

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

To some, it is commonsense knowledge that SMK is an essential element in teaching. Yet, despite its centrality in the teaching/learning process, SMK did not receive much attention in education research until the 1980s. Such research took off in earnest after Shulman's plea in 1985 to the research community to put it on its agenda. Since then, a sizeable number of studies have been conducted on SMK in subjects such as English literature (e.g. Grossman, 1989), biology (e.g. Hashweh, 1987), history (e.g. Wineberg, 1997), mathematics (e.g. Ball, 1991) and science (e.g. Carlsen, 1991). All these studies have provided a deeper understanding of SMK in the teaching of various school subjects. The knowledge gained from these studies has, in turn, informed policies and practices on teaching and teacher training. For example, the Department of Education in Massachusetts has a set of SMK requirements for educator licensure and preparation program approval ([www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7/7.06.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7/7.06.html)).

While there is much research activity on SMK in school subjects such as those mentioned above, a search of literature has revealed that very little is known about SMK in TESOL. Considering the rapid growth of the TESOL industry worldwide, including Australia, there is an urgent need to undertake studies on SMK in TESOL in order to gain greater insight into this very necessary component of teaching. The study which has been reported in this thesis was undertaken as an attempt to better understand the phenomenon in TESOL and to go some way towards addressing the lack of systematic study in this area. It investigated TESOL teachers' perspectives on SMK in language teaching in an ELICOS setting. The ELICOS sector was selected because it is a dynamic sector in the education service industry. It is also a biggest employer of TESOL teachers in Australia outside of the school system.

This final chapter provides a summary and conclusion to the study. It begins with a summary of the findings. This is followed by a consideration of the transferability of the study. The final part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the implications of the findings for theory development and for practice.

## Summary of Findings

Conceptualised within the interpretive paradigm, the study reported was concerned with the perspectives of ELICOS teachers on SMK in language teaching in the ELICOS setting. In this regard, it sought to understand the aims for their actions, the strategies devised to achieve the aims and the significance of those aims and strategies. It also sought to understand the reasons behind those aims and strategies.

Data were collected through indepth interviewing, document analysis, and non-participant observation. Through data analysis involving open coding, axial coding and analytic induction. Eight propositions were developed. The propositions are summarised below.

The first proposition states that TESOL teachers see their role as ELICOS teachers is solely to work within the set conditions of the workplace to teach ELICOS students a body of SMK that will go towards helping them to realise their communication needs in English. The particular conditions that exert a strong influence on ELICOS teachers' perspective of their role are the employment conditions and the syllabus set for the ELICOS program. Concerning employment conditions, the majority of ELICOS teachers have to contend with the uncertainty of employment beyond their current contract which is usually short. Furthermore, even if they are assured of work for the immediate future, they are uncertain of the level of the class they will be assigned to teach until the last minute. Such uncertainty plays a decisive role in the amount of work they are prepared to do to improve their work between teaching contracts. Additionally, teachers are constrained in their teaching by timetabling factors. Actual teaching time for the ELICOS teacher is approximately three-and-a-half weeks for each module after taking into account class organisation at the start of each module and testing in the last week of the module. They also have to deal with new students joining the class at different times, students with different knowledge about the subject matter, and differences in ELP. These conditions set the parameters for the actions of the ELICOS teachers.

Within these parameters, the ELICOS teachers have to teach an officially prescribed syllabus. For the core morning classes, there is a set syllabus for each level of the

ELICOS and there are set tasks for assessments. Teachers are expected to teach their students the SMK stipulated in the syllabus so that their students are able to perform well in the assessment tasks. Similarly for the elective classes, there is an established outline and while not as strictly set as the morning syllabus, teachers are expected to follow that outline. These external constraints are important influences on the actions of teachers as they negotiate their way through the system in their everyday work.

Proposition 2 states that TESOL teachers see that their role as ELICOS teachers is to develop teaching strategies that accommodate the constraints posed by the way the ELICOS Program at DoLIE is organised, managed, and operated. The strategies which the ELICOS teachers have developed may be grouped under four headings, namely, strategies to maximize time utilisation in the classroom, strategies to address the lack of homogeneity among students, strategies of working with co- and parallel teachers, and strategies to prioritise the SMK to be taught. To maximize class time, the ELICOS teachers start teaching early, with most teachers beginning the work of the module in the second lesson. They also usually select materials and activities that allow them to teach several skills at one time. Also, they sometimes integrate the teaching of the two macro-skills or they reinforce the teaching of one macro-skill when teaching the other. Another strategy to maximize class time is to spend more time addressing the common language problems the students have, rather than address individual problems. Finally, no time is wasted on activities that do not have a language learning goal. Thus, time in class with the students is well accounted for by all the teachers.

Further, in their attempts to address the lack of homogeneity among students in terms of knowledge about the language, language proficiency and goals for studying English, the ELICOS teachers' strategy is to create a common base from which they can then carry out their teaching of the SMK in the syllabus. Several ways are utilised to achieve that common base. To deal with differences in knowledge about language among the students, the teachers employ the following strategies. They pair new students with students who have already studied one module in their class so that the new students could learn by observing these more experienced students; encourage the more experienced students to share their knowledge with the newcomers; integrate important aspects of SMK which these students have been taught into the new lessons; revise important aspects of SMK with the class as a whole; and expect new students to catch

up on their own. To solve the problem of disparity in language proficiency, most teachers look for the 'right' level at which to pitch their lessons. To find this 'level', they observe student's interactive behaviour while performing class tasks, analyse the results of diagnostic tests, and engage in logical deduction. Finally, in terms of addressing the problem of students with different goals for learning English, the teachers adjust their lessons according to the goals of the students in their class.

Regarding strategies for teamwork, ELICOS teachers make sure that their channels of communication are open and a willingness to accommodate the other teacher is demonstrated by all the participants. With the co-teacher, the ELICOS teachers take care not to utilise materials and activities meant to be used by the co-teacher. Additionally, they always keep their co-teacher informed about important developments in their class such as a change in student behaviour, or students' difficulty in a task given in class. In relation to working with a parallel teacher, the ELICOS teachers show tolerance of views that are different from their own and they make attempts to accommodate the other teachers materials and suggestions in their lessons even though they might prefer to use some other materials or activities.

Finally, ELICOS teachers deal with the issue of limited time by prioritising the SMK to be taught to students. There are two areas of SMK to which teachers pay particular attention. The first is that which is related to the assessment tasks found in each module. This is especially the case with the Academic English classes where almost all the planned activities revolve around the assessments. The second concerns equipping students with the knowledge and skills they require to achieve their medium and long-term goals for studying English.

Propositions 3, 4 and 5 are clustered together in a story line. These propositions relate to the teachers' conceptualisation of the SMK of TESOL. Proposition 3 states that for the ELICOS teachers, language is a complex system consisting of non-verbal and verbal codes. The subject matter of language must include both of these sets of codes. In terms of non-verbal codes, the subject matter extends beyond the normal focus on eye gaze and facial expressions to include general behaviour that is culturally appropriate. As for verbal codes, the aspects of language that form the SMK of language are vocabulary, grammar, the macro-skills of reading, writing, listening and

speaking, and pronunciation. All these are deemed important for communication to be possible.

Proposition 4 is in two parts. Proposition 4a develops the notion of language as a tool, which is used predominantly for communication. There are many metaphors used to conceptualise language and one of them is to view it as a tool. A tool is associated with some practical use and in this case, it is for communication purposes. Associated with the idea of communication is the notion of audience and how to initiate and sustain interaction to achieve one's communicative goals. This idea underpins a great deal of the decisions and actions of the teacher. Their perspective is that in order to achieve a desired outcome in communication, the students need to know how to write and speak using various genres.

Proposition 4b expands on the meaning of communication to the ELICOS teachers. For them, communication is concerned with the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning. Meaning expression requires knowledge of the non-verbal and verbal codes of language. Clarity, relevance and appropriateness are criteria used by the teachers to determine the quality of the meaning expressed. In terms of clarity, there are two important aspects. The first is the clarity of content while the second is the clarity of language. In regard to meaning interpretation, three levels of interpretation are identified. These are literal comprehension which is considered fundamental to the interpretation of text, inferential comprehension which requires the reader/listener to draw certain conclusions from the text that are not made explicit, and evaluative comprehension which requires the reader/listener to make judgements about the writer/speaker's ideas and style of delivery. As for meaning negotiation, teachers do not teach it explicitly as the nature of meaning negotiation in communication is best conducted through actual doing. For this reason, activities for teaching all aspects of language are made as interactive and as authentic as possible.

Proposition 5 states that meaning can only be fully realised if language is interpreted within its socio-cultural context. Thus, understanding of the sociocultural norms of the speech community is necessary for successful communication to occur. To this end, the teachers feel that it is important to teach the students about the values and behaviours of mainstream Australian society and the notion of appropriateness that is

associated with these. They draw their students' attention to aspects of behaviour in general and the academic setting in particular which are regarded appropriate or inappropriate in Australia. Students are made aware of behaviours that are considered rude, actions that are likely to cause miscommunication, and actions that are deemed desirable. To give students more understanding of the society, the teachers also try, where possible, to give them general information about Australia and the issues of importance to Australians.

The next three propositions, namely propositions 6, 7 and 8 are also clustered together to form a story line relating to the teachers' understanding of how SMK in TESOL is best learnt. The teaching must take three entities into consideration, namely, the teaching environment, the student and the teaching/learning process. Proposition 6 describes the teaching environment. There are three types of environment of which teachers take cognisance, namely, physical, affective and social environments. The perceived ideal physical environment is one where there is sufficient space for the teachers to move around the class to check on their students and have desk arrangement in groups of four. In addition, teachers also consider the seating of the different sexes for they believe that it also makes a difference to the learning environment. Concerning the affective environment, teachers try to boost the confidence of students and maintain face-saving strategies. As for creating a conducive social environment, this is achieved through making the class a socially cohesive entity and generally the first step to achieving this is to invest some time in the first lesson to trying to create such an environment. What follows after that depends on the peculiar characteristics of the individual classes.

Proposition 7 describes the issues about students to which ELICOS teachers pay particular attention. The teachers tend to view their students in terms of their needs and how to attend to those needs. Three types of student needs are catered for. These are knowledge, affective and behavioural needs. In terms of knowledge needs, three categories of knowledge have been identified. These are language, culture and general knowledge. There are three key times in which strategies are developed and put in place to address these needs. These are before the commencement of the module, on first encounter with the class, and during or after each lesson. The strategies developed may be broad or very specific. Broad strategies are usually developed before the start of a

module and these are modified on first encounter with the students. Narrow strategies are usually developed after each lesson and they serve to address very specific problems which the students have. When planning and teaching, the teachers have both types of strategies in mind. Where affective needs are concerned, the teachers are watchful over the emotional wellbeing of their students and are quick to take the appropriate action when the need arises. The aim is to ensure that their students are not distracted from their study by issues that cause emotional upset. Finally, the teachers also pay heed to the learning behaviour of students. There are four behaviors which they feel are desirable in a language learner and ought to be encouraged. These are being autonomous, active, receptive and disciplined. Again, they have strategies to encourage their students to become independent, active, receptive and disciplined learners.

Proposition 8 relates to teachers' perspectives on the teaching/learning process. Teachers employ two sets of strategies in the teaching of the SMK. The first set is strategies based on understanding the nature of the SMK and the second is based on understanding of learning in general. In regard to language learning, the learning activities, the study materials and the role of the teacher in the classroom are viewed as important in helping students to learn. The learning activities must be interactive as far as possible because language is mainly for communication. Closely following that is the fact that the teaching materials must be authentic to make them meaningful to the students. Finally, the role of the teacher is more than a matter of delivering a set of materials recommended in the unit outline. The teachers are facilitators, managers, resource persons and needs analysts. For the teachers, language teaching is concerned with finding or creating opportunities for students to practise various aspects of language in meaningful ways. This means finding activities and materials that are relevant to the students' needs and interest.

In relation to general learning strategies, there are four strategies which the teachers consider important. The first is to produce lessons that are cohesive and coherent. The notion of themes is used to make lessons cohesive and coherent. Again, three types of themes are noted. These are topic-based theme, task-based theme and skills-based theme. The second is to communicate clearly teacher expectations to the students. They do this by making sure that their instructions for tasks are clear and they check their students as they perform their tasks to ascertain that they have understood the

instructions. The third is to keep the atmosphere balanced which means that cognitively taxing activities have to be juxtaposed with 'lightweight' activities. The final strategy is to make sure that learning is a pleasant experience.

It is important to point out that in setting out to investigate the ELICOS teachers' perspectives on SMK in language teaching, the researcher found that the answer to the question was deeply embedded in the workplace organization and that for it to be revealed in a meaningful way, the relationships between it and the different aspects of the organization had to be unveiled and explicated. Every teacher comes with an understanding of the SMK of TESOL but what gets taught and how it gets taught is largely influenced by the conditions under which the teaching is carried out. Thus teachers' perspectives of the SMK in the ELICOS setting are the outcome of an interaction between what they understand to be the SMK and the work environment. For this reason, the first proposition highlighted those aspects of the workplace that led to the teachers interpreting their role in the organization. Then, the second proposition showed the strategies they used to mediate between what they had to do in the classroom with all those external constraints over which they had no control. Only when that was made explicit was it possible to appreciate their actions in the classroom – the strategies they used to deliver the SMK. This then revealed the nature of the SMK which they were teaching the students.

### **Transferability of Findings**

When it comes to the question of whether this study has applications for other settings, criticisms may be levelled at the fact that the findings were based on data gathered at only one site. However, the question of size of sample was not a consideration in this study. The size of sample is vital for generalisations to be made from the research findings. However, the study reported here was interpretivist in nature.

Following in the tradition of interpretivist research, the selection of the sample for study is based on other criteria. As Patton (1990, p.169) asserts, the power and logic of selection of a study sample in interpretive research is whether the 'sample' can be information-rich. The decision to conduct the present study at one site was based on the

fact that the researcher was very familiar with the site. She had worked in that particular ELICOS program for several years and had seen its transformation over the years. She was confident that she could have access to different types of information about the ELICOS Program that might not be as readily available at other research sites if the study were to be conducted over a few research sites where some information might be considered too sensitive for viewing by outsiders. It was, therefore, more advantageous to carry out data collection at only one site.

However, it was recognised that this alone would not be sufficient consideration for the decision to study this particular site. A more compelling reason was that the selected research site is the one of the founding ELICOS centres that began in the early 1970s. It played a significant role in many decisions regarding policies and organisation of ELICOS colleges. It is a mature, well-established organisation. Thus, it satisfies Patton's criterion of an 'information-rich' site.

Because of the differences in the ontological and epistemological assumptions between the two paradigms of research, where positivists demand that the findings of studies be generalisable, interpretivists expect transferability in order to satisfy their own standards for determining the robustness of the findings. Transferability refers to whether readers can:

...note the specifics of the research situation and compare them to the specifics of an environment or situation with which they are familiar. If there are enough similarities between the two situations, readers may be able to infer that the results of the research would be the same or similar in their own situation.

(<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/research/genstrans/printFormat.cfm?>)

In transferability, the responsibility for making connections between the findings and other situations resides with the readers. The readers decide whether all or some of the findings are transferable to their own situation or other situations they have in mind. It is the responsibility of the researcher to report the study in a manner that makes it possible for the readers to make comparisons with some degree of confidence. To facilitate this, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stipulate that the researcher's description in the study be sufficiently detailed or 'thick' so that the readers can appreciate the conditions in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs. Based on that, they are able to decide for themselves whether the study reported can be applied to another context.

This was borne in mind in the reporting of the present study. First, care was taken to provide detailed accounts of how the data were gathered and analysed to establish credibility of the study. Next, the findings were presented in their natural context and were supported by relevant extracts from the data. From the attention paid to detail both of the findings as well as the documentation of thesis report is adequate for readers to make judgements of transferability.

The readers who may see an applicability of these findings to their own situations include practitioners who are familiar with the ELICOS industry. They may be able to identify with the conditions of work that were experienced by the participants of this study. Some of the conditions described are uncertainty concerning employment and student levels, mixed ability classes and little time for preparation. The readers familiar with the ELICOS setting may also be familiar with strategies which the teachers at the research site used to cope with these conditions. Alternatively, they may compare the strategies they themselves use with those reported here and make a decision regarding their applicability in their own context.

TESOL teachers in all settings in countries in the inner circle may also recognise and relate to the model of SMK in language teaching of the ELICOS teachers at the research site. In TESOL in these countries, teachers are mainly concerned with the function of language for communication and this means viewing language from the point of expression, interpretation and negotiation. The learning of different components of language such as grammar and vocabulary is to aid meaning creation. Such a view of language is not new. Rather, it has been taken for granted and is implicit in teachers' actions in planning and teaching in many countries in the inner circle. However, such a view of language may not be fully accepted in many parts of the world where the SMK of language is limited to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, which is not necessarily in context. With the model of language articulated in this study, the teachers may be able to reflect on their own understanding of language and compare that with this model. This may give them the opportunity to consider the relevance of such a model in their situation especially when English is not used outside the classroom.

Closely allied to this is the transferability of findings on the teaching of the SMK. Readers may be able to relate to the approach and strategies employed by the teachers at

the research site. Once again, the practices described are not new and trained teachers would have encountered them in their study or professional development workshops. However, by reading about how the SMK in TESOL is taught in the research setting, readers may feel reassured that teachers elsewhere are also using methods and activities that are similar to theirs. The thick descriptions of the findings may also allow teachers in countries where the traditional teacher-centred approach is still in practice to evaluate the strategies used here and determine if such strategies may be adapted to suit their local conditions. Many teachers from countries such as Indonesia and China have expressed a desire to have more student-centred and communicative methods of teaching in their own country and the findings in this study may offer some insights into such teaching in an inner circle country.

Finally, it must be stated that transferability offers ‘temporary understanding’. According to Cziko (1992, p.10), people differ from each other in many varied ways and these change with time. Thus, “the most we can realistically hope to achieve in educational research is not prediction and control but rather only temporary understanding”. It is in the spirit of this position that the findings are offered.

### **Implications of Research Findings**

The findings of the study have implications for both theory development and practical application. For theory development, much more needs to be done to add to what is known about SMK in TESOL. From the findings, it is evident that knowledge gained from further investigations in different settings and different population will provide a more comprehensive picture of teachers’ perspectives on SMK in TESOL. Additionally, extending the area of research to the study of other aspects of SMK will contribute towards a greater understanding of the whole phenomenon in TESOL. In terms of practical application, implications for teacher training, management of program, and teaching can also be drawn from the findings. These will be discussed in greater detail below.

### **Theory development**

The study has found that teachers' perspectives on the SMK of TESOL is an intertwining of teachers' understanding of the workplace organisation, the nature of the SMK of TESOL, and the nature of learning this SMK. The organisation of the workplace has a huge influence on teachers' perspectives of their work as teachers in that particular environment. This study focused on the perspectives of TESOL teachers in the ELICOS setting. Future studies may expand on the knowledge gained from this study by investigating a range of different TESOL settings. TESOL is offered worldwide. The educational settings, which may be investigated include primary and secondary school settings in different countries of the inner, outer and expanding circles of English speakers. Private language colleges and tuition centres in countries like Japan and Korea, and language support units in university departments in different countries may also provide further insights into the subject. Investigation may also focus on the influence of ethnic culture, national cultures and organisational culture on the actions of the individuals. The findings from these studies may further illuminate the link between context and individual perspectives.

In addition, there is a need for research on the perspectives of different types of practitioners. One type that is very important is that of non-native English speaking TESOL teachers in various settings in different countries. The study reported here investigated the perspectives of native English speakers in the Australian environment. Within Australia, the perspectives of non-native English speaking TESOL teachers who have come, as adult migrants may be different from those reported here. Similarly, there may be differences in perspectives with NNES TESOL teachers in countries of the outer and expanding circle, especially concerning the SMK of TESOL and the manner in which it is taught. Findings of these various perspectives will help to inform the debate and decision on the employment of native and non-native English teachers for TESOL in various countries.

Research may also be undertaken from the perspective of experienced teachers, novice teachers, trained teachers and untrained teachers. The participants in this particular study were all trained and experienced teachers. However, as explained in Chapter 2, the TESOL industry is not tightly controlled by governments or professional bodies in most countries. Entrepreneurial business people who see an opportunity to make money

from starting TESOL colleges do not always employ trained TESOL teachers. Moreover, in countries such as Japan and Korea, preference is given to native English speakers even though they have no teacher training, let alone training in TESOL. Related to this may be studies on the differences between knowledge of, and knowledge about language, and how these two impact on classroom teaching, actions and decision making. Studies in these areas will contribute towards a better understanding of the role of teacher training, especially in a subject such as language.

The research focus can and should extend to other aspects of SMK. Studies similar to those described in the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 may also be undertaken. Studies may be conducted on the way teachers who are knowledgeable and less knowledgeable in the SMK handle teaching in the classroom, have the ability to take up serendipitous learning opportunities in the classroom, and offer explanations of grammar points. Studies may also be conducted on the growth of SMK of teachers and the sources of teachers' SMK. Finally, studies seeking to understand student learning of SMK in different settings and by different groups of teachers (for example, novice/experienced, native speaker/non-native speaker and trained/untrained) may also be carried out.

In addition to these different aspects of SMK of TESOL teachers, an interesting area of TESOL to investigate is the time dimension in learning. The element of time was an important consideration in teachers' actions and decision in this present study. It was mentioned quite regularly by all the participants. It would be illuminating to carry out studies on the availability of time and the quality of learning. This seems particularly urgent as the current trend is towards shorter periods of study. As stated in the first proposition, some ELICOS colleges allow students to study for as few as two weeks. It would be useful to find out the learning gains made within that period of time. Findings from such studies may also help to inform teaching of other subjects in different educational settings since most training offered today tends to be short.

### **Improvement of practice**

The findings from this study can also be used to inform practice. One area in which the findings can inform practice is teacher training. This study has shown that teachers' conceptualisation of the SMK of TESOL and the best methods for teaching the subject reflect contemporary understanding of language and language teaching. A very likely

source of such knowledge is pre-service and in-service teacher-training courses. Teacher-training courses such as the CELTA, graduate certificate in TESOL, the DELTA and the graduate diploma in TESOL have an important role in preparing trainees adequately for their work. Most of the trainees in these courses are learning about language for the first time. It is important that they are properly equipped with the basic knowledge of the SMK before they are certified fit for teaching the subject. To prepare students well for their work, the teacher trainers have to be very knowledgeable about the areas of TESOL which they teach. They have to keep abreast of new knowledge in their areas of expertise in TESOL so that their courses are constantly revised to include new knowledge that they think will be useful.

As for the teacher training courses themselves, the study has revealed certain areas of teaching that need more attention than others and these could be dealt with in greater depth in teacher training. One area that needs special attention is teaching of SMK in mixed level classes, which are more the norm than the exception in most language classes. Another area requiring greater treatment is assessment. In the study reported, all the teachers had to carry out formative and summative evaluations of their students. It was an important part of the teachers' work and an important aspect of student learning. Students' results were taken as indicators of their language ability and were generally the deciding factor for promoting students to a higher level. The ability to set good tests that measure the students' language ability with a reasonable degree of accuracy requires skill and knowledge that can only be obtained through formal training. Since all teachers are expected to carry out evaluations in their work and since important decisions about student learning depend on their test results, the courses that prepare them for work ought to cover this aspect of teaching in some depth.

Another area where the findings of the present study can inform practice is management of ELICOS. The study's finding that teachers' actions are dictated largely by the management and organisation of the ELICOS college shows the importance of a good organisation structure and good management for the delivery of quality language courses. In this respect, the finding is an affirmation of the steps taken by NEAS for the accreditation of ELICOS colleges. The *ELICOS Accreditation Handbook* (2002) lays down clearly the minimum requirements in key areas for the setting up of an ELICOS college. The key areas covered include the employment of specialist staff, the

curriculum, student assessment and materials and equipment (*ELICOS Accreditation Handbook*, 2002, p.2). By insisting on these minimum requirements, there is an assurance that the colleges accredited will be operated as a professional unit. This in turn, will impact on teachers and their teaching.

It is important that the managers of ELICOS colleges ascertain that they have a pedagogically sound curriculum since teachers have little input into the bigger picture of course organisation. For instance, in the present study, the morning classes are organised around the four macro-skills. This has certain underlying assumptions, namely, that writing, reading, listening and speaking can be treated as separate entities and that they can be tested separately. The teachers employed to teach students in these classes do not have an input into whether they agree with such a conceptualisation of language and language learning. Decisions of this nature are made by the people in management and if they do not have a good understanding of the SMK of TESOL and learning, they may produce a poor quality curriculum which will affect the quality of the courses. Thus, people in management such as the DoS and the few permanent teaching staff members have to be up-to-date with developments in TESOL theory and practice.

To a large extent, if the ELICOS colleges want to enhance the quality of their program, the management must make provision for on-going teacher training. This is demonstrated by the finding on teachers' understanding of SMK and how best to teach it. As stated earlier, the understanding of teachers revealed in this study is consistent with the current understanding. Formal courses such as those offered by teacher-training institutions are but one source from which teachers learn about current theories and practice of TESOL. As Grossman, Wilson and Shulman (1989) have discovered, teachers also gain knowledge as they work. That being the case, the management of ELICOS colleges ought to make provisions for on-going training. This may take several forms. One is to make sure that there are professional journals available. This is particularly necessary for ELICOS colleges which are not sited in a tertiary institution. Another is to provide professional development workshops. Yet another form of training is to encourage staff to attend conferences and to engage in research.

Finally, implications for teaching in ELICOS programs are also evident from the findings. The study has shown that the manner of operation of ELICOS colleges requires teachers to be flexible and knowledgeable. Teachers can expect to work long hours at the start of each teaching cycle to get the appropriate materials and activities for the whole cycle. They must have a good understanding of the SMK and the resources available to be able to prepare for teaching at very short notice. They must also be prepared to teach mixed ELP level classes and also to teach classes with people with different goals for studying English. In the classroom, they must be prepared to adopt a more student-centred teaching role where their chief activities to be a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher who is the giver of facts. This is particularly important to note for teachers who have had training where their methods of teaching are mainly based on a teacher-centred approach.