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Seasons of my learning

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12 Seasons of my learning

Ayesha Bashiruddin, *Pakistan*

Introduction

Who I am as a teacher and teacher-educator reflects a complex, ongoing process of interaction and interpretation of elements, conditions, opportunities, and events that has taken place throughout my life in all realms of my existence – the intellectual, physical, psychological, spiritual, political and social (Cole & Knowles 2000).

In writing about this lifelong process of continual growth, I have moved inwards, towards my internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions; outwards, towards the existential conditions of my environment; and backwards or forwards, into past, present and future (Clandinin & Connelly 2000).

I preface this account with a poem, 'Seasons of my Learning,' that is written into a silk painting as an artistic/literary representation of various stages of my personal and professional development. I then construct the narrative of my development around each stanza of the poem. The painting can be reproduced here only in black and white. Anyone who wants to see it in color should contact me at: Bashiruddin Ayesha: peechoo2000@yahoo.com

Childhood memories

The morning breeze of Spring,
Cool and exhilarating,
Made me dream of
What I wanted to be.

My choice of profession began with a dream: becoming a Teacher.

My favorite childhood pastime was to play School.

I always wanted to be a teacher; teaching was in my blood. I have a family history of academic literacy: my father and grandfather were both teachers. My family valued education more than anything else. Teaching was an inheritance.

Our culture at home was academic. I grew up on the campus of a university in north-west Pakistan where my father was a professor of English. I was raised in an environment where I heard four languages simultaneously. We used to speak Urdu (the national language) at home; my mother would speak Punjabi (her mother-tongue) to us; to people in the community, we spoke Pushto (the local regional language) and my father sometimes spoke to us in English. The first phrase that I learned in English that was meaningful to me was, 'Thank you, thank you very much,' which my sister and I would say to the guests who came to our house. It never seemed difficult or complicated to switch from one language to another. We considered it bliss to be multilingual and started mixing all languages. My sister and I spoke a hybrid of these languages at home and with friends.

I was greatly inspired by my mother's friend, also my kindergarten teacher. She represented all I wanted to be. I saw her as affectionate, warm, sensitive and enthusiastic about teaching. I liked the school and the teachers and found it a wonderful place. In

SEASONS OF MY LEARNING

The morning breeze of Spring,
Cool and exhilarating,
Made me dream of
What I wanted to be.

The scorching sun and stifling heat of Summer
Made me sweat and suffer
It made me doubt of
What I wanted to be.

The changing colors of Autumn
Reminded me of
Who I am,
Where I come from,
And where I want to go.

But then,
The thunderstorms, lightning and rain
In Winter,
Unfolded the unpleasantly conspicuous reality
And shattered all the dreams that I had of
What I wanted to be.

It was Spring by then,
A stimulating evolution
Which changed my life
And led me to the path
Where I wanted to be.

In all these Seasons of jubilation and distress
I had a divine force
And a beatitude of being loved,
Which kept me going.

Does it take a life-time to learn?

(Bashiruddin, A, 28th September, 1998, Professional Journal Entry)

my initial school years, I enjoyed the play, the music and the nursery rhymes that we sang in English, though I did not understand their meanings. My basic proficiency in English allowed me to learn and write the alphabet with ease. Writing Urdu and the numbers was a chore.

But we never questioned. In retrospect, I understand that in our school culture, teaching and learning are not a matter of choice. We accepted a set tradition of teaching and learning, which emphasized learning by rote. Every day was planned according to the same cycle, starting from the morning assembly till the end of the day. But I liked the routine.

As I grew to love the idea of teaching even more, and envied my teachers, I would look at them and say to myself, 'They are so lucky, they are teachers,' and I wished to be like them. I observed them and the way they taught very closely. At home, I dressed in the way that Auntie N (my teacher, my mother's friend) dressed, and started 'teaching'. My elder sister sometimes agreed to play with me and take the role of student, but she would quickly get bored. Then my class comprised all my dolls, my teddy bear, and sometimes empty bottles or any handy objects. I was the knower, the most powerful, and would translate every word into Urdu to make them understand. I used to do my homework like this, sometimes taking the role of teacher and sometimes that of student. In retrospect, this play shows how our education system viewed the teacher as the authority and the student as the passive dependent learner. I would talk to the parents of the students in my imaginary teaching world. When I reflect, I understand that I was only imitating what I saw and what was of value to me. Nonetheless, these experiences formed the beginning of learning to be a teacher. I practiced the compassion and commitment of a teacher.

Observing my keen interest in teaching, my father got me a blackboard and a box of chalk. It was the happiest day of my young life. When I used to go out with my father, his students greeted him respectfully in the market, on roads, in cafes; I felt so proud. One day my father told his friend about me and my enthusiasm for teaching; I could see hope in his eyes.

In high school, I was an 'above-average student', eager to participate in extra-curricular activities. I acted in English plays; my father helped me to rehearse my part. On graduating, I went to college for my BA.

College days

The scorching sun, and stifling heat of Summer
Made me sweat and suffer
It made me doubt of
What I wanted to be.

Looking back, I realize how stifling and suffocating my college days were, how extremely stressful, depressing and boring. Social and academic problems overshadowed my zest for teaching. First the curriculum, the teaching style and the atmosphere were not intellectually motivating. Above all, I found no teacher who inspired me. I remember feeling lost in the crowd of a hundred students in the compulsory classes. The teaching was all exam-oriented. The teachers mostly explained the prescribed texts by lecturing.

The student's task was to memorize the answers prepared during the class, and reproduce them in the examinations. The textbooks were very boring.

Second, I did not have friends to share my ideas with. In all the courses, I had a group of peers from an elite English-medium school who excluded and ridiculed me. I was so confused that I could not participate in class. I tried to do my readings, but was too intimidated to ask questions, because I was constantly overwrought with anxiety. I talked to the teachers about the situation, but it did not improve. I got along by ignoring these students, which did not come very naturally.

I took subjects from the humanities group: English compulsory, English literature, Psychology, Logic and Civics. Only English literature interested me, because I intended to take it up as the major for my MA. My interest in English literature grew, because of my father's interest and influence, and because of my interest in reading for pleasure.

The teaching in English literature classes was slightly different. There were only seven students. The teachers assigned chapters from the novels, then they explained and discussed them in class. The teacher explained poetry and drama with meanings of the difficult words and verses. To prepare for the long essay questions on examination papers, the teacher used to either dictate notes or lecture. We had to write the answers to the questions and get them checked by the teacher.

My college experience changed and the group pressure reduced when my cousin joined the class in the last two years. Meanwhile, only one thing, a kind of magic, really gave me a lot of confidence throughout my college life: my repeated success in the annual Poetry Reciting Competition. I loved reciting poetry – it simply mesmerized me. I remember how my father helped me prepare. He would teach me the pronunciation, intonation and voice variation.

Generally, this stressful four-year interlude demoralized me and diminished my dream of becoming a teacher; I no longer liked anything associated with teaching.

University days

The changing colors of Autumn
Reminded me of
Who I am,
Where I come from,
And where I want to go.

After my BA, I immediately applied for admission to the MA in English in my father's department. It was like a second home to me, because I had known it since my childhood. Here I found a new life, because of the family-like traditions and the caring atmosphere. I rapidly escaped the feelings of doubt, loneliness and suffocation that had engulfed me during college. Here I could grow academically and personally amidst learned and caring teachers. Three teachers particularly impressed me with their style of teaching and left a lasting effect on me. First, my father, already my informal teacher and mentor, now formally taught me for the first time. He used to teach Poetry; I loved his style. I can still hear the sound of his poetry recitation in his perfect, near-native English. After reading, he would explicate the poem in detail. Another professor, whom I already knew in the capacity of my father's colleague and friend, taught us Novel and Criticism.

He used to lecture, walking to and fro on the stage at the front of the class without notes or books. I appreciated his remarkable memory and immense knowledge. Our drama teacher also greatly impressed me. She introduced a new way of teaching; she would bring disc records of Shakespeare's plays from the British Council library. After briefly introducing each scene of the play, she would let us listen to it. This allowed us to visualize the characters and understand the dialogues much better.

I now realize, though, that all these teachers were delivering lectures in the tradition of transmitting knowledge. Nevertheless, each one had a distinct, personal style.

In the MA program, the courses were demanding, books in the library were limited and the time pressure was immense. I learned to write full-length critical essays. My desire to know more about literature grew; I often went to the British Council library to consult and borrow books. I frequently discussed these works with my father. These discussions emboldened me and developed my critical understanding of what I was reading. I also began to experiment with writing poems in free verse and started to get them published in the local English newspaper.

After majoring in English, I was qualified to teach. Through all these years of formal academic learning I had accumulated an enormous wealth of information about how different teachers teach. This experience augmented and expanded the teacher in me. I was very sure of what I was doing, my faith in my abilities grew stronger and my confidence was restored.

Beginning teaching

But then,
The thunderstorms, lightning and rain
In Winter,
Unfolded the unpleasantly conspicuous reality
And shattered all the dreams that I had of
What I wanted to be.

To be seen as a teacher by myself and by others necessitated acquiring and redefining a socially legitimate 'professional identity' (Coldron & Smith 1999). Immediately after completing my Masters degree I was employed as a lecturer in English at one of the university's women's colleges. Teachers at that level were not required to obtain any formal training to teach. The system assumed that anyone who could understand and appreciate English literature could understand language, and hence could teach. The system rested on Carter and Doyle's (1996) 'three cultural myths': that everything depends on the teacher; that the teacher is the expert, and that teachers are self-made. I was to teach English Literature and Compulsory English to undergraduate and graduate students. I taught as I had been taught, by the traditional, up-front, lecturing method.

My first few years of teaching appalled me. I survived because I was persistent and had a strong desire to become a teacher. Initially, the sheer number of classes to teach and prepare was overwhelming. The day-to-day routines and exigencies were extremely demanding.

But above all, the so-called help that I got from my senior colleagues was exasperating. I cannot forget those experiences; they still lurk as nightmares and give me shivers.

Usually, my senior colleague went with me into the class and sat at the back, with a disapproving look. In the middle of the lesson, she would get up and re-teach the same lesson in her own way: it was extremely humiliating for me. Arguably, she was trying to teach me a better technique through the apprenticeship model – 'a standard mode of learning associated with the practical orientation ... working with the master over a period of time, the apprentice acquires practical skills and learns what works in real situations' (Feiman-Nemser 1996: 222). This was a general practice in colleges and universities which required no formal training for the teachers. It rested on the assumption that 'learning to teach comes about through a combination of firsthand experience and interaction with peers and mentors about problematic situations ... the novice is inducted into a community of practitioners' (ibid.).

My experience of this model was more of a 'miseducation' (Arnstine 1975). It shattered all my dreams perhaps because I entered the teaching profession believing I had nothing more to learn; or perhaps because I wanted a warm, receptive encounter rather than this harsh, humiliating one.

I would prepare my lessons and have my father check them. Every time I went to class with some confidence, I came home in tears. As Nielson (1998: 21) puts it: 'My novice teacher idealism eroded quickly in that climate.' My frustrations started to manifest themselves physically: I started getting migraines and sickness of the stomach. Anxiety dreams followed.

My senior colleague followed her pattern of supervision day after day, until one day, during our post-conference session, I burst into tears and I told her how I felt. I told her that I wanted to resign. She looked at me as if I had committed a sin; she got very angry, and told me that she was only trying to help me. For a few days she did not enter my class and did not reply to my greetings. She was annoyed. Even that was nerve-racking.

My other colleagues, who told me not to quit, comforted me. I continued teaching in my own, conventional manner, helping the students to memorize the 'right' answers. Students grew fond of me and commented sometimes that I was 'pleasant, knowledgeable, well dressed and soft spoken.' This meant a lot.

I now carried my father in my heart, mind, and spirit on an ongoing basis. He taught me to focus on the class, and gave various suggestions for teaching. He also taught me what Noddings (1986: 497) calls 'high fidelity,' as he strongly believed in natural caring rather than caring out of duty.

In 1983, after two years of teaching in the college, I knew my teaching texts very well, because they were the same every year. I also needed a break from the suffocating environment.

Then a friend asked me to teach adult students at an English language center in the evenings. It was a watershed experience. My friend gave me a teacher's book with teaching strategies, and told me that it outlined everything. I took the book home and browsed through it. I found the course and teaching pedagogy very interesting; they were based on teaching communicative English. I embraced the challenge and joined the center.

The entire experience was new to me. For the first time, I was teaching adult men, most of them Afghan refugees. Initially, it came as a shock to me that the student, not

the teacher, was the focus of the classroom. The teacher was only a facilitator.

Teaching at the college in the mornings and at the center in the evenings demanded a lot of hard work. Getting used to teaching language at the center took a long time. I religiously followed the teacher's guide, because it was the easiest way. I enjoyed the work, because I was not being watched or supervised and because teaching was different and more interactive.

In the summer of 1984, an American teacher gave a workshop at the center on how to teach speaking skills. For the first time I realized how useful these teaching methods really could be; I tried to apply some of them in my college teaching. I knew that I was taking a risk, but the students liked the new methods. This gave me confidence.

I continued in this manner until the principal summoned me to her office. She told me that the students had informed her that I was introducing new methods. I solemnly declared that these were 'the new techniques' that I had recently learned in a workshop; I had decided to use them because, 'they worked well and students enjoyed them'.

The principal told me to consult my senior colleagues before introducing anything new. I, however, wanted to work in isolation rather than involving my colleagues, because of my previous experiences with them. The principal told me that a very excited group of students had gone to one of my senior colleagues to tell her how I taught my section. They wanted her to teach in the same way in her sections. She was very embarrassed because she did not know what I was doing. The principal felt that she should be informed. This made me proud; and in a way my rebellious self was very pleased. However, I was again going to have to be subject to vigilant supervision, because my success challenged my colleagues' authority. I felt 'out of step with the march of surrounding things' (Dewey 1934: 14).

Professional development

It was Spring by then,
A stimulating evolution,
Which changed my life
And led me to the path
Where I wanted to be.

Despite the difficulties, I felt a renewed sense of myself as a teacher and as a person. Subsequent events offered many opportunities to develop personally and professionally. I attended many workshops on Modern English Language Teaching Methods organized by the American Center in my college and other colleges in the University. This taught me new teaching methods, and reconfirmed and expanded the knowledge that I had accumulated at the language center workshops. I joined The Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT), a private voluntary organization. I worked for them for more than ten years as a program/academic coordinator. I not only learned to work with teachers at various levels, but also developed a spirit of volunteerism.

In 1986, after six years at the college, I was nominated by the principal to enrol in an in-service diploma program in Teaching of English as an International Language. This was organized by the University Grants Commission in collaboration with the British Council, the American Center, the Asia Foundation and a local University in Islamabad.

For this course I had to move to the capital city, Islamabad, a totally different landscape.

This, my first formal teacher training course, was an invigorating and transforming experience, a major turning point. The intensive program, designed along lines consonant with Dewey's (1904, 1964) 'proper relationship' of theory and practice, introduced me to theoretical knowledge, subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of English Language Teaching. The course could be well described in terms of what Feimen-Nemser (1996: 224), drawing on Joyce and Showers (1980, 1983) calls the *Training Model* of learning to teach:

First, teachers should learn about the theory or rationale behind a given strategy or procedure. Second, they should see a demonstration. Third, teachers need a chance to practice and get feedback ... Finally, teachers need help transferring the new behaviours to the classroom from a coach.

During this time, many teachers recognized and nourished my intellectual curiosity. I also developed cooperative learning and interpersonal skills. I became familiar with the scholarly journals and books.

After the first phase of the diploma course, I returned to the college. Because I had done well, my ideas on teaching gained credibility among my colleagues. I translated theory into practice in my own classrooms. I used the set curriculum, but introduced new techniques such as working in pairs to write a story, working in groups and prediction exercises. On the basis of these experiences, I wrote the final research papers for the diploma course. On these assignments, I achieved the grade Distinction, and they were put in the library of the University Grants Commission as an example for other students. Overall, I came second in the program. I was awarded a British Council scholarship to study for my MA in Applied Linguistics. My happiness knew no bounds: my family, my college, my students, were all proud of me. I felt elated. I was progressing towards my goals.

I was selected to do a Masters in Applied linguistics in a British university. I had heard a lot about England from my parents, who had lived there while my father pursued his degree. I had also read about it. When I reached England, in the fall of 1988, I felt quite at home, though there were certain cultural aspects to which I had to adjust. Studying in England gave me a broader outlook by exposing me to students from different cultures and countries. I learned to respect and honor other people's cultural, religious and political beliefs without undermining my own.

The British university system was very different from that in Pakistan. The teacher was not an all-knowing authority who taught everything in the class, but was more of a facilitator.

Initially, I felt overwhelmed with the courses in the first semester. They were loaded with detailed theoretical and practical knowledge. Nonetheless, they formed an important basis of my content knowledge, building on the background of linguistic and pedagogical knowledge I had already developed during my Diploma course. I found the second term much more interesting than the first. I took a course called Discourse Analysis, which I later taught at the Diploma course in Pakistan. Another course, on teacher training, sparked my interest in the field. I knew the professor who taught these courses, as he had been one of the tutors on my Diploma course. Since then I had regarded him as my

mentor. I also appreciated working with him and a coursemate on a short research project, which later three of us presented at an international conference and had published. This paper, referred to as 'Bashiruddin et al. 1990', made me feel proud. In the process, I learned to conduct sociolinguistic, quantitative research and to present it at a conference.

When I returned to my college in Pakistan in 1989, I introduced new techniques. I first incorporated group work in a class of 30 students during composition writing periods. The Principal, who was on her rounds, called me out of the class and asked, 'Ayesha, aren't you teaching?' I told her about the technique and its benefits.

I used to have this strong belief that students should work individually, not looking at each other's work, and should ask the teacher if they needed any help. My awareness of the new teaching and learning methods altogether changed my perception. I made my students work in pairs; then gradually I started introducing group work. They no longer found the prescribed essays boring, or so arduous. We all participated in the library research, the sharing of ideas and materials and the production of classroom displays.

My senior colleagues soon left and new staff members joined the department. I was able to incorporate some changes that I had proposed in my Masters' dissertation. I was now in a position of authority, which I considered a responsibility to develop a team of teachers who could work and grow together. I tried to make time for my colleagues' questions. I told them stories of my experiences; I mentored them and provided the kind of help I had not been given by my seniors. In collaboration with these colleagues, I designed a skill-based course for the college students called the New English Language Integrated Course.

I realized that the new teachers had no, or very little, experience of language teaching. I discussed this problem with the principal, proposing a Practical English Language Teaching Course for them. She agreed; I realized that I had gained an ally and could now count on her support.

I designed and taught this course with two other colleagues, a Fulbright Scholar from the USA, and an American English Language Teaching expert. Once it was done, the teachers and I met for one period a week for coordination. This process involved three kinds of self-initiated learning: knowledge exchanging, in which we all shared and reflected on our teaching practices and experiences; experimenting, in which we all enacted new ideas and techniques; and environmental scanning, in which we individually gathered information from outside sources (see Lohman & Woolf 2001).

In 1990, I started teaching the teacher training courses during the summer break, too. This was an incredible experience. I was learning from other teachers.

Working for SPELT and teaching on the Diploma course bore fruition. I was recognized by the ELT world in Pakistan. I presented papers at SPELT International Conferences, and engaged in discussions about professional development with colleagues from Pakistan and abroad. My papers dealt with my work in the classroom. That my own classroom could be a place to do research was a new idea for me. This classroom research made me reflect; it taught me to become a better teacher.

In 1994 I was sent to the United States as a reward for my volunteer work for SPELT, to visit and observe similar organizations. While there, I attended one of the world's

largest Teaching of English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) conferences. I gained insights into my subject-content knowledge and learned how people organize such large-scale conferences on a voluntary basis. I introduced similar sessions in the conferences that I arranged for my own SPELT chapter. I started writing academic papers and got them published in national and international journals (see for example, Bashiruddin 1992a, 1992b, 1994-95, 1996, 1996-97).

Later in 1994, I attended a British Council Summer School in Cardiff on Training the Trainers in ELT. The course content, though not new, provided me with new insights into the philosophy of pedagogy. At the end of it, I was consciously aware that, in Beattie's (2001: 25) terms:

Becoming a teacher and learning to teach are processes which are inextricably linked, and the knowledge which good teachers enact in their classrooms is a knowledge of self, of subject matter, of pedagogy, of relationships, of interpersonal interactions, and of the creation of a setting for learning.

After 1994, I became very frustrated with my professional life, which did not allow me to grow as I wanted. But finally I realized (to use words that I would read later) that:

life goes through us as much as we go through life, that we are trapped as much as we are free, and that those notions of liberty and constraint are constructs we create together.

(Neilson 1998: 32)

This realization helped me move on, as 'my head and my gut stagnated,' (Guba 1996: 82), and I decided to enter Teacher Education full time.

In 1997, I took a full-time job as a teacher educator at a private international university in southern Pakistan. The new job introduced new challenges in Teacher Education. It involved innovative teamwork from conceptualization to implementation of the courses, taking into consideration what Liston and Zeichner (1990) call the social context of schooling, where the prospective teachers need to think about the social, political, and institutional contexts of school. The duty of supervising an MEd student's thesis taught me about qualitative research, now proving helpful in my doctoral studies.

In 1998, I went into doctoral studies in Canada, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The doctoral program's courses and requirements gave me many opportunities to explore new subject areas and new ways of knowing. I attended courses in qualitative research, teacher development, and research in second language learning. I came to reflect on and recognize my own learning and teaching abilities.

In Canada I also learned the significance of using various artistic and literary forms of expression, such as poems, stories and silk paintings to understand and represent academic work. This arts-based approach, which employs nonverbal, artistic media (Barone & Eisner 1997) allows researchers to draw on their creative energies and go beyond the limits set by traditional verbal and text-based means (Cole & Knowles 2000). I now understand how various artistic and literary forms can be ways of knowing.

I am still writing my doctoral thesis. The research and writing has provided me with

new insights, but I miss teaching. I would like to teach and conduct research simultaneously, because both have their own pleasures.

In relating these experiences of my continuing professional development, I have acknowledged each stage and the processes through which I have passed. Each of these experiences has contributed to my development as a teacher and teacher educator. And my professional development will not end with the ending of this paper – it is an ongoing, lifelong process.

In all these seasons of jubilation and distress
I had a divine force
And a beatitude of being loved,
which kept me going.

Does it take a life-time to learn?

... Closings

Julian Edge, *UK*

The themes that have been evoked in me by the differing perspectives of the chapters in this collection are not unfamiliar. Indeed, it is their familiarity that suggests that we have all for some time been building an appropriate agenda: an agenda that depends on our **awareness**, in **cooperation** with others across a variety of **insider/outsider** relationships, as we tell and listen to our individual **stories** and learn from specifics in the establishment of our own sense of **coherence**. Let me try to follow some of those themes.

The nurturing and constant reinvestment of one's **awareness** is implicit in any articulation of development through reflective practice, an approach common to all the authors here. Sometimes, this awareness illuminates issues of professional competence, as when Bailey considers the skills that she has developed through serving as President of TESOL; sometimes the awareness is personal, such as when McCabe expresses her surprise at her own lack of emotional expression in a narrative that she regards as personally significant; and sometimes the rush of awareness is mine, as a writer reaches out and pulls me into a space illuminated by their insight, as Perkins does when she writes of her growing disillusionment with her career in healthcare:

My patients couldn't tell that something was lacking, but I could; and I felt that my patients deserved better. I wasn't bored, but I wasn't passionate. ... There is no chance for excellence to blossom in that scenario, and who wants to be mediocre? Can one be passionate about competence? I can't.

In Myers and Clark, the interplay between awareness and development is their explicit central theme, and their chapter is an eloquent example of how the disciplined pursuit of an abstract concept, in interaction with practical constraints of time and money, can lead to far-reaching and satisfying changes in professional practice. Rinvoluceri's stories, by contrast, are explicitly tied into specified classroom experiences, frequently featuring recalcitrant students. What he calls 'earth-tremor moments', however, are clearly examples of what Myers and Clark call 'accommodation', and what they are all concerned with is what takes place when our normal frames of reference are broken and we have to grow replacements.

The importance of **cooperation** is everywhere in this collection, whether sought by Haskins and McKenna, or celebrated by Kohonen, where the strength of collegiality buttresses the sense of individual development. The significance of professional associations to such cooperation is also a common thread here, linking Bashiruddin to Xu and to the Nakamuras, even before we count Bailey and Barduhn, who were invited to write specifically from such a perspective.

The contrast, **insider/outsider** is a natural part of a language teacher's life and psychological framework. It surfaces most joyfully here in the experiences related by the Nakamuras, and perhaps most poignantly in the chapter by Ilangovan and Hill. Between those who stay and those who visit, the separation must be real, and Ilangovan and Hill's chapter invites us to reflect on the nature of the connecting doors that empathy