

'The Earth speaks Arabic'

Arab proverb

Research Question

'How can data on language use and cultural context gathered from participants and tutors during Professional Development (PD) sessions delivered by Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC) help better tailor BTC PD to participants' needs and enhance their learning environment?'

(1.0) Needs Audit

This action research (AR) is intended to address a range of personal-professional, participant-focused, curriculum development, and institutional needs.

Personal-professional needs include:

- Making myself a more effective practitioner working with mid-career Bahraini as an educator-facilitator on PD programmes
- Making myself a more efficient coordinator and developer of PD programmes in an evolving context
- Making myself a more effective manager of BTC's PD programme

Participant-focused needs include:

- Gaining insights into participants PD needs and expectations
- Identifying and addressing factors that restrict participants' learning
- Making learning 'real' and meaningful for participants

Curriculum development needs include:

- Improving the current PD modules
- Developing new PD modules
- Improving feedback and assessment

Institutional needs include:

- Gaining the insights needed for BTC to develop effective needs analysis (NA)

and performance (PM) procedures for PD participants

- Cooperating with the Bahrain Ministry of Education (MoE) and other stakeholders to make BTC PD needs-relevant and performance enhancing
- Developing PD tutors professionally

(2.0) Focus

The proposed AR focuses on the evolving PD provision at BTC (E.1.0; E.2.1 to E.2.16; E.3.1 and E.3.2; E.5.1 and E.5.2; E.6.0; E.11.1 to E.11.11)¹, and the factors that impact on the quality of the participants' PD experience:

- the relevance of PD provision, and the impact of this on participants' attitudes to learning and developing practice
- directing the BTC PD programme in a way that builds on the previous NIE-derived materials, while enhancing the participant experience and maximising professional development potential for positive change

My letter of appointment as Academic Head of PD at BTC states:

“In this position, you will be expected to liaise with colleagues from the NIE [the National Institute of Education, Nanyang University, Singapore] and from the Ministry of Education as we adapt and transfer responsibilities for all Professional Development in the public education system to the Kingdom of Bahrain. You will be called upon to provide leadership in the development and recommendation of policies and procedures, to negotiate with the MoE regarding content requirements, communication of opportunities and options for delivery. A long-term plan for an integrated approach to professional development must be developed, and a network of providers (e-sources, consultants and providers) must be established over the next few years.”
(E.13.2)

In order to fulfil this mission successfully, I need to assess the needs, motivation, and satisfaction levels of BTC PD participants with existing PD courses, in order to inform the future development of these and future courses. To-date, interested stakeholders have undertaken little background research on participants' needs. Thus, this AR provides a timely opportunity to investigate participants needs further.

As Academic Head of PD at BTC, I teach two modules per semester. However, the

¹ Citations prefixed with an 'E' refer to evidence collected in my PCAP Portfolio of Evidence

terms of my appointment specify inter-stakeholder liaison, leadership, and management duties; this range of duties is at an altogether different level of responsibility to those of the “beginning lecturer” for whom PCAP was originally designed in UK HE. Accordingly, if this AR is to be meaningful as a PD experience for me, it is necessary that it encompasses the full range of my responsibilities as Academic Head of PD. In order to facilitate this, I have had to take some liberty with the stipulated 5,000 word-length format of York St. John’s PCAP AR.

Semester 2, Academic Year 2010-11 has marked the start-up of BTC’s PD provision. Previously, PD modules for Bahraini teachers at BTC were delivered directly by NIE, Singapore, BTC’s lead consultant on education reform. Hence, the focus of delivery has been on the transfer of the 41 PD modules developed by NIE, Singapore for BTC PD (E.4.0; E.5.1 and E.5.2).

In order to render this relevant to the needs of mid-career teacher Bahraini PD participants, this AR will focus primarily the language of instruction, although it is hoped that it will also have a wider relevance encompassing:

- participant motivation
- participant satisfaction
- cultural appropriacy of PD materials and delivery
- participants’ PD expectations

This focus means going beyond ‘technical rationality’ where participants are viewed as passive learners (Schon, 1983, 1987). If the PD needs of these participants are to be addressed I need to work more organically with them.

(3.0) Background

My work involves managing the start-up of PD provision at BTC, co-ordinating a team of twelve PD course tutors, undertaking quality control of PD provision, and developing existing and new PD courses (E.13.2). It also involves delivering a number of PD courses as a learning facilitator in workshop-like sessions (E.4.0).

PD participation is voluntary, but is promotion linked to successful completion of 12 PD courses according to the Ministry of Education’s (MoE) ‘Cadre’ system for promotion (E.5.2). Currently, PD modules are offered at Cadre levels 4-8. In order to obtain promotion from one salary level to the next highest, teachers must complete 360 hours of PD (twelve x thirty-hour PD modules) within a four-year period. During the academic years 2008-9 and the first semester of 2009-10, NIE was responsible

for the delivery of PD modules, using Singaporean facilitators working at UoB.

BTC's PD provision began with the delivery of 17 NIE-derived thirty-hour PD modules during March and April 2010. These covered topics in Foundation, Maths, and Science with a maximum enrolment of 460 participants (E.1.0). During this time I facilitated two sections of the cadre Level Five course EPD 5001 *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning*.

In May and June 2010 a further batch of ten PD modules were delivered, covering the same subject areas, with a maximum enrolment of 300 participants. In this most recent session I facilitated two sections of the module EPD 5001 as overload (E.1.0).

(4.0) Review of Theory

In this AR, I will use theory derived from three main subject areas:

- Reflective Practice (RP)
- Sociolinguistics with a focus on the Arab World
- Studies in Cross-cultural Communication

For RP and its application to teaching and learning, my primary point of reference will be Donald Schon (1983, 1987), supplemented by more contemporary sources, including Bigg's and Tang's *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*.

Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory ("CAT"; 1978, 1991) provides me with a starting point, this is supplemented by Saravanan's work on the sociolinguistic aspects of pedagogy and education reform in Singapore (1985), and more recent Arab World language use data from Bassiouney (2009). Theoretical insights into Cross-cultural Communication will be informed by the work of Berger (1979), and Hofstede (2001).

(5.0) Timeframe

AR activities were on-going throughout PD provision. Dates for Cycle 2 studies were as follows:

- Mid-course survey, April 11th
- End-of-course on-line survey, 2nd May
- End-of-course tutor survey, 2nd to 9th May

For Cycle 3, final participant data on course and tutor evaluation was gathered between 20th June and 6th July 2010.

(6.0) Ethics

A number of straightforward ethical issues arose in the course of this AR:

- Participants were informed that coursework and data derived from surveys would be used anonymously for the purpose of this AR (see Introduction to E.8.1), and given an opt-out option if requested (no participants did)
- The BTC Heads' Council granted PCAP participants the permission to adapt PD provision in accordance to the requirements of PCAP AR, subject to approvals
- The Heads' Council also authorised the use in this AR of BTC materials otherwise deemed confidential, subject to approval and, if need be, anonymisation

(7.0) Method

This AR incorporates a variety of data collection instruments to investigate the effectiveness of BTC PD over the current academic year. Data was gathered in the three cycles.

(7.1) Cycle 1:

I was assigned as Academic Head for Professional Development at BTC in February 2009. At this stage my chief responsibility was to manage the handover of PD provision for state-sector Bahraini teachers from NIE, Singapore, to BTC. NIE had been delivering PD and Education Leadership courses from September 2008 until December 2009. BTC's PD provision was originally planned to commence in January 2010, although limitations on human and material resources delayed delivery until March.

From February to December 2009 I conducted the following activities to assess the effectiveness of the NIE provision, and to gain insights into how this provision might be improved and fine-tuned to make it better suited to the Bahrain context. These included:

- Observations of NIE-delivered PD sessions
- Post-delivery tutors' focus groups

- Interviews with PD participants

While these activities were conducted in an informal manner, certain issues began to emerge as being highly significant to the effective delivery of PD. The issue of the language of learning was by far and away the most significant issue raised by both participants and facilitators. Facilitators also noted motivational and related attitudinal issues, while participants mentioned issues of cultural appropriacy, the applicability of the materials used to the Bahrain context, and the perceived “foreignness” of the materials they had to work with.

NIE materials courses are written entirely in English (E.4.0). No NIE tutors spoke any Arabic, and nearly all of them were Education specialists, with little or no background in English Language Teaching (ELT) or Cross-cultural Communication. Communication was further complicated by the fact that many participants had difficulty in understanding the accents and English usages of many of the Singaporean facilitators. Singapore has its own dialect of English, “Singlish”, characterised by Chinese-influenced intonation patterns, different stress patterns, the simplification of consonant clusters, different word-order, and additional morphemes derived from Chinese dialects and from Malay (Gopinathan and Saravanan, 1983, 67).

Like most Singaporean professionals, the facilitators used “Singapore British English” (SBrE) as their language of professional practice. However, the pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary of SBrE is often powerfully influenced by Singlish, particularly when used by academics, to the extent that SBrE and Singlish can be seen as two ends of a continuum of Singaporean English dialect use, rather than as two discrete dialects (68-8).

Thus, the language of delivery was doubly “foreign” to Bahraini participants: foreign because it was in English (Arab identity is primarily defined by language); foreign again because it is in a form of English that is unfamiliar to Bahrainis.

SBrE is well established as a language of instruction at all levels of the Singaporean education system and across subject areas. It is an official national language in a multilingual, multiethnic island nation, and functions as an important unifier for Singaporean society.

None of this is true for Bahrain. Although English is widely used in Bahrain, particularly in the commercial sector, it has no official or legal status, and while English is taught from Grade 6 in Bahraini schools, it is taught as a *foreign* language and is not the language of instruction for any core curriculum subjects. Even at BTC, the college’s regulations state:

“The official language of BTC shall be Arabic; the BTC Governing Council upon

recommendation of the BTC Council shall admit other languages in teaching, research and professional activity as are necessary in the light of standards of international excellence of the programmes” (E.13.1; Article 4, Section h)

Whereas Bahrain, like most Arab states, has Arabic (i.e. MSA², a language that is learned in school and which is nobody’s natural means of spoken communication) as its sole official language (Bassiouney: 2009, 211), Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil, in recognition of the linguistic diversity of Singapore (Gopinathan and Saravanam: 1983, 65), where the following languages are spoken:

- Various forms of standard or near-standard English
- The ‘Singlish’ linguistic continuum
- Mandarin, and a range of mainly southern Chinese dialects
- Various forms of Tamil
- Significant minority languages: Arabic (various forms), Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), Thai, &ct.

In this highly diverse linguistic context, standard English serves as a common language of professional discourse, and as a national unifier (Gopinathan and Saravanam, 69). English does not (officially) play this role in Bahrain, and there is not the same level of awareness at a public policy level of the dynamics of plurilingualism as is found today in Singapore.

Singaporean facilitators had received little briefing on Bahrain, Bahraini culture, and language preparation of the participants, as a result, it was perhaps too easy for NIE’s otherwise highly skilled facilitators to make assumptions about the status and role of English in Bahrain based on Singapore experience.

Bilingual dictionaries and other resources were not provided for either participants or facilitators, and the facilitators arrived at the airport, disembarked from the plane to their hotels, taught the 30 hour PD modules intensively over two weeks; they then returned to Singapore, and the process repeated three times in a semester with very little facilitator or participant feedback feeding into delivery.

² MSA: Modern Standard Arabic, a modernised form of Classical Arabic (CA) used as a language of law, learning, education and politics across the Arab world. MSA is learned at school, rather as Latin was once done in the West. While MSA is close to the classical language, it is quite different from all spoken dialects of the Arab world, and being a language that is acquired by study is nobody’s mother tongue.

This seemed to me that through inadequate background research and planning, a “culture clash” had unwittingly been set up, precisely the sort of culture clash that ought to be avoided when implementing an education change project which is already seen by many as being politically controversial.

Linguistic convergence is a key factor in effective and positive cross-cultural communication. Sociolinguist Howard Giles points out that “convergent communicative acts reduce interpersonal differences”, creating an atmosphere conducive to co-operation across cultures and language groups, while “divergent” acts in which “speakers accentuate speech and non-verbal differences”, can be used as a defensive mechanism to reinforce an “us and them” dichotomy that inhibits effective communication (1991, 7-9).

Effective communication is a key element in change management. This is because change, however necessary, often contains an element of fear, and fear leads to uncertainty. As Michael West (2009) at Aston Business School puts it:

‘It’s not change we fear, but the place in between, there’s nothing to hold on to.’ (CIPD, “Managing Change”, 5’.10”).

This Management Studies insight is reinforced from a Sociolinguistic perspective by Berger’s research on the necessity of reducing uncertainty in order to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication (1979).

Thus, it occurred to me that divergent communication reinforcing a natural uneasiness about change in a politically charged context could constitute a significant threat to the effectiveness of NIE’s delivery of PD programmes at BTC; this assumption was to a certain extent confirmed by participants’ SWOT analyses focusing on the effectiveness of PD delivery by NIE and BTC (E.2.4; E.2.7).

Whereas the problematic use of English outlined above undoubtedly created straightforward inter-linguistic communication problems, I also suspected that the motivational and attitudinal issues reported by the NIE facilitators, and the cultural inappropriacy and foreignness mentioned by the participants might have been exacerbated by, or even created by, a retreat into divergent communication on the part of both facilitators and tutors.

(7.2) Cycle 2:

Cycle 2 began with the commencement of BTC PD on 21st March 2010, meeting four hours a week at BTC until 6th May. Seventeen sections of PD courses were offered, facilitated by a mixed delivery team of bilingual Arabic-English speaking tutors, and non-Arabic speaking tutors (E.1.0). During this cycle, the following diagnostic tools were used:

- A mid-course initial survey gathering qualitative feedback from PD participants in one two sections of the course EPD5001, *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning*. One section was facilitated by myself, a non-native Arabic speaking tutor; the other was facilitated by Dr. John McKeown,³ a non-Arabic speaker with some reading knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic (E.12.1).
- An end of course on-line survey gathering data from 38 students in two sections of 5001 (E.8.1)
- An on-line survey gathering quantitative and qualitative data from all 12 BTC faculty members (Arabic speakers and non-Arabic speakers) delivering PD modules March-May 2010 (E.8.2)
- End of course grades (E.7.1; E.7.2).

Based on my observations in Cycle 1, I realised I needed to:

- Identify language use issues in the PD courses
- Use language positively to create a better linkage between my NIE & BTC PD objectives, minimising the “fear” element inherent in change and development projects
- Devise strategies to minimise divergent and maximise convergent linguistic behaviour in all PD sessions, whether or not they are facilitated by an Arabic speaker

(7.3) Profile of Participant Sample

A sample of 38 participants enrolled in two sections of the Level 5 course EPD5001, *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning*, were surveyed for this AR in May 2010, to gather basic demographic data. This yielded the following results (E.8.1):

- Language use: 57.9% of participants self-identified as speakers of Arabic only; 35.9% self-identified as bilingual Arabic-English; 2.6% self-identified as bilingual Arabic-Other language⁴

³ Whereas the names of other BTC faculty members are anonymised in this AR, Dr. John’s isn’t, a reflection of the closeness of our ‘critical friendship’ (Curry, 2008) in the course of this AR.

⁴ The ratio between self-identified Arabic-English bilinguals and Arabic-only speakers became more even during Cycle 3, with both groups totally around 46% of participants, with small minorities identifying either as “Bilingual, Arabic and another language other than English”, and “Bilingual, English and another language other than Arabic.”

- Genders were balanced more or less evenly, 52% to 48% in favour of females
- The vast majority of participants were in their thirties: 60.5% were in their early thirties, 26.3% were in their later thirties; just over 13% were older, in age bands falling between 40 and 60+
- Years experience as teachers: the overwhelming majority, 76.3% had between 6 and 10 years' experience, this is in keeping with their status as Level 5 teachers; 18.4% had between 11 and 15 years experience, while 5.2% had between 20 and 30 years teaching experience
- 39.5% were primary teachers, 26.3 taught at intermediate level, 34.2% were primary teachers, and 2.6% identified as "other"
- The largest single group of subject specialists were Arabic teachers, at 20.6%; 14.7% were English specialists, 11.8% taught Islamic Studies, 11.8% taught History, 11.8% taught Maths, and a further 11.8 taught Physical education; smaller percentages taught in Business, Science, or as General Class Teachers at primary level.

(7.3.1) Discussion of Profile

The fact that 60.5% of the sample self-identified either as Arabic-only speakers, or as speakers of Arabic and another language other than English, with less than 40% self-identifying as bilingual Arabic-English is highly significant for a course which was designed and delivered entirely in English by NIE (E.4.0).

Data regarding participants' self-identification in terms of language ability corresponds well to their subject specialisations: the largest single specialisation presenting in this sample was Arabic, at 20.6%. Further, the combined percentage for specialisations that are taught either entirely in Arabic, or with very little English, was 46.2%.

The fact that 60.8% of participants taught in classes in which English was hardly ever used, while 60.5% of participants self-identified as non-English speakers brings into question the rationale for English-only provision.

The age-range and years of teaching experience presented by the participants accord well with the MoE's criteria for Cadre Level 5 teachers, although there is a significant minority who are older and more experienced, bringing into question the suitability of these participants for these particular courses. In older, more experienced teachers are slipping into Cadre Level 5 it might be worth investigating why this is so, and tailoring provision for this particular group.

The majority of participants who took part in the sample have between 6 and 15

years post-qualification experience.

(7.4) Response to Cycle 1

In order to address the language issue, I adopted the following approaches:

- delivering teacher talk in a mix of about 70% Arabic, 30% English, code-switching (“the alternating use of two or more recognisably different language variants within the same text” Dickins et al 2002: 233) for technical terms (E.3.0)
- using about 90% MSA on the whiteboard (E.3.0)
- encouraging participants to work collaboratively in group work to produce their own Arabicisations (or Bahrainisations), of English-derived concepts. Rather than merely translating, the aim here was to support students in understanding the concept, then encourage them to express this in Arabic, using metaphors and examples derived from real Bahraini usage and experience, a form of “cultural transplanted” (Dickins et al 2002: 32; E.2.1 to E.2.16; E.3.0)
- allowing group discussions to take place in Bahraini dialect (“natural” language use is best for brainstorming), with presentations and demonstrations of teaching given either in standard languages (English or MSA; E.2.7; E.3.0)
- allowing coursework, lesson plans, posters &ct to be produced in Arabic (E.2.1. to E.2.16)

Dr. John was also anxious to address the language issue (E.9.2). His competence in Arabic, however, was less advanced than mine. Accordingly, Dr. John did the following:

- he used previously translated bilingual handouts and other materials
- he reduced the number of heavily English-language laden Powerpoint presentations found in the NIE materials, and simplified the language in those that he used
- he replaced some of the slides with all-Arabic or bilingual versions
- he allowed participants to use Bahraini Arabic for discussion activities, and MSA for presentations
- he encouraged students to produce their own translations of course materials as a group activity

- he made use of targeted bilingual support for explanation of key concepts and concept-checking (E.9.2)

The mid-course survey was then used as a means of gauging the effectiveness of these measures.

(8.0) Cycle 2 Data Analysis

(8.1) Mid-Course Survey, Dr. Mike Diboll (E.12.1).

This survey gathered data on participant satisfaction with one sections of the course EPD 5001, *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning*. Here, a total of 18 participants who arranged themselves into three groups, one male, two female.

Participants were made aware of the purpose of the activity, and assured that the survey was completely anonymous, and was being used for purely diagnostic and AR purposes.

Participants were instructed to brainstorm, thinking about the course in as wider way as possible, with an emphasis on how it could be improved. Participants were given 25 minutes discussion time, followed by five minutes to write up a set of notes on the points on which members of the group agreed.

One participant then presented their deliberations to the rest of the participants. The female group presented in English, the two male groups in Arabic. Below are main points presented by each group summarised in note form:

Female group⁵:

- Overall experience was that the class was “refreshing”
- Participants felt empowered by learning new techniques
- Primary general classroom teachers found the course less useful, due to the lack of primary school focus
- Some teachers are using CL in their schools following a “Teacher Guide-Student Guide” lesson plan. These participants noticed inconsistencies between this plan and the course activities on EPD

⁵ Participants tend to self-select into gender-based groups; further, although not directly related to this AR, gender differences in communication styles, approaches to learning and attainment are significant in the GCC context.

5001

- Most participants thought that more Arabic is “a must” on this course
- Most participants found the English language handouts and PPPs difficult and confusing
- PD sections should be organised on a subject-specific and/or a level-specific basis (e.g. sections specially for primary teachers, sections specially for English teachers, etc)

Male Group 1:

- The course needed a better and more diverse range of resources
- Participants needed the opportunity to practice CL strategies in their schools and report back during PD classes
- Arabic should be the basic language of instruction, with supplementary resources in English
- PD courses should be run during the summer after the school exams period
- PD participants should have enhanced financial incentives to study
- Participants should have hands-on assistance in applying CL strategies in schools

Male Group 2:

- Core CL concepts and practices should be developed through their actual application in schools
- All PD classes should be bilingual Arabic-English
- The course curriculum should be clearer
- The course curriculum should be written in Arabic
- There should be an active Internet connection in class
- There should be a more diverse range of learning materials
- PD tutors should visit Bahraini schools

(8.2) Mid-Course Survey, Dr. John McKeown

Dr. John’s section of 20 participants on a parallel section of EPD 5001 took the same

survey under the similar conditions, but with slightly smaller groups.

Male Group 1:

- The course was very useful, especially group work
- Cooperative learning strategies helped me a lot
- Application of theory to practice very good
- An Arabic language course guide would be a major improvement
- Use of appropriate examples an area for improvement
- More time needed

Female Group 1:

- The course is useful in enabling us to apply CL strategies appropriately
- Applying these strategies correctly could be time-consuming and would take a lot of effort
- Course timing should be changed
- The location is too far away
- Course should be taught in Arabic

Female Group 2:

- Course useful in helping us to apply CL strategies in class
- Course will help us to innovate our approach to teaching
- Tutor-participant interaction is good
- Groupwork enables an exchange of ideas and experiences
- The course should be comprehensively Arabicised
- The course should use examples and models derived from real Bahraini experience

Female Group 3:

- New CL strategies useful for our classes and will make students more engaged
- Good interaction with the tutor

- It was good for US to have the opportunity to be cooperative learners
- Some participants need a translator because the English language is difficult
- Need real examples from Bahraini schools

Female Group 4:

- Teaching-learning methods very good
- Course content useful
- We need a translator
- We need Arabic or bilingual worksheets

(8.3) Participants' End-of-course survey (E.8.1)

This survey was conducted on 2nd-3rd May in the computer labs at BTC under conditions of confidentiality. It involved 38 participants from two sections of 5001. The survey was conducted through www.surveymonkey.com which provides instant analysis of survey data⁶.

The survey has two main sections, both of which gather quantitative data: (a) demographic data on participants, and; (b) participant's course satisfaction data. The survey also incorporates text boxes in which participants can type qualitative information. Data from section (a) has been used to develop the participant profile above.

This survey asked participants how frequently they were now using a range of 10 CL strategies in class:

- Think-pair-share: 36% reported using it 'always'; 20% 'often'; 31% 'sometimes'
- Jigsaw: 19% 'always'; 26% 'often'; 38% 'sometimes'
- Expert: 20% 'always'; 27% 'often'; 31% 'sometimes'
- Round Robin: 18% 'always'; 23% 'often'; 30% 'sometimes'
- Circle the Sage: 17% 'always'; 23% 'often'; 26% 'sometimes'

⁶ Data collection is on-going, visit SurveyMonkey using, Password: PDcoordination and; Username: faculty1 (both case-sensitive).

- Three Step Interview: 13% 'always'; 22% 'often'; 40% 'sometimes'
- Team-pair-solo: 11% 'always'; 38% 'often'; 28% 'sometimes'
- Numbered Heads: 19% 'always'; 33% 'often'; 33% 'sometimes'
- Ability grouping: 29% 'always'; 29% 'often'; 27% 'sometimes'
- Mixed ability grouping: 44% 'always'; 30% 'often'; 21% 'sometimes'

These results are impressive, as they show substantial minorities of participants (11-44%) 'always' using the ten CL techniques, with large majorities using these approaches either 'often' or 'sometimes'. Only small minorities (1.5% to 3%) reported that they used these approaches only 'rarely', or 'never'. These results are impressive considering that prior to taking the course, most of the participants were had little or no experience in CL.

A majority of 65% rated tutor-participant interaction as 'excellent', with 24% rating it as 'very good'. Participant-participant interaction was rated at 46% 'excellent', and 40% 'very good'. Language use was rated at 42% 'excellent', and 26% 'very good' only 5% of respondents though that language use on the courses was either 'blow average', or 'poor'. In the 'Comments' section, there was only one negative comment, about the university style classroom furniture being inappropriate to CL (E.8.1; see photos in E.1.0)

(8.4) Tutors' End-of-course survey (E.8.2)

The 12 tutors facilitating PD sessions from March to May also completed an end-of-course survey. Assessing the relevance of the course materials to the Bahraini cultural context opinion was divided, 25% of tutors thought it was 'excellent', 33%, 'very good', 25%, 'good', and 16% 'satisfactory'. While no tutors thought it was 'unsatisfactory', tutors did add comments on the cultural suitability of the materials, for instance:

"I would suggest that the NIE PD materials be consistent with the cultural and contextual factors associated with the participants' life and educational experiences, their working conditions and learning environment."

"I found that the course materials could do two things a) inspire critical and creative thinking and b) give students (teachers) baseline skills to get started if only they are serious and willing to make a change in their society."

"Generally, the NIE materials were satisfactory, although too focused on the Singapore setting. The materials for GR6001 were somewhat outdated and advocated an approach that is no longer considered viable in curriculum development."

“Overall I was unimpressed by the NIE materials. Although relevant to the subject area, they were not at a level the participants could grasp quickly. There was also little breadth to the topics covered.”

“These materials need revision, and more Bahrain relevant materials developed.”

“I needed to make a few modifications because of cultural context . But overall it is very well prepared. Also, I needed to add more demonstrations based on availability of materials. We did not have teaching materials.” (E.8.0)

On the language of tuition, 91% of tutors thought that the courses should be bilingual, and 9% thought they should be taught in Arabic only. Not a single tutor supported English-only provision.

When offered bilingual teaching options, 80% favoured bilingual versions of the NIE materials, and 20% Arabic only versions; 90% favoured BTC developing its own bilingual teaching materials, and 40% favoured bilingual co-teaching; 67% of tutors thought that enhanced bilingual provision was the single most important thing that could be done to improve participants, learning experience.

On motivation, 33% of tutors thought their participants were only ‘somewhat motivated’, although 25% considered them to be ‘very motivated’. Tutors own attitudes toward PD were divided: 47% said they were ‘enthusiastic’ about teaching it again, while 33% said they would either ‘rather not’, or ‘certainly not’ want to teach PD again.

Tutors were invited to offer final reflections on how to improve PD provision. Again, the language issue was prominent:

“. . . I would prepare more activities and performance tasks, which are directly related to teacher's needs and practical life.”

“I'd try to get some materials translated into Arabic”

“I would have an Arabic-speaking tutor visit the class earlier than I did. I would also give the participants class time to prepare their assignments so I could check to make sure they understood the assignment rather than relying on the English-speakers assurances that everyone 'got it'.”

(8.4) End of course grades

It is important to remember here that assessment of the PD courses inherited from NIE is essentially designed with a pass/fail system of grading in mind. The individual assessment component on 5001 is low at 30% of the total, and most assessment is either for groupwork assessed on a group “sink or swim” basis, or for collaboration.

However, at present the BTC is obliged to follow the UoB system for academic grading, which has grade bands from F to A, with plus or minus grades, e.g. C-, C, and

C+, separated by three marks. This schema is obviously designed with summative, exam-type assessments in mind, where getting one or two questions right or wrong can meaningfully distinguish between a C and a C+.

This schema does not fit well with PD courses, where only a minority part of the mark is given for purely individual effort. When marked according to the NIE rubric, successful completion of the tasks assigned on these PD courses will lead to an academic grade in the A or B range (E.6.0, page5).

The final grades for my section of 5001 had a 100% pass rate of 23 passes out of 23 participants, many of these high passes in the A and B range. I had no drop-outs during the course, although I had 8 no-shows who had been registered by the course by the MoE, but who never attended (E.7.1).

Dr. John had 15 passes, all A grades, with three failures for non-submission of course work, and 7 no-shows (E.7.1).

The final results posted by Dr. X and Dr. Y make an interesting point of contrast. Dr. X is a non-native speaker of English. She is an observant Muslim and dresses accordingly, and is an experienced practitioner. However, she does not know Arabic, and used English as the sole means of communication in her section of 5001.

Dr. Y is also a non-native speaker of English; he knows no Arabic, and has had no previous experience of Islamic culture. He is also an experienced practitioner, and an active researcher in his field. However, like Dr. X he used English as the sole language on the course, even for discussions and presentations. Neither Dr. X nor Dr. Y took advantage of options for bilingual support.

Dr. X's section of 5001 had 27 participants. There were 11 no-shows, and four drop-out; there were 7 passes, 4 A-grades, 1 B and two Cs. There were 5 fails resulting from non-completion of course work.

Dr. Y's section of 5005, *Critical and Creative Thinking for High Ability Learners*, had 32 enrolled participants; however, there were 14 no-shows. The remaining participants achieved 5 A-grades, 6 Bs, and 1 C. There were 7 Fails due to non-completion of coursework. Although popular and competent tutors on BTC's B.Ed. and PGDE courses, both Dr. X and Dr. Y were the subject of subject of complaints regarding attitude and communication skills.

(8.5) Analysis

In the mid-course survey, all groups identified the lack of opportunity to use Arabic as a learning medium as a weakness of the current provision, and some individual participants considered this to be a serious weakness. All groups stressed the need for bilingual learning materials, and/or bilingual instruction. Some groups reported

that in addition to the language issue, PD materials should be developed in such a way as to make them more relevant to the Bahrain cultural context.

At the same time, the groups generally found the courses a useful and positive learning experience, with good tutor-learner and learner-learner interaction, that was of practical use to participants in their schools. This, combined with the generally successful grade outcomes in my section and Dr. John's section (E.7.1), might suggest that perhaps the participants were exaggerating the significance of language as a factor in learning.

However, it should be remembered that based on findings from Cycle 1, both John and I made significant efforts to factor bilingualism into the existing NIE-derived provision. While I was able to use Arabic in a way that John was not able to, he nevertheless developed and deployed a sophisticated range of bilingual learning strategies, including allowing the use of Bahraini dialect as a means of discussion, and MSA for presentations, with participants who were English language specialists acting in a 'lead participant/interpreter role (8.2 above). These seem to have positively enhanced the participant's learning experience, despite the fact that he as a tutor.

Giles and Smith (1979) cite a number of factors that influence the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication: "similarity attraction", that "the more similar are attitudes and beliefs are to certain others the more likely it is we will be attracted to them" (47); the "social exchange" process, "the rewards attending a convergent act, that is an increase in attraction or approval" (48); "causal attribution", where "we interpret other people's behaviour, and evaluate persons in themselves, in terms of the motivations and intentions that we attribute as the cause of their behaviour (50); "intergroup distinctiveness", wherein members of different groups, when they are in contact, "compare themselves on dimensions that are important to them" (52). Building positive inter-cultural relations and effective communication depends on aligning these factors to achieve "optimal convergence" leading to positive inter-evaluation (53-4).

Thus, focusing on the importance of language in tutor-participant relations is of value to other BTC PD faculty, especially non-Arabic speaking faculty, as it enables outsiders to achieve optimal convergence in a cultural setting which values "a close long-term commitment to the member 'group'" where "loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules" (Hofstede *Cultural Dimensions: Arab World*).

Eckert (2005) calls this a "community of practice", which is:

An aggregate of people who come together on a regular basis to engage in

some enterprise. A family, a linguistics class, a garage, band, roommates, a sports team, even a small village. In the course of their engagement, the community of practice develops ways of doing things – practices. And these practices involve the construction of a shared orientation to the world around them – a tacit definition of themselves in relation to each other, and in relation to other communities of practice” (qtd. in Bassiouney: 2009, 94).

Clearly, the BTC PD classes are, in this sense, communities or practice, bilingual, cross-cultural communities of practice, in each of which a unique ‘social meaning’ is constructed in the interactions between participants and tutor, and, perhaps more significantly, between the participants themselves.

Arabic diglossia is subject to subtle variations that create in-groups and out-groups according to an interaction between a variety of ethno-confessional, socio-cultural, and socio-economic factors.

This convergence-divergence, in-out group dynamic has an inter-Arab dimension as well as an Arab-non-Arab dimension. Arabic diglossia is a highly significant factor in Arab World education reform. As Maamouri notes:

“In the foreseeable future, perhaps in the next 2-3 decades, the diglossic situation in the Arab region could continue to produce dramatic widening of the ranges between the various Arabic colloquials and fusha. The fracture of the internal structure and dynamics of the Arabic linguistic continuum will have important consequences for education.” (1998: 72)

Bassiouney (2009) offers examples of the following sentence English sentence translated into MSA, Tunisian Colloquial Arabic, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, Lebanese Colloquial Arabic, Iraqi Colloquial Arabic, and Saudi Colloquial Arabic:

‘I love reading a lot. When I went to the library, I only found this old book. I wanted to read a book about the history of women in France.’

She then offers German and Dutch versions of the sentence: ‘Ich lese sehr gerne. Als ich in zur Bibliothek ging, fand ich nur dieses alte Buch. . .’ and ‘Ik hou heel erg van lezen. Toen ik naar de bibliotheek ging, vond ik slechts dit oude boek. . .’ She concludes:

‘As one can see from this example, even without a knowledge of German or Dutch, the differences are similar to the differences between the different [Arabic] vernaculars examined above. The examples make one wonder about the difference between different languages and different varieties, and whether terms like ‘language’ and variety’ are political terms rather than linguistic ones (21-26).

Although at the end of her study she comes down very much on the side of the 'struggle to preserve and to save MSA' (270), Bassiouney acknowledges that code-switching between Arabic dialects can and does act as a means by which in-groups/out-groups can be formed, and convergence/divergence be achieved.

This is particularly important in Bahrain, where ethno-confessional differences between the Shiite Baharnas and the Sunni Arabs are reflected in language, differences that are deeply intertwined with the dynamics of Bahraini politics, and the politics of the wider GCC and Middle Eastern continuums, including highly charged ethno-linguistic situation in contemporary Iraq (Bassiouney: 2009, 105-111).

Therefore there is an urgent need for PD tutors to 'firm up' their micro-levels of communities of practice by careful consideration of the roles of language and culture in achieving optimal convergence. Moreover, the tutor has a key role to play in modelling optimal convergence and the building of communities of practice to a participant group where ethno-confessional and socio-cultural dynamics can constitute a serious obstacle to effective communication, communication, and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The mid-course surveys suggest that to achieve optimal convergence, it is not necessary for non-Arab tutors to be fluent in Arabic in order to be successful in facilitating learning, even with groups where over half the participants self-identify as "Arabic only" speakers (E.8.1). Rather, it is sufficient that: participants are allowed to use Arabic for discussion and presentation; that bilingual resources are employed (the production of bilingual handouts, English specialists as "lead participants", targeted bilingual co-teaching), and; that the tutor uses *some* Arabic and signals interest in and respect for participants' cultural perspectives. This minimises "perceived threat" and "uncertainty", which are serious obstacles to effective inter-cultural communication (Berger: 1979, 133-4), and helps achieve "optimal convergence."

Thus, by respecting the importance of language and culture in the sessions, both Dr. John and I were able to achieve a greater level of optimal convergence than the Singaporean NIE tutors, or Drs. X and Y. This led in turn to positive learning outcomes for the participants, as evidenced by the participants' end-of-course survey (8.3) in which participants previously unfamiliar with CL learning strategies reported a high levels of usage across 10 different CL approaches.

The tutor's end-of-course survey also showed an awareness of the importance of language and cultural issues. The overwhelming majority of tutors (91%) were strongly in favour of enhanced bilingual provision, both in terms of human and material resources. Most commented on the difficulties encountered in working with the existing English-only materials, and many reflected on the need to make the

materials more relevant to the Bahraini cultural context.

It should be stressed here that other PD tutors did not have quite the flexibility that I had in adopting the NIE-derived PD courses to the Bahraini context, since it had previously been agreed at a BTC Heads' Council meeting that during the start-up phase of BTC PD the Singapore materials should be adhered to as closely as possible, and then evaluated. In my capacity as Academic Head of PD I had more leeway to pilot new approaches, and as a PCAP participant I (and Dr. John) had a Heads' Council approval to modify PD provision in line with the requirements of the AR cycles (see 6.0 above).

Nevertheless, data gathered in Cycle 2 was very valuable, feeding into Reflection 4 of my PCAP Reflective Journal, which in turn fed directly into general advice issued to other tutors involved in PD for the academic year 2010-11:

There is a significant generational difference in the English-language abilities of the middle-aged, mid-career Bahraini teachers on PD courses compared to those of the much younger "globalised" Bahrainis on BTC's B.Ed. and PGDE programmes (E.12.0). While younger students generally have a very positive attitude toward English, this is not necessarily the case with older teachers, who sometimes see the spread of English in Bahrain as a form of "linguistic imperialism."

However, "linguistic convergence" either on the level of language or dialect can have a very positive influence on morale, attitudes, and motivation, creating ownership of learning for the participants, and genuine inclusion for the tutor. Thus, the Arabicisations of core concepts and practices that can come out of "convergence learning" between Arabic-speaking tutors and participants are a significant contribution to existing knowledge worthy of publication.

Subsequent experience with tutors with little or no Arabic showed that linguistic convergence can still take place, and still be nearly as effective the convergence that takes place between an Arabic-speaking facilitator and Arabic-speaking participants (E.9.1). Often a "gesture" towards convergence, such as allowing discussions to take place in Bahraini, or using some bilingual course materials, is all that is needed to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural convergence (E. 9.1)' (*Reflection 4*)

Further uses of the Cycle 2 data include:

- Research activities (E.10.1-5)
- Reports written to the Dean of BTC, the MoE, NIE, and EDB, and development

strategies for future PD (E.11.1-5)

- The development (in association with the EDB) of the new core “Coaching” PD modules (E.11.9)
- The formation of the BTC Translation and Contextualisation Committee, charged with facilitating the development of bilingual materials for currently English-only courses across PD and programmes at BTC during the academic year 2010-11

(9.0) Cycle 3

In the light of the experiences of Cycle 2, the following approaches were factored into PD provision for May-June 2010:

- increased use of bilingual materials
- increased use of targeted bilingual provision, with a team of Arabic-speaking, pedagogically trained tutors scheduled to undertake targeted bilingual facilitation at key points in the course at the main tutor’s request
- merging sections for specific purposes, so that two sections are co-taught as one section by an Arabic-speaking and a non-Arabic speaking tutor
- increased use of peer observations and ‘visits’ whereby tutors and selected participants visit each other’s sections
- running one section which was co-taught throughout by a new, non-Arabic speaking, native-speaker of English faculty member (a specialist in the subject area of that course *The Classroom Learning Environment*), and an Arabic-speaking generalist who had only intermediate English (Drs. A and B).

(9.1) Method

May to June PD provision concluded on 6th July 2010, two weeks before the end of the academic year 2009-10. As a result of pressures arising from the B.Ed. and PGDE final exams, and preparations for the beginning of the academic year 2010-11, and the arrival of BTC’s new Dean⁷, it was not possible to gather the permissions needed to present in Cycle 3 of this AR the range of evidences that was presented in Cycle 2.

⁷ Dr. Emad Taqi, to whom I reported during the term of this AR, was appointed as Acting Dean of BTC for the second semester 2009-10

Thus, in order to gauge the effectiveness of changes made to PD provision in the May-June cohort, I am restricted to using data derived from participants' end-of-course Course and Tutor evaluations for:

- Myself
- Dr. John
- Drs. A and B, facilitating on the co-taught section of *The Classroom Learning Environment*
- Dr. Z, a non-Bahraini native speaker of Arabic with near-native speaker abilities in English, who used similar bilingual strategies to those I used in 7.4 above

The end-of-course survey was developed by the BTC Evaluations Committee which I chaired during the academic year 2009-10, which was charged with developing an evaluations questionnaire which was more in keeping with BTC's ethos and approach to learning than the current UoB one. With the permission of the Dean of BTC, this was piloted for end-of-course evaluations of May-June PD, and will be rolled out, after analysis and feedback, to the whole of BTC provision during the academic year 2010-11.

The questionnaire asks 15 questions about the tutor, 15 questions about the course, 10 questions about the overall learning environment, and 5 questions about the participants' overall learning experience. The participants respond to the questions across a scale of 1-5, "1" being low and "5" being high. A bilingual version of the questionnaire was produced.

For Cycle 3 I will present data from selected questions which appeared on the participants' evaluations questionnaire:

- Tutor: overall communication skills
- Tutor: respectfulness and professional attitude
- Course: effectiveness as an overall learning experience
- Course: relevance to Bahraini context

(9.2) Participants' End-of-Course Evaluation Data

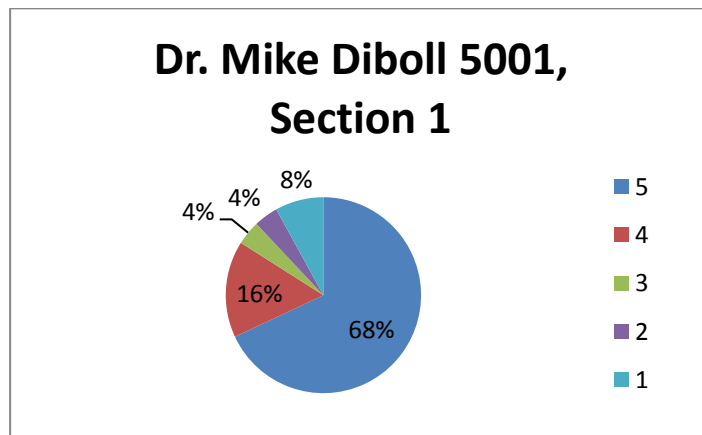
These data were gathered at the end of the second semester, academic year 2009-10 (July), and have yet to be formally analysed by BTC for course and tutor evaluation purposes. For reasons of procedure and confidentiality, samples of the questionnaires could not be included in my PCAP Portfolio of Evidence in time for

the submission of this AR to York St. John University. Should YSJ require to have sight of this evidence, it can be made available later in the first semester, academic year 2010-11.

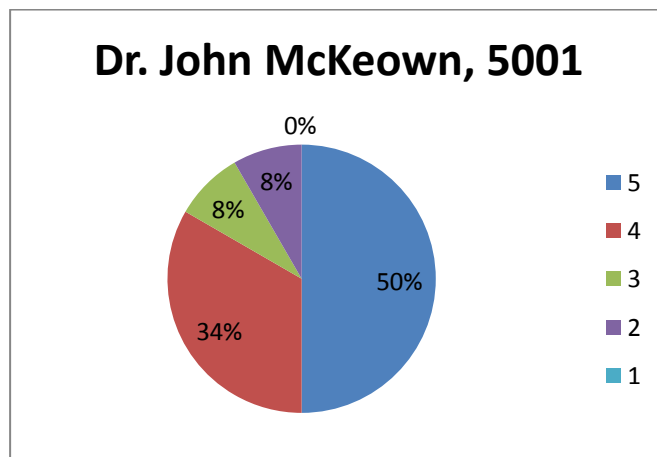
(9.2.1) Tutor's Overall Communication Skills

This question was selected for use in this AR as it is of clear relevance to the language question.

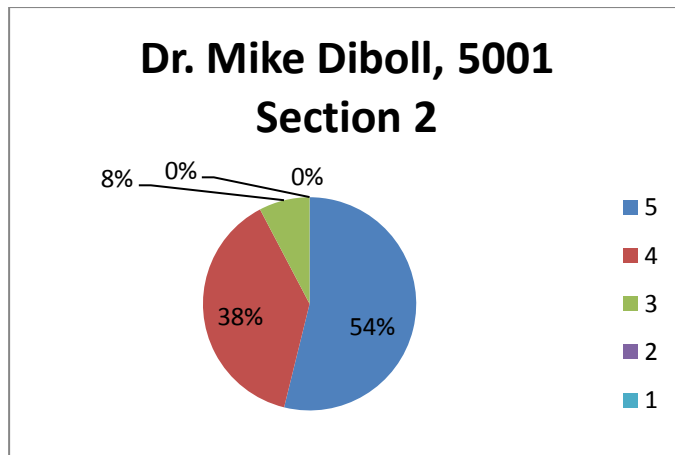
I am a native-speaker of English, with advanced Arabic language skills



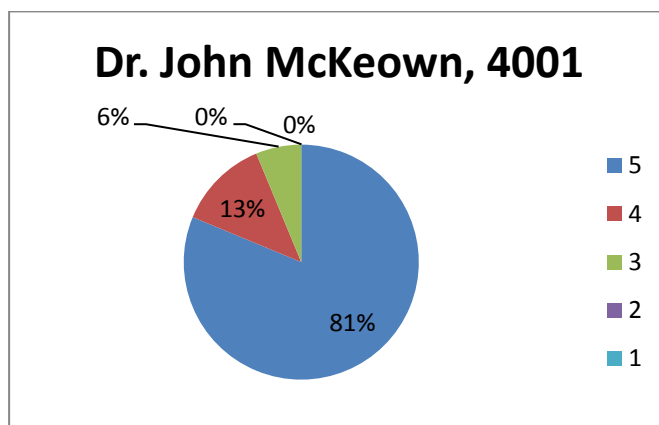
Dr. John is a native-speaker of English with some Arabic language skills, but extensive GCC experience and experience in cross-cultural communication in a range of contexts across the globe.



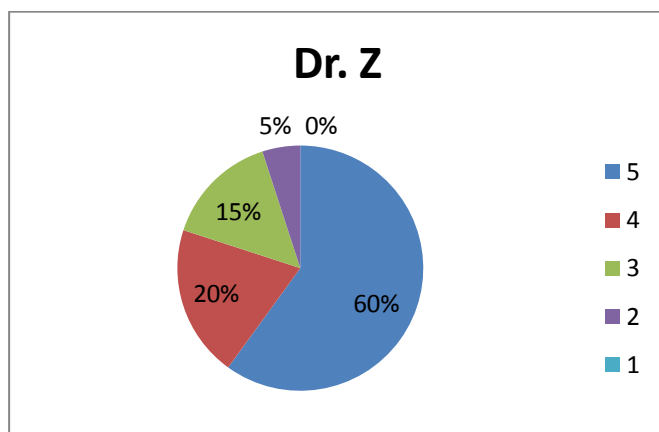
Comparing these two sets of results, my evaluation and John's are remarkably close, given the significance that participants were attaching to the language questions. This seems to demonstrate the bilingualism itself is only one aspect to achieving "optimal convergence", and that other cross-cultural strategies, combined with some bilingual input, can be just as effective as a reliance on bilingualism alone.



Indeed, in this second section of 5001 my evaluation is almost identical to John's.

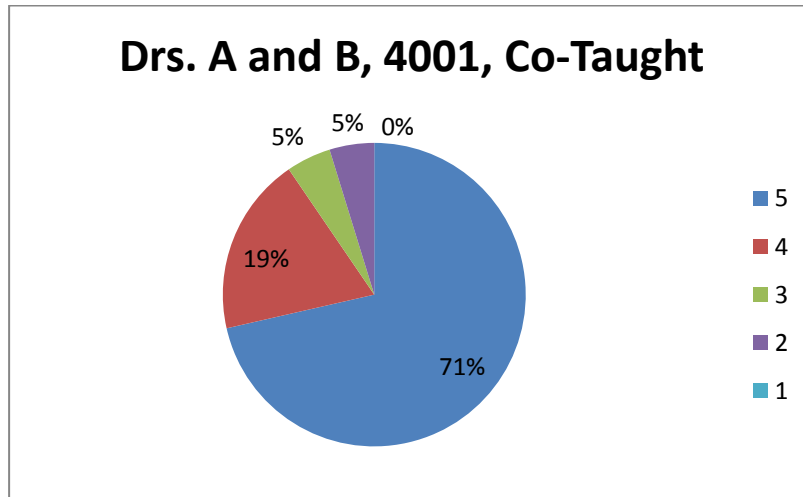


And in this section of 4001 (admittedly a different course) John scores higher for effective cross-cultural communication than I do in either of my sections of 5001.



Dr. Z is a non-GCC native-speaker of Arabic, with near-native abilities in English. He adopted almost exactly the same approach to bilingualism as I did, achieving very similar results. This suggests that notwithstanding pan-Arab rhetoric expressed by some participants, both non-native speakers of Arabic (myself) and experienced non-Arab cross-cultural communicators (John) can work as effectively in an Arabic-Anglophone cross cultural communication situation as can native-speakers of Arabic.

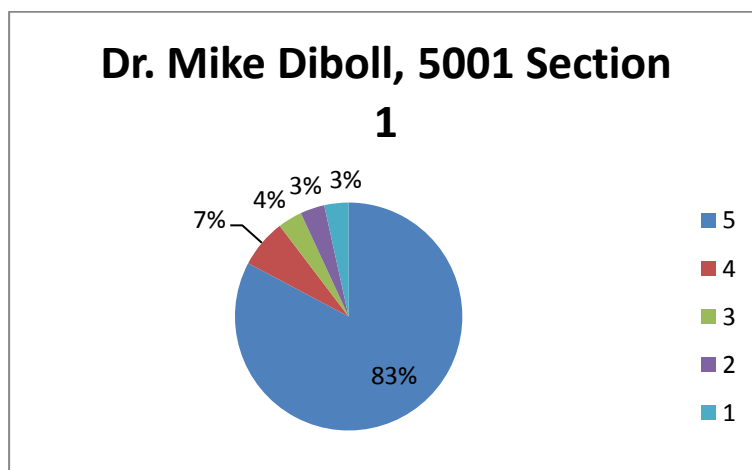
Dr. A is a Kenyan-American subject specialist in the classroom learning environment, with near-native speaker ability in English, and personal experience of growing up as a cultural “outsider” in a Western cultural context. Dr. B is a Moroccan pedagogic generalist with fluent Arabic and French and intermediate level English.



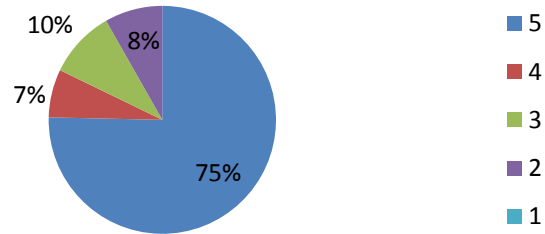
This course was co-taught by Drs. A and B, demonstrating the effectiveness of bilingual co-teaching with this participant group.

(9.2.2) Tutors' Respectfulness and General Attitude

This question was selected as following on from language, respectfulness, and in particular respectfulness with regard to culture had been identified in participant focus group and SWOT activities as a key factor in effective communication in the context of BTC PD. Many participants reported previous negative experiences with the NIE, Singapore tutors in this regard, and Drs. X and Y at BTC were also subject to negative feedback in this regard (see 8.4 above).

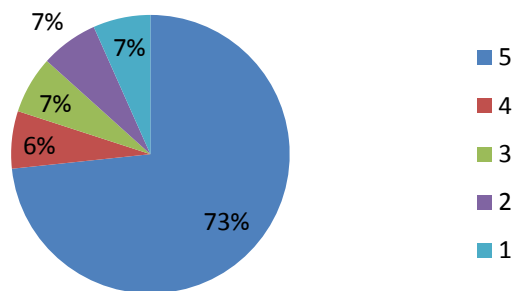


Dr. Mike Diboll 5001 Section 2

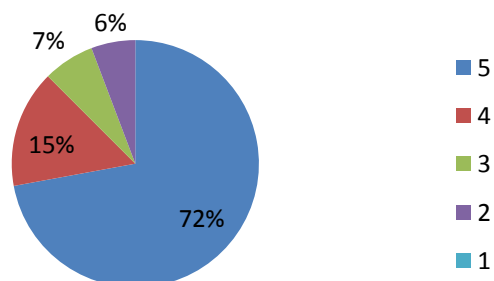


As with effective cross-cultural communication, John and I receive comparable positive evaluations for respectfulness and attitude, demonstrating the way that in cross-cultural communication language skills and cultural sensitivity are equally valuable.

Dr. John McKeown 5001

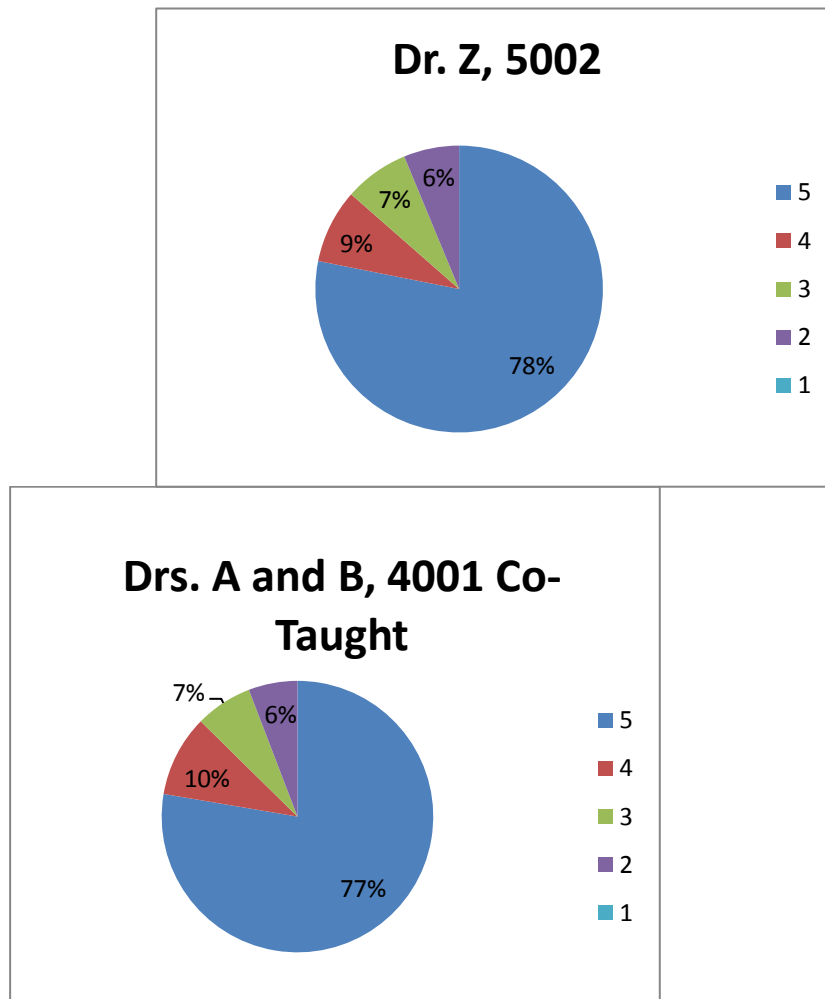


Dr. John McKeown 4001



Data for Dr. Z and for Drs. A and B show similar positive evaluations of the tutors' skills as effective cross-cultural communicators who are aware of the importance of

respectful attitudes across cultures.

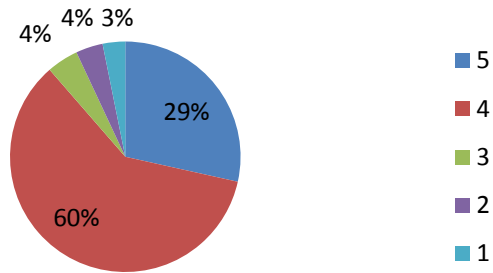


Overall, my evaluations, and those of John, Dr. Z and Drs. A and B are almost uniformly excellent, notwithstanding our heterogeneity in terms of our own cultural backgrounds, and our differing backgrounds and capabilities as users of English and Arabic. This demonstrates, perhaps, the effective implementation of lessons learned in Cycles 1 and 2 of this AR.

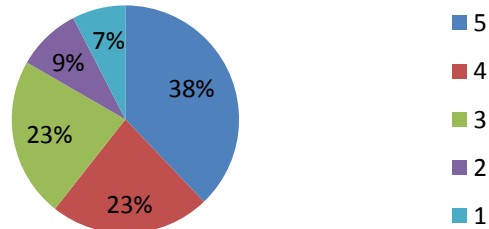
(9.2.3) How useful was this course as an overall learning experience?

The focus now shifts from the tutors to the classroom learning experience. Again, my evaluations are positive, although with a marked decrease in the percentage of level "5" evaluations given.

**Dr. Mike Diboll, 5001
Section 1**

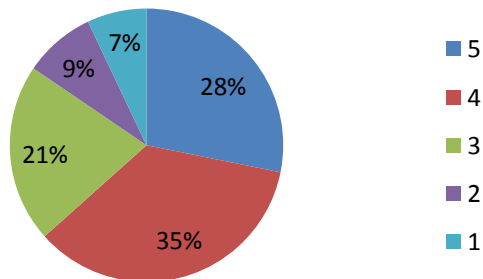


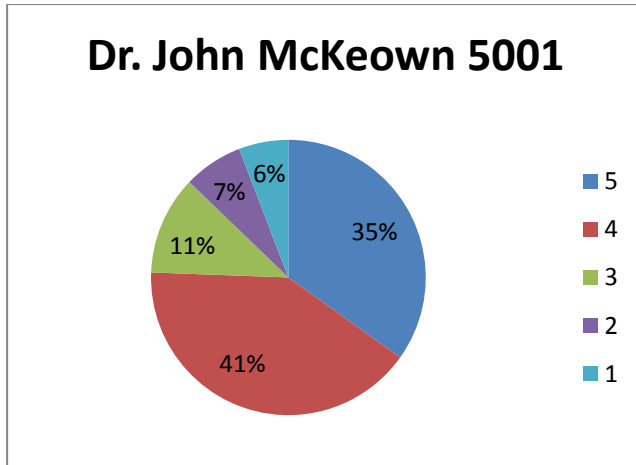
**Dr. Mike Diboll 5001
Section 2**



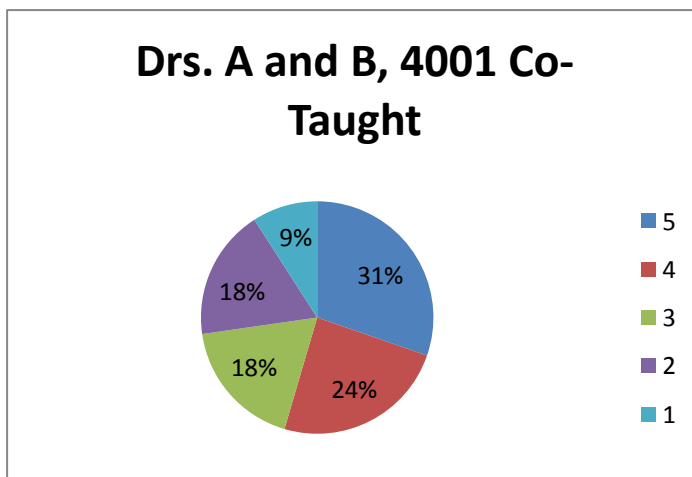
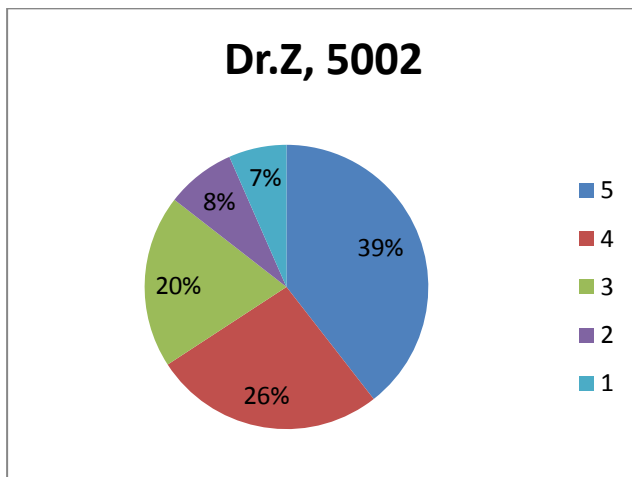
This pattern is repeated with participants' evaluations of their learning experience in John's sections.

Dr. John McKeown, 4001





Likewise, the pattern is more or less repeated in Dr. Z's section, and in Drs. A and B's co-taught section:

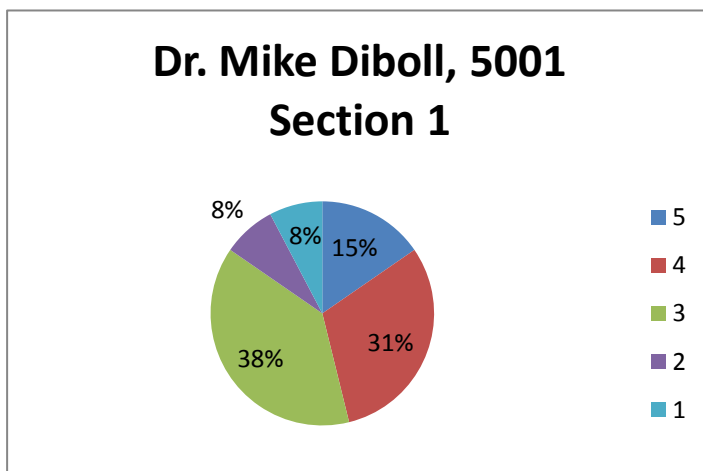


One possible implication here is that the evaluation of the overall learning experience takes in factors other than tutor-participant interaction, such as participant-participant interaction, participant attitudes, course planning, course materials, and the physical environments of the classrooms.

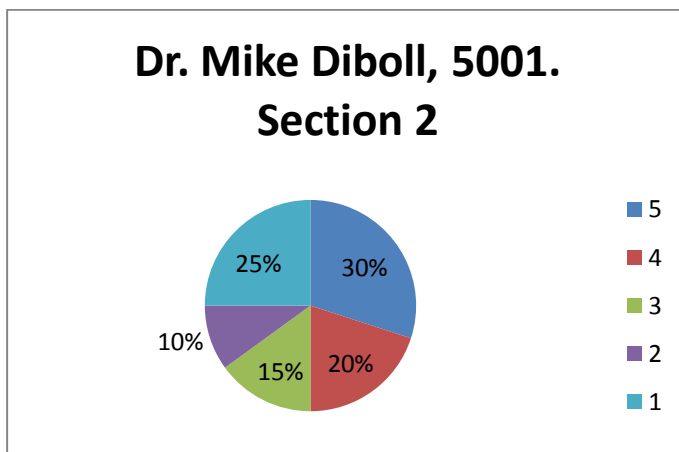
(9.2.4) How Relevant was this course to the Bahraini context?

This question was selected due to the fact that during Cycles 1 and 2 participant feedback has consistently stressed the importance of the “cultural friendliness” of courses and course materials as a factor nearly as important as tutor-participant cultural alignment in facilitating effective learning in a cross-cultural learning environment.

In my sections of 5001 participants rated the Bahrain-relevance of the course and course materials as average. In Section one the largest percentage of evaluations were at Level 3 (38%), although significant minorities of the participants rated the course at 4 (31%) and 5 (15%).

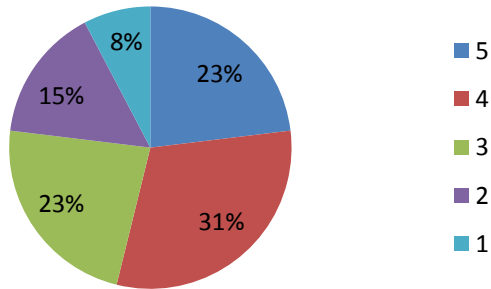


In my Section 2 this pattern was repeated. Although there was a larger percentage of Level 5 evaluations, these were off-set by an almost equal number of evaluations at Level 1, the lowest level.

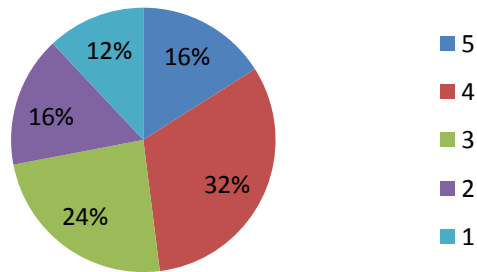


John’s participants evaluated the Bahrain-relevance of their courses according to a broadly similar proportion of percentages:

Dr. John McKeown 4001

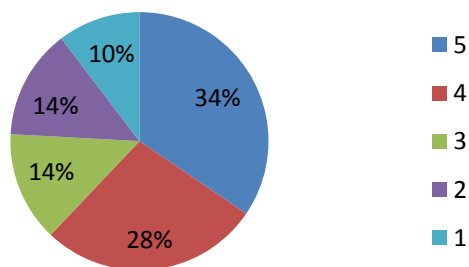


Dr. John McKeown, 5001

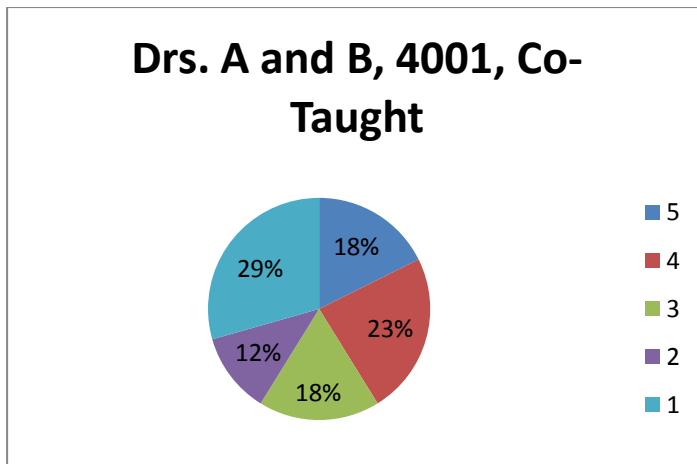


This pattern was again repeated in Dr. Z's section:

Dr. Z, 5002



And the pattern was repeated once again in Drs. A and B's section:



This suggests that data from this AR has fed usefully into: (a) improving tutor-participant communication; (b) positively influencing participants' perception of culturally "Other" tutors, and; (c) improving participant-participant communication in the context of Bahrain's ethno-confessional diversity.

However, it also shows the need for this improvement in inter-personal cross-cultural communication to be supplemented by the development of bilingual and culturally sensitive and relevant course materials. During the May-June PD sessions tutors had limited opportunities to develop such materials because (a) radical changes to the NIE-derived materials have to undergo a process of approval and evaluations that could not be undertaken during the seven weeks of PD provision, and; (b) end-of-academic year pressures prevented most tutors from developing course materials at a more micro-level.

The data does, however, suggest directions for PD course development for the academic year 2010-11.

(10.0) Discussion, Development, Conclusion

In his *Language Policy and Language Planning: From nationalism to globalisation* Wright (2004) states:

Language policy is primarily a social construct. . . policy as a culture construct rests primarily on other conceptual elements – belief systems, attitudes, myths – the whole complex that we are referring to as linguistic culture, which is the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious stricture, and all the other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background. (276).

At a macro- and a micro-level, the public policy economic and educational reform project of which BTC is a part involves every aspect of what Wright calls 'linguistic

culture'. It is not unsurprising, therefore, that this AR has confirmed the centrality of Giles' linguistic 'optimal convergence' to effective cross-cultural communication in BTC's PD classrooms and workshops.

In short, if BTC's PD provision is to be effective, the 'language question' cannot be avoided. This AR has provided a useful beginning to research into the importance of linguistic and cultural factors to BTC PD, and beyond that the college's wider provision. Clearly, the cycles of research, action-based-on-research, and further research will need to be factored into BTC's curriculum development procedures if 'the language question' is to be adequately addressed.

Moreover, there is a major opportunity in this to extend existing knowledge and improve contemporary practice in a multidisciplinary field that encompasses:

- Arab World Economic and Education Reform
- Arab World Sociolinguistics
- Consultancy Management
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Development Studies
- Gulf Studies
- K-12 Pedagogy
- Management Studies
- Professional Development
- Teaching and Learning

A comprehensive multidisciplinary study of this nature is obviously beyond the scope of this AR. However, it has given me insights into how such a major study could be developed.

This AR began with an audit of personal-professional, participant, curriculum development, and institutional needs which conclusions derived from the research might address.

In conclusion, I was review these needs and the contributions this AR has made to addressing them:

Personal-professional needs:

- Making myself a more effective practitioner working with mid-career

Bahraini as an educator-facilitator on PD programmes. *This AR has given me significant theoretical and practical insights into how an understanding of linguistic issues can help me to work towards optimal convergence and the building of communities of practice in PD classes*

- Making myself a more efficient coordinator and developer of PD programmes in an evolving context. *Through this research, I have learned how to more effectively coordinate tutors from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a change-intensive, cross-cultural context*
- Making myself a more effective manager of BTC's PD programme. *Through this AR I have gained insights into how linguistic and cultural issues can be better factored into inter-stakeholder liaison and planning. It has also given me insights into how "train-the-trainers" and other professional development courses for PD tutors might be tailor-made with a focus on language and culture issues*
- *This AR has also inspired me as to possibilities for further post-doctoral research and publication around BTC PD, and possible work toward an 'M' level professional qualification, such as an MBA in Education Management.*

Participant-focused needs:

- Gaining insights into participants' PD needs and expectations. *This AR has shown me how participants needs, attitudes, and expectations are rooted in cultural context and evolving communities of practice*
- Identifying and addressing factors that restrict participants' learning. *Through this AR I have a new understanding of the roles of uncertainty in inhibiting learning*
- Making learning 'real' and meaningful for participants. *Insights from this AR have fed directly into several BTC initiatives, including the formation of the new Translation and Contextualisation Committee*

Curriculum development needs:

- Improving the current PD modules. *This AR feed directly into on-going discussions around how teaching and learning on BTC PD can be made more effective for the academic year 2010-11*
- Developing new PD modules. *This AR has indicated a need for new PD modules for Arabic and English specialists, "building communities of practice" workshops for tutors and participants, core "coaching" modules for BTC, and generic "effective communication" modules for all PD participants.*

- Improving feedback and assessment *Activities designed to gather data for this AR have led to the construction of a range of activities which enhance the formative assessment of participants, and the formative evaluation of tutors and courses*

Institutional needs:

- Gaining the insights needed for BTC to develop effective needs analysis (NA) and performance (PM) procedures for PD participants. *Feedback from this AR can feed positively into discussions with the MoE on teacher-participant PM and NA*
- Cooperating with the Bahrain Ministry of Education (MoE) and other stakeholders to make BTC PD needs-relevant and performance enhancing. *Enhanced awareness of the centrality of the language issue and consciousness raising around issues of optimal convergence and communities of practice will positively influence the achievement of inter-stakeholder constructive alignment*
- Developing PD tutors professionally. *Insights gained from this AR are feeding into on-going inter-stakeholder discussions around how BTC PD tutors' might be professionally developed, and how this tutor PD might segue with teacher-participant PD on issues such as optimal convergence and communities of practice.*

I should end this AR with an expression of thanks to all who made it possible, PD participants, colleagues at BTC, UoB and other stakeholders, faculty at SOAS and YSJ, my family when I put 'quality time' aside to complete this.