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Aligning Who I Am with What I Do: Pursuing Language Teacher Authenticity

Abstract: This study explores the dynamic, interactive relationship between teacher identity and authenticity. Through an examination of several socio-cultural (social identity, situated learning, and image text) and psycholinguistic (individual differences) second language acquisition theories, a conceptualization of identity is provided. Subsequently, language teacher authenticity is characterized from both a philosophical and pedagogical perspective and connected to the notion of teacher identity. The final section of the paper presents research-based applications that include reflecting critically, redefining personal credibility, discovering one's personal style, displaying emotion and recognizing diversity to facilitate the positive-broadening quest of aligning one's identity (i.e., who I am) with authenticity (i.e., what I do).

Keywords: teacher identity, authenticity, social identity, situated learning, image text, individual differences

Introduction

In the repertoire of stories passed through the generations of the Lakota indigenous people from the Great Plains of the United States comes a wise, thoughtful creation story that sets the stage for the enigmatic synergy of human identity and authenticity. It begins with the Creator gathering all of Creation, and saying, "I want to hide something from the humans until they are ready for it. It is the realization that they create their own reality."

The eagle said, "Give it to me, I will take it to the moon."

The Creator replied, "No. One day they will go there and find it."

The salmon said, "I will bury it on the bottom of the ocean."

"No, they will go there, too."

The buffalo said, "I will bury it on the Great Plains."

The Creator said, "They will cut into the skin of the Earth and find it even there."

Grandmother Mole, who lives in the breast of the Mother Earth, and who has no physical eyes but sees with spiritual eyes, said, "Put it inside of them."
And the Creator said, "It is done."

This story speaks to the elusiveness of discovering one's *identity* and its corollary, *authenticity*. Taking my cue from the Lakota, I address this complexity on the first day of each semester in my TESOL Methods class with the following words to my pre-service teachers: "I cannot teach you how to be a good language teacher. I can only show you those things which research, my own experience, and 'best practices' have suggested as being potentially effective. You and you alone will need to look deeply inward, find your teacher self, and discover from among the myriad of methods and techniques you will be introduced to what works best for you and the unique group of learners you have in front of you at any given moment." For some, this invitation to explore is an exciting challenge. For others, this paucity of recipes is scary and daunting. In one word, I beseech my future teachers to be *authentic*—a virtue which cannot be achieved without first *knowing thyself* and formulating a comprehensive answer to the enigmatic question, *Who am I?*; thus making self-identity a precursor to authenticity. Authentic teachers teach like the people they are. Taylor (1991, pp. 35–36) suggests: "When we come to understand what it is to define ourselves, to determine in what our originality consists, we see that we have to take as background some sense of what is significant. Defining myself means finding what is significant in my difference from others." In this paper, I attempt to make the case that teacher authenticity means acting upon the cognizance of our uniqueness.

When our personal and professional identities are in sync, and when *who I am* and *what I do* are as congruent with one's true essence as they can possibly be, it is then that together with our students, we as teachers, experience well-being. When considering the pursuit of authenticity as a personal process of engagement that is manifested in teachers' lives and work, we acquire a deeper understanding of the kinds of practices and pedagogical encounters that enhance (and sometimes limit) learner and teacher development (Malm, 2008). This incredibly intimate process of self-discovery, however, is not a static, exhaustive, and consistent experience, but rather it is multiple, fluctuating, oppositional, and shaped by powerful social forces. On the one hand, the process of identity discovery is personal, defined by an individual's emotional, psychological, and cognitive drives; on the other, it is shaped and negotiated by social influences like power and co-constructed meaning-making. Parker J. Palmer (2007), in his book, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's*

Life, wrote, “I want to learn how to hold the paradoxical poles of my identity together, to embrace the profoundly opposite truths that my sense of self is deeply dependent on others dancing with me and that I still have a sense of self when no one wants to dance.”

The present study examines the ever-shifting, synergetic relationship between teacher identity and authenticity and attempts to demonstrate how reflecting critically, redefining personal credibility, discovering one’s personal style, displaying emotion and recognizing diversity might facilitate the positive-broadening quest of aligning one’s identity (i.e., who I am) with authenticity (i.e., what I do). To begin, I attempt to scale the very slippery slope of conceptualizing teacher identity. To this end, I elucidate four theories from a second language acquisition (SLA) perspective: social identity theory, situated learning, image-texts, and individual differences theory before highlighting several tenets from the discipline of education. Next, I examine the conceptualization of authenticity from both a philosophical and pedagogical perspective. Finally, I attempt to provide research-based applications concerning how to align our identities with authenticity. We take this self-discovery journey as teachers in the hopes of heeding our deepest personal and educational mission: “Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—we will also find our path of authentic service in the world” (Palmer, 2001).

Identity Defined

From the outset, it is important to highlight the transformational and transformative nature of identity. Its formation is neither structurally determined nor context-free. Individuals are intentional and exert agency as they socially, culturally, and politically explore the identities assigned by others and those that are self-acknowledged (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). In juxtaposing a variety of language teacher social identity theories, we can use them to enlighten each other and to mitigate the internal limitations of each if considered alone. To this end, let us examine three different sociolinguistic paradigms—social identity theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1998), the theory of situated learning and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and identity as image-text (Simon, 1995)—and discover where they intersect (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

Social identity theory promotes the notion that identity is based upon group membership and is shaped by social categories like race, nationality class, etc.,

that govern differences in power and status (Tajfel, 1978). Consequently, an individual's understanding of self is continually in flux and changes over time and within different contexts. Thus, group membership provides a sense of social identity and belonging in the social world and impacts one's self-esteem and sense of pride, carrying the implication that association with a negatively valued group even for a minimal time might result in a lowering of one's self-worth. Because we simultaneously belong to a myriad of different groups, membership in one group is often more relevant and influential than in another. With such powerful social consequences, one way to increase one's self-image is to enhance the status of the group. An example of the influence of social identity theory on language teacher identity is found in the idealization of the native versus nonnative speaker and the negative-narrowing self-perceptions that this might engender in nonnative speakers teaching a target language.

Although social identity theory is significant in the sense that it raises an individual's awareness of their status in a particular group, it is limited in its dependence on conflicting, fixed social classifications and prevents teachers from tracing their developing and ever-so-individual evolution. Nevertheless this theory can still offer useful insights into teacher self-perceptions, albeit more global and generic than the other two theories under investigation (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

A second insightful theory implicating teacher identity is situated learning. This theory links learning and identity by characterizing learning as a process of identification in which learning and understanding transpire and evolve as individuals participate in activities and become progressively more involved. Thus, communities of practice, comprised of numerous identities and levels of participation, are not precisely defined. They host members who share an appreciation about what they do and the meaning that this participation has in their lives and for their communities. In this theory learning occurs through co-participation and social engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This view is especially significant to our current teacher identity conversation in that self-savvy teachers are as concerned with learning about their environments as they are about classroom skills (Darling-Hammond, 1990). Learning, therefore, is much more a process of *coming to be* by shaping identities in real-world endeavors, and it is this kind of learning—*participating in* rather than *being acted upon*—that is an important condition for successful learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Even though situated learning theories allow us to conceptualize learning and identity construction as a process of being in evolving communities of practice, there are various limitations. One of the problems is the emphasis on how individual identity develops inside the structure of group practice instead of contemplating different forms in which identities are shaped through interaction. The emphasis on the group ignores the role of personal experiences and

motivations and cannot account for the power relations and underlying ideologies within groups (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

A third theory that taps into language teacher identity as a precursor to authenticity is the notion of teacher identity as a result of the co-creation of “image-text.” Image-texts are created through daily school activities and reflect the familiar, emotional relationships that frequently grow out of teacher-student interaction. They are complex, multi-faceted representations, assembled with interpretations of immediate and observable experiences like classroom interaction, formal instruction, and assessment, but they are also guided by indirect and often indiscernible realities, like students’ feelings about a teacher’s ethnicity or gender, or on the other hand, a teacher’s low expectations for a class based on the socioeconomic status of the school community. A teacher’s personal stories, body language, clothes, and the connection of these with a student’s personal previous experiences might also be found in the image-text generated by the class. The image-text reflects a variety of conflicting and harmonizing voices, is open to new interpretations that are superimposed upon preceding ones, and allows for both conformity and resistance. This theory highlights the notion that as teachers we are often times invisible to ourselves but students can “read” us and respond to aspects of which we are unaware (Morgan, 2002).

Image-texts demonstrate that as teachers we cannot always guarantee that our actions will have prescribed outcomes. We can, however, distinguish ourselves in ways that open up identity options not previously imagined, or that can inspire, for example, social practices or forms of participation we have not previously considered. At the same time, teacher identity as pedagogue carries potential dangers. Teachers have considerable influence on and, in some settings, substantial power over students’ futures. Therefore, the notion of image-text helps us to see that as teachers, we need to present ourselves in ways that are not directly threatening or disrespectful but instead open to novelty and new interpretations (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

The three previous theories characterize identity-discovery as being formed and negotiated by social influences, but they do not directly address the individual emotional, psychological, and cognitive journeys teachers make as they seek the positive-broadening power of self-identification by personal rather than social exploration. We approach our language teaching with a myriad of different motivations and from a variety of diverse contexts. Our velocities, comfort zones, fortes, linguistic proficiency, and the journeys we embark on to reach our ultimate language teaching destinations are quite various. Theories that address these differences, their causes and outcomes, are collectively discussed under the umbrella of Individual Differences (IDs) and take the form of variables such as anxiety, beliefs, cognitive abilities, motivation, learning styles and strategies, and willingness to communicate (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). While the majority of ID literature focuses on learner individuality, researchers

have also targeted teacher variables like language teacher anxiety and beliefs (Horwitz, 1996; 1988), and language teacher motivation (Dornyei, 2005) and there have been numerous investigations concerning the alignment of teacher and learner styles and intelligences. Traditionally, most of these traits have been studied as distinct variables; however, the discipline of applied linguistics has recently experienced a surge of research in dynamic systems that recognizes the complexity of language learning and teaching. Such recognition has resulted in attempts to assemble the large variety of isolated factors into coherent, cohesive systems (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Dornyei, MacIntyre, & Henry, 2015).

Individual teachers are each composed of a countless number of systems that have evolved in numerous diverse ways resulting in unique personalities. Each system must work congruently within itself and synchronously in combination with all the others. If our beliefs about our systems do not match the reality of them, the systems are bound to break down. Consequently, externally imposed beliefs have to be integrated within a system or they become wrenches in it. Each of us is composed of systems that are so complex that a great deal of introspection is necessary to realize how our own unique system really works. For example, imagine an introverted, private, serious teacher who is told that learners engage better with jokes and personal anecdotes. Such techniques might work authentically for the extroverted, self-disclosing teacher, but for the reserved, thoughtful teacher, those practices would seem fake and unauthentic.

Moving beyond SLA literature to research in general teacher education, we find concurrence with the notion that teacher identity is dynamic, that it fluctuates with time, and is impacted by a myriad of factors that are both internal (e.g., emotion) and external (e.g., life experiences) to the individual (Sachs, 2005; Zembylas, 2003). Accordingly, identity implicates both a person and a context, and according to Gee (2001), the idea of identity suggests a certain “kind of person” within a specific context. Although we all have a core identity—one that is relatively stable—various iterations of this identity surface as we engage with different people and settings. Gee isolates four ways of perceiving identity:

1. Nature-identity (developed from nature or originating in our natural state, something akin to individual differences research).
2. Institution-identity (resulting from a position acknowledged by authority, much like the categories created by society as found in social identity theory mentioned above).
3. Discourse-identity (rising from the discourse or opinion of others about us, similar to the co-construction found in image-text).
4. Affinity-identity (determined by one’s practices in relation to external groups, comparative to the communities of practice in situated learning).

The emphasis in this view of identity is on the multifaceted nature of identity and its changing shape in terms of external influences.

Olson (2008) takes a sociocultural perspective in his proposition that teacher identity is both the process that results from influences upon the teacher and the product derived from the ongoing interaction of our own teacher development. He views identity as a term for the assortment of impacting factors found in the immediate contexts of “self, social positioning and meaning systems” (p. 139)—all of which fluidly influence and are influenced in a continually shifting construct. Such factors get entangled within the stream of teacher activity as we simultaneously respond to and navigate situations and interactions at any given moment. Hence, identity is linked to the collective discourses that contour our own individual circumstances and our individual contributions that supplement the contributions of a community (Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

In reviewing the three language-teacher-affiliated sociocultural theories, the psychological premises found in literature on the subject of individual differences, and the concurring literature from education research, we can see that the discovery of our teacher identities is intensely personal and psychological, as it integrates teacher’s self-images and natural predispositions, but it is also deeply social and shared in that identity also considers the collective practices taking place in institutional settings like teacher education programs, schools, and even larger collectives like culture. Furthermore, teasing out language teachers’ identities is not only a process of discovery that is intricately interwoven with language and discourse, but is also embedded in a concrete real-world phenomenon. As we construct, recognize, and embrace our teacher identities in pursuit of greater authenticity, it behooves us to take account of the way teachers’ identities are individually recognized and discursively constructed and recognize the social forces to which teachers are exposed and attempt to understand the consequences these influences exert on individual self-definitions. In considering recommendations for teachers to align who they are with what they do, there needs to be sensitivity to the discourse and agency that the theory of image-text offers; however, suggestions must also consider the impact of situated learning that community-of-practice theory proposes. Yet, it is with identity theory and understanding the role of individual differences that teachers can conceptualize their individual psychological states. In short, multiple theoretical approaches are essential if teachers are not to lose sight of the real-world complexity of being true to themselves (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

In an attempt to bring some kind of consensus to this discussion on identity’s definition, I end this section with Sachs (2005, 15f.): “Teacher professional identity ... stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of ‘how to be’, ‘how to act’, and ‘how to understand’ their work and their place in society.” This idea of teacher identity rejects the notion that it is fixed but holds instead that it is negotiated through experience and the sense that individuals make of that experience. According to

Parker (2007), “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.”

Authenticity Defined

To understand what “authenticity” means, we have to grasp the notions of difference, originality, and the acceptance of diversity. Taylor (1991) contends that in defining ourselves, we need to establish those elements that make us original while, at the same time, considering what is significant. Authenticity includes creation and construction in addition to discovery, uniqueness, and recurrent resistance to the roles assigned by society. Concurrently, authenticity demands openness to what is meaningful and self-definition through dialogue (Taylor, 1991).

Because teaching is relational in nature, it is “an emotional practice” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835). This is because “emotions are at the heart of teaching. They comprise its most dynamic qualities, literally, for emotions are fundamentally about movement.” An examination of the emotions of teaching and educational change led Hargreaves to surmise that the emotional connection teachers nurture with their learners is pivotal to their decision-making about their methods, teaching contexts, and practice selections. The emotional rewards of teaching, the authority to make independent decisions, and to exercise personal discretion, initiative and creativity through their work are all vital to maintaining teachers’ senses of self and to find their meaning via communication and dialogue with learners. Giddens (1991) contends that being true to himself means being true to what makes him original, and that this originality is so much his own; that it is only he who can articulate and discover it. He adds that in articulating his uniqueness, he also finds a definition of self (i.e., realizing the potentiality that is properly his own).

According to Laursen (2004; as cited in Malm, 2008), the following characteristics are typical of authentic teachers: personal commitment, embodiment of the task, realistic teaching intentions, respect for students, close teamwork with colleagues, and persistent determination for personal and professional growth. For Laursen, authenticity is one type of teachable teacher expertise directly connected to teaching quality which develops as an extension of basic, fundamental knowledge. Consequently, authenticity and professionalism are not in opposition; quite the reverse: authenticity is the epitome of professionalism where no division exists between person and professionalism.

Another affective dimension of authenticity relates to our affinity as teachers for the subject we teach (in our case, the target language), and engaging

our learners in genuine and candid interaction around ideas that matter. Such dialogue implicates virtues, such as being genuine, developing greater self-awareness, defining ourselves rather than allowing other people's expectations to manipulate us, allowing portions of ourselves to personally interact with our learners, and critically reflecting upon ourselves, others, our relationships and the content. Even more important perhaps is that teacher authenticity contains a moral dimension that urges us to explore the "horizons of significance" (e.g., standards of excellence) within which we define ourselves as educators and make decisions about the education of others. Being an authentic teacher demands that we search with an eye toward that which is outside ourselves because for authenticity to be meaningful it needs to be sought by considering significant issues and asking ourselves at every turn whether what we are teaching is in the best interests of our learners. This can only be discovered through negotiation and critical reflection (Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007).

To sum up what has been said so far, teacher identity formation can be conceptualized as a socialization process wherein the way we think about our teaching and our teaching practices is influenced by a learning process that transpires in relationships with a community. From this viewpoint, the first idea for teachers to explore in aligning who they are with what they do is the degree to which their context interacts with their personal emotional and psychological factors. Directly related to this is the extent to which teachers have a sense of agency or, in other words, a belief that socially imposed elements are provisional and to what degree a teacher deems it possible to march to his or her own drum in teaching and learning practices. Furthermore, identity formation is a dynamic process that is linked to authenticity, and carries a moral value-laden dimension. Thus, the question a teacher needs to ask is not only whether he or she can create a unique teacher identity from within (as opposed to a response to external expectations), but also whether there is the potential to be a unique individually-defined teacher while at the same time connecting with and committing to something significant that lies beyond.

Aligning Our "Being" with Our "Doing": Practical Applications

Reflect Critically. To find our "inner teacher" and embrace it, we first need to personally and critically reflect upon whether we see any relevance in the notion of authenticity. Confronting this issue with honesty and integrity will require that we tap into our cognitive dimensions, as well as engage our hearts

and search for answers to questions about whether assigning a significant role to teacher authenticity rings true and feels right. In the end, we need to define for ourselves what the end of education is all about. Language teachers need to critically reflect upon the degree to which we feel we are “authentic,” to contemplate how contextual factors influence our perceptions of ourselves and our language learners, including the myriad of assumptions we hold, and the decisions we make about the what, how, and why of being a teacher and teaching (Kreber et. al., 2007). Because teaching with authenticity reflects a profound sense of self-awareness and self-identity, we must look inward into our own selves without judgment and be open to inquisitorial, mindful inspection to consider how we think about ourselves and our classroom behavior (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Dirkx, 2006).

Redefine Personal Credibility. Successful teaching is not only a technique—authentic teaching emanates from the integrity of the teacher in relation to our target language and our learners—and from the unpredictable synergy of it all. Master language teachers anticipate great things from their learners and expect that their learners imagine great things of themselves (Quinn & Anding, 2005). Additionally, learners see master teachers as something more than content experts. Learners perceive great teachers as credible people (Palmer, 1990). According to Brookfield (1990), learners base teacher credibility on whether a teacher: (1) matches words with actions; (2) openly admits faults; (3) is seen in out-of-class contexts (i.e., is a “real” person); and (4) shows respect through active listening. Citing a variety of personal correspondences, Wright (2013) adds that teacher credibility also includes adapting courses to meet students’ needs so they understand the value of the content. It also means providing insight into real-world professional experience so students believe the teacher knows what he or she is talking about. Credibility is particularly important for those instances when teachers need to criticize as it permits learners to realize that the commentary stems from the experience of knowing what is expected outside the four walls of the classroom.

Discover a Style. There is not a single recipe for how to teach a language. Teachers must bring their own styles and personalities into the classroom. Authentic teaching implicates more than mere behavior and techniques, and according to Quinn and Anding (2005), it is “about the expression of who we are” (p. 488). Style-savvy language teachers critically question every aspect of a class to develop a style, communicate effectively, and reveal their creativity. Because there are as many “teaching styles” as there are teachers, their sheer number and diversity make it difficult for educators to discuss teaching style in relation to methods. Hence, we need to find methods that value stylistic diversity and banish methodological reductionism from our professional conversations

(Palmer, 1998). In other words, language teachers have no need of copying others as there is much more to motivation than methods.

Displaying Emotion. Teaching is rooted in emotions that stem from the relationships present in the classroom. As language teachers, we often ignore or minimize the potent emotional context in which our work is embedded. Emotions are important in transmitting knowledge and they influence how it is received. The age-old saying, “students may never remember what you taught them, but they will never forget how you made them feel,” targets the conundrum challenging teachers every day we begin our classes: we seek our students’ attention and try to connect and engage, but it is really their emotions we must deftly distinguish, sensitively navigate, and masterfully manipulate. The power of emotion in learning is laid bare when we consider the neuroscience behind it: emotion improves our capacity to create vivid memories of even the most trivial events. Hormones (norepinephrine) that are released during emotional arousal play a pivotal role in our emotional regulation of memory and enhance learning by inundating the brain with natural memory stimulants. In the classroom, we look for manifestations of these emotions in engagement or imagination. Although we might also incorporate other mechanisms with the hope of stimulating these same manifestations (e.g., grouping learners, giving them a voice and a choice, or participating in a think-pair-share among a variety of other techniques to increase engagement and/or creativity), none of these necessarily *cause* emotion because indeed emotion does not cause learning—emotion *supersedes* it (Tully & Bolshakov, 2010). For example, if we ask learners what they remember most about their favorite childhood teacher, they would likely say little about the subject but rather they might describe how this teacher made them feel—maybe it would be the sense of excitement or discovery as they learned new things, or the supportive classroom environment that incited them to take risks and make mistakes, or the confidence they felt because they were valued as human beings. According to Hansen (2001), few features in the classroom have a larger impact on learners’ educational experience than a caring relationship with their teacher. As an example, imagine two language teachers covering the same grammar lesson on the past progressive. One is impatient with learners and corrects every error. The other is supportive and sensitively and judiciously corrects. Knowing only that, we can probably guess which learners will be more likely say, “I was sleeping during my last class.” Learners who share caring relationships with teachers are academically more successful and demonstrate greater pro-social behavior (Cassidy & Bates, 2005).

Because how, when, and why we display emotion (and care) plays an important role in identity, aligning this facet of “who I am” with “what I do” needs reflection on our own experience with caring and emotion. Often, we unconsciously care for others the way we have been cared for—for better or

worse. James (2012) interviewed four different teachers at the same school who shared one particular learner and discovered that the teachers cared for the learner in different ways that were each congruent with the way they had been cared for as children. Teachers revealed that they did not ask anyone—including the learner himself—what the learner’s needs might be. Instead, the teachers made assumptions about the learner’s background based on their own childhoods. Teachers who reflect on their own past histories of care will increase their understanding of “who I am” and receive insight into the kind of care they might be extending to their learners, and this will allow them to better adjust their caring to fit learners’ needs in terms of “what I do.”

Recognizing Diversity. Building connections with students through authentic teaching demands understanding the different ways that students learn and what their individual expectations are (Brookfield, 1995). Through direct interaction between language learners and their teachers, we can develop an understanding of learners’ past experiences and the influence such experiences have had (Moustakas, 1967). Assigning journal entries that prompt learners to deliberate about their views weekly classroom experiences and then using class time to address issues that learners write about might enhance the authenticity of the teacher and demonstrates the teacher’s trustworthiness to the student (Brookfield, 2006). Learner feedback is often the best venue for improving teacher performance. According to Wiggins (2010), teachers can show authenticity by reading and acting upon feedback during a time when it can directly impact the learner making the comments, making it advisable to gather such feedback often during the course. Confrontation, which is meeting to resolve conflict or controversy, may ensue, but as Moustakas states, “Paradoxical as it seems, only when persons can openly disagree, if this is the reality of their experience, is it possible for them to establish genuine bonds” (1967, p. 23).

“If the teacher is effective, it is because she combines the element of having something important to say, demonstrate, and teach with being open and honest with students. The former quality is that of credibility, the latter the concept of authenticity” (Brookfield, 2006, p. 5). Grimmett and Neufeld (1994) introduce a phenomenon called authentic teacher motivation that strives to use intrinsic motivation. Authentic motivation occurs when teachers attempt to do not what the institution rewards, not what they themselves feel intrinsically and professionally satisfying, but that which is beneficial and essential for learners given any context and conditions. This results in doing what is right and important for the learners in all situations. They conclude that authentic teacher motivation “is moral; it is caught up in a struggle to do what is necessary and of value, not just for the organization nor just for oneself, but ultimately in the important interests of learner” (Grimmett & Neufeld, 1994, pp. 4–5). According to Brookfield (1990), “The problem with pursuing authenticity and credibility ...

is that actions associated with these ideas often seem contradictory. In pursuing one you risk the threatening of the other” (p. 175). For example, extolling our own pedagogical virtues could be construed as arrogant but failing to acknowledge them might also end in reduced credibility. Authentic teachers therefore recognize the differences learners bring to the classroom.

Conclusion

“Knowing thyself” is a necessary precursor for language teachers to understanding their learners. Through continual reflection and dialogue with others, teachers enhance their self-awareness. We develop empathy, accountability and the positive-broadening emotions of reciprocated care and involvement. Respect for individual integrity is one of the cornerstones in a free society. As “me” and “I” interact synergistically and symbiotically and come into alignment with “what” and “who” we come to a greater understanding of the significance of being human (Malm, 2008).

The Lakota people of the Great Plains have it right. If we look deeply within ourselves, we might just realize that we indeed have the power to shape our own realities.

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Tammy Gregersen

Was bin ich und wie benehme ich mich: in der Suche nach der Authentizität der Fremdsprachenlehrer

Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel bezweckte, eine dynamische Interaktion zwischen der Identität (eng.: *teacher identity*) und der Authentizität eines Lehrers zu schildern. Die von soziologischen Modellen, Kulturforschungen und psycholinguistischen Theorien abstammenden theoretischen Voraussetzungen ermöglichten, den Begriff „Identität“ (eng.: *identity*) zu konzeptualisieren. Man definierte auch den Begriff „Authentizität eines Fremdsprachenlehrers“ sowohl in Bezug auf Philosophie als auch Pädagogik. Am Ende wurden die beiden Termini – Identität und Authentizität des Lehrers – dargestellt und das im Zusammenhang mit Entwicklung der Nachdenklichkeit des Lehrers, Neudefinieren seiner Person, Entdeckung seines eigenen Stils, seiner emotionalen Selbstbeherrschung und Akzeptanz für Verschiedenheit, was dem Lehrer möglich macht, eigene Authentizität zu bestimmen, also die Frage zu beantworten: Was bin ich und wie benehme ich mich?