 provides a summary interpretation of Episode C, followed by activities guiding users' attention to how participation is arranged by two students who engage differently in the activity. In particular, these activities aim at raising users' awareness of the fact that although both students are willing to participate, they might have different access to the communicative resources that are necessary to engage successfully in the framework of an "academic debate" type of event.

Linking up with previous discussions, Section 4.5 includes an extract on the importance of developing a curriculum of talk in the classroom, in terms of the development of academic language skills of the students. Follow-up activities in this case ask users to share their previous experiences and frustrations when trying to arrange similar activities in their classrooms, this discussion being an excuse for facilitators to raise contrasts between users' examples of previous activities and the underlying teaching design that is behind the activity transcribed in Episode C. There is a wider pedagogical sequence which starts before the video-recorded activity in order to scaffold students in the use of the language repertoires that they need to participate in the classroom debate. Finally, Section 4.6 requires users to design a unit of work in which digital resources like *Facebook* are used for pedagogical purposes; a template is required to be filled in and supporting classroom materials/examples are provided in order to facilitate users' work/discussions.

2. EPISODE A

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2.1. BACKGROUND NOTES (PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVITY)

Class Information

- There are 16 students in this Form 2 class.
- They are youngsters with Pakistani background who speak Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and English in their everyday lives.
- Their language repertoires in English vary greatly, from beginners who do not use much English to fluent speakers who use it at home and with their peers outside the school.
- During the lesson, three students, Ajmal, Hasan and Zareef played an active role in the course of activity.
- Hasan and Zareef were average or above in the school, in terms of academic performance. Ajmal, on the other hand, was a lower achiever and dropped out of the school a few months later.

Episode Context

- It's an afternoon lesson.
- A fill-in-the-gap activity on vocabulary related to feelings was carried out. This activity serves as a pre-test preparation for students.
- The class was going to have a standardized English test the next day. All students in the school, both in the local and international divisions, were required to take this test so that a comparison across the two divisions was allowed.

- Mr. C is strongly opposed to those tests since, according to him, they detract from student learning, empowerment or “authentic” assessment of learning. However, after arguments with the Head panel of English language in the school, regarding previous assessments, Mr. C has agreed to proceed with the test in its existing form to avoid further conflict.
- The extract begins approximately 19 minutes after the lesson started.
- This pre-test activity is orally introduced by Mr. C at the beginning of the session, as follows: “There will be a vocabulary part but there will not be sentences, and to fill the words out. There will not be a list of words, you will have to remember the words and then fill them in. You’re not going to be matching them, you’re not going to be choosing the letter; you’re going to have to know the word inside your head this time, for the vocabulary part (...)”.
- Before the extract starts, Mr. C has gone through several words but the students do not seem to be completely engaged in the activity. At one point in the course of the activity, Mr. C initiates a clapping routine, which is often used as a boundary making practice when parallel conversations are numerous and students are not doing what they are expected to. This initiation is followed by a collective clapping reply from all the students in unison, immediately replicated by an Ajmal’s *solo* performance who repeats once again the same clapping routine. Right after Ajmal, Zareef and Hasan repeat once again the same clapping pattern, which leads to a subsequent laughter by the students and to a few seconds pause by Mr. C who stares at them silently before speaking to the class. Before resuming individual work, Mr. C decides to review collaboratively with the students the meaning of each of the vocabulary items they have to deal with to accomplish the required task.

2.2. TRANSCRIPT

1 **Mr.C:** FRUSTRATED &
2 **Ajmal:** & {in a bored-like fashion} aah
3 **Hasan:** [{laugh}]
4 **Mr.C:** [uuh] / A PERSON FEELS [FRUSTRATED] =
5 **¿?:** [()]
6 **Mr.C:** =WHEEN / THEY WANT TO DO [SOMETHING] /
7 **Zareef:** [{laugh}]
8 **Mr.C:** BUT THEY CANNOT DO IT (2") ok // SO LET'S SAY I [WANT YOU]=
9 **Ajmal:** [{cough}]
10 **Mr.C:** =to [()] /
11 **Ajmal:** [{makes a sound with his hands}]
12 **Mr.C:** [AND I CAN'T DO IT↑] /
13 [{laughter}]
14 **Mr.C:** I will feel frustrated↓] //
15 {laughs and cough}
16 **Mr.C:** LET'S SAY I WANT (()) TO BE QUIET &
17 **Zareef:** {to his peers} & ((OI ! WASIF)) MEN!
18 *hey! Wasif*
19 **Mr.C:** AND THEY KEEP TALKING↑ &
20 **¿Hasan?:** & nothing
21 **Mr.C:** [()]
22 **Zareef:** [()]
23 **Ajmal:** [{coughs}]
24 {sounds of Mr. C writing on the blackboard}
25 **¿?:** disgusted &
26 **Zareef:** & what? // sir / keep on talking
27 **¿?:** surprised
28 **Ajmal:** {laugh}
29 **¿ Zareef?:** {whistles}
30 **Ajmal:** {laugh}
31 **¿?:** (())
32 **Mr.C:** (1") ok / [EMBARRASSED]
33 **Husna:** [ARRE] / CHOOOR NA YAR
34 *oh please / leave him pal*
35 **Mr.C:** [yeah]
36 **Ajmal:** {to Husna} [poor (())] &
37 **Mr.C:** & YOU GUYS KNOW EMBARRASED &
38 **Ajmal:** & {to Husna} kya hei

39 *what is it *

40 **Zareef:** [{{laugh}}

41 **Hasan:** [YEES!]

42 **Zareef:** {to Husna} you should report [(())]

43 **Mr.C:** [(())]

44 **¿Zareef?:** disgusted

45 {sound of a pen falling down near Zareef's seat}

46 **Mr.C:** DISGUSTED↑

47 (3") {sound of a pen falling down near Zareef's seat }

48 **Mr.C:** disgusted↑

49 **Zareef:** I am the one↑

50 **Ajmal:** {laugh}

51 **Hasan:** sir / something really [yuck↑]

52 **Ajmal:** [paalli]

53 *peanuts* {nickname??}

54 **Mr.C:** A PERSON FEELS / DISGUSTED / WHEEN / uh &

55 **Hasan:** & they say something yuck↑ / (((hum↑)º)) &

56 **Mr.C:** & uuh / like /

57 **Husna:** uusko choor gaya [{{laughs}]

58 *he left him *

59 **Ajmal:** [woo khud bool gaya] / {laugh}

60 *he forgot himself*

61 **Mr.C:** {in Spanish} cómo se llama↑

62 *how is it called?*

63 **Zareef:** SIR / {covering his nose with his fingers} YOU ((DO)) LIKE THIS /

 AND /

64 **¿?:** [(())]

65 **Ajmal:** [{{laughter}]

66 **¿?:** [(())]

67 **Mr.C:** [YOU GUYS KNOW / IN CANTONESE] =

68 **Hasan:** [(())]

69 **Mr.C:** = wattat?

70 **Hasan:** no &

71 **Zareef:** & WATTAT / YEAH YEAH &

72 **Mr.C:** & wattat / WATTAT IS / DISGUSTING // like uuh

73 **Ajmal:** {whispering}

74 **Ajmal & Zareef:** [{{laughs and whispering}]

75 **Mr.C:** [IF YOU SEEE / A DEAD DOG ON THE STREET] / you would say / oh

76 hou wattat! / in English you would say I feel soo disgusting &

77 **¿Zareef?:** & [(())]

78 **Ajmal:** [{{laughter}] &

79 **¿?:** & (()) &

80 **Mr.C:** oor / SMELL [SOMETHING]

81 **Ajmal:** [laughter]

82 **Mr.C:** BAD / {in Cantonese} HOU CHOU / [((you feel the same...))]

83 **Ajmal:** {covering his nose with his hand} [SIR / I CAN SMELL NOW!]

84 [laughter]

85 **Zareef:** [SIR / (())]=

86 **Hasan:** [(()) bhatbu↑]

87 *bad smell*

88 **Zareef:** = SO MUCH WORKING (())

89 **Ajmal:** [laughter]

90

91 [coughing]

92 **Ajmal:** SIR / [I CAN SMELL ((NOW))]

93 **Mr.C:** [talking to students on the first rows] ((this is-)) &

94 & {coughing} &

95 **Mr.C:** & you feel [disgusted]

96 **Zareef:** [((disgusted))]

97 **Mr.C:** ((makes you feel)) sick &

98 **Zareef:** & yeah

99 **¿?:** (((frightened)))^o

100 **Mr.C:** ok / [((next one))]

101 **Zareef:** [FRIGHTENED]

102 **Mr.C:** frightened↓ // means scared // that one ((is)) / easy to remember / [scared]

103 **Ajmal:** {stretching his muscles} [AAHH!]

104 (3") {sounds of someone walking, probably Mr. C}

105 **¿?:** you know what / ganna lagga ni hai

106 *have to play song *

107 {laughter}

108 **Mr.C:** Zareef / I want you to write [(())]=

109 **Zareef:** [(())]

110 **Mr.C:** = ((now I don't want you)) to talk anymore

111 **¿?:** [(())]

112 **Mr.C:** [otherwise you ((would have to ...))]

113 {there is a parallel conversation in the background which is hardly audible on the recording}

Symbols used in transcripts

A	(Capital letters) loud talking or emphasis
aa	lengthening of vowel or consonant sound
/	short pause (0.5 seconds)
//	long pause (0.5 – 1.5 seconds)
(x'')	X seconds pause
[]	turn overlapping with similarly marked turn
&	latched utterances
(())	non-understandable fragment
() ^o	low talking
{ }	researcher's comments
↑	rising intonation
↓	falling intonation
=	absence of a discernable gap between two parts of a same utterance, after overlapping
**	translation of bits in Urdu language

2.3. ACTIVITIES FOR A TENTATIVE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT'S GOING ON

Activity 1

What are your first reactions to what happened in the classroom?

Activity 2

Listed below are some words and phrases which may describe the students' behavior in Episode A. Which one(s) do you think best describe them? When making your choices, please refer back to specific lines in the transcription as evidence.

- active
- distracting
- cooperative
- disengaged
- humorous
- talkative
- respectful
- curious
- disrespectful
- other: _____

2.4. COMMENT FROM THE WIDER CULTURE: THE 'IRE/IRF' MODEL

Read the following quote:

“Teacher: Can you tell me why do you eat all the food?

Yes.

Pupil: To keep you strong.

Teacher: To keep you strong. Yes. To keep you strong.

Why do you want to be strong? (Text G)

A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an initiation by the teacher, followed by a response from the pupil, followed by feedback, to the pupil's response from the teacher, as in the above example.”

(Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975:21)

Activity 3

Please try to apply the IRE/IRF pattern to the interaction in Episode A. Can you apply it? If yes, indicate where; if not, show evidence of it.

2.5. SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- **The explanation of “frustrated” (line 1- 31)**

When Mr. C is trying to explain the word “frustrated”, two students, Ajmal and Hasan, keep distracted from the activity as they engage in making noises which overlap with Mr. C’s talk (line 1-15). In view of that, Mr. C immediately reacts by complaining that he is frustrated when students do not listen to him (line 8). After Mr. C explicitly disapproves students’ disruptive behavior (line 17), Zareef seems to begin to pay attention to the teacher as he asks Mr. C to keep on talking (line 26). Nevertheless, Zareef and his peers’ subsequent verbal actions and whistling seem to have negated Zareef’s request to be a sincere interaction with Mr. C (line 28-30).

- **The explanation of “embarrassed” (line 32-43)**

A female student, Husna, who speaks in Urdu language, asks them to cooperate with Mr. C (line 33). Ajmal and Zareef mock her (line 36, 38, 42). For the next word, “embarrassed”, Mr. C does not give any detailed explanation, as he suggests the students already know this word well (line 37). Nevertheless, Ajmal asks Husna what the word means (line 38). Zareef and Ajmal keep on laughing and are engaged in parallel conversations throughout the entire fragment (line 36, 38, 40, 42).

- **The explanation of “disgusted” (line 44-98)**

Zareef points out the next word for discussion – “disgusted” (line 44). Following him, Mr. C approves his participation by repeating this word in a louder voice (line 46). Nevertheless, immediately after this contribution to the activity, Zareef drops his pen twice (line 45, 47). Later on, Mr. C has difficulty in choosing the most appropriate explanation as he tries to code-switch to Cantonese (lines 68, 71, 74) and Spanish (line 61). At this point Ajmal starts laughing (line 59). Zareef helps Mr. C explain the word by providing an explanation accompanied by body gestures (line 63). This is

followed by instances of over-enthusiastic responses (line 71), laughs and whispering (line 74).

- **The explanation of “frightened” (line 99-113)**

Zareef speaks the next word “frightened” in an excessively loud voice that overlaps that of Mr. C, suggesting over-enthusiasm on the task again (line 101). Immediately after that Ajmal displays his sense of boredom by stretching his muscles in an overreacting manner (line 103). Later, Ajmal engages in parallel conversation, presumably with Zareef (line 105-107), since Mr. C reacts by asking Zareef to focus on the worksheet and stop talking (line 108-110). Meanwhile, some other students are also having parallel conversations.

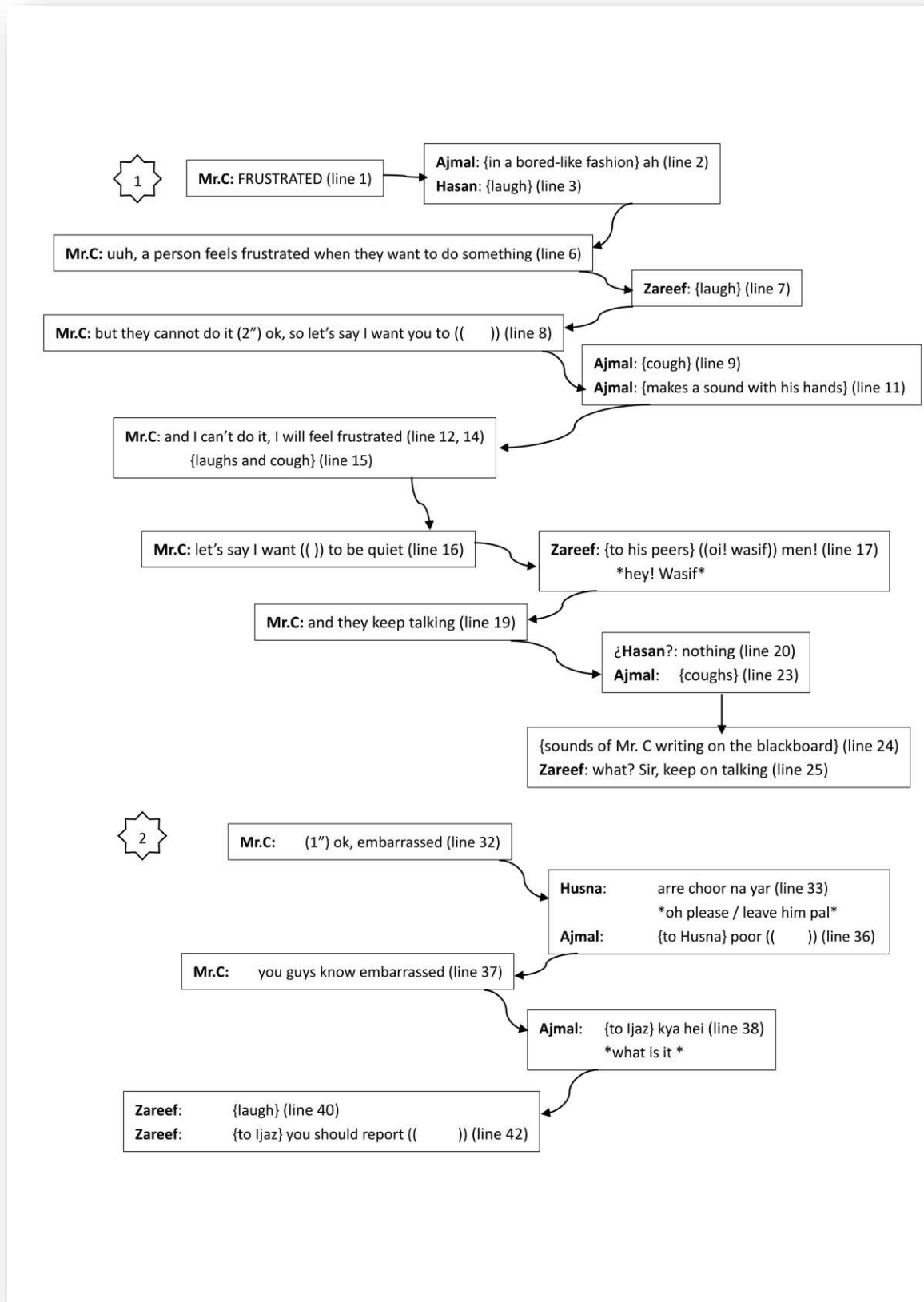
Activity 4

After reading the interpretation, please go back to Activity 1. Do you want to change any descriptions for any of the students involved in the episode? If yes, what is the reason for you to change? If not, can you further explain it with reference to the summary interpretation?

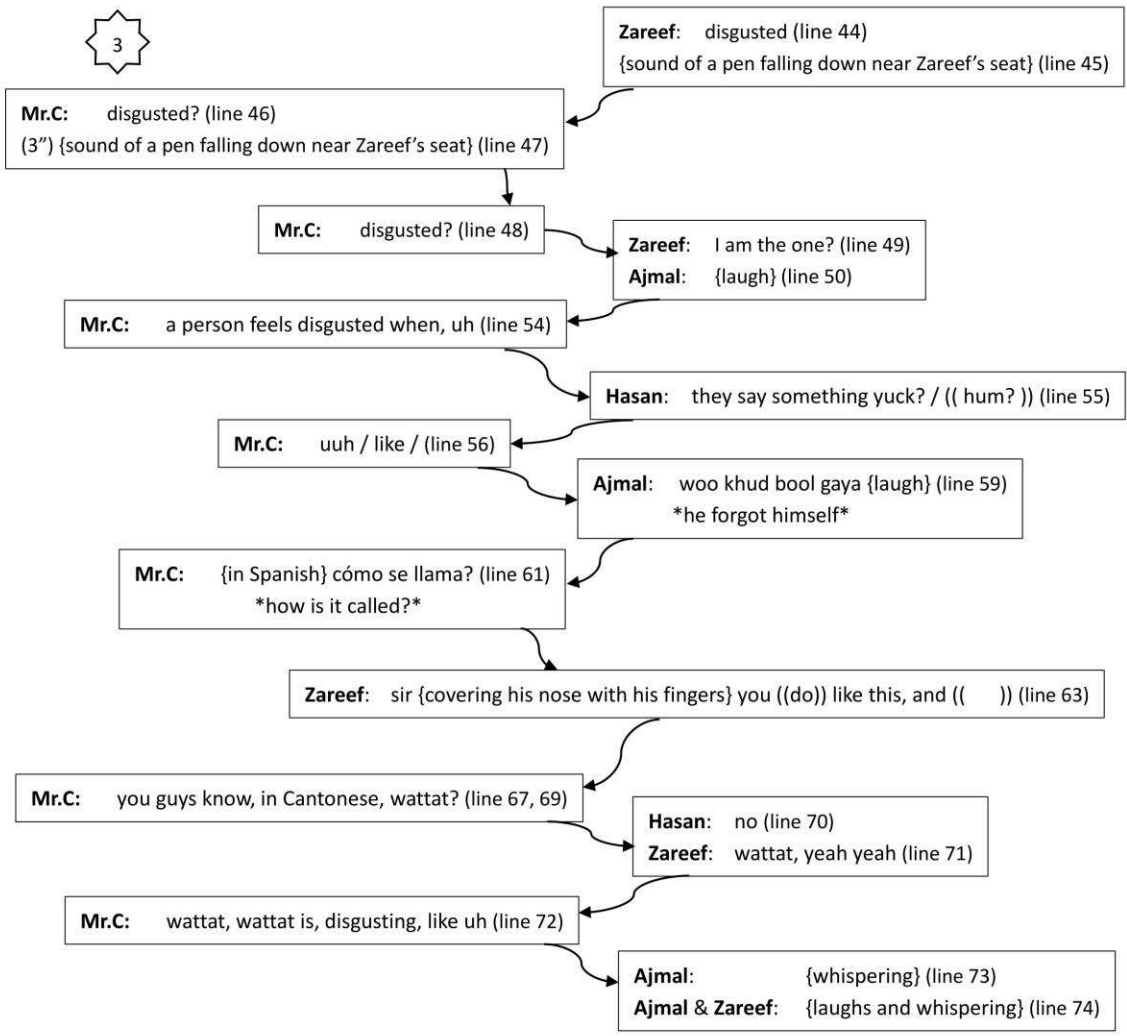
Activity 5

Read through the following diagram, marking on the key moments of the lesson. Please pay close attention to Zareef. What is he doing in this episode? After reading the diagram, go over the transcript again and find the different roles played by Zareef in the classroom. Please refer to specific lines to support your opinion.

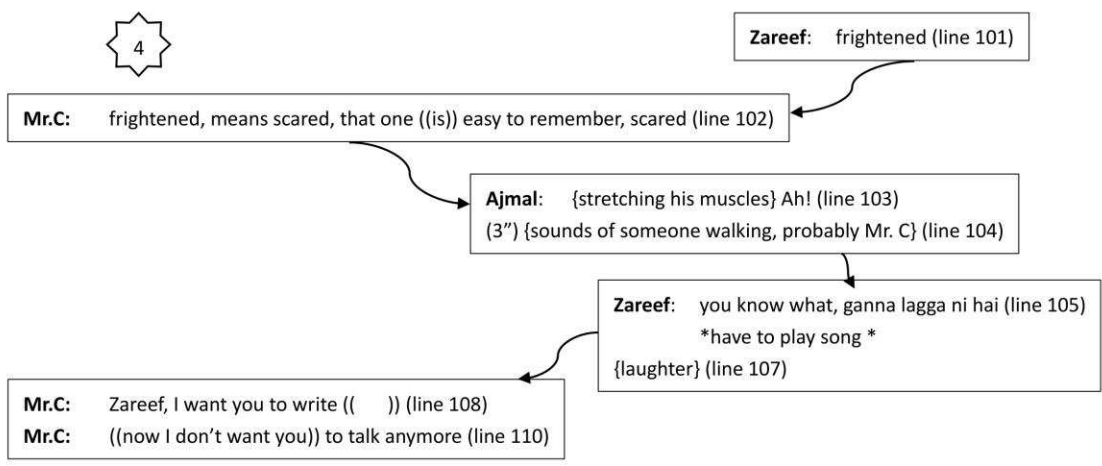
2.6. DIAGRAM OF TRANSCRIPT



3



4



2.7. COMMENT FROM THE WIDER CULTURE: THE AGE OF STANDARDIZATION

Read the following quote from a newspaper article about English as a media of instruction in Hong Kong schools:

“While public discourse stresses more than ever the importance of quality education, the present trend to use market forces as a basis for funding has led to extensive monitoring, evaluation, standardisation and ranking of schools and students. It has also forced schools to digress into marketing efforts.

(...) Other problems appear to be occurring in those schools implementing English-medium education for ethnic minority students. The setting up of an international division within a former Chinese-medium school, in which ethnic minority students learn through English– in some cases taught by ethnic minority teachers – is sometimes the result of a strategy to increase the intake of students by targeting the ethnic minority populations.

This seems to favour the access of ethnic minority students to tertiary education, since many feel more confident in English even though they had a Chinese-medium primary education and speak Chinese. In this ambivalent context, tensions can emerge in everyday school life, given the so-called “local” and “international” divisions.

Such tension often arises from a clash between the Hong Kong institutional culture of testing and the demands from international teachers who want a greater focus on critical thinking and creativity.

All this points to the need to counterbalance the exaggerated emphasis on testing and the institutional monitoring of schools. This would allow school participants to avoid the stress concerned with closing and to focus wholeheartedly on how to make quality implementation a reality.”

(Lin & Perez-Milans, 2012)

Activity 6

Have you ever experienced similar pressure to meet the institutional demands (for standardization and testing, or uniform pedagogy throughout the school)? Please share your feelings and thoughts with others.

In a situation similar to that of Mr. C, how can a teacher best balance the requirements of the school and a more enjoyable and meaningful way of teaching students? Please discuss with others your experiences and opinions.

2.8. NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Transcript

- The participants should not read the transcript before they listen to the audio recording for the first time.
- Give participants an opportunity to quickly read through the general background notes for the episode, and sufficient time to read the transcript.
- Play the recording of the episode for participants to follow when using the transcript.
- Play the recording a third time.

The 'IRE/IRF' model

- The IRF pattern is initially put forward as an analytical tool for classroom discourse analysis. It describes an ideal sequence of interactions between a teacher and a student.
- During the activity, guide the participants to see how different a real classroom interaction can be when compared to the ideal IRF pattern.

Summary of interpretation and follow-up activities

- After reading, try to guide the participants by connecting their first reactions with what is presented in the summary interpretation.
- When focusing on one particular student (i.e. Zareef), the participants should be able to identify the different roles he played during the class. By observing him switching between these roles, the participants should be led to see the

importance of going beyond interpretations which emphasize disruption, resistance or conflict; ambiguity and collaboration, on the other hand, also constitute a key function in the episode.

Comment from the wider culture: the age of standardization

- The aim of providing the news article extract is to present the dilemma of dealing with contradictory needs derived from having to meet schools' standardized curriculums and students' interests. Through the discussion, try to have the participants talk about their own experiences of dealing with similar tensions and possible solutions.

3. EPISODE B

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3.1. BACKGROUND NOTES (PARTICIPANTS AND THE ACTIVITY)

Class Information

- They are youngsters with Pakistani background who speak Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and English in their everyday lives.
- Their language repertoires in English vary greatly, from beginners who do not use much English to fluent speakers who use it at home and with their peers outside the school.
- They have set up a Facebook group page for their class.
- Mr. C is a teacher of English and liberal studies in the international division.

Episode Context

- On a Friday night Mr. C posts on the Facebook group page a link to the website of a Japanese photographer yowayowacamera.com.
- The photographer posts a photo in which she seems to levitate.
- Mr. C tags two students, Sita and Amita in his first post. In the following days, more students join the discussion but the focus remains on these two students.
- Mr. TS, a science teacher in international division of the school, also takes part in the discussion.

3.2. FACEBOOK DIALOGUES



Mr. C

I think some of you might like this photographer; let me know, I haven't made up my mind yet. — with Amita and 2 others.

よわよわカメラウーマン日記

yowayowacamera.com

Lives in Tokyo with two cats. Photographs mainly levitating self-portraits (and cats not levitating). yowayowa is a Japanese term meaning

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · Friday at 9:40pm near Hong Kong

, Amita and Sita like this.



Sita I love Japan!

Friday at 10:20pm · Like · 1



Sita Wow.. She's like she flying whenever she goes..

maybe she's girl that noone can see her..

Friday at 10:21pm · Like



Sita Does she have a super power??

Friday at 10:22pm · Like



Sita I LOVE This photographer YowaYowa!
She's a amazing!

Friday at 10:24pm · Edited · Like



Sita MEEEEEE I'M VERY INTERESTED >< OMG

Friday at 10:27pm · Like



Amita WOW, I WANT TO TAKE PICTURES LIKE HER!!!
AMAZING LADY!!!! HOW COULD SHE DO THAT?!!!! I LOVE
IT !!!! I AM REALLY INTERESTED ON IT !!

Friday at 10:33pm · Like



Sita NOW I HAVE SOMEONE WHO I ADMIRE !! "よ
わよわ"

Friday at 10:36pm · Like



Mr. C She uses a good camera that can take photos at
a high speed. she explains on the website. These are
"levitation" photos; floating in the air with some super power

Friday at 10:46pm · Like



Sita WOW!!

Friday at 10:48pm · Like



Sita What is mean by levitate?

Friday at 10:51pm · Like



Mr. C in the photos, she is "levitating"; staying above
the ground.

Friday at 10:52pm · Like



Mr. C



Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Friday at 9:42pm

, Sita and 2 others like this.

Sita She's amazing!
Friday at 10:36pm · Like

Mr. C I think her photography is also about modern environments, so it makes it interesting
Friday at 11:49pm · Like

Write a comment...



Sita

Now I'm curious!!

DOES SHE REALLY HAVE A SUPER POWER???? Owo



Like · Comment · Follow Post · Friday at 10:43pm

- Mr. C** Try... i have seen people in HK do it, just not as good as this photographer
Friday at 11:04pm · Like · 1
- Sita** OMGG...
Friday at 11:05pm · Like · 1
- Amita** Oh...Okay... It sounds.... difficult then...
Friday at 11:05pm · Like
- Mr. C** you can do it
Friday at 11:06pm · Like · 1
- Sita** How can Amita do it?? Is it because she's thin??
Friday at 11:06pm · Like · 1
- Amita** O.O but how tow do it?? just taking the 3D shots or we have to also levitate ??
Friday at 11:08pm · Edited · Like
- Sita** Yeah we have to levitate!
Friday at 11:10pm · Like
- Amita** o.o then won't the photos shake while levitating ?
Friday at 11:13pm · Like
- Mr. C** <http://grav0.tumblr.com/>
-
- ZERO GRAVITY**
grav0.tumblr.com
Click on the image to enlarge the Levitation photographs. Inspired by yowayowa photography.
- Friday at 11:31pm · Like · 1 · Remove Preview
- Amita** I did it with some stuffs but I'm really not sure, it is correct or not. I'll try with my friends tomorrow..
Friday at 11:42pm · Like
- Mr. C** can't wait to see the experiments
Friday at 11:44pm · Like · 1
- Mr. TS** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaSHDd60Zso>
-
- How to do Levitation Photography**
www.youtube.com
We got sent a link recently to a website called yowayowacamera.com and were quit...
[See More](#)
- Friday at 11:47pm via mobile · Like · 2 · Remove Preview
- Mr. TS** I will be trying levitation shots during summer, anyone interested to by model :)
Friday at 11:48pm via mobile · Like
- Amita** Sir, u are going to Korea this summer... u can take pictures with [redacted] / [redacted] or [redacted]
Friday at 11:51pm · Like
- Sita** Amazing!!!! But i can't jump that high!:P
Saturday at 12:22pm · Like
- Mr. C** don't think about jumping up...think about jumping down
Saturday at 12:24pm via mobile · Like
- Sita** ohh
Saturday at 12:29pm · Like



Sita

Mr. TS can we people levitate??

Like · Comment · Follow Post · Friday at 11:04pm

likes this.

Mr. TS To levitate is possible if Earth's gravitational pull do not pull us anymore! However looking at this Japanese photographer, all we need to do is click the shot while jumping in the air... QUICKLY!
Friday at 11:19pm via mobile · Like · 1

:D
Friday at 11:41pm · Like

Moon! :D
Friday at 11:41pm · Like · 1

Sita ahh yeah we can levitate on the moon! hha-
Saturday at 12:09am · Like

Amita By CRAVITY :D haha
Saturday at 12:50am · Like · 1

Amita or by wings!! -.-
Saturday at 12:50am · Like · 1

Sita someday let's go to the moon and take our portraits of ourselves >< by levitating!
Saturday at 12:52am · Like · 1

Amita ahahah,
Saturday at 12:54am · Like · 1

Sita xDD
Saturday at 12:54am · Like

Write a comment...



Mr. C

I love to see students learning and using their multiple intelligences. Here is a combination of learning about English, art, and science. The students use their visual-spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and existential intelligences.



Levitation Shoots!!

Awesome gravity (low gravity) :P

By: Amila

Photos: 26

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 19 hours ago



and Sita like this.



Mr. TS So much reminded me of weightlessness & gravity.
Great & inspiring indeed :)

18 hours ago · Like



Mr. TS I hope 2D students can relate and connect this with their science class.

18 hours ago · Like

Write a comment...

(adapted from Pérez-Milans & Soto 2013)

3.3. ACTIVITIES FOR A TENTATIVE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT'S GOING ON

Activity 1

What do you think the teacher (Mr. C) is trying to accomplish? Do you think the students are following what Mr. C wants them to do? Do you think Facebook is absolutely necessary for achieving Mr. C's goals?

Activity 2

Now think of your own experience. Will you be able to do something similar in your class? Have you ever adopted similar digital resources in your teaching practice? If yes, what difficulty or achievement did you have? If not, what are some of the dilemmas or difficulties that may prevent you from using them?

3.4. COMMENTS FROM THE WIDER CULTURE: NEWS OF DIGITAL RESOURCES AS DISTRACTION

While reading the journal extract below, try to compare the opinions contained in the news article with Mr. C's attitude towards digital media.

The New York Times

Copyright © The New York Times

New York, Sunday, November 21, 2010

Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. — Researchers say the lure of these technologies, while it affects adults too, is particularly powerful for young people. The risk, they say, is that developing brains can become more easily habituated than adult brains to constantly switching tasks — and less able to sustain attention.

“Their brains are rewarded not for staying on task but for jumping to the next thing,” said Michael Rich, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and executive director of the Center on Media and Child Health in Boston. And the effects could linger: “The worry is we’re raising a generation of kids in front of screens whose brains are going to be wired differently.”

But even as some parents and educators express unease about students’ digital diets, they are intensifying efforts to use technology in the classroom, seeing it as a way to connect with students and give them essential skills. Across the country, schools are equipping themselves with computers, Internet access and mobile devices so they can teach on the students’ technological territory.

It is a tension on vivid display at Vishal’s school, Woodside High School, on a sprawling campus set against the

forested hills of Silicon Valley. Here, as elsewhere, it is not uncommon for students to send hundreds of text messages a day or spend hours playing video games, and virtually everyone is on Facebook.

(...) Several recent studies show that young people tend to use home computers for entertainment, not learning, and that this can hurt school performance, particularly in low-income families. Jacob L. Vigdor, an economics professor at Duke University who led some of the research, said that when adults were not supervising computer use, children “are left to their own devices, and the impetus isn’t to do homework but play around.”

Research also shows that students often juggle homework and entertainment. The Kaiser Family Foundation found earlier this year that half of students from 8 to 18 are using the Internet, watching TV or using some other form of media either “most” (31 percent) or “some” (25 percent) of the time that they are doing homework.

(...) “I’ll be reading a book for homework and I’ll get a text message and

pause my reading and put down the book, pick up the phone to reply to the text message, and then 20 minutes later realize, 'Oh, I forgot to do my homework.' ”

(...) With powerful new cellphones, the interactive experience can go everywhere. Between classes at Woodside or at lunch, when use of personal devices is permitted, students gather in clusters, sometimes chatting face to face, sometimes half-involved in a conversation while texting someone across the teeming quad. Others sit alone, watching a video, listening to music or updating Facebook.

(...) “I know I can read a book, but then I’m up and checking Facebook,” he says, adding: “Facebook is amazing because it feels like you’re doing something and you’re not doing anything. It’s the absence of doing something, but you feel gratified anyway.”

He concludes: “My attention span is getting worse.”

(...) Mr. Diesel, by contrast, does not think technology is behind the problems of Vishal and his schoolmates — in fact, he

thinks it is the key to connecting with them, and an essential tool. “It’s in their DNA to look at screens,” he asserts. And he offers another analogy to explain his approach: “Frankenstein is in the room and I don’t want him to tear me apart. If I’m not using technology, I lose them completely.”

(...) To Ms. Blondel, the exercise in group reading represents a regression in American education and an indictment of technology. The reason she has to do it, she says, is that students now lack the attention span to read the assignments on their own.

“How can you have a discussion in class?” she complains, arguing that she has seen a considerable change in recent years. In some classes she can count on little more than one-third of the students to read a 30-page homework assignment.

(...) Mr. Reilly hopes that the two can meet — that computers can be combined with education to better engage students and can give them technical skills without compromising deep analytical thought.

By Matt Richtel

Activity 3

Based on your previous experience, as well as on what Mr. C has done in his class, please discuss the practicability of using digital media in schools. Try to rely on the specific moments from the *Facebook* dialogues to support your opinion. The diagram of the dialogues is provided below.

3.5. DIAGRAM OF FACEBOOK DIALOGUES





Sita

Now I'm curious!!

DOES SHE REALLY HAVE A SUPER POWER???? Owo

4



Like · Comment · Follow Post · Friday at 10:43pm

Mr. C Try... i have seen people in HK do it, just not as good as this photographer
Friday at 11:04pm · Like · 1

Sita OMGG...
Friday at 11:05pm · Like · 1

Amita Oh...Okay... It sounds.... difficult then...
Friday at 11:05pm · Like

Mr. C you can do it.
Friday at 11:06pm · Like · 1

Sita How can Amita do it?? Is it because she's thin??
Friday at 11:06pm · Like · 1

Amita O.O but how tow do it?? just taking the 3D shots or we have to also levitate ??
Friday at 11:08pm · Edited · Like

Sita Yeah we have to levitate!
Friday at 11:10pm · Like

Mr. C <http://grav0.tumblr.com/>
**ZERO GRAVITY**
grav0.tumblr.com
Click on the image to enlarge the Levitation photographs. Inspired by yowayowa photography.
Friday at 11:31pm · Like · 1 · Remove Preview

Amita I did it with some stuffs but I'm really not sure, it is correct or not. I'll try with my friends tomorrow..
Friday at 11:42pm · Like

Mr. C can't wait to see the experiments
Friday at 11:44pm · Like · 1



Sita

Mr. TS can we people leviate??

Like · Comment · Follow Post · Friday at 11:04pm

6

Mr. TS To levitate is possible if Earth's gravitational pull do not pull us anymore! Howeverly looking at this Japanese photographer, all we need to do is click the shot while jumping in tha air... QUICKLY!
Friday at 11:19pm via mobile · Like · 1

Moon! :D
Friday at 11:41pm · Like · 1

Sita ahh yeah we can levitate on the moon! hha-
Saturday at 12:09am · Like

5

Mr. TS <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v-xaSHDd60Zso>



How to do Levitation Photography
www.youtube.com

We got sent a link recently to a website called yowayowacamera.com and were quit...
See More

Friday at 11:47pm via mobile · Like · 2 · Remove Preview

Mr. TS I will be trying levitation shots during summer, anyone interested to by model :)
Friday at 11:48pm via mobile · Like

Amita Sir, u are going to Korea this summer... u can take pictures with _____ / _____ or _____
Friday at 11:51pm · Like

Sita Amazing!!!! But i can't jump that high!:P
Saturday at 12:22pm · Like

Mr. C don't think about jumping up...think about jumping down
Saturday at 12:24pm via mobile · Like

7

Mr. C

I love to see students learning and using their multiple intelligences. Here is a combination of learning about English art, and science. The students use their visual-spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and existential intelligences.



Levitation Shoots!!
Awesome gravity (low gravity) :P
By: Amita
Photos: 26

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 19 hours ago

Mr. TS So much reminded me of weightlessness & gravity. Great & inspiring indeed :)
18 hours ago · Like

Mr. TS I hope 2D students can relate and connect this with their science class.
18 hours ago · Like

(adapted from Pérez-Milans & Soto 2013)

3.6. SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATION FROM M. C'S PERSPECTIVE AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

“One Friday at 9:40pm I posted to our class Facebook page a link to photographs on the website yowayowacamera.com, where a Japanese photographer posts daily ‘levitation’ photographs. These are mostly self-portraits depicting her seemingly floating in air in a variety of urban and rural landscapes. The photographs convey a sense of freedom, other-worldliness, and invisibility. I had discovered the artist on the blogging site Tumblr, and when I posted the link, I tagged Sita along with two other students I knew liked to play with cameras. Above is the beginning of the pedagogical sequence. After the first post at 9:40pm, I made another post of just one photograph at 9:42pm.

Sita responds forty minutes after my initial post, at first to affirm her love of Japan, and then to share her interpretation of the photographs, including her recognition of the theme of invisibility. At 10:33pm, another student, Amita enthusiastically joins the dialogue, showing her excitement through the use of all capital letters in her comment. At 10:46pm I explain that these are ‘levitation’ photos, and provide instruction on the meaning of levitation by adding, ‘floating in the air with some super power.’ After Sita asks for clarification, I explain, in the photos, she is ‘levitating’; staying above the ground.

At 10:43pm, Sita claims authorship by making her own post of a photograph from the yowayowacamera.com site to the class Facebook page. She captions the photograph, ‘Now I’m curious! DOES SHE REALLY HAVE A SUPERPOWER???? Owo’. Over the next hour and a half, I continue a dialogue with Sita and Amita, trying to encourage them to try this kind of photography.

Instructionally, within this portion of the pedagogical sequence, both students are producing text with the vocabulary term I introduced earlier, 'levitation.' Amita asks, '...but how to do it?? just taking the 3D shots or we have to also levitate??' and Sita responds, 'Yeah we have to levitate!'. At 11:44pm, I provide another link, this time to a Tumblr blog page that contains levitation photographs created by fans 'inspired by yowa yowa photography'.

Later on at 11:04pm, Sita starts a parallel discussion on another Facebook page moderated by Mr. TS, a Nepali math and science teacher (see Table 2). There, she asks him, 'can we people levitate?'. Amita shifts her participation to this post, and another classmate, a Nepali boy, Sam, joins the conversation along with Mr. TS. Here, the teacher and students begin to discuss levitation in relation to scientific concepts and experimentation. Mr. TS explains, 'To levitate is possible if Earth's gravitational pull do[sic] not pull us anymore,' to which Sam counters, 'Moon!'. Then at 11:47, Mr. TS, the class' science and math teacher, comments on Sita's post on the English and Liberal Studies page by adding a link to a video on Youtube.com that explains how to create levitation photography like that on yowayowacamera.com.

Over the next few days, the dialogue on levitation continues with comments on both the English and Liberal Studies and Math and Science Facebook pages. The dialogue turns from online talk to engagement with the physical world when Sita, Amita, and a third girl from the class, Susan, take their own levitation photographs around Hong Kong. Then the dialogue returns to Facebook after the photos are posted on Amita's personal Facebook page. I try to consolidate the learning by commenting in a post that 'I love to see students learning and using their multiple intelligences. Here is a combination of learning about English, art, and science. The students use their visual-spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and existential intelligences'. At the time, our class was finishing our study of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, so I wanted

to connect the photographic activity by the students to our classroom learning. Besides the post, I showed the images taken by the students in class to review Gardner's theory.

Following the posting of the photographs on Amita's page, Sita comments on Amita's page, 'OMG I want to take more photos of our levitation!'. Krishna, a Nepali female student in our class 'likes' the comment and then makes a reference to the song, 'Fly' by the popular American female rapper, Nicki Minaj (2011). The lyrics to the song's chorus are as follows: 'Everybody wanna try to box me in, suffocating everytime it locks me in, paint they own pictures than they crop me in, but I will remain where the top begins, cause I am not a word, I am not a line, I am not a girl that can ever be defined, I am not fly, I am levitation, I represent an entire generation'.

Like Minaj in this song, Sita may not see herself as 'a word,' 'a line,' or 'a girl that can ever be defined.' Her subjectivity includes her experiences within a struggling family, her school which separates learning from experience, and a life in Hong Kong perceived as boring. So within this learning activity, Sita and her classmates are able to acquire and use new vocabulary, synthesize art with science learning, and invest in an identity as producers of visual texts.

To engage Sita in dialogue and move her towards re-making her world meant thinking and acting in a multi-textual, cross-disciplinary way, and generating temporal, geographic, and participatory displacement as the dialogue shifted across time and online and physical locations, while participants and authors entered and left the dialogue at various points. Because I was aware of her interests and life circumstances, I was able to interpret her musings about boredom as expressions of the limiting boundaries of her everyday life."

(Pérez-Milans & Soto 2013: 23-25)

Activity 4

To what extent do you agree with Mr. C's interpretation of the dialogues? Where do you disagree with his opinion? Please stick closely to the posts in Episode B throughout your discussion. You can also use the diagram provide above for reference.

Activity 5

In groups, discuss and design a unit of work in which *Facebook* is adopted as a pedagogical resource. Please use the table below for brainstorming the ideas.

Topic: Exploring dry ice				
Activities / tasks	Objectives		Use of Facebook and/or other digital resources	Assessment tool
	Language	Content		
- Students design an experiment involving the use of dry ice	-The name of the chemical elements	- The physical / chemical property of dry ice	-Teacher post videos in which dry ice is used for various purposes (e.g. stage effect, fire extinguishing, etc.) - Students share their drafts of experiment designs and provide feedback to each other	- The quality of students' feedback to their peers - The final experiment design, taking into account the feedback received

3.7. NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Facebook dialogues

- The aim of the discussion after the dialogue is to have the participants' attention on the use of digital media in schools.
- Ask the participants to pay attention on the time indicated in the posts.

Comments from the wider culture: news of digital resources as distraction

- The article presents a controversy upon the use of digital media in schools. After going through Mr. C's example, the participants are expected to notice the complexity of this issue and to discuss about their previous related experience, if any. The aim for this discussion is to push the participants to go beyond polarized positions regarding the nature of new technologies in the classroom (i.e. good vs. bad).

Summary interpretation from Mr. C's perspective

- The interpretation is provided from Mr. C, from an insider's perspective. After reading both the Facebook dialogue and the news extract, the participants, at this point, should realize that the important issue is how teachers use these new technologies; there needs to be a clear pedagogical design with attention to purpose, structure and scaffolding, as well as with a focus on youngsters' realities, anxieties, motivations and concerns.

4. EPISODE C

EPISODE C – CONTENTS

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4.1. BACKGROUND NOTES

Class Information

- There are 20 students in this Form 2 class.
- They are youngsters with Pakistani and Nepali backgrounds who speak Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Nepali and English in their everyday lives.
- Their language repertoires in English vary greatly, from beginners who do not use much English to fluent speakers who use it at home and with their peers outside the school.

Episode Context

- The class is having a group discussion on a story they have read: 7th Grade.
- The story is based on a topic about youth culture: puppy love. In the story, Victor, who is the hero, thought he liked his classmate Teresa.
- Students have done various preparation activities before this discussion. The activities include:
 - reading the story;
 - listening to the song “Puppy Love” by Donny Osmond;
 - reading an article regarding the topic “puppy love”; and
 - filling in a worksheet named “thinking stems”, in which they need to complete sentences regarding the story’s themes, plots, characters and so on’.

- Mr. C, an English and liberal studies teacher in the international division, has previously introduced a set of group communication strategies. These include:
 - Having a facilitator to host the discussion;
 - “Step up, step back”: students should reflect themselves whether they usually take on the role of a contributor or a listener in a discussion. If they always take the stage, they should “step back” to give others the chance; if they feel shy to share, then they should “step up” to try to share their opinions.

4.2. TRANSCRIPT

{Students are sitting in a circle so that everyone faces to each other}

- 1 **Students:** yes / yes / [shh]
2 **¿Caspar?:** [I agree]
3 {Drezar and Nasih raises their hands}
4 **¿Nasih?:** I er / I (())
5 **¿?:** (())
6 {Nadim, Nasih and Caspar raise their hands}
7 {Caspar stretches his arm towards someone}
8 **Nadim:** [this story reminds me of]
9 **Nasih:** [this story is / really about] LOVE ↑
10 **¿?:** huh ↑ &
11 **¿?:** & eh ↑
12 **Nasih:** (4") {lays back in his seat} this story is er / really about love &
13 **Caspar:** & NO / [PUPPY LOVE] ↑ {pointing at Nasih's direction}
14 **Students:** [PUPPY LOVE] ↑ {laughter}
15 {Drezar raises his hand}
16 {Jahmal raises his hand; a girl laughs}
17 **Jahmal:** I don't think [Victor]=
18 **Nasih:** [why not?]
19 **Jahmal:** =is handsome // [am I right?]
20 **Nasih:** [{laughter}]
21 **¿?:** WE DON'T KNOW [we haven't seen his face]
22 **Qadir:** [(we don't know)^o]
23 **Nasih:** we can type the internet / ((for a while))
24 {laughter}
25 **Caspar:** is VERY good answer
26 **¿?:** (())!
27 **Qamar:** {laughter}
28 **¿?:** ok ((en tick))
29 **Nadim:** {looks down at his notes and reads} this reminds me of my first / crush {looks up}
30 **¿Caspar?:** woowei
31 {laughter}
32 **¿Caspar?:** WHO WAS IT / [WHO WAS IT]
33 **Students:** [WAS IT]
34 **Nadim:** ((every girl))^o {laughs and lowers his head}
35 [{laughter}]
36 **¿Caspar?:** [every girl ↑]
37 **¿?:** (())
38 **¿Caspar?:** you [((look))]

39 ¿?: (())

40 ¿Caspar?: you [((CAN'T BE))]

41 Omeed: [{laughs}]

42 Nasih: [((be caution / be caution))] &

43 {points at Caspar's direction}

44 ¿?: & ((you know what)) &

45 ¿?: & ((Victor))

46 Caspar: [(())°]

47 ¿?: [((no you just))]

48 Caspar: / I think Teresa DOES love Victor //

49 {Safiy starts to talk with his deskmate}

50 Nasih?: [yes↑]

51 ¿?: [ME TOO] / me

52 Nadim: I don't think so &

53 ¿Omeed?: & I THINK / [((it supposed to be))]

54 Nasih: [I don't think so] &

55 Nadim: & ((because)) / [((just so proud of this))]

56 ¿?: [why not (())]

57 ¿Omeed?: maybe ↓

58 ¿?: (())

59 {Safiy stops talking}

60 Erman: {stands up} why ((is that)) 7th grade a movie? {sits down}

61 Nadim: [((because it is))]

62 Omeed: {spreads her arms} [don't know] // [maybe because it's a short] =

63 ¿?: [don't know!]

64 Omeed: = [story] {with her hands showing something small}

65 ¿?: [it's just] a story &

66 ¿?: & just that &

67 Nasih: & maybe it's not real even

68 Omeed: obviously!

69 Erman: ((it's real↑))

70 Nasih: I know [it's real / but]

71 Omeed: [no / no] but he said [it's based on a true story]

72 [{some students overlap}]

73 Nasih: puppy love

74 Jahmal: it's not REAL ↑

75 Omeed: kind of / similar &

76 Nasih: & not real / so it might become aa &

77 Erman: & what is this {points at the screen} / this one is a bit [(())]

78 [{some students overlap}]

79 Omeed: this is (())

80 Jahmal: ((yes what [every pages]))

81 **Nasih:** {raising his hand} [I- I have a (lead) // uh / Victor reminds me of / {a student
82 whistles} time when my friend kiss // his ex-girlfriend
83 **¿?:** OHH
84 {Nasih nods}
85 **¿?:** sorry what was (((that again)))
86 **Nasih:** [(())] &
87 & {a student claps} &
88 **Nadim:** & me me [me]
89 **¿?:** [who] who who
90 {Iffan raises his hand}
91 **¿?:** ((and you friends with))
92 [{{loud laughter}}]
93 **Caspar:** {pushing Iffan to say something} [((stands up stands up))^o
94 [{{some students overlap}}]
95 **Nasih:** {((what / what))}
96 **Caspar:** {raising his hand, first looking at Iffan and then turning to Omeed} (())!
97 **Omeed:** Iffan wants to [speak]
98 **¿?:** [ssh]
99 {the whole group keeps silent}
100 **Caspar:** {reading from Iffan's notebook} (if I were // if I were Victor)^o {then signals Iffan to
101 read} // (you read just / if I were Victor)^o
102 **Iffan:** {reading from his notebook with a flat tone} / (if I were Victor // [I would love] =
103 **Caspar:** {reading from Iffan's notebook} [(I would love)^o
104 **Iffan:** = (T[erisa])^o
105 **Caspar:** [(Teresa)^o] =
106 **Iffan:** = (because I don't know men)^o {raises his head}
107 **Caspar:** {cheerfully claps his hands and pats on Iffan's shoulder} OH I AGREE WITH
108 HIM!
109 {Drezar raises his hand}
110 {overlapping of various students}
111 **Omeed:** [maybe↑ (())]
112 {overlapping of various students}
113 **Drezar:** me me me me me / [me]
114 **¿?:** [((what did you mean))] &
115 **Qamar:** {looking at Drezar} & ok [ok ok]
116 **Omeed:** [ok be quiet please (())]
117 **Nasih:** ok can I ask something?
118 {Qamar raises her hand, then Drezar and Caspar raise their hands}
119 {overlapping of various students at this point}
120 **Omeed:** Drezar wants to (())
121 **Nasih:** ok Drezar / ((read)) you first &
122 **¿Qamar?:** & Drezar

123 **Nasih:** (())
124 **Drezar:** {reading from his notes, scratching the back of his head} this story reminds / mee
125 of my oold //
126 {Drezar's reading is overlapped with a parallel conversation between Nasih and other student}
127 **Drezar:** year one // & um k2 (()) &
128 **¿?:** & ooh! (())!
129 **Students:** ohh!
130 **Nasih:** what is that? / ssh
131 {Drezar shakes his head and puts a finger on his mouth to show that he has no further comment}
132 {Caspar looks at the camera and raises his hand}
133 **Nasih:** ok (()) / your turn
134 **¿?:** ((maybe))
135 **Nasih:** (you just said) °
136 {the whole group keeps silent}
137 {Jahmal keeps waving his hand}
138 **Nadim:** {reading from his notes} if I were Victor / I would say I am in love with you / but
139 (())
140 {students laugh}
141 **Nadim:** [(())]
142 **Caspar:** {stands up and reads from a notebook} [I don't think] Teresa will say yees to
143 Victor because / (he doesn't know French)°
144 **¿?:** (()) &
145 **Caspar:** & {sits down and places the notebook on Iffan's table} // {points to Iffan} his
146 stories /
147 **¿?:** (()) / {laughter}

Symbols used in transcripts

A	(Capital letters) loud talking or emphasis
aa	lengthening of vowel or consonant sound
/	short pause (0.5 seconds)
//	long pause (0.5 – 1.5 seconds)
(x")	X seconds pause
[]	turn overlapping with similarly marked turn
&	latched utterances
(())	non-understandable fragment
()°	low talking
{ }	researcher's comments
↑	rising intonation
↓	falling intonation
=	absence of a discernable gap between two parts of a same utterance, after overlapping
**	translation of bits in Urdu language.

4.3. ACTIVITIES FOR A TENTATIVE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT'S GOING ON

Activity 1

What do you think of this kind of activity? Do you think students are learning or just wasting their time? If you think they are learning, what is it they have learnt? If not, what are your reasons to believe so? You can refer to the diagram below.

Activity 2

Have you ever conducted similar activity in your class? Did you provide students with this type of space?

4.4. SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

This is a students' discussion session. The teacher gives the floor to students to let them express themselves. Students are seated in a circle so that everyone can see each other. Generally, students take turns to talk about their opinions about the main characters and the related life experiences. Others give comments after one finishes his/her sharing but there are also cases when commenting is omitted.

- **“This story is really about love.” (line 1 - 27)**

While several students are urging to speak, Nasih and Nadim speak in overlapping. In reaction to this, Nadim stops talking and allows Nasih to finish his contribution (line 8 -9). He states that the story is really about love, but the class seems not sure about his answer. After a 4-seconds pause, Nasih repeats his answer, this time followed by the whole class correcting him as it should be “puppy love.” (line 12-14) Without any further discussion, the topic turns to what Jahmal asked: the physical appearance of the main character (line 17, 19). His question brings up a discussion. As the majority thinks that there is no related information given in the story, Nasih suggests that they can research about it on the Internet. His opinion is approved by Caspar as a “very good answer.” (line 23-25)

- **“This reminds me of my first crush.” (line 28 - 47)**

Shortly after Caspar's last contribution, a female student expresses her concern about the fact that someone else should say something (line 28). Nadim takes the floor and states that this story reminds him of his first crush, which immediately catches everyone's attention (line 29 -31). A short conversation then takes place between Nadim and a male student, possibly Caspar who represents the group (line 32 - 40). The conversation ends in students' laughter and Nasih's statement that everyone should pay attention to someone who wants to speak (line 42 -43).

- **“I think Teresa does love Victor” (line 48 - 59)**

Caspar takes the turn and states his opinion on the relation between two main characters: he thinks the heroin loves the hero too (line 48). Students, as they hold different opinions, discuss around this topic. As soon as Caspar starts talking, Safiy, who is sitting several seats away from him, also starts a parallel conversation with his deskmate (line 49 -59). The discussion remains stuck on simple expression of agree or disagree with Caspar’s statement without any audible explanation.

- **Discussion about the story “7th Grade” (line 60 – 80)**

The discussion of the previous topic ends abruptly when Erman stands up and asks a question about the story itself: why it is a movie (line 60)? Omeed takes a major role on answering his question (line 62, 64). Meanwhile, Nasih, Erman and Jahmal begin to discuss the authenticity of the story; they refer to the screen during the discussion (line 67 - 77).

- **“Victor reminds me of my friend kissing his ex-girlfriend” (line 81 -96)**

Although other students are still discussing the authenticity of the story, Nasih raises his hand and starts talking. He claims that the main character reminds him of something related with a girl, which excites the class. Although the group is extremely curious about who the girl is, Nasih seems to be happy to keep the answer to himself. While other students are still asking Nasih for more details, Nadim tries to take the next turn to speak (line 88). Meanwhile, Caspar is talking to Iffan, prodding him to say something.

- **“If I were Victor...” (line 97 -108)**

Omeed sees Iffan raising his hand but the class is still in a fuzz; so she let the class notice that Iffan is ready to speak. The class calms down and listens to him. Nevertheless, Iffan seems to be reluctant to speak. His deskmate, Caspar points at his notebook and reads out the sentence starter for him (line 100-101). Iffan speaks in a relatively low voice compared with his classmates and reads out his sentence in a flat tone (line 102, 104, 106). Caspar evaluates Iffan’s opinion positively by loudly

agreeing with him and patting on his shoulder (line 107-108). The class, on the contrary, seems not be able to hear Iffan clearly and thus no further comment is provided. Drezar raises his hand immediately after Iffan finishes (line 109).

- **Students fight over the floor (line 109 - 123)**

At this point, many students, including Drezar, Nasih, Qamar and some more, want to be the next one to speak. Drezar's crave is expressed by his repeated asking (line 113). In view of that, Omeed again takes the role as facilitator to point out that the class should listen to Drezar (line 120). Magon then officially approves it is Drezar's turn (line 121).

- **"This story reminds me of..." (line 124 - 131)**

Drezar shows a little hesitance at first but manages to finish his sentence: this story reminds him of his previous experience with a girl (line 124 -127). This statement excites the class again. When other students try to ask for more detail, Drezar simply uses gestures to show that he does not want to talk more (line 131).

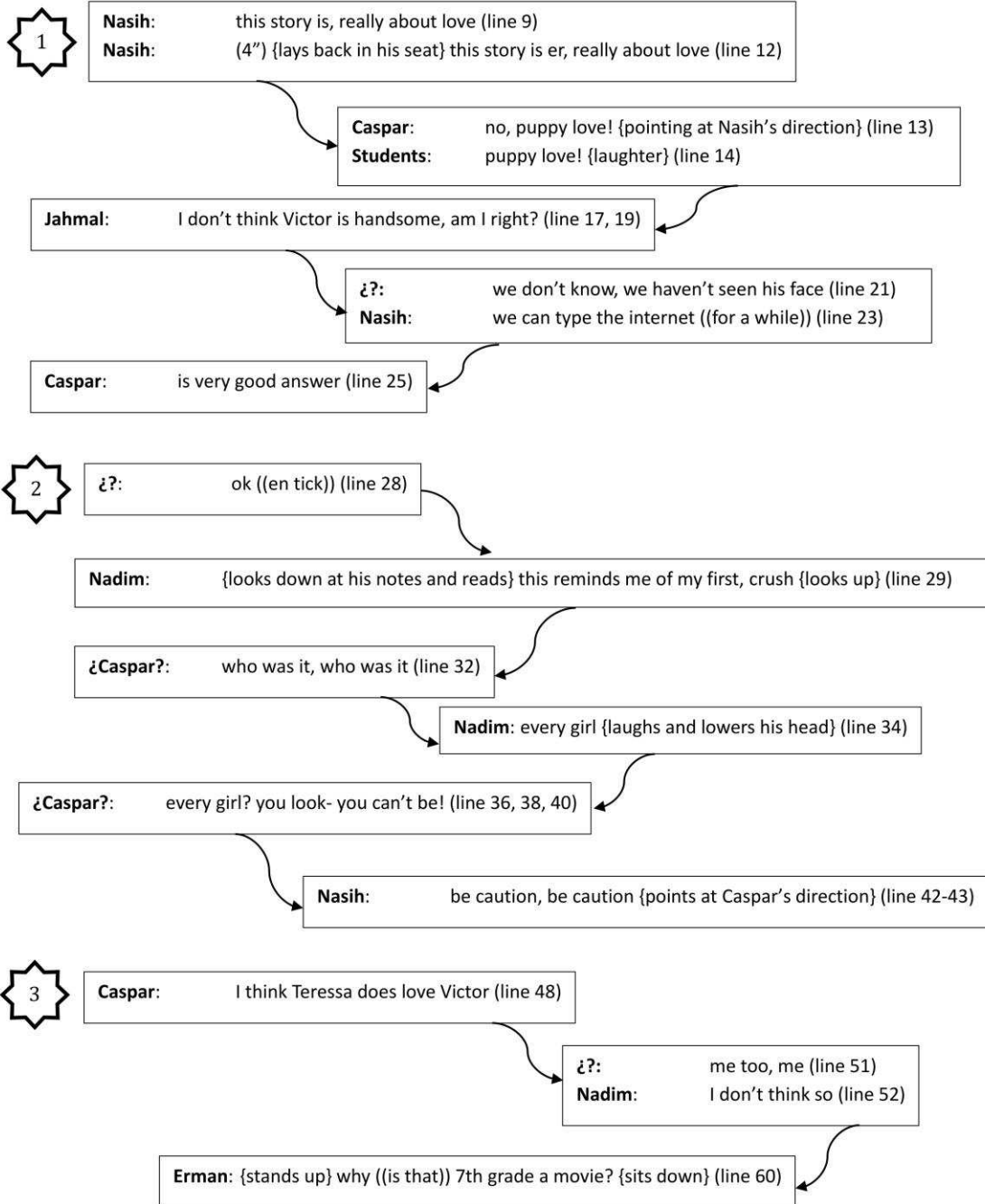
- **"... his stories" (line 132 - 147)**

As no one contributes more on the topic, Nasih suggests Nadim be the next one to speak (line 133). Nadim expresses his way of impressing Teresa, which amuses the whole class (line 140). Without receiving any approval, Caspar suddenly stands up and starts talking about a reason for Teresa did not love Victor (line 142-143). After reading from his notes Caspar emphasizes that it is Huassin's opinions (line 145-146). Following him, some students respond in chorus and then laugh out loud.

Activity 3

Pay attention to how Nasih and Iffan participate differently in the activity. Please, compare and contrast their actions throughout the discussion. Use specific lines to indicate the similarities and/or differences. You can also use the diagram of transcript below for quick reference.

4.5. DIAGRAM OF TRANSCRIPT



4

Omeed: {spreads her arms} don't know. maybe because it's a short story {with her hands showing something small} (line 62, 64)

Nasih: maybe it's not real even (line 67)

Erman: ((it's real!)) (line 69)

Omeed: no, no, but he said it's based on a true story (line 71)

Jahmal: it's not real! (line 74)

5

Nasih: {raising his hand} I, I have a lead. Uh, Victor reminds me of time when my friend kiss, his ex-girlfriend (line 81-82)

¿?: oh! (line 83)

{Nasih nodes} (line 84)

Nadim: me me me (line 88)

Caspar: {pushing Iffan to say something} ((stands up stands up)) (line 93)

6

Omeed: Iffan wants to speak (line 97)

¿?: ssh (line 98)
{the whole group keeps silent} (line 99)

Caspar: {reading from Iffan's notebook} if I were, if I were Victor {then signals Iffan to read} you read just, if I were Victor (line 100-101)

Iffan: {reading from his notebook with a flat tone} if I were Victor, I would love (line 102)

Caspar: {reading from Iffan's notebook} I would love (line 103)

Iffan: Terisa (line 104)

Caspar: Teressa (line 105)

Iffan: because I don't know men {raises his head} (line 106)

Caspar: {cheerfully claps his hands and pats on Iffan's shoulder} oh I agree with him!
(line 107-108)

7

{Drezar raises his hand} (line 109)
Drezar: me me me me me, me (line 113)

Qamar: {looking at Drezar} ok ok ok (line 115)
Omeed: ok be quiet please (()) (line 116)
Nasih: ok can I ask something? (line 117)

Omeed: Drezar wants to (()) (line 120)
Nasih: ok Drezar, ((read)) you first (line 121)
¿Qamar?: Dreza (line 122)

8

Drezar: {reading from his notes, scratching the back of his head} this story reminds, me of my old, year one, um K2 (()) (line 124-125, 127)

¿?: ooh! (())! (line 128)
Students: ohh! (line 129)

{Drezar shakes his head and puts a finger on his mouth to show that he has no further comment} (line 131)

9

Nasih: ok (()), your turn (line 133)
Nasih: you just said (line 135)

Nadim: {reading from his notes} if I were Victor, I would say I am in love with you, but (()) (line 138-139)

{students laugh} (line 140)

Caspar: {stands up and reads from a notebook} I don't think Teresa will say yes to Victor because, he doesn't know French (line 142-143)
Caspar: {sits down and places the notebook on Iffan's table then points to Iffan} his stories (line 145-146)

¿?: (()) {laughter} (line 147)

4.6. COMMENT FROM THE WIDER CULTURE: A CURRICULUM OF (ACADEMIC) TALK

Read the following quote:

“When we refer to classroom talk, we mean all the different interactions that a teacher may structure around learning during literacy work, in the content areas, or in social situations. The challenge for teachers is to set up structures in which children increasingly take more responsibility in initiating and carrying on the different types of conversations that will happen in the classroom.

At the beginning of this process, the teacher is the facilitator of the conversations, and after the children speak, she may ask students to turn and talk to their partners to give their opinions. In a general discussion, she may ask children to add to the discussion, to agree or disagree; or she may ask a particular child to speak. The teacher may coach individual EL children to respond, asking them to rehearse their answers before speaking. She often reminds students to look at each other as they speak, rather than looking at her.

As students get used to having classroom conversations, the teacher’s role as facilitator diminishes; eventually, students speak when they hear something they can add on to, or when they disagree.”

(Swinney and Velasco, 2011:37)

Activity 4

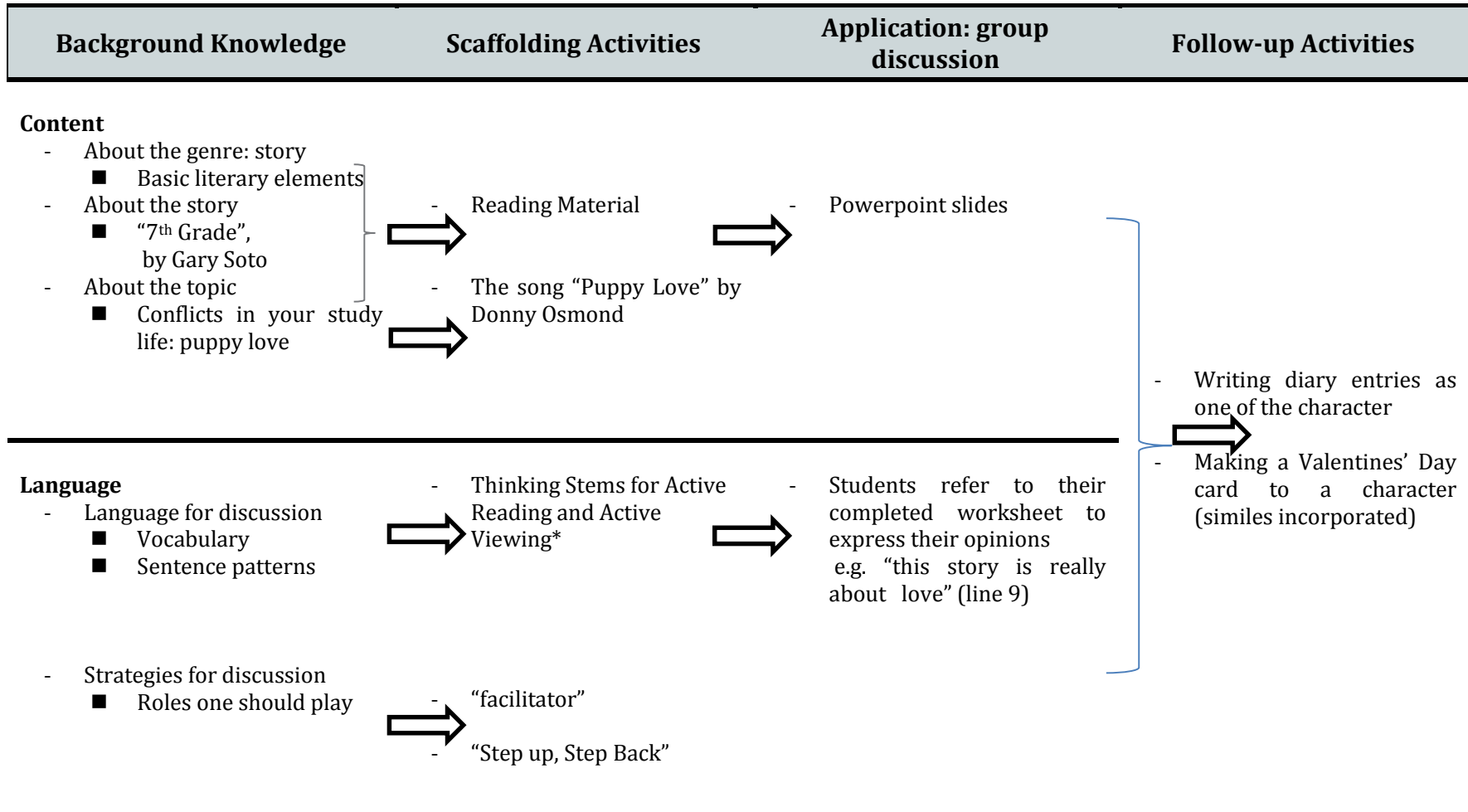
In this quote, the teacher plans a “classroom talk” activity by designing a scaffolding sequence in which students are supported in different ways throughout the process. This implies that this type of activities require a careful planning in order to ensure that the students have the key language resources for engaging in a discussion about a given topic. Please read the sample teaching plan below. Some sections of the teaching plan are left blank. In groups, discuss how a group discussion activity can be scaffolded and fill in the blank areas.

Background Knowledge	Scaffolding Activities	Application: group discussion	Follow-up Activities
Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <subject knowledge> Geography - <topic> The development of a city - <genre> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading materials - two cases of typical city development - 		<assessment of content> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writing a report on the development of a chosen city
<hr/> Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <subject specific terms> - <language for discussion> Sentence starters; Sentence patterns - <strategies for discussion> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - word games: cross and down - - 		<assessment of language> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - giving a presentation of the written report

4.7. THE UNIT OF WORK (LESSON AND MATERIALS) AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The following is the teaching plan for the unit of work regarding the short story “7th Grade”. The accompanying materials and activities are also included.

The activities are arranged in chronological order. Starting from the preparation stage, various scaffolding activities have been carried out to provide background knowledge to the students. Different types of materials, from printed handout to multimedia resources are adopted. The teaching plan clearly presents the connection between the knowledge, the corresponding scaffolding activity and how it is to be applied by students in group discussions.



The sign "*" indicates that supporting material is provided.

Adapted from "Planning Template for Memoir Unit of Study" (Swinney & Velasco, 2011:63)

4.8. SUPPORTING MATERIAL – THINKING STEM

Name: _____ Class: _____ Number: _____ Date: _____

Thinking Stems for Active Reading and Active Viewing

<p><u>Making Connections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This reminds me of _____ because... • I have a connection to... • An experience I have had like that... • How can I live differently because this text has been part of my life? 	<p><u>Asking Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wonder... • How come... • Why... • I'm confused... • What if... • I don't understand...
<p><u>Visualizing/Sensory Images</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my mind I picture... • I visualized... • I can see... • I can taste/hear/smell/feel... 	<p><u>Inferring/Predicting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think... • Maybe this means... • I'm guessing... • This allows me to assume... • I predict... because...
<p><u>Summarizing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far this text is mostly about... • The main ideas of this text are... • Some important events are... because... 	<p><u>Synthesizing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm thinking that... • At first I thought _____, but now I'm thinking... because... • I'm changing my thinking again... • I think the lesson or theme is... • These events have caused me to believe...
<p><u>Author's Message:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This story is really about... • What this story/video/article/film/poem says about the world is that... • The story that is being told is the story of... • The themes I can see so far are... 	<p><u>Evaluating:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I agree with...because... • I don't think...because... • The way the author does/uses... is...because....
<p><u>Setting (Time and Place):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This story takes place in/during... • Something I noticed about the setting is... • I would/would not like to live during this time/ in this place because... • Some words/phrases/images the author uses to describe the setting are... 	<p><u>Characters:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I were (character's name), I would/would not... • The character that interests me the most is...because... • A character that really changes in the story is...I think this is true because... • I like/don't like (character's name) because...

4.9. NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Transcript

- The discussion here aims to elicit the importance of promoting academic language development.
- When the participants are discussing about their own use of classroom talk for learning, facilitators need to guide the discussion in the desired direction, towards establishing contrast with what Mr. C does in this case, where there seems to be a clear design with room for previous introductory activities before the focus task. This is what is considered as scaffolding, as the teacher is providing students with resources they need to engage successfully in a given task (e.g. thinking steams, models, etc.).

Summary interpretation and follow-up activities

- By looking for similarities and differences between Nasi and Iffan, the facilitator should guide the discussion so that participants realize that both students are willing to participate but many of the problems Iffan faces may be due to the fact that he does not have the necessary communicative resources to engage successfully in the genre of a "classroom debate", for which students need very specific communicative skills (e.g., how to take the floor, how to distribute and allocate turns and how to evaluate others' contributions, etc.).

Comment from the wider culture: a curriculum of (academic) talk

- The sample teaching plan, though used as supporting information for participants' own design of a unit of work, can also be used as a template for daily teaching.
- Although a geography lesson is provided in the sample teaching plan, participants are encouraged to choose any other content or subject they might be interested in.

Sample teaching plan and supporting

- The whole teaching process of Mr. C's lesson is presented in this section for participants' reference.
- Supporting materials are included as well.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY – WORKS CITED

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EPISODE B

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EPISODE C

Swinney, R., & Velasco, P. (2011). *Connecting content and academic language for english learners and struggling students grades 2-6*. (pp. 27-44, 63). London, England: SAGE Ltd.

The aim of this material is to provide a systematic set of classroom-based naturally occurring data, complementary activities and materials for educators to reflect upon Hong Kong's contemporary reforms of its language education policies, from a bottom-up perspective which takes into consideration real and localised experiences of teachers and students who are supposed to make such reforms a reality. This is not an academic book in which classroom data are analyzed against or in relation to a given theoretical framework; rather, this package attempts to allow Hong Kong teachers to reflect around the provided classroom materials under the guidance of a facilitator, on the basis of which further interpretations and (academic/non-academic) discourse / perspectives available in wider society are progressively brought into being. Indeed, these complementary perspectives are introduced in a way that seeks consolidation / re-consideration / challenging of initial interpretations by teachers and, therefore, opens new paths for discussion and reflection.



香 港 大 學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG