TESOL and the Expectations of Intercultural Communication

Carla R. Chamberlin
The Pennsylvania State University Abington College, USA

This study investigates the role of communicators' expectations of intercultural encounters, at both individual and organizational levels, within the context of higher education in North America. Non-native (n=17) and native speakers (n=11) of English were interviewed to uncover students' conceptualizations of intercultural communication and to describe their expectations of university policies and initiatives to increase intercultural activity. In addition, interpersonal expectations of the students were examined. Analysis of the interview transcriptions suggests that intercultural communication is perceived on a superficial level, that an institution's endeavors aimed at increasing awareness are not perceived as having an effect on behavior, and that low personal expectations may underlie students' willingness to interact with peers from different language or cultural backgrounds. For TESOL professionals, this implies that efforts to increase intercultural communication among speakers of diverse language backgrounds must be re-examined if they are to bring about change, and that participation in a community of learning is not solely the responsibility of language learners.

Nobody really talks to each other;
I mean it really just seems like everybody just gets along . . .
(multicultural U.S. college student)

In the discourse of today's global economy and practically unlimited communication networks, the idea of intercultural communication has woven its way into business, social, government, and community organizations, fueled by a desire to break down barriers, facilitate negotiation, and increase peace. The general expectation is that intercultural communication is good, necessary, and inevitable. To second language professionals, this idea is far from new. We know that effective communication cannot exclude socio-cultural dimensions. Consequently, our profession also has certain expectations of intercultural communication. Our pedagogy assumes that awareness of cross-cultural and linguistic differences, world views, and beliefs and values leads to understanding and change in communicative behaviors. We hope, that as our students acquire more language skills and cultural knowledge, they

become better communicators in intercultural contexts. Ultimately, we want our students to be communicatively competent in the target language and culture. While this goal itself is not unrealistic, there is a somewhat inherent expectation that places the responsibility for effective intercultural communication on language learners, and this expectation is unrealistic.

The reality is that communication is reciprocal in nature, not one-directional. Each participant in an interaction brings certain expectations to the conversation, and in the case of intercultural communication, both native and non-native speakers are responsible for the outcome of the interaction. Thus, it is not solely the language learners who are accountable for effective communication. Native speakers must also be interculturally competent. What each speaker brings to a conversation determines expectations on social and individual levels, and these expectations then shape the communicative act. The goal of this study is to expand our understanding of both native and non-native speakers' perceptions and expectations of intercultural communication.

Expectations of Intercultural Communication

The notion of "expectations" for the purpose of this study, which takes place within the context of higher education in the United States, is applied to intercultural communication on two levels: institutional and interpersonal. The affiliations forged at institutional and interpersonal levels create a network of social relationships and power dynamics that affect language learning in a multitude of ways, ranging from personal encounters to academic policies. Although the overlap and exchange between the institutional and interpersonal are considerable, it is useful to examine these ideas separately in order to dismantle and understand the expectations that surface at both levels.

On the institutional level, intercultural communication is conceptualized as a tangible goal, as something to be achieved in a community or organization. Intercultural communication is manifest in activities of groups that promote peace and multiculturalism, in festivals and celebrations that promote awareness, and in workshops and courses that support diversity initiatives. The expectations are that intercultural communication is good, and that awareness of cultural dimensions will lead to better understanding and improved communication. The intentions of these expectations are, without a doubt, a positive step. However, these expectations limit the notion of intercultural communication to episodic and often decontextualized actions and events.

These institutional expectations impact the field of second language learning and teaching in several ways. First, in the case of college students who are non-native English speakers, university ESL courses are often limited in time and scope. Students are expected to achieve college-level, native-like language skills in one or two semesters

of classes—a formidable task even for native speakers. Second, within the institutional framework of an organization such as a university, the responsibility of intercultural communication is often placed by default on non-native speakers. It is their responsibility to learn about cultural differences and similarities, and ways to negotiate successful interaction. Even the most interculturally competent non-native speakers, however, still run into obstacles when dealing with those who are not interculturally competent. Moreover, ESL teachers themselves take on additional responsibility by trying to inform native-speaking students, staff, and faculty about the dynamics of intercultural communication. Finally, non-native speakers are tacitly expected to carry the burden of providing ways for "others" to become aware of their culture. It is the non-native speakers who commonly, but not exclusively, organize and participate in special events and awareness activities. They are expected to provide a showcase of sorts for others to observe from a safe distance. From this social-institutional perspective, the burden of intercultural communication often lies on non-native speakers and second language professionals.

One way to lessen this burden has been to incorporate the study of intercultural communication into general university curricula. Diversity-focused courses, events, and workshops do offer excellent opportunities for developing awareness, but these efforts are often limited in scope and credit hours. Moreover, the notion of "awareness" itself is problematic. If "awareness" means simply the recognition and validation of the existence of another way of living, eating, worshipping, dressing, or speaking, then changes in attitudes and behaviors are unlikely to occur from exposure to episodic and decontextualized efforts. If "awareness" is broadened to include an interpersonal realization that identity and cultural affiliation play important roles in the negotiation of meaning (Fantini, 2000), then individuals may be more fully engaged in developing a self-awareness that leads to substantive change or transformation.

Transformation in attitudes and beliefs is a more realistic expectation on the interpersonal level where awareness of personal identity and status can influence the expectations people have toward others in their daily interactions. When participating in a target language community, for example, language learners and native speakers may judge each other according to how well their expectations of each other, based on nonverbal cues such as dialect, physical appearance, and level of emotional expressiveness, to name a few, have been fulfilled. Burgoon and Hale's (1988) Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) describes individuals as having a range of behaviors they consider to be acceptable; if behaviors fall outside the boundaries of these expectations, negative or positive judgments can result. Although EVT focuses on nonverbal behaviors, the notion of expectations has been used to describe the pre-interaction expectations that people hold as they approach intercultural encounters. Gudykunst (1993) posits that when a person's positive expectations of another are

fulfilled, anxiety decreases and the communication becomes more effective due to an increased ability to anticipate or predict another's behaviors. Spitzberg's (1994) model of intercultural communication competence specifies the expectations we have at individual, episodic, and relational levels. On the individual level, what one expects to gain from an interaction (reward value) is important for ESL students as well as the native speakers with whom they are interacting. If neither expect to gain much, then motivation, according to Spitzberg, may decrease. Next, the episodic system recognizes external variables that filter one's impressions of competence. In other words, how might a speaker's perceived competence be attributed to the actual ability of the speaker or to contextual variables such as previous success in similar situations and status within the community? For ESL students, these questions may be strongly linked to prejudice, stereotypes, and levels of credibility in their relationships with fellow students, staff members, and faculty.

Finally, in the relational system, Spitzberg (1994) identifies the aspects of communication that fulfill our needs as social beings. Impressions of competence may increase as needs for autonomy and intimacy are met, as similar values and orientations are discovered, as trust is built, and as networks and social support become part of the relationship. When people are drawn together through mutual attraction, interest, or needs, they may not only have perceptions of greater communicative competency, competency may truly increase due to increased levels of motivation, reward value placed on the relationship, and fulfillment of positive expectations. Overall, expectancies filter impressions of competency. As someone fulfills our expectations of friendliness, trustworthiness, and assertiveness (Spitzberg, 1994, adapted from Pavitt & Haight, 1985), and does not violate our ideal of an effective communicator, our positive impressions of that person will increase. In contrast, if expectations are not met, we may feel threatened or anxious.

Within the context of ESL in higher education, research reveals many differences in attitudes and perceptions among ESL students, native speakers, and those who instruct them. These studies speak to the underlying relational expectations that can reveal themselves in divisive patterns of interaction. In their needs analysis of academic listening and speaking skills, Ferris and Tagg (1996) found that instructors tended to attribute students' difficulties to cultural differences and language deficiencies rather than acknowledging the possibility that their own teaching strategies may need to be examined. Likewise, some students complained about instructors rather than taking personal responsibility. Potentially harmful perceptions were also revealed in ESL students' assumptions that American (native-speaker) students have no interest in them and that international teachers favor students with whom they share a cultural background (Chamberlin, 1977). That students and teachers are sometimes prejudged and disempowered on account of their status as non-native speakers is an unsettling picture of the inaccurate and low expectations that color intercultural interactions

(Amin, 1977; Harklau, 2000; Hoekje & Williams, 1992; Leki, 2001, Lui, 1999; Pennycook, 1998; Tang, 1997).

Research Questions

In an educational environment that does not lack multicultural initiatives, many questions about expectations for intercultural communication arise. Despite efforts to create a good opportunity for developing intercultural communication competence for all students, why do non-native speakers seem to be so separate and socially isolated from native speakers? In a world where diversity, tolerance, and awareness are key words in curricula and policy initiatives, what effect, if any, do these things have on students' perceptions of each other and willingness to engage in intercultural communication? Do the students even think about these things? Is it unrealistic to expect ESL students to interact with native speakers? Before attempting to answer these questions through quantitative measures, it seems critical to explore first the world of the students and their personal expectations of their school and of each other. Thus, the two following questions are the focus of this study.

1) How do institutional initiatives shape the expectations students have about intercultural communication?

2) What are the interpersonal expectations of non-native and native speaking students toward intercultural encounters?

Methodology

Participants and Context

The participants in this study are 28 university students who attend a mid-sized college located just outside a major metropolitan area in the United States. The students range in age from 19-28 and represent 17 self-reported cultural groups. Eleven (6 male, 5 female) of the participants were native speakers of English and 17 (9 male, 8 female) were non-native speakers of English. All were matriculated degree-seeking students in an urban, nonresidential college campus with over a 26% minority population. The college's mission statement incorporates efforts to increase diversity and intercultural awareness at all levels of the organization and has several initiatives in place for recruitment and retention of minority students. Intercultural awareness is visible through specific courses, funds for course development, lecture series, year-long cultural events, and diversity week events. No records of overt protests, demonstrations, or hostile events connected to issues of ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, social class, were found in this investigation. This is not to say that the socio-cultural environment is perfect, only that documented cases of discrimination are rare.

Data Collection

Participants in this study were recruited by the principal researcher from multiple sections of a required public speaking course and campus activity groups. Conversations with students were recorded over the course of 3 semesters by two trained student researchers. Both researchers served as participants in the interview in order to engage students in conversation and increase comfort levels. The researchers followed a set of questions as guidelines to facilitate the conversation, but were careful not to control the direction of the students' responses. The conversations ranged in length from 20 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the participants' willingness to talk. Each conversation took place in a quiet area on campus, either an office, empty classroom, or study area, and was scheduled only when neither participant was constrained for time. All participants signed informed consent forms and were assured of the anonymity of their identities. After transcripts were completed by a professional transcriber not linked to the university, all recorded data were destroyed.

Analysis

As each transcription was carefully read, patterns in the students' discourse emerged. The units of discourse, measured in terms of ideas, were categorized according to the main idea represented in the unit. As a collective, these transcriptions offer insight into the shared discourse created in this community of students. Although the discourse may not be a direct reflection of their thoughts and behaviors, the transcriptions do reflect the nature of how intercultural communication is talked about, in this particular academic community of students (Denzin, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

Overall, the patterns that emerged in the discourse were classified into two main categories: institutional expectations and interpersonal expectations. Because the research assistants began the interviews with prompts referring to campus events and activities as a way to open up the conversation, all of the participants discussed, to a different extent, the role of the university in increasing intercultural awareness. Within this part of the conversation, participants were directly or indirectly prompted to offer their own definition of "intercultural communication." The early part of the conversations, then, provide data for the first research question. As the conversations continued, all of the participants expressed their personal opinions and related stories of their own experiences, or lack of experiences. These individual accounts provide a rich source of data for examining the interpersonal expectations of both native and non-native speakers (research question 2). Due to space constraints, excerpts that best represent common responses (more than 65%) or striking comments are presented in the results.

The responses have not been sorted out by gender or native language. The salient issues here are not correlations between groups and attitudes, but the range of communicative expectations that constitute a truly mixed, intercultural environment. In some cases, the excerpts contain content that identifies the speaker as native or non-native, but this analysis does not focus on attributing certain attitudes to specific groups. The individual comments of these students are legitimate voices of the diverse academic community of this particular school and represent the two-way process of intercultural communication. The following results are presented in categories that respond to the research questions. Because several utterances contained overlapping ideas, the results and discussion are presented simultaneously.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1: How do institutional initiatives shape the expectations students have about intercultural communication?

Several patterns emerged in the discourse as students talked about the role of the university in promoting intercultural awareness. First, when asked to elaborate on their understanding of "intercultural communication," all of the responses pointed to a largely superficial conceptualization based on the notion of "diversity." Over 70% of the participants remarked, without hesitation, that a diverse community of people from various cultures is "good." None offered explanations, however, of what "good" means. In addition, the intercultural environment was markedly described by all 28 as characterized by "differences."

> The different ethnicities, the different religions coming together and meeting in one place. I like diversity, it's, I guess it's good to have.

> I see it as a mixture of different cultures, different races, just differences between things.

> It's like when you have a group of people and they're all from different countries and different backgrounds, different cultures, different nationalities.

These conceptualizations of the intercultural environment on campus lacked any mention of interaction, involvement, or communication. The only two expanded conceptualizations mention the ability to express oneself safely and the different ways people think as being part of intercultural communication.

> It should be just like an atmosphere where people can express themselves or be allowed to share, like they can perform their own cultural rituals without facing violence.

> This is like differences between people. Basically, I think it is the way they think. Because in my example I see that I learn this language and even if I know this language, it's still just the differences between the way that I think and the way that people that are born here.

Students' responses that address "diversity" paint a fairly clear picture of how students, both native and non-native speakers, conceptualize intercultural communication on this college campus. They emphasize differences and view their environment as a demographic state rather than an interactive phenomenon. This notion seems to be reinforced by institutional activities and events that promote awareness through displays of customs, food, fashion, and dance by various ethnic clubs and organizations. Students, it seems, interpret institutional efforts as being limited to what Atkinson (1999) refers to as a "received" notion of culture-one that reduces culture to unchanging customs and norms.

> I think I went to [name of event] last year actually. Is that where they have free t-shirts?

> Well, I've never been to [name of event] or anything, but I hear about it and I saw them one time. So, you know, at least they're making awareness.

> A lot of times it's just something that's Irish culture, then only Irish people will go. You know if it's something that's Indian, then only Indian people will go. I mean it's a shame, but that's how it normally is.

> So here, you know, people have clubs, put on their own fashion shows, which are neat. And then it's also fun to smell the different foods that the different groups....so you know, everyone can relate to food. So that's always a great way to bring people together. Especially desserts, you really can't go wrong with that.

The second pattern that emerged in the interviews can be seen as an extension of the first pattern of superficiality: Students acknowledge the positive intentions of institutional initiatives for promoting intercultural awareness, but they doubt any transformative results. Students' comments about activities, events, and curricula designed to increase intercultural communication on campus express a general satisfaction with the goals of the efforts; the students vary, however, in their evaluation of the effectiveness of such efforts. Most students (n=25) concluded that efforts are not enough and that those who benefit are limited to a specific group.

> They all attend, but it doesn't make change. You know, everybody attends, everybody goes. There's lots of events for different minorities. They have Indian Day, they have Asian Day, and the Hispanic Club. They have all these clubs, all these events, and I

> personally think this campus does a lot for minorities and diversifying the campus. There is a lot that's being done. A lot more than I would think. And it's like, good to see, but I don't see any changes within the people themselves.

The most striking theme of these comments, however, is the expression of university efforts being a good thing for those who need it, often with the speaker excluding him or herself from that group.

> I think one class is good. But for some people it might not be enough. Maybe more events. More things to do. [Interviewer: Have you taken part yourself?] Nah, not really.
>
> There's a program like the Asian club, the Latino club, and stuff like that. So that really helps students who are not native.
>
> I don't know, maybe it's good for certain majors or cultures.
>
> I'm not attending anything like this. I think it's good if you attend. I think there's some kind of benefit.

In general, students express a positive tone in reference to the institution's commitment to increasing intercultural awareness. They describe it as something that is beneficial and necessary in today's global-oriented world. When students talk about university efforts to increase awareness, however, there is a consistent use of language that targets the efforts toward "others," i.e., those who really need to be informed. The students seem to place little reward value on their personal participation, as evidenced by those who admit to not taking part, and those who see it as something beneficial for "students who are not native." Embedded in these statements is a subtle (or perhaps what the students see as a politically correct) form of "otherization."

In sum, students expect intercultural communication to be part of the overall experience of higher education, but they do not seem to expect a great personal reward from it. Due to the politicized structure of university systems and the transient nature of student populations, intercultural communication is typically manifest to students through episodic efforts at increasing awareness. Awareness is, of course, a foundation upon which intercultural communicative competence is developed (Fantini, 2000) and should in no way be dismissed as inconsequential. An unintentional by-product of initiatives aimed at increasing awareness, however, may be the lowering of expectations that students have toward these efforts. Students expect the university to provide exposure, but they do not expect this exposure to challenge the intellect, to inspire and motivate change, or to benefit those besides minority group members.

Research question 2: What are the interpersonal expectations of non-native and native speaking students toward intercultural encounters?

On an interpersonal level, students' comments and stories provide much insight into the expectations they hold toward groups, individuals, and change. Without any prompting, an overwhelming number of students (26 our of 28) initiated talk about the patterns of communication among students from various backgrounds. Each description followed a consistent idea: Students from different cultural groups tend to socialize almost exclusively with members of their own cultural affiliation. Moreover, more than 75% of the students describe this self-segregation as "normal," intimating little expectation of change.

> When people go to class, they all go to class. There's all different races in the class. Everyone gets along fine. But when people leave class, you see distinct groups going off together. The Blacks go together, the Chinese go together, the Whites go together. It's not like they hate each other; it's just that's who they hang out with. And all the groups separate as they go. I do it.

> I see it a lot of times. It's not a Black and White thing. You do have your kids who are the Whites are over here and the Blacks over here. Asians here, and Latinos over here. In the classrooms you see that again.

> There are certain places on campus where race, cultures hang out. Over in [building name], yeah, well the Chinese people hang out there, and I don't know why. It's funny how they have certain places that they hang out. That's funny how that happens. And I don't know why it happens.

As the students described this separatism along cultural boundaries, many also made their expectations clear about the necessity for change or people's capacity to change attitudes. In the following excerpts the students' discourse constructs a climate of rather low expectations, not only for change itself, but for the necessity for change.

> I don't know if . . . if everybody's happy then . . . I don't, I don't think people are, I don't know. Maybe people are missing out on other cultures by doing what they do. I don't think it [less separation] would be a bad thing. But I don't necessarily think that it's a necessary thing to do. I don't understand what the advantage would be.

> I don't think we can do much about it because that's the way it is.

> We should all be, you know, together, united. You can be doing it until you're blue in the face, but it's almost like, you know, you could do a

lot to inform others, but that's just the way people are. And you just have to face the facts.

It's so obvious, you know. It's not like a racist thing, but it's just how it is. It's how things are you know, and you basically accept it. I don't find it a problem.

> There's nothing really bad about what's going on, so I don't see why you should change it.

More specifically, individual expectations revealed themselves when students began to tell stories and talk about their circles of friends. Some expressed the expectations that others, namely Americans, do not care to engage in intercultural interactions; while others felt certain that those who speak a language other than English are better off in groups where they can speak that language.

> Oh the Asians. I think it's just the language, the language barrier, because Asians talk Asian to each other. They speak their own language. I don't see Indians mingling with Blacks though . . . or the Hispanics. Asians don't mix with Indians. I never see it.

> Most people don't seem to care. They don't think about it much, most Americans.

> Russians, you know, they basically mingle within themselves. Because a lot of them feel more comfortable speaking their own language because English is their second language, so I would understand that. But on the other side of [name of a cafeteria] everybody's Black, and it's like a clear distinct line you could almost see, and it's kinda disturbing. Then you have Asians always talking to Asians, and you have Indians in the far corner. And it's a clear boundary almost.

This tendency to distinguish by language identity illustrates Spitzberg's (1994) claim that the communicative status, as part of the episodic system, affects interaction. The expectation that those who speak languages other than English prefer to associate only with those who share their language may be true for some, but not all. Many college ESL students in this institutional setting are, in fact, bilingual or multilingual and may be quite comfortable speaking in several languages. Perhaps it is the monolingual student's anxiousness at not being able to understand that partially constructs this wall of unapproachability. Interestingly, in two cases (see excerpts below), students' acceptability was contingent on others not being able to tell they were not American. This brings into question a threshold of acculturation where the expectations are that one

changes identity in order to be accepted. In circles where expectations are as high as this, social networks are only open to those who appear to be "Americanized."

> My friends are mainly White Americans. [Name] is from Russia, but he's been here since he was three. So you don't really see that much Russian in him.

> Nobody can even tell that I'm not American. They don't think of me as any differently than anybody else. So it doesn't make much difference to them.

As pointed out in the relational system (Spitzberg, 1994), people have a need to share values and cultural orientations with others. We find comfort in commonalities and tend to affiliate with those with whom we share backgrounds and, of course, languages. I speculate, however, that linguistic differences, particularly in the setting in question, are not the reason that students are not interacting with each other, but an excuse as to why making an effort might be too demanding and unrewarding. It is easier to say that people "Stick to their own" and that this status quo does not need to be changed. Some students said quite frankly that nothing is wrong, and nothing, therefore, needs to change. Even those who did recognize a need for change resolved that nothing can really be done to change the way things are. This "lost cause" attitude sets a very low expectation for effective intercultural communication at both interpersonal and institutional levels.

Overall, the interpersonal expectations regarding intercultural communication in this population are complex and problematic. At the individual level, for example, students do not place a positive reward value in engaging in conversation or activity with students from outside their own group. A few even mention that they see little need or reward for making such efforts, and those who believe that there are benefits speak only in terms of abstract, collective benefits for all people. No references are made to personal growth or motivation. A level of awareness that brings about change (Fantini, 2000) is lacking. The fact that many of these students have been exposed to diverse communities most of their lives may contribute to their ambivalence toward interacting with others. One student related his story about moving to the United States while in high school and expecting to be treated as a novelty. Instead, he found himself in a school where 40% of the students shared his cultural background and language. Much to his surprise, he was not the center of attention. Being accustomed to diversity, however, does not completely explain the lack of interaction expressed in these interviews.

Implications for TESOL

A good language learner is not defined by linguistic achievement alone, but b participation in various communities and conversations (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Norto

and Toohey, 2001; Toohey and Day, 1999). Language learning involves gaining access to social practice and social relationships, requiring not only language skills but also an understanding of the social norms that govern patterns of communication in various contexts (Kramsch, 1998). University settings are but one of the contexts for language learning in which students are part of a social community that is united by both institutional and interpersonal relationships. Within the vast network of these relationships, intercultural communication is an inevitable part of the language learning experience for ESL students in higher education. Intercultural communication, however, is often shoved into a rubric of cultural knowledge that one must attain, rather than approached as a reciprocal relationship that one must experience. TESOL professionals must challenge the positivist paradigm and examine intercultural communication as a process that exists within a larger system of social practice. Moreover, we must realize that all students, not only those learning English, should be invested in the process.

Looking at intercultural communication as a reciprocal process, we must first attempt to understand the range of expectations by which ESL students may be judged, as well as the expectations that ESL students hold toward others. These expectations will be different in all cases, but the results of this study point out some of the aspects particularly salient to TESOL practice. First, we must question to what degree our pedagogy cultivates a landscape of "differences." When students focus on differences, they come to expect insurmountable barriers, or at least barriers that are best left unchallenged. They know that being aware of differences in good, but they must realize that awareness is only a first step to intercultural competence, not the final outcome.

The next thing to consider is the notion of approachability and how expectations might affect it. Approachability speaks to the questions of how language learners and native speakers might again more access to each other. On an interpersonal level, access can be achieved through human agency (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2001) and use of intellectual and social resources. In conjunction with human agency, however, is the realization that personal expectations can be powerful sources of both misunderstandings and successful interactions. The assumption that a native speaker has no interest in a non-native speaker, or that multilingual students prefer one language over another brings low expectations to an interaction-expectations that may lead to low levels of motivation and lack of interest.

This is not to say expectations cannot change. According to Expectancy Violations Theory (Burgoon & Hale, 1988), low expectations may be confirmed or violated as strangers interact, and the reward value can change. For example, students may find that their expectations are exceeded, leading to a positive outcome. The problem here, however, is that the low expectations seem to keep students from interacting with each other in the first place, and without this interaction, expectations can be neither

confirmed nor violated. Any anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst, 1993) regarding intercultural communication will have little chance to be decreased.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that intercultural communication may not be taking place as much as we would hope. Even when ESL students are part of a diverse learning community, the members of this community may think that being "aware" of each other is enough. But superficial "awareness" is the easy part. Motivating students not to restrict themselves to the easy patterns of self-segregation is the challenge. These conclusions are not meant to suggest that students' strong associations with those with whom they share a cultural identity is wrong; affiliation is natural. Identity with a group is a fundamental part of being human. Affiliation among those who share cultural backgrounds and languages can be a source of invaluable networks that offer resources for information, emotional comfort, and social support. As highly advanced communication systems, international trade, and political unrest reshape our communities, however, we cannot afford to accept the status quo and think that "awareness" is enough. TESOL educators and students must insist that the expectations at institutional and interpersonal levels be raised to a level of transformation.

References

Amin, N. (1997). Race and the identify of the nonnative ESL Teacher. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*, 580-583.

Atkinson, D. (1999). TESOL and culture. *TESOL Quarterly, 33*, 625-654.

Burgoon, J. K., & Hale, J. L. (1988). Nonverbal expectancy violations: Model elaboration and application to immediacy behaviors. *Communication Monographs, 55*, 58-79.

Chamberlin, C. (1997). ESL students' perceptions of the university classroom in the United States. *College ESL, 7*(2), 1-19.

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fantini, A. E. (2000). A central concern: Developing intercultural competence. *SIT Occasional Papers Series, Inaugural Issue: About our Institution, 1*, 25-42.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996). Academic oral needs of EAP learners: What subject-matter instructors actually require. *TESOL Quarterly, 30*, 31-58.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (1997). *The New Language of Qualitative Method*. New York: Oxford.

Gudykunst, W. B. (1993). Toward a theory of interpersonal and intergroup communication: An anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) perspective. In R. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence*, (pp. 33-71). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Harklau, L. (2000). From the "good kids" to the "worst": Representations of English language learners across educational settings. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*, 35-67.

Hoekje, B., & Williams, J. (1992). Communicative competence and the dilemma of international teaching assistant education. *TESOL Quarterly, 26,* 243-269.

Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture.* New York: Oxford.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leki, I. (2001). "A narrow thinking system": Nonnative-English-speaking students in group projects across the curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly, 35,* 39-67.

Lui, J. (1999). Nonnative-English-speaking professionals in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly, 33*(1), 85-102.

Norton Pierce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*, 9-31.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*, 307-322.

Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language.* Harlow, England: Longman.

Spitzberg, B. (1994). A model of intercultural communication competence. In L. Samovar, & R. E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader,* (pp. 379-391). New York: Wadsworth.

Tang, C. (1997). On the power and status of nonnative ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3), 577-583.

Toohey, K., & Day, E. (1999). Language-learning. The importance of access to community. *TESL Canada Journal, 17*, 40-53.

About the Author

Carla Chamberlin is an Assistant Professor at Penn State Abington College where she teaches intercultural communication in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences. She has taught EFL/ESL around the world and currently works with immigrant student populations. Her research focuses on interpersonal dimensions of intercultural communication with multicultural communities.