THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL DECODING ON ELICITING EMPATHETIC RESPONSES IN LANGUAGE TEACHERS: AN IDIODYNAMIC CASE STUDY

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this (thesis) is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the effects of emotional decoding on enhancing the empathetic responses of a male in-service English second language (ESL) teacher as its case study. Although research has validated the positive implications of empathy in teaching and learning, few studies scrutinize the extent to which the construct of empathy can be facilitated or at best learned and more specifically, how. This intervention case study explores a retrospective empathy enhancement tool necessitating the case study participant to observe video data of himself as he interacts with learners in an authentic ESL classroom and rate his levels of empathy on a moment-to-moment, idiodynamic timescale. The respective rating produces a chart of the dips and spikes of his self-rated empathy. With graph in hand, he then reassesses instances of teacher-student interaction and stops the filmed data in those places where self-reported low levels of empathy had been recorded. At this stage he is requested to pause to read the emotion of the learner during the given interaction and to deliberate on how his response may have changed subsequent to naming the learners' emotion. The study is the first of its kind to employ an idiodynamic investigation on the power of increasing teacher awareness of learner emotion during classroom interaction. Following the treatment period, the case study participant indicates a heightened awareness of empathy and what an empathic response entails. He also highlights the value of the empathy enhancement process as a potential teacher training tool. This thesis suggests that an idiodynamic approach leads to a retrospective empathy-building process as it encourages the language teacher to self-reflect over their own pedagogical practice in light of naming learner emotion and deliberating more empathic responses and in doing so, a greater awareness of learner emotion is brought to bear.

Keywords: *Teacher Empathy, Empathy Development, Learner Emotion, Idiodynamic, Dynamic Systems Approach*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009), professional development in the context of education can be defined as the inclusion of activities which foster the skills, knowledge, expertise as well as other characteristics of the respective teacher. Over the course of the last decade, Stojiljković, Djigić and Zlatković (2012) write that a notable body of literature in educational psychology has addressed the personal characteristics of educators and their subsequent impact on the potential to boost cognitive development and improve the overall quality of learning outcomes. Two characteristics that are mentioned to be of particular importance include emotional stability and empathetic sensitivity (Morgan, 1977). Townsend (2012) highlights this renewed direction for teaching and learning by proclaiming that psychologists, neuroscientists, economists and educators alike are putting emphasis on the 'non-cognitive skills' of teachers, specifically, teacher empathy.

In Lee's (1960) timeless novel, "*To Kill a Mockingbird,"* the author explores the concept of empathy by means of the protagonist who conveys to his children the idea that unless we 'climb inside of the person's skin,' we are unable to justly understand him or her. Lee (1960) not only insinuated the inherent prominence of empathy as a way of being but essentially exemplified empathic practice. Whilst a universally agreed upon definition is yet to surface in relevant literature, Tyler Colasante defines the notion as "the intrapersonal realization of another's plight that illuminates the potential consequences of one's own actions on the lives of others'" (as cited in Hollingsworth, Didelot, & Smith, 2003, p.146). For the purpose of this thesis, 'empathy' will refer to the aforementioned definition.

According to Hoyt (2001), at the heart of education is:

> a way of defining one's identity to oneself and others, a way of demonstrating how one can be helpful to others, a way in which one can make some part of the world a better place, a way in which an individual can excel in something, a way of doing things of interest to the worker, a way of finding and interacting with others who have similar interests, and a way of accumulating economic benefits (as cited in Boyer, 2010, p. 313).

In this sense, the author epitomizes empathy in-action by delineating the concept as a controlled effort which entails the individual's capacity to consciously deduce indicators of either distress or pleasure (Rueda et al., 2004, as cited in Boyer, 2010). This prescribed effort is manifested when the response to a given situation is subsequently adapted (Hoffman, 2000). As such, it can be deduced that within a teaching context educators with greater levels of empathic willingness are deliberately more considerate, supportive and responsive to each individual student which in turn enriches the learning environment as an outcome.

In concurrence with Hoyt (2001), Arnold (2011), Bergman and Bergman (2010), Eisner (2002) and Jalongo et al. (2010) purport that an ethos of caring sincerely and empathically with learners and their well-being is at the heart of purposeful teaching and imperative to inspiring students to better contemplate their own learning (as cited in Boyer, 2010). Arnold (2011) also notes that teachers who are insensitive to what goes on 'inside of their learners' are not necessarily placing learning on the 'firmest foundation' (p. 14). In light of this, the paradigm shift concerning the professional development of teachers' non-cognitive skills becomes relatively more evident.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Whilst contemporary research appears to primarily deliberate the theoretical influence of an empathic quality to teaching practice, little explores theories in relation to the process of empathy development or addresses to what extent empathy denotes a 'learnable skill.' A large body of literature may confirm the positive impact of empathy in teaching, however fewer studies have scrutinized the capacity to enhance empathy and whether this can be translated into behavior. Therefore, while teachers may be encouraged to endorse empathy, they may not be adequately trained *how*. Thus, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which teachers obtain a solid understanding of empathy in-action and continue to exert a cognizant effort to practice empathy at a didactic, meaningful level irrespective of whether or not they are rhetorically urged to endorse the concept.

Literature attributed to the value of empathic teaching rather than detailing how professional educators can support the development of teachers' empathy has its implications. For instance, Alemán et al., (2016) show teachers were uncomfortable engaging in the topic of empathy – not only due to the abstruseness stemming from the

various interpretations of the definition, but due to underlying assumptions in that the phenomenon is solely attributed to one's personal nature. However, according to Gordon (2011), founder of Roots of Empathy, empathy cannot be taught directly but it *can be* 'intentionally cultivated.' Whilst empathy is a characteristic that individuals are born with, the author contests that just as any other skill it *demands* practice. The ambiguity encompassing the act of empathy as a skill or behavior that can be nurtured versus a trait which is inherently unteachable prospectively inhibits teachers from gathering the incentive to take on an active role in facilitating their empathy reservoirs. Boyer (2010) subsequently highlights the necessity to developmentally shift from the general and broad conception of the need for empathy to a more precise and applied idea of the theory in action.

In language education, the significance of exploring practices which facilitate empathic teaching is tenfold. This is as learners are likely to encounter complex tasks which may inspire feelings of alienation as well as ambivalence towards the learning of the new language, thus highlighting unique learner needs (Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Nakagawa, 2007). According to Stevick (1980), success in the language classroom is determined less by materials, practices or linguistic analysis and more so on what goes on inside as well as between the individuals in the classroom. However, many teachers receive limited to no training with regards to the unique learning requirements of language students (Brisk, Barnhardt, Herrera, & Rochon, 2002). This is more problematic in the case of monolingual educators who may not be as aware of the specific trials confronted by language learners in comparison to their bilingual peers. According to Barr (2010), whilst teacher training programs may highlight teacher dispositions, they need to shift their focus to 'training teachers to recognize and exercise their cognitive empathic capacities' (p.367-368).

According to Malm (2009), there is a necessity to heighten the awareness of what it entails to be a teacher, with both the personal 'being' and the professional 'becoming' as crucial and interconnected dimensions of career advancement in teacher education. Malm (2009) argues there has been a tendency to highlight the 'becoming' at the expense of what it means to 'be.' The individual the student teacher is becomes the ultimate relevance to how they will progress professionally yet not enough significance is attributed to the importance of personal development in light of professional learning. Malm (2009)

suggests teacher education emphasizes more on the personal process involved in the becoming of a professional teacher and that training programs strike a balance between both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning to teach. The lack of focus of respective training programs to cultivate empathy or develop the empathic willingness of teachers, may be attributed to the apparent void in literature which investigates the inherent learnability or accessibility of the notion.

Finally, in 2010 the average level of people's empathy decreased by 48 percent between the years 1979 and 2009, with an exceptionally large decline between 2000 and 2009 (as cited in Reynolds, 2015). According to the author, the decline was potentially the result of an upsurge of narcissism in youth, the rise in personal technology and social media usage and/or the accentuated pressure for individuals to succeed. Given the stance of our 'post-empathetic world,' it becomes even more imperative to identify processes of empathy development and subsequently, for the professional development of teachers to include empathic-centered teaching as part of their training.

1.2 Significance of the Research

In '*If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face?'*Alda (2017) explores how to develop empathy to improve communication. Throughout the book, he largely propels his readers to name the emotion of individuals during any type of interaction to subsequently facilitate one's sense of empathy. The present thesis moves beyond the theoretical conception of empathy by presenting a case study analysis of how empathy can be enhanced via a retrospective empathy development process, which utilizes the naming of learner emotion and occurs over the teacher's pedagogical practice. This entails an idiodynamic investigation on the impact of deciphering or naming learner emotion during teacher-student interactions on the facilitation of empathic responses by the language teacher. The idiodynamic method refers to a modern language teacher education tool which utilizes moment-to-moment self-reflection. This research method is explored in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis. According to Ickes (as cited in Good, Fox & Coffen, 2011), the cognitive elements of empathy can be broken down into three mental abilities; emotional decoding, understanding others' emotional states and perspective taking. As such, this thesis explores the first element, i.e. emotional decoding, which entails the ability to name discrete emotions from facial expressions.

Several studies have investigated external classroom practices, such as enrolling in foreign language classrooms as learners (Zhang & Pelttari, 2013) or taking part in study-abroad programs (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012), on heightening teachers' awareness of empathy (See section 2.3 for studies on empathy development). This thesis recognizes the significance of transgressing beyond the concept of 'feeling what the students are feeling' and that not all teachers possess the resources to engage in labor intensive practices to facilitate empathy. Therefore, the current study explores how a retrospective empathy building process can cultivate a teacher's awareness of learner emotion and the empathic responses that this recognition may elicit via a practice that is not labor intensive in terms of in-class time, logistics or preparation. As such, the study goes one step further by not only assessing the effects of emotional decoding on eliciting empathetic responses and by the same token, the viability of a retrospective means to enhancing teacher empathy but by concurrently striving to present a more practical approach of empathy development.

Moreover, this study is the first of its kind due to the exploitation of the idiodynamic approach in its research methodology. Given the dynamic nature of the construct of empathy in that it is constantly affected by the convergences of individual characteristics and situational features, the approach, which necessitates the research participant to observe video of a teaching event and rate the efficacy of a target variable on a moment-to-moment timescale, allows for a more explicit and systematic assessment of empathy at every moment of the teaching performance. The emerging self-reported narrative data can accelerate the critical reflection process of the teacher and prompt a 'growth' mindset' – which is not only vital to progressing the expertise of the teacher but to cultivating their sense of teacher empathy. Furthermore, the approach exposes teachers to the multifaceted dynamics of the classroom, permits an investigation into the interplay of dynamic systems on the participant in real-time and experience with spontaneous decision-making, which the respective complexity necessitates (Gregersen & Macintyre, 2017).

Finally, this thesis aims to contribute to relevant literature by determining the impact of naming student emotions in enhancing the empathetic responses of teachers and ultimately exploring the underlying perceptions' of empathy and the development process amid a language educator within the educational context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Perceptions of empathy in teaching may offer greater insight into the value, if any,

that is currently associated to the concept within the spectrum of positive teacher characteristics amongst different language educators. This thesis explores the following primary research question:

1. How does retrospective empathy building, using the practice of naming learner emotions, encourage a language teacher to reassess his/her empathetic responses during given moments of teacher-student interaction?

The aforementioned objective is achieved by addressing the following two secondary research questions:

2. To what extent can retrospective empathy building concerning pedagogical practice on a moment-to-moment timescale serve as a viable means of empathy development?
3. To what extent do we see variation in empathy over a given period of time and is there evidence in that a dynamic systems approach can be used to document changing levels of empathy?

1.3 Overview of Thesis Chapters

The first chapter addressed the inherent purpose of the current thesis and outlined the research questions. The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews key conceptualizations in empathy research such as definitions and implications, attributed benefits to teaching and learning and findings of previous empathy development studies. In addition, the chapter introduces and describes the process of the Idiodynamic Method, explores the Idiodynamic Method juxtaposed with other research designs and delineates the implementation of the method in contemporary research. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the research and presents a detailed account of the participant in addition to each data collection tool that was utilized for the purpose of this study. Chapter 4 presents a summary and analysis of the findings obtained from the data collection tools, i.e. the background survey, the idiodynamic software, the intervention survey and the teacher interview. Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes the present thesis by highlighting key findings and presenting implications as well as limitations of the research.

Chapter 2: Empathy and Idiodynamics in Teaching: A Literature Review

In the following chapter, key conceptualizations of empathy as well as empathy in relation to teaching will be explored. This sub-section aims to consolidate literature which defines empathy and explore theories in relation to its 'learnability' in an effort to depict a richer comprehension of the construct. This is followed by an account of the professional and academic value attributed to empathy in-action to both teaching and learning respectively. Next, the findings of research studies on the enhancement of empathy will be presented. Finally, a closer look at the idiodynamic approach and its value to research in language education is discussed.

2.1 Conceptualizations of the Notion of Empathy

2.1.1 Historical background. In 1909, psychologist Edward Titchener translated the German notion '*Einfühlung,'* (i.e. feeling into) as 'empathy.' However, the concept of 'Einfühlung' originated in the eighteenth century and initially concerned the prospect of surveying the human psyche by empathizing with others (Nowak, 2011). The concept was not subjected to careful debate until the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when there happened to be increased interest in the psychology of perception (p. 303).

Since the 1990's, the field of education has seen a growing interest in social as well as emotional learning, primarily due to the influence of Daniel Goleman's work, *'Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ'* (Krznaric, Empathy Education: Why it matters and how to do it, 2014). Goleman attests that skills such as empathizing are imperative in the formation of positive relationships with others (as cited in Krznaric, 2009).

2.1.2 Definitions and implications. The concept of empathy has continued to receive attention from the likes of various philosophers as well as social and cognitive psychologists over the years. However, whilst research on empathy is burgeoning there is little agreement among respective researchers in relation to what it entails and as such its definition conflicts widely in relevant literature (as cited in Smith, 2017, p. 710). According to Hackney (as cited in Bouton, 2016), over 21 definitions of the term 'empathy' were employed in the field of psychology alone by 1968. Given the number of differing concepts such as 'sympathy' or 'compassion' which depict similar ideologies to that of empathy,

they have gradually superseded one another. In an effort to systematize the various interpretations represented in literature, some of these definitions as well as their implications are presented in continuation.

In the early works of humanistic psychologist, Carl Rogers, defined empathy as a skill that could be learned (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 707). However, he later conceded that empathy was not necessarily a skill but, a way of being. His shift in understanding was heavily influenced by theologian Martin Buber who described a process he coined 'dialogue' which Rogers believed to be identical to empathy (pp. 707-708). In 'dialogue,' two individuals embark on an evolving conversation in which the outcome is unknown. When the process of 'crossing over' transpires, the interactants find themselves meticulously connected to the other. Whilst Buber maintained that the process of 'crossing over' could not be forced to happen but had to be allowed instead, Rogers contended that empathy occurred willfully, i.e. when it is cognitively made to happen as a result of careful listening and the mirroring of words and feelings.

Conversely, Stein depicted empathy as unique and separate from associated intersubjective processes in that it occurs 'non-primordially' or in a manner similar to that of a post-event realization (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 708). In other words, individuals may involuntarily find themselves experiencing the phenomenon as opposed to having explicitly caused it to happen directly (p. 709). In this sense, empathy is a 'happening' which can either be facilitated or blocked, but it is not a behavior, therefore suggesting that the concept cannot be learned. Stein described two characteristics which contribute to the uniqueness of empathy in comparison to other interactions; it is realized only after it has occurred and it takes place in three coinciding stages: self-transposal, crossing over and sympathy. Within the first stage individuals listen intently and attempt to put themselves in the other's place. In the second stage, an emotional shift from thinking to feeling occurs which deepens ones understanding and awareness of the other's plight. During the crossing over stage, a profound connection to the other person is formed and a resulting feeling of 'oneness' takes place. Finally, it is in the last stage that individuals separate themselves from the other and are able to stand side by side in sympathy (pp. 709-710).

According to Hodges and Myers (2007), there are two types of empathy; emotional and cognitive. Emotional empathy is an innate force which probes an appropriate response

to the emotions of another, occurring automatically and often unconsciously. Emotional empathy entails three separate components. The first consists of feeling the same emotions as that of the other person and is sometimes attributed to emotional contagion, for instance, involuntarily 'catching' another's tears and experiencing sadness as a result. The second relates to the person's own feelings of personal distress in response to perceiving another's plight. The authors note that feelings of distress which are associated with emotional empathy do not necessarily mirror the specific emotions of the other in that the same pain is not experienced. Finally, the last emotional component which is most frequently associated with the study of empathy in the field of psychology includes feelings of compassion for the other. Compassion or 'empathic concern' is believed to emerge at a later stage developmentally and to require greater self-control than emotional or personal distress. Research consistently reveals a positive correlation between the extent to which individuals report feeling empathic concern for another and their subsequent willingness to extend help (p. 297).

The second type of empathy, i.e. cognitive, refers to the conscious process of an individual to accurately perceive as well as understand the emotional state of another. Simply put, cognitive empathy entails an individual's perception or possession of evidence in that they have successfully deduced another's thoughts and feelings (Hodges & Myers, 2007). In this sense, cognitive empathy entails more complete knowledge in relation to the 'contents of another's mind' as well as how the other person feels (p. 297). As such, cognitive empathy is acknowledged as a skill in that the individual learns to recognize as well as comprehend the emotional state of another primarily as a way of processing given emotions and behaviors.

Certain scholars have rejected the notion that emotional and cognitive empathy represent two distinct forms of empathy and have argued that 'true empathy' essentially integrates both forms (Staub, 1987). However, contemporary research into empathy reveals that the human brain responds differently when either cognitive or emotional empathy is activated (Nummenmaa, Parkkola, Hirvonen, & Hietanen, 2008). For instance, despite the fact that emotional empathy increases brain activity within the same areas as cognitive empathy, the latter activates the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in language as well as

the processing of semantic content, stronger than emotional empathy. In addition, cognitive empathy is deemed a more conscious as well as deliberate process.

Lastly, it is important to shed light on the distinction that has been made between the concepts of empathy and sympathy despite the interchangeable use of the two terms (Hodges & Myers, 2007). Empathy involves understanding another's experiences by imagining themselves in the other's given situation. Sympathy on the other hand, entails the experience of 'being moved by' another. Concurring with Hodges and Myers (2007), Davis (1990) writes that sympathy is one of four interactions (pity, identification, and self-transposal being the others) commonly confused with the notion of empathy. Accordingly, when one individual experiences feelings of joy over the success of another for instance, they are in sympathy with them. In other words, a common feeling is shared in relation to a past or current event outside of the involved individuals (p. 708). In contrast to empathy, sympathy does not involve shared emotions or a shared perspective. In this sense, where sympathy prompts individuals to *care* for another's suffering, empathy inspires individuals to essentially *feel* that suffering.

2.1.3 Empathy as a dynamic process. Main (2017) argues that whilst research in empathy has thus far offered insightful data with regards to the development and neurological substrates of empathy, the focus of empathy research has traditionally emphasized the internal experience of the empathizer, which often times limits our understanding of how empathy entails an interpersonal and relational process. Therefore, contemporary conceptualizations fail to depict the depth of the empathic process and do not subsequently offer many useful implications as far as how people may learn to be better empathizers (Main, 2017).

According to Main (2017), several elements of empathy are often lacking in empirical research. To begin with, she asserts that empathy is inherently interpersonal in nature. To illustrate, she offers a situation between mother and child in which the mother makes an inaccurate assumption of her child's behavior (withdrawing to his/her room) by placing herself in his/her shoes (angry that his/her phone was taken away). In the event that the child had showed a greater willingness to disclose his/her reasoning (triggered by his/her mother's lack of trust), the mother's empathy may have been facilitated (Main, 2017). Whilst this may appear obvious on the surface, some studies neglect the idea that

empathy entails an interactive and social process that is not only contingent on the empathetic tendencies of the empathizer but on the openness or resistance of the individual being empathized with.

Second, Main (2017) argues that empathy is traditionally viewed as a static trait, i.e. if empathy is expressed in this situation, one is deemed empathetic, if not, they are not. However, according to Main (2017), empathy is significantly context-dependent. Although sharing the emotional experiences of others can be adaptive in certain contexts (such as the motivation to help by sharing an individual's pain), it is not always the most effective means to practicing empathy. For instance, Gottman et al. (2014), write that whilst empathy is a crucial component of effective conflict resolution, the sharing of another's negative emotions during conflict is thought to lead to conflict escalation as opposed to resolution (as cited in Main, 2017). Therefore, in conflict resolution, empathy can best be characterized as validating another's emotions and not necessarily enacting or matching them (Main, 2017).

Finally, Main (2017) emphasizes that empathy does not occur at a finite point in time, but instead evolves dynamically over a given period of time. In the aforementioned example of the mother and child, the former may have initially concluded her child experienced anger as a direct result of the withdrawal of his/her phone, however, if the assessment were to halt at this point, whether she persisted in this belief or attempted to interact with her child to determine the accuracy of her initial judgement would have been overlooked. Neglecting the corrective processes involved in real-time, the very dynamic nature of empathy is squandered. Moreover Main (2017), writes that empirical research on empathy utilizes self-report questionnaire with regards to dispositional tendencies or necessitates research participants to make one-time judgements of another's emotions. However, as aforementioned, Main (2017) suggests empathy is a corrective process, evident in the exploitation of others' facial, postural and emotional cues to determine our accuracy in determining his/her emotions.

2.1.4 Emotional decoding. According to Schyns, Petro and Smith (2009), despite the evolutionary acquisition of spoken language capabilities, the role of facial expressions in relation to social interaction remains substantial. In concurrence, Hyniewska, Sato, Kaiser and Pelachaud (2019) state that the ability to read another's emotion primarily from

an observation of their facial expression is an imperative skill in the management of social relationships. Moreover, Schyns, Petro and Smith (2009) maintain that irrespective of whether facial expressions are inextricably associated to the internal emotion and subsequently part of a constructed emotional response or whether different cultures develop their own unique expressions, a notion which has been deliberated for over a century, a facial expression remains a visible manifestation, under both automatic and voluntary control.

Bailey, Merrell and Tymms (2006) argue humans are highly skilled when it comes to the decoding of facial expressions. Baron-Cohen devised an assessment of empathic abilities known as 'Reading the mind in the eyes' which showcases 36 pairs of eyes and requests test-takers to choose one of four words to best describe what each person may be feeling or thinking (Krznaric, 2015). The average score of the test, i.e. 26, suggests that most people are in fact good at visually reading the emotions of others. Bailey, Merrell and Tymms (2006) argue that the skill suggests the process possesses an evolutionary function in light of peoples' inherent need to utilize facial expressions to identify the emotional states of another and permit successful functioning within a 'complex social environment.' According to Bailey, Merrell and Tymms (2006), facial expressions serve a higher level of social functioning than they may have in the evolutionary past as they allow for the 1) interpretation of genuine emotional states whilst also possessing the capacity to be controlled for social manipulation and 2) via the display and detection of facial expressions a simple level of communication between two persons is possible, even if they don't share a common language. As such, the prospect of training language educators to utilize the process of emotional decoding within the language classroom becomes paramount, especially in reference to the increase in multicultural classrooms present in today's educational settings.

Literature theoretically proposes that individuals decode the emotions of others from particular sets of facial action units (Hyniewska, Sato, Kaiser, & Pelachaud, 2019). In fact, different researchers have postulated that certain emotional categories, such as anger, or elementary components of emotions, such as cognitive appraisals, can de decoded primarily based on the recognition of specific facial movements. For instance, in the case of sadness, the specific facial action set would include inner eyebrows drawn together and

raised as well as lip corners pulled down (Hyniewska, Sato, Kaiser, & Pelachaud, 2019). According to Dimberg et al. (2011), highly empathic individuals are particularly responsive to the facial expressions of others (as cited in Rymarczyk, Żurawski, Jankowiak-Siuda, & Szatkowska, 2016). It is therefore the assumption of Rymarczyk, Żurawski, Jankowiak-Siuda and Szatkowska (2016) in that the ability to react to the emotional expressions in others constitutes an imperative aspect of emotional empathy.

Despite successful expression recognition being deemed an imperative component of adaptive emotional functioning, according to Smith et al. (2018), empirical evidence in adulthood reveals relatively consistent age differences with respect to laboratory measures of emotional processing. Older adults tend to perform worse than younger adults in relation to the accurate decoding of emotions in static facial expressions. However, the differences appear to differ by the emotion shown (Smith, et al., 2018). For instance, little to no age differences are typically found in terms of happy and/or disgusted facial expressions, yet larger age differences are generally found for negative facial expressions including, fear, sadness and anger. Whilst there is a degree of consensus regarding the existence of age differences in accurately recognizing emotional expressions, the underlying mechanisms remain debatable. One account attributes prospective age differences to motivational explanations. According to Smith et al. (2018), older adults may subconsciously opt to emphasize positive emotions to a greater extent whilst avoiding negative emotions by default. In this sense, older adults may be predisposed to attend less to negative than to positive expressions. This suggests the imperativeness of continuously practicing empathy in-action throughout one's professional career.

2.1.5 Teacher empathy. Educational psychologists recognize empathy as an imperative factor in teaching and learning as well as prosocial development. According to Tettegah and Anderson (2007), teacher empathy is referred to as the capacity to express concern and recognize the perspective of the student. Following in-depth interviews and classroom observations of experienced and student teachers, Cooper (2007) maintains that there are three varied types of empathy present in educational settings: fundamental, profound and functional.

Fundamental empathy entails key characteristics for the initiation of relationships including; adopting a non-judgmental approach, attentiveness, careful listening and

portraying verbal and non-verbal signs of interest. Participants reported that focused attention between the student and the teacher resulted in maximized communication as the students began to imitate the behavior of their respective teachers (Cooper, 2007). The second type of empathy, i.e. profound, includes a deeper understanding between students and teachers that results in more meaningful relationships. Profound empathy involves the capacity of the teacher to demonstrate personal levels of concern and is cultivated via individual, one-on-one interactions over time. Finally, the last type of empathy, functional, is predominantly observed within larger classrooms in which the teacher is unable to develop personal connections with each and every student. In this case, the teacher resorts to creating a sense of belonging and group cohesion by exploiting examples that are deemed universal, and as such, of interest to multiple students. However, functional empathy can prompt stereotyping especially in more diverse student groups, when it becomes even more problematic (Cooper, 2007).

According to Swan and Riley (2015), as teachers' empathic capacities increase, their capacity to understand and respond to student needs is also increased. In terms of teacher-student interaction, the application of empathy is deemed a cyclic process that entails perspective taking, utilizing what is known about students to navigate interpersonal communications with them and attending to student feedback as an instinctive form of perspective taking (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015). Teachers can essentially negotiate the exploitation of empathy in their interactions with their students by making different personal and professional adaptations in an effort to ultimately produce the most favorable result for the student or students involved. Therefore, the more teachers nurture this cyclic process, the better the outcome for teaching and learning. However, despite the positive implications of empathy in education, Barr (2010) states that the notion of teacher empathy in general is a discipline that has not been studied extensively.

2.2 Benefits of Empathic Teaching

According to Boyer (2010), the importance of teacher empathy in relation to students' perceptions that they are sincerely cared for cannot be stressed enough. Denis (1999) discovered that those who are good at developing positive relationships are usually the ones that empathize with others more easily. This is because empathizing with others entails the capacity to listen to the feelings of another beyond that which are evident via

verbal communication (as cited in Boyer, 2010). Furthermore, Barr (2010) argues that when teachers practice empathy, a bridge is essentially formed between the teacher and student which can also improve school culture.

In order to be effective, Swan and Riley (2015) argue that teachers must understand how the experiences of students within the classroom shape the changes that are occurring in their minds. In fact, in a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses addressing students' achievements, Hattie (2009) found that the cultivation of teacher-student relationships is a key component in improving student learning with an average effect size of 0.72 across 229 studies (as cited in Swan & Riley, 2015). In a similar study, Cornelius-White (2007) found that person-centered teacher variables such as honoring students' voices and adjusting to individual and cultural differences were positively correlated with better student outcomes in a meta-analysis of 119 studies with a mean correlation of 0.31 (as cited in Swan & Riley, 2015).

The empathy-attitude action model proposed by Batson et al. (2002), suggests that the induction of empathy towards a stigmatized group does not merely augment positive attitudes towards the group but also increases the willingness to help. In fact, the authors investigated the extent to which increased empathy influences actual behavior by experimentally inducing empathy within a group and subsequently measuring any influence of behavior in terms of helping a stigmatized group (Batson, et al., 2002). The findings of their study revealed that the individuals who had induced empathy portrayed greater readiness to take action towards helping the stigmatized group. Moreover, they found that empathy affected attitudes which subsequently influenced a willingness to change and concluded that attitudes mediated the impact of empathy in relation to taking action to help.

That increased empathy can be translated into actual behavior accentuates the outcomes of teacher empathy to teaching and learning further. The following subsections will identify some particular benefits of mindfully implementing an empathic mindset in teaching as described in literature. While these may tie into one another, they include but are not limited to, the recognition and inclusion of culturally responsive practices, improvement of the teacher-student relationship, augmentation of student learning capacity, and cultivation of students as global citizens.

2.2.1 Culturally responsive practice. A dialogic interaction necessitates an understanding of the self through the identification and comprehension of the needs and circumstances of those around us. Krznaric (2014) theorizes that whilst the twentieth century can be presumed as the age of retrospection, the twentieth-first century demands the contrary; that individuals 'step outside of themselves' and experience the world from the perspectives of others -- something that is increasingly more important in the current interconnected globe. In the context of education, the present-day era of globalization translates into increased diversity within the classroom.

From a humanistic approach to learning, learners are perceived as individuals possessing physical, emotional, social and cognitive features. As such, they are more than merely representatives of a foreign culture (Mehrgan, 2012). Each student not only carries the message of a specific culture but also reflects his or her *own* individual essence of culture which is comprised of a sum of personal experiences. Observing students in this light, i.e. as whole persons with unique experiences, obliges the teacher to develop a better understanding of learner motivations as well as struggles in relation to their academic success. In an effort to produce a safe learning environment within increasingly diverse student populations, empathetic educators possess a flexibility of the mind which permits the crossing of borders and subsequently the acceptance of differences (Elena, 2014). That being said, an empathic mindset subconsciously prompts the teacher to develop culturally responsive practices which is imperative in contemporary classrooms to facilitate learning.

According to Arnold (2011), although the cognitive functions of teaching are not to be undermined, there must be recognition that thinking processes develop more effectively when the emotional aspects of learners are also taken into account. A growing consensus suggests that teachers who consciously extend empathy towards their students will reap the benefits of improved learners. For instance, McAllister and Irvine (2002) state that an empathic mindset inspires greater positive interaction with culturally diverse learners, more supportive classroom environments and more student-centered practices. Correspondingly, Dolby (2012) writes that empathetic centered teaching is pivotal to culturally responsive interactions and by extension, central for promoting culturally responsive teaching practices. Adding to this, Pedersen and Pope (2010) write that empathic teaching prompts professionals to accurately comprehend and effectively

respond to students' comprehensive cultural relationship in relation to their environment. The very ability to place oneself in the shoes of another is deemed imperative for managing cultural sensitivity as well as diversity issues prevalent within educational settings as better understanding each individual learner helps the teacher to subsequently meet their educational needs (Lu, Dane & Gellman, 2005, as cited in Bouton, 2016). Whilst Bouton (2016) recognizes that employing empathy to embrace each and every student in terms of their ways of knowing, feeling and being is not an easy task, the necessity of it has been emphasized repeatedly since the late 1950s.

Finally, according to O'Brien's (2003) research, empathy can be utilized by educators as a tool to reduce perception gaps as well as minimize adverse results that are associated with the misapprehension of student behaviors, engagement, as well as motivations. In light of this, Pajak (2001) attests that empathy is a crucial component for teachers working with diverse student populations and should be incorporated in teacher training programs given that empathy is a competence that can be learned. As such, pre-service teachers need to be introduced to the appropriate skills and knowledge considered necessary to meet the shifting social, intellectual and cultural needs of multicultural classrooms.

2.2.2 Positive teacher-student relationship. According to Freire (2005), teachers must respect their students and possess an awareness of the 'concrete conditions of their world' in addition to the circumstances which shape them. Negating the reality of students' lives impedes teachers' abilities to access the way their minds work and would therefore be a hindrance in determining 'what and how they know' (Freire, 2005). Hook (2010) asserts that a mutual relationship between the teacher and students which nurtures both parties and creates an atmosphere of trust and commitment is always present when learning occurs. For instance, Arnold (2011) maintains that positive affect offers invaluable support for learning just as negative affect closes the mind down and ultimately prevents learning from occurring altogether. An empathic mindset in relation to teaching prompts educators to place themselves in the shoes of learners and subsequently adjust their approach to meet their specific needs. This helps to cultivate a positive relationship between the teacher and student which improves learning outcomes (Arnold, 2011; Hook, 2010 & Freire, 2005).

Better teacher-student relationships created as a result of maintaining an empathic mindset also improves discipline outcomes in relation to problematic student behavior. Research conducted at Stanford which encouraged middle school teachers to take on an empathic mindset in relation to student discipline decreased the percentage of students who got suspensions over the school year from 9.6 to 4.8 percent (Parker, 2016). The study assessed whether 39 teachers would be willing to adopt an empathic rather than punitive mindset regarding discipline. The teachers in question briefly wrote about the vitality of positive teacher-student relationships in an effort to help students learn self-control (i.e. empathic mindset) or the necessity of punishment to allow for the teachers themselves to take control of the classroom (i.e. punitive mindset). The findings revealed that presenting teachers with the opportunity to express empathic values by understanding students' perspectives and sustaining positive relationships with respective students, improved the student-teacher relationship as well as discipline outcomes. In fact, the teachers who were given the punitive prime noted that they would punish a hypothetical misbehaving learner more harshly. On the contrary, those who were given the empathic prime said they were more likely to talk it out with the student and less likely to identify him/her as a troublemaker.

The authors decipher that the focus on the relationship between teacher and student helps to humanize learners and that supportive and trusting relationships are a prerequisite for student growth and improvement (Parker, 2016). In the context of problematic student behavior, students are perceived as more than just a 'label' but instead as evolving individuals who can change and learn to behave in more appropriate ways, albeit with help. In fact, research shows that the impact of teachers on student behavior is hu times more predictive of their long-term academic success than their impact on test scores (Relations, 2018). This demonstrates the inherent significance of empathic teaching which not only helps students to develop on a personal level but also realize academic success.

2.2.3 Learning capacity. According to Townsend (2012), stress negatively impacts brain development in children, primarily the prefrontal cortex which is responsible for managing non-cognitive skills, memory and reasoning. However, a secure attachment that is provided by an adult comforting a child through a seemingly tough time, reduces the damaging effects of stress, implying empathy to be an effective antidote to stress

(Townsend, 2012). In classroom settings, learners are likely to experience a wide range of stressful emotions such as anxiety and/or humiliation to name a few. A teacher who actively practices empathy in his/her teaching can facilitate a secure attachment, reducing the damaging influence of stress on learning. Kohn (1991) writes that educational institutions in which students are immersed in programs designed to cultivate 'caring communities' possess higher academic scores on measures of higher-order reading, for instance.

2.2.4 Students as global citizens. Teachers possess a powerful role in terms of facilitating as well as demonstrating empathy within classroom communities. This is especially important given the increase in multicultural classrooms which subsequently depict a unique setting for the development of empathy as a result of the diversity in language, ethnicity, social class and culture. According to Banks et al., (2001), multicultural classrooms offer learners the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are required to positively interact with people from various cultural backgrounds. The process broadly entails the deconstruction of traditional knowledge and power boundaries and in its place the development of knowledge which embraces, as opposed to excludes, diverse world views (Guo, 2014).

As an extension of global connectivity, societies continually become more diverse. In education, this translates into linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms. The resulting environment necessitates that educators be pedagogically competent to aid learners intellectually and morally to address progressively complex and controversial global issues and act as responsible global citizens for the economic development of local and international communities and support holistic thinking (Guo, 2014). According to Tavangar (2018), global citizenship entails the practice of empathy and the defining of what one stands for as a global citizen. Tavangar (2018) goes on to say:

> Increasingly, we talk a lot about the growth mindset, the global mindset—I think the mindsets we leave our students with are even more powerful than the skillsets. It goes back to some of those qualities and virtues such as empathy, service, grit, and creativity that all go into building a global citizen. A way of opening yourself up to these new modes of thinking. Focusing on these is a very powerful way to build leadership qualities and to lead.

According to Jones, Weissbourd, Bouffard, Kahn, and Ross, (2018), young adults naturally possess the capacity for empathy, however, this does not imply that they can develop it on their own. In actuality, they learn how to notice, listen and tend to others by observing and listening to adults, thus taking cues from different influencers regarding the inherent importance of empathy. Teachers therefore play an important role in helping learners to develop, as well as display, empathy by serving as first-hand examples (Jones et al., 2018). In other words, teachers who implement an empathic mindset and demonstrate empathy in-action in the classroom are subsequently more likely to cultivate learners as global citizens who can peacefully navigate the increase in diversity inside as well as outside of the classroom.

Jones et al. (2018) proposed that when educators portray their concern for all within the school community, including those who vary in background and beliefs, and expect the same of their students, they are essentially opening their eyes and ears to others. Therefore, in addition to demonstrating an empathic mindset, teachers can also encourage students to take the leap from merely possessing empathy to actually acting on it. Too often it is assumed that young adults innately know what to do when they feel concern (Jones et al., 2018). However, according to Jones et al. (2018), many fall into the 'empathy-action gap' in which people may express care for another but not necessarily offer to help. Teachers can help to bridge this gap by modeling and inspiring students to ultimately take action. Finally, given the notion that the classroom acts as a stepping stone to the outside world, and presumably most educators are interested in preparing their learners for personal as well as academic success, modeling empathy in-action is deemed imperative to helping meet students' greater needs.

2.3 Empathy Development

In addition to managing instruction, educators must also attend to the relational aspects of their practices and actions. Research on effective teaching continues to suggest that retaining empathetic relationships with students boosts student engagement and learning (as cited in Hall & Smotrova, 2013). However, despite the acknowledged importance of maintaining such relationships, few empirical studies have investigated how such empathetic relationships are accomplished. This subsection explores the learnability of empathy in teachers.

Redman (1977) studied the impact of in-service human relations training on in-service teachers' levels of empathy towards minority persons. The goals of the training program were to help participants understand the contributions of various cultures in society, identify dehumanizing biases and prejudices, cultivate learning environments which positively contribute to the self-esteem of all individuals and respect human diversity and individual rights (Redman, 1977). One hundred and seventy eight teachers were thus exposed to 50 hours of large group instruction, 20 hours of external classroom task-oriented instruction and a field study of the effects of applying particular human relations skills over a ten-week period. Participants' levels of empathy towards minority persons were measured pre and post study. The author found that empathy among participants increased significantly at the conclusion of the training and continued two and a half months post training.

In another study, Chambers and Lavery (2012) studied the involvement of service training on the development of pre-service teachers' academic, cultural and professional levels in the School of Education at the University of Notre Dame in Australia. According to the authors, service learning must be investigated with specific reference to four key elements; that the service addresses the needs of real life; the service and learning goals are deemed of equal importance; there is reciprocity between those who are serving and those being served; and the program is adequately and clearly structured for the use of the participants.

One hundred and one pre-service teachers were required to take two service learning units as part of their teacher education. At the time of the study, the university offered two particular service-learning units: education, service and community engagement; and inclusive education. The pre-service teachers were engaged in meaningful and hands-on service with those who were marginalized or disabled. Based on reflective journals and written reports, six themes emerged which detailed the experiences of pre-service teachers upon the completion of the respective units. These included: empathy, leadership, self and societal reflection, teacher confidence, professional practice, and knowledge and skills. Specific examples drawn from the authors' data illustrated how service learning built the empathy of the pre-service teachers. For instance, one participant observed developing a better understanding of the needs of a person with a disability,

another highlighted their augmented love and respect towards children who were initially described as ‘strangers’ and one more reported to have developed a bond and friendship with their student directly as a result of the time spent on their service (p. 132).

Chambers and Lavery (2012) maintain that the participation within the service-learning units itself is what encouraged teacher participants to display empathy as a direct outcome of the working, playing and reflecting that occurred alongside people who were considered marginalized in the society. Through these interactions, the pre-service teachers were able to develop the ability to adopt another’s perspective. According to the authors, this ability is invaluable in that it leads to improved capacities to perceive issues from the viewpoints of students and in turn, permits the teacher to cultivate a considered response. Chambers and Lavery’s (2012) research reveals that via direct interaction with members of those perceived as marginalized in society, empathy can be nurtured. The study therefore insinuates that empathy is a learnable trait which can, in fact, be developed.

To explore the development of critical thinking and empathy in prospective teachers, Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) assessed the impact of teaching a required institutional course i.e. ‘Second Language Acquisition’ (SLA), to pre-service teachers abroad. The course that is offered to preservice teachers at the first author’s academic institution was designed to develop multicultural awareness by introducing the theory and practice of SLA and aid teachers in becoming familiar with the challenges of immigrant students in relation to the cultural and linguistic adaptations these students experience. Therefore, a critical component of the study-abroad program was to facilitate the students’ capacity to develop a critical awareness of the needs of second language learners.

As part of the aforementioned study, eleven undergraduate students traveled to Mexico, resided with Mexican host families, visited a number of local schools and studied Spanish. The students engaged in dialogue journals with their instructors, writing two entries per week. These journals, along with pre and post surveys and follow-up interviews three years after the experience, served as a basis for the authors’ findings, particularly in relation to the impact of the study-abroad experience on preservice teachers’ understandings of the experiences of immigrant children in American schools.

Based on student reflections, the authors maintain that the program facilitated the students’ confrontations with the limits to their own sense of empathy which ultimately led

them in the direction of critical cultural awareness (defined as the ability to analytically compare one's own experiences with that of another's). In other words, the empathetic experience not only served as a source of emotional connection and understanding between individuals but also brought about an awareness of the limits of understanding as well as connection across different cultural and social contexts. Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) contend that when the preservice teachers confront their feelings of connection to the other as well as the sociocultural limits to those feelings, they acquire a novel understanding of how they and the other are situated in the larger context and possibly recognize themselves as implicated within the social potencies that generate the climate of impediments the other must confront.

Finally, despite the experience not always being deemed as positive or comfortable for the students, according to the authors, their reflections made it clear that the stay was productive in relation to the development of empathy (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). Most students expressed feelings of empathy with newcomer students on a more personal level and frequently appeared to expand the limits of their own sense of empathy, ultimately understanding the systemic nature of the differences between that of their own and their future students' experiences.

Whilst the findings of the aforementioned studies concur in that empathy is shown to be a characteristic that can be developed, the majority of the evidence is gathered outside of ordinary classroom settings and/or require considerable time investments on behalf of the pre-service or in-service teacher. Limited literature explores the enhancement or facilitation of empathy in relation to in-service teachers and via more accessible and less labor intensive means.

2.4 The Idiodynamic Method

According to MacIntyre (2012), affect entails a moving target. As such, he suggests researchers aim to answer how it is tracked as well as recognize interacting attributes of the individual and the circumstances which can influence the target variable. MacIntyre therefore proposed a method which unlocks the 'net emotional force' contained by an individual on a dynamic and continuing basis (Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Meza, 2014). According to Gregersen, et al. (2014), the idiodynamic approach alleviates certain

limitations of previous research by examining how various interacting internal emotional as well as psychological variables alter from one moment to the next.

In communication, MacIntyre (2012) argues, traits of the individual converge with features of the situation to cultivate given communication behavior. Therefore, the affective and cognitive setting which contextualizes communication, or for the purpose of this study, the teacher's empathetic responses, is simultaneously being shaped and re-shaped instantaneously as it is being enacted, progressing relentlessly onward in time. In terms of language research, Fogel (2006) contests that the consideration of the ebb and flow of communication with respect to a dynamic perspective entails a description and account of the fluctuations in affect from one instance to the next. This subsection describes the idiodynamic approach to research, explores dynamic systems theory (which supports the theoretical framework of the method), and offers a comparison of idiodynamics against alternative research methods.

2.4.1 Idiodynamics in research: a description. Idiodynamics concerns an individual acting during an event as the basis for analysis, contrary to identifying group-level traits, i.e. nomothetic, or individual-level traits, i.e. idiographic (MacIntyre, 2012). During the idiodynamic approach, a short communication episode such as an oral interview, conversation or public presentation is recorded. The method takes on an individual formative approach observing the process of communication, as opposed to a summative approach, assessing the culmination of various communicative experiences (MacIntyre, 2012). Whilst employing the method, research participants watch a video recording of a communication episode at their earliest convenience following its completion. Software developed specifically for the purpose of idiodynamic research is then employed to allow the respondents to rate themselves (or another individual) on a cognitive or affective variable that is relevant to the given research. A graph of the participants' ratings are immediately printed and utilized as a tool to interview the respective candidate (MacIntyre, 2012).

By means of stimulated recall, the respondent is interviewed following the production of the ratings, affording a running commentary on the feelings and thoughts which inspired the ratings (MacIntyre, 2012). At any given point during the interview, the researcher or participant can pause the video recording playback to allow for a more

detailed discussion of a particular peak or valley on the ratings graph. The participant's interpretation of the principal motives for an alteration in his or her affective state is documented (MacIntyre, 2012). The video may also be rated by external observers such as students or peers, at a later time.

2.4.2 Dynamic systems theory. According to MacIntyre (2012), the idiodynamic approach exploits insights gained via research and theory in the dynamic systems theory of human development. deBot, Lowie and Verspoor (2007) identify four key properties of dynamic systems which are relevant to the idiodynamic approach (as cited in MackIntyre, 2012). To begin with, dynamic systems regard each state as a function of the prior state in addition to the effect of some other influence on that state. This property recognizes that communication entails a process as each moment in time arises from a preceding moment. Secondly, dynamic systems are said to be wholly interconnected. In other words, the variables within the system are linked together and subsequently influence each other. Thirdly, dynamic systems self-organize into preferred states in which the system settled and other 'repeller states' that are unsettled (MacIntyre, 2012, p. 363). However, as time progresses, these preferred states will also undergo changes. Lastly, dynamic systems retain threshold effects in which small changes in one element of the system can have significant effects on the system overall. According to MacIntyre (2012), communication affect, behavior and cognition can all be studied from a dynamic systems theory perspective.

2.4.3 Idiodynamics against other research approaches. According to MacIntyre (2012), the idiodynamic approach supplements other methods applied widely in communication research. Idiodynamics tackles questions about the patterns of change within individuals that cannot be addressed with other research designs such as, cross-sectional, longitudinal or qualitative research. For instance, studies implementing the cross-sectional research design consider individual differences within a sample. Certain statistical tools then 'treat the variability within groups or off the regression line as error' (p. 364). However, variability is essentially the primary focus of idiodynamics. With longitudinal studies which employ a test-retest approach, the interviewing process is not examined precisely as it unfolds, as opposed to the idiodynamic method. Therefore, they crucial factors of change may prove to be difficult to detect. Finally, with regards to

qualitative-retrospective studies, although the forces of change can be recognized better than the aforementioned research methods, as the time span between events and the recollection of them escalates, memory is subjected to greater biases (MacIntyre, 2012). According to Hilbert (2012), some cognitive biases that impact qualitative-retrospective accounts, include the forgetting of information, absentmindedness, retrospective biases, persistence of intrusive thoughts and the blocking of specific memories (as cited in MacIntyre, 2012). In terms accurately capturing a particular event, MacIntyre (2012), contends that a short video remains superior to a long memory.

Despite every research method retaining bouts of effectiveness and limitations, idiodynamics is a mixed-methods approach which can produce quantitative data that can be correlated with qualitative interpretations in real-time (MacIntyre, 2012). In fact, research participants are able to generate a significant volume of data that can be assessed either holistically or in segments. According to MacIntyre (2012), a strong emphasis on the comprehension of each individual's dynamic system alters the ways in which researchers study different communication traits and behaviors.

2.4.4 The idiodynamic method in contemporary research. In 2011, MacIntyre and Legatto investigated willingness to communicate in terms of a dynamic systems perspective (as cited in MacIntyre, 2012). The authors gathered data from six female students studying French as a second language who were requested to complete an oral interview of eight specific tasks in French. The results of their research indicated substantial differences in the patterns of change in the students' willingness to communicate within the person over time and in response to different interview questions (some questions were more challenging than others). MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), concluded that willingness to communicate portrays properties of the dynamic system, including fluctuations over time that are partly due the previous states, interconnectedness of the social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic systems inspiring the willingness to communicate, and evidence of the threshold effect (as cited in MacIntyre, 2012).

Other researchers who have begun to employ the idiodynamic methodology include that of Merver who utilized the approach to investigate the interrelations of students' self-perceptions during pair-work activities in a second language and those who examined the

ratings of anxiety taken at five-second interims throughout a twenty minute classroom presentation (as cited in MacIntyre, 2012).

2.4.5 Empathy and the idiodynamic method. Main (2017) proposes that a vital goal for future research is to incorporate and develop qualitative methodologies which balance external and internal validity to better characterize the concept of empathy. The idiodynamic approach permits the research candidate to assess his/her empathetic responses via the video recording and prospectively offer insight with regards to external or internal factors that may have influenced the behavior in real-time. According to Main (2017), despite the trials in terms of investigating empathy from an interpersonal and ecologically valid perspective, it is time for empirical research to contemplate a more dynamic and relational approach in order to provide greater insight with regards to how individuals can better empathize with others amidst complex and real-life situations.

2.5 Summary

A review of relevant literature indicates key conceptualizations which further amplify the importance of the present thesis. These include; evidence in that empathy *can* be enhanced through practice, the phenomenon in that emotional decoding entails an inherent process which is *already* practiced, albeit at a subconscious level, but that may require training with age, and the many denoted gains of cultivating an empathic practice to *both* teaching and learning. In addition, a review of previous studies on the development of teacher empathy suggests the need for a more viable empathy building process that is not contingent on drastic measures on behalf of the teacher or solely concerns the facilitation of the teacher's awareness in relation to the daily challenges or unique needs of learners. There appears to be a void in literature which addresses an explicit, non-labor intensive means of empathy enhancement that instigates *empathy in-action* and can be practiced over. This thesis attends to this void by exploring how a retrospective empathy building process which capitalizes on the notion of emotional decoding – a biological and innate practice, can encourage the language teacher to reevaluate empathic responses during specific moments of teacher-student interaction.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The following chapter outlines the methodology adopted in the present thesis. An account of the principal procedures for collecting the data is first presented. Next, a detailed description of the case study participant, the empathy development intervention and the exploited data collection tools are provided. It is important to note that IRB approval was obtained prior to the conduction of the survey and the collection of data.

3.1 Procedures and Data Collection

In order to recruit an eligible candidate for the purpose of this study, a call for participation was emailed to a practicing ESL teacher at an institution of higher learning within the UAE. The invitation included an Introductory Letter which briefly defined the purpose of the study and presented the main features of the research. The case study participant completed The Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research Study prior to commencing the intervention process. Upon his expression of willingness to participate, an online Background Survey (Appendix A) was emailed to screen for eligibility and collect data in relation to his practicum experience, acquired qualifications, demographics and his measure of empathy at the time of study. This measure was calculated quantitatively via the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Appendix B) contained within the Survey.

The confirmation of eligibility led to the arrangement of the intervention process which required the candidate to be filmed during instruction on two separate occasions and within the timespan of one week. The intervention period consisted of two phases which occurred over the course of two weeks. During the first phase and subsequent to the acquired film data, the participant was called to watch the video of himself teaching and idiodynamically self-rate moments of teacher-student interaction clicking arrows on the screen which corresponded to whether his perceived level of empathy was increasing or decreasing. This produced a bit graph chart generated by means of the participant's input. Next, the participant reassessed self-rated lows or 'dips' of perceived teacher empathy during teacher-student interaction as depicted by the bit graph and subsequently responded to a series of enquiries about each dip during this follow-up interview. In the second phase, the participant self-reflected on his reasons for the low rating, identified the emotion of the learner within each of the interactions, and contemplated how the participant may have

responded differently in light of mindfully decoding the given learner's emotion. Finally, a post-intervention interview was held with the participant in an effort to triangulate data as well as generate further meaningful feedback.

Each stage of the research procedure and the respective data collection means, i.e. Background Survey, pre-intervention observation, intervention period (Phase I: idiodynamic ratings/charts and Phase II: Intervention Survey) and post-intervention teacher interview are described in greater detail within the subsections below.

3.1.1 Background survey. The Background survey intended to: a) determine the eligibility of the candidate; b) collect general information on the candidate's demographics (age range, gender, nationality etc.), academic background and practicum experience; and c) measure the candidate's current level of empathy via the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire. The survey provided context surrounding the individual case study participant.

The participant – who is of British decent, is an IELTS language instructor at a semi-private higher institution within the UAE and has thirty-four years of domestic and international experience in language education across a variety disciplines. For the purpose of anonymity, the case study participant is referred to as *William*, a pseudonym. William's demographic information collected from his responses to the Background Survey is summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of Case Study Participant Demographics

Name	William
Age	Over 50
Nationality	British
Year/s of Teaching	34
Year/s of Teaching at Current Place of Employment	7
Current Teaching Subject/s	IETLS Preparation / University Study Skills Course
Educational Qualification/s	CELTA, DELTA, MEd TESOL, PhD Applied Linguistics
Empathy Score	49

The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire utilized in this study consisted of sixteen closed-ended statements which required the respondent to identify how frequently he may act or feel in relation to each of the statements on a 5-point Linkert Scale as a means of measuring empathic responses. The responses included "never," "rarely," "sometimes," "often" and "always." Statements 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16 were positively worded items and statements 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 were negatively worded. The sum of the participant's responses indicates their level of empathy. Scores above 45 denote higher levels of self-reported empathy whilst scores of below 45 are indicative of below average empathy levels. William's score will be explored in further detail within the analysis section of the present thesis.

3.1.2 The intervention process. The empathy development process implemented as per this study required the teacher participant to tap into one of the three cognitive elements of empathy, emotional decoding, and explore how the practice of naming learner emotions can affect his empathy in relation to the modification of his teaching behavior when reviewing given moments of teacher-student interaction in retrospect. This entailed a series of three steps; the pre-intervention, the intervention period and the post-intervention.

3.1.2.1 ***Pre-intervention.*** William selected two lessons to be filmed in which similar pedagogical practices were being implemented over the same group of students and within a one week timeframe. From the film data obtained from each observation, i.e. observation #1 and observation #2, selected moments of interactive practice between the teacher and students were edited and collated using online software and assembled into two shorter recordings at approximately four and five minutes each, respectively. This was to factor out pedagogical practices that were irrelevant to this study such as teacher-led instruction or whole class interaction, and subsequently narrow the content down to concise and individual instances of interaction between the instructor and the students. The former type of interactions, i.e. teacher-led instruction or whole class interaction, evidently present a challenge in relation to the practice of naming individual learner emotion and as such, were resultantly eliminated.

William was filmed on two separate teaching occasions in an attempt to maximize the instances of teacher-student interaction, provide him with more opportunity to practice

naming learner emotion and subsequently generate further useful data. The details of the location and time of each observation had been conducted via e-mail beforehand. Video was selected for the present study in light of its capacity to accurately capture an event in comparison to the unreliability of a 'long memory,' which is prone to a variety of biases (MacIntyre, 2012).

3.1.2.2 ***Classroom context.*** The classroom observed for the purpose of this research consisted of 16 students as part of an academic achievement program designed specifically for admitted university students who received low scores on Standard Tests of English Proficiency including the TOEFL and/or IELTS examinations during the registration process. These students obtained scores between 4.5 and 6.0 on the IELTS or between 400 and 547 on the TOEFL. The purpose of the program is to increase the learners' levels of language proficiency to that which is deemed suitable for study in university-level courses conducted in English. Finally, the duration of the program is contingent on each student's linguistic proficiency and may continue for one academic year. A general overview of the attended classes as per each observation can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Classroom Observations

Total No. of Students	16
Gender Ratio (F:M)	6:10
Age Range	17-20
Ethnic Group	Middle-Eastern & Asian
Purpose of Lesson	Reading Strategies for IELTS

3.1.2.3 ***Intervention period.*** The present thesis recognizes the construct of empathy as a dynamic variable. The idiodynamic software permitted William to assess self-reported empathy levels over the respective pedagogical practice on a moment-to-moment timescale. The quantitative data generated via the software enabled the linking of quantitative data from the first phase of the intervention with qualitative interpretations gained from the second phase of the intervention in real-time. The two phases of the intervention period are outlined in greater detail below.

The first phase required William to rate the teacher-student interactions of each of the edited videos based on their perceived levels of empathy during the given interaction using the idiodynamic software. This phase of the intervention was conducted alongside the researcher based on a timing and location formerly arranged between William and the researcher via email communication. During this time, the researcher ensured that William possessed a clear understanding of the definition of empathy in teaching used in this study and could subsequently identify levels of low and high empathy based on said definition, could garner experience working the idiodynamic software alongside the researcher who could provide technical assistance and finally, to be available to respond to specific queries the researcher had in relation to his idiodynamic ratings. As such, William was presented with an Information Sheet (Appendix C) which provided a definition of the construct of empathy, outlined the imperativeness of empathy in relation to teaching and learning and summarized the main purpose of the research. The Information sheet was developed to ascertain that the participant possessed a thorough understanding of the construct of empathy and could revert back to it during the intervention. In addition, the Information Sheet provided context to the participant concerning the study and described in detail his role.

Once William had digested the information, he was trained on using the idiodynamic software. He practiced using the software following a verbal explanation of its features with a test-run video specifically selected for this purpose. The two minute test-run video required William to rate the subject of the video on a given variable using the upward and downward arrow to represent the perceived highs and lows of the variable provided. Upon expressing confidence in relation to operating the software, William then self-rated his own levels of empathy during the pre-recorded teacher-student interactions and based those ratings on the definition of empathy as delineated on the Information Sheet. To this end, William rated a series of teacher-student interactions using the idiodynamic software concerning his empathic levels by continually ‘clicking’ on one of two arrows; the arrow pointing upwards which indicated self-perceived high levels of empathy or the arrow pointing downwards which indicated self-perceived low levels of empathy. William had to be consistently reminded to click the upwards or downwards button during this phase.

During the second phase of the intervention, the Idiodynamic Charts (Appendix D) generated from the instructor's responses during the first phase were scrutinized to determine significant drops in relation to William's self-reported levels of empathy. The output data of these charts entailed a twofold purpose: to determine the teacher-student interactions in which William presumed his empathy to be significantly low and to produce data which responded to the secondary research question defined within the Overview of the Study, i.e. to what extent do we see variation in empathy over a given period of time and if there is evidence in that a dynamic systems approach can be used to document the respective changes in levels of empathy. As such, a spike or dip depicted via William's idiodynamic line charts were counted every time there was an upward or downward trend in the idiodynamic data.

For the purpose of this study, five self-rated moments of low empathy during teacher-student interaction from each of the classroom observations were identified; one instance from the first video compilation and four instances from the second video compilation. The timings of each of these interactions were noted and later utilized for the purpose of the Intervention Survey, which required William to cue back to specified instances of self-reported low empathy (as depicted from the yielded charts) and respond to three questions that correspond to two of the research questions in the present thesis. As such, the quantitative data generated via the idiodyanmic software permitted the linking of quantitative data with qualitative interpretations in real-time.

Next, William was asked to explain each of the five interactions in light of the following: the reason for the lower self-rating, the particular emotion the learner was feeling at the time of interaction and finally, ways William's behavior could have been more effective given the recognition of the learner's emotion. William was given the option to conduct this second phase of the intervention with the researcher either in person or by email. William opted for the latter. As such, the videos were electronically delivered to him, along with an online Intervention Survey (Appendix E) which instructed the him to cue to the five specified places on each video and subsequently respond to the following enquires as thoroughly and as detailed as possible, i.e. 1.*' Why did you rate yourself low on empathy,*' 2. *'Can you name the emotion of the learner?*' and 3. *'Now what would you have done differently (given you have recognized the learner's emotion?).'* At this stage,

William was encouraged to “read” the respective student in an effort to name the particular emotion believed to be present at the time of interaction when cueing to the given teacher-student interactions.

The purpose of the first question, which requested that William review his underlying reasons for self-reported low empathy during each of the teacher-student interactions, was to permit the triangulation of the quantitative data as yielded via the his idiodynamic diagrams. The rationale of the second question of the survey, which prompted William to name the emotion of the learner within the given teacher-student interaction, was to have him fulfill the mindful practice of decoding learner emotion and subsequently determine to what extent the practice posed a challenge to the participant. Finally, the third question explored to what extent the participant made a conscious effort to alter his empathetic response, initially rated as low, given he had recognized the emotion of the learner at the time of interaction. Therefore, the last and final question intended to qualitatively assess how the empathy building process suggested as per this study, elicits William’s empathetic responses. In other words, the third question investigates whether the participant chose to alter his behavior in response to the learner’s emotion and subsequently, how the practice of naming learner emotion may or may not enhance teacher empathy. The three open-ended items yielded attitudinal as well as behavioral data in relation to the five teacher-student interactions reviewed by William.

The Intervention Survey elicited data which responded to the dominant research question outlined within the Overview of the Study, i.e. in what ways does retrospective empathy building, using the practice of naming learner emotions, encourage a language teacher to reassess his/her empathetic responses during given moments of teacher-student interaction.

3.1.2.4 ***Post-intervention.*** Following the intervention process, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the participant to prompt him to consider the implications of a retrospective empathy building process in relation to eliciting empathetic responses in language teachers. The interview was recorded following William’s consent.

The aim of the interview was to triangulate the data obtained from the idiodynamic charts and solicit greater in-depth, open-ended responses from the Intervention Survey. The semi-guided aspect of the interview served to permit flexibility, however, the general

framework of the interview elicited William's response to the intervention's effect on enhancing his empathetic responses and the extent to which the practice served as a viable means of empathy development. Re-listening to the words William expressed during the interview phase added to the layered interpretations of the quantitative and qualitative data that was collected via the idiodynamic software and the Idiodynamic Survey.

3.2 Evaluation of Results

Responses to the Background Survey and Toronto Empathy Questionnaire were qualitatively and quantitatively assessed. The output data of the idiodynamic charts were quantitatively reviewed and qualitatively triangulated with the responses to the Intervention Survey as well as the post-intervention interview to determine emerging patterns/or themes. The data collected from the Intervention Survey and post-intervention interview were qualitatively reviewed to detect developing patterns and candidate insight respectively, which responded to the research questions presented at the beginning of this thesis. Moreover, the post-intervention interview permitted for layered interpretations in relation to the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Chapter 4: Findings and Data Analysis

The following chapter provides the findings of the data analysis obtained from William's responses to the Background Survey, input to the idiodynamic software, answers of the Intervention Survey and responses to the teacher interview. The findings yielded via the data collection means are then summarized in light of the research questions and the literature on teacher empathy.

4.1 The Background Survey

William's responses to the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire results in an empathy score of 49. Previous research using this instrument suggests that in general, scores for males range from 43.45 to 44.45, whilst females tend to score between 44.62 and 48.93. William's result indicate a higher than average score for males, thus suggesting he entered the study with greater-than-normal empathy. This heightened empathic sensitivity prospectively sheds light on the nature of his responses to the Intervention Survey in which he demonstrated a predisposition to portraying affective responses that were more considerate of the learner's situation than his own. In this sense, William was likely more prone to demonstrate greater empathy while reflecting on his teaching practice than someone with a lower empathy score.

4.2 The Idiodynamic Software

One purpose of the idiodynamic software was to determine the extent to which William's self-reported levels of empathy were dynamic in nature. The bit graphs (Figure 1 and Figure 2) on the following page depict his self-reported levels of empathy in relation to the first and second classroom observation as generated via William's self-rankings.

The vertical axis indicates the extent to which William rated his empathy as high (i.e., positive; 0 to 12) or low (i.e., negative; 0 to -8). The higher the response rate, the higher the participant's self-reported level of empathy and the lower the response rate, the lower the participant's self-reported level of empathy. The horizontal axis indicates the time of the participant's response in seconds or more specifically, the moment William rated a given instance of teacher-student interaction as per the video observation.

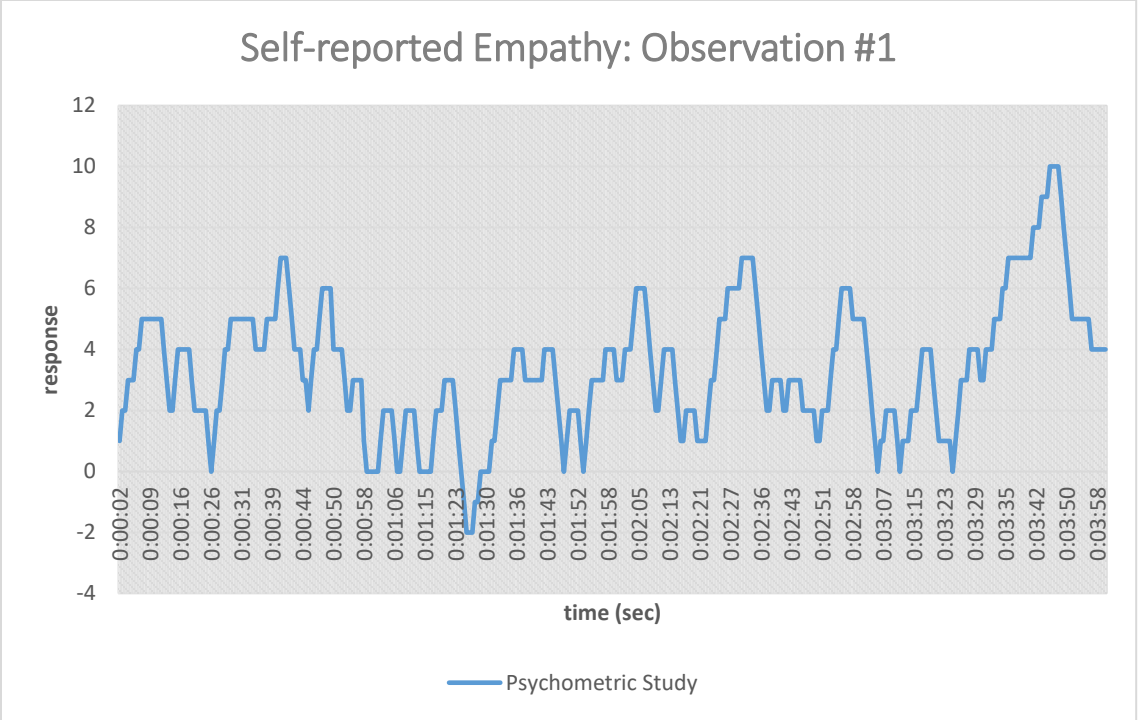

Figure 1. Self-reported Empathy during Classroom Observation #1

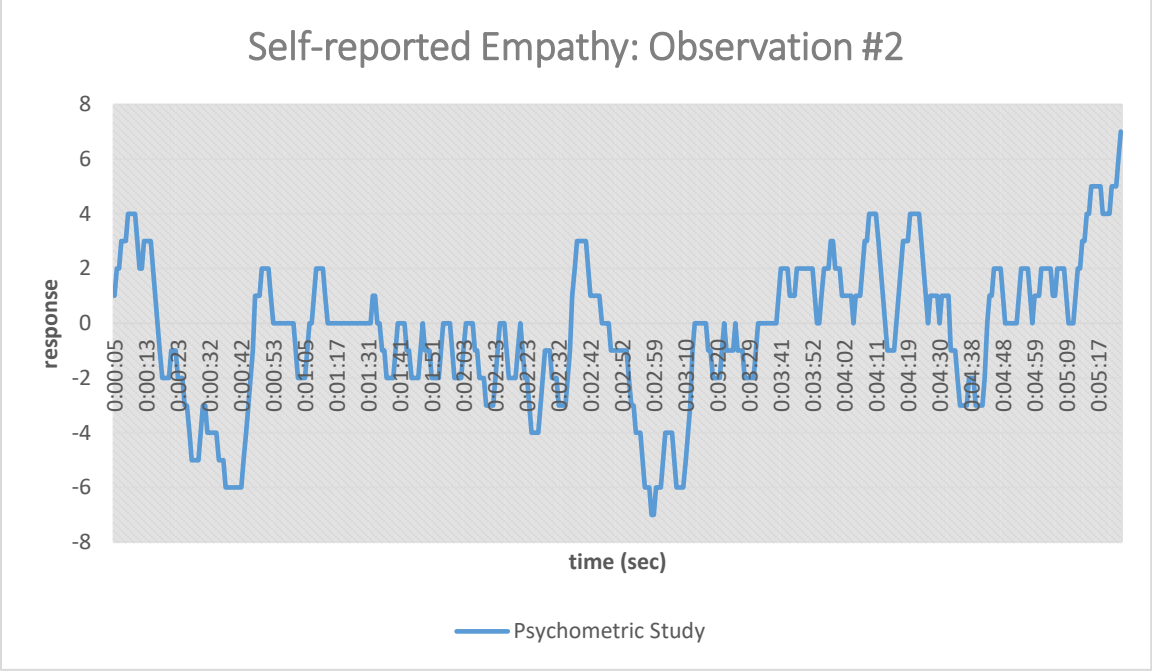

Figure 2. Self-reported Empathy during Classroom Observation #2

The vertical axis indicates the extent to which William rated his empathy as high (i.e., positive; 0 to 12) or low (i.e., negative; 0 to -8). The higher the response rate, the higher the participant's self-reported level of empathy and the lower the response rate, the lower the participant's self-reported level of empathy. The horizontal axis indicates the time of the participant's response in seconds or more specifically, the precise time the participant rated an instance of teacher-student interaction within the video compilation.

As illustrated in Figure 1, William's self-reported level of empathy dropped at approximately 1 minute and 19 seconds to approximately 1 minute and 29 seconds before increasing once more indicating a professed lack of empathy during this teacher-student interaction from a positive response rating of 3 to about -2. Figure 2 indicates greater variance in relation to levels of empathy with four instances of self-reported levels of low empathy or drops. These occurred between 0:00:10 to 0:00:37; 0:02:19 and 0:02:35; 0:02:50 and 0:03:03 and 0:04:31 and 0:04:40.

4.3 The Intervention Survey

The results of the Intervention Survey related to the primary research question, i.e. how does retrospective empathy building (via naming learner emotions), prompt the language teacher to reassess his empathetic responses during moments of teacher-student interaction. The below summarizes William's responses to each drop on the respective charts while answering the three following questions:

1. Why did you rate yourself low on empathy?
2. Can you name the emotion of the learner?
3. Now what would you have done differently?

4.3.1 Classroom observation #1: video cue 1 *(0:01:19 – 0:01:29).* In relation to the first question, William's self-reported lack of empathy directly responded to an instance where he challenged a particular student's mobile phone usage in class. When William enquired about what was on the phone and the student responded with "nothing important," William "sarcastically echoed the student's words." In response to mobile phone usage in the classroom and his subsequent low rating of the incident, he said:

> The mobile phone seems to have become the bane of many teacher's lives in that we cannot really compete with its attraction to many of the students and, for those

like me who do not want to place an outright ban on things in class, this can be problematic… Perhaps the negative rating I awarded was due to the negative feelings I get when I see students in class on social media or playing games rather than concentrating on the lesson.

In relation to the second question of the survey, i.e. what is the emotion of the learner, William named the student's emotion as 'embarrassed.' He said:

> He's embarrassed but not overly so as I have not challenged him loudly in front of the whole class. My voice has been low and only Y, sitting next to him, has even noticed our exchange. He looks slightly ashamed at having been caught out, but not actually bothered.

Finally, in response to the third question, i.e. what he would have done differently, William contemplated his original reaction to the student and accentuated the manner in which he discreetly and personally managed the situation and as such, he reassessed his initial low rating of empathy. The participant wrote: "He had been doing something he knew he really shouldn't have and I had called him up on it, but quietly and personally. I think in doing it this way I was actually showing empathy."

4.3.2 Classroom observation #2: video cue 1 *(0:0:10 – 0:0:37).* William explained the student had just asked about their academic essay results, which the instructor had yet to mark. As a result, he presented a "long and probably unnecessary" explanation as to why this may be, thus clarifying the low self-reported empathy. He said:

> I had to explain how, with forty two students and an average of twenty minutes spent marking each essay, I had not marked their essays… I do not like marking essays – I find it hard and often quite depressing. I feel that I MUST give full and comprehensive feedback on each piece of writing so that the student will be able to learn from their mistakes and become better writers yet when I hand them back all too many of them just glance at the grade and then put them away, ignoring all the careful corrections of spelling, punctuation and form, an all the suggestions for improvement. If I have essays that I have not marked yet, I tend to spend the day with a constant, nagging guilt that I have not done them…

Furthermore, responding to his low rating, William continued:

> I'm trying to teach reading and this kid brings up the writing… I'm not thinking this kid is worried because he wants to know his result because he wants to get better at writing… I'm thinking I haven't had time to mark them all. I think I'm being defensive because I don't need to be telling them this all the time… I was wrapped up in my own emotions. With him in particular I was annoyed because his attendance isn't great, he doesn't do homework and I made him write one essay and he's complaining that I haven't instantly marked it.

In relation to the emotion of the learner, William identified the student as 'unhappy' and/or 'worried.' He said *'the student seems unhappy that I have not corrected all the essays yet. He also seemed surprised when I said I spent twenty minutes on each essay. He shakes his head dismissively at my excuses.'* Finally, in response to what William would have done differently, the instructor explained that he should have responded to the student's query about the status of his essay in a manner that addressed the underlying emotion of the learner, i.e. of worry. In retrospect, he believed the student was genuinely concerned about his work because he [the student] wanted to improve his academic writing skills. William revealed that he should have not accentuated the inconveniences he personally experiences towards the process of marking academic writing. Instead, he would have taken the learner's emotion as one of concern into account, deflecting his response away from his own disposition towards the grading and reaffirmed that the papers will be marked and returned as soon as possible. He said:

> Anyway, in this particular case I marked myself low for empathy because rather than show concern for a student who wants to know their grade for their latest piece of writing, and acknowledge their worry about how their writing skills may be developing, I seem to be more concerned about defensively justifying my lack of progress in getting the essays marked. My tone of voice shows my exasperation with the situation. I cut off the student saying "As I said on Thursday …" signaling my irritation on being called up on the fact that I had not spent my whole weekend marking their essays.

4.3.3 Classroom observation #2: video cue 2 *(0:02:19 – 0:02:35).* William admits that he is uncertain of the underlying reason for the low rating in relation to the empathy he reported as he idiodynamically rated his teaching. He remarked: 'I'm not sure why… I

was checking to see if they had done the homework. One of them had done a bit. I think I seem quite empathetic with the students here.' The emotion of the learner at the time of interaction according to the instructor, is contentment, and in terms of what William would have done differently, he said he does not necessarily think he would have done anything differently.

4.3.4 Classroom observation #2: video cue 3 *(0:02:50 – 0:03:03).* William attributed his low self-rating to his "contemptuous" response to two students' usage of their mobile phones during a structured classroom activity. He said:

> One student was on his phone (again with the phones) instead of working on the reading activity, while the other had turned up for class yet again without a book. I was trying to get them to actually do some reading and asked them "don't you care? Do you want to pass IELTS?" as a way of getting them to concentrate on the reading and not waste time on their phones. Although I was quite light-hearted and joking with them, I was also a bit dismissive.

In relation to the emotions of the learners, William suggested that the two students 'don't seem to care' and that they are 'laughing and joking.' In response to the third question, William highlighted the need to have been 'more serious' in an effort to 'reflect the seriousness of the issue and the fact that they have to pass the IELTS if they want to get into their major and continue as students.' Instead, William maintained that he treats their lack of effort 'as a joke.'

4.3.5 Classroom observation #2: video cue 4 *(0:04:31 – 0:04:40).* During the final teacher-student interaction, William saw himself as having to manage yet another instance of phone usage in the classroom. He said:

> As the video shows, I look out and see the same student on his phone again rather than paying attention to the lesson and my whole body slumps. As I watch myself looking so exasperated with once again having to fight for a students' attention against the irresistible allure of the mobile phones, watch my body slump in frustration…I'm physically shaking my beard and it's kind of a negative thing to do… Please, I put you in groups, you're working on this reading activity and what are you doing? You're on the phone, you're having fun but not fun from English, fun from phone. I marked myself down because I was being snarky. I can hear the

> irritation in my voice, I think that's why I reacted faster [in response to William's rate of clicking.]

In response to the second question, i.e. naming the emotion of the learner, William decoded the student emotion at the time of interaction as 'fun.' The participant elaborated by suggesting that whilst the student may be 'having fun,' it is not necessarily the 'type of fun' that will help him improve his English skills or similarly enhance his chances of passing the IELTS. Finally, William maintained that he would not have changed his response to the situation. He said:

> Unlike some of my colleagues, I have made a decision not to ban the use of phones in class as I believe they can be useful at times. However, this is a decision I have to live with and it does mean that some students will abuse it.

4.4 Teacher Interview

The aim of the teacher interview was to triangulate the quantitative data and qualitative data obtained from the participant's idiodyamic data generated via the idiodynamic software and the Intervention Survey. The interview prompted more open-ended feedback in relation to William's experience as well as highlight potential themes. The interview was semi-structured and entailed questions similar in nature to the following:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a naturally empathetic person or do you feel you have to make a concentrated effort?
2. How did you decode students' emotions during the intervention (e.g. via facial expressions, body language etc.)?
3. Are there instances when you have to be more empathetic during classroom interaction?
4. Do you think that by neglecting the corrective processes in relation to determining the accuracy of your judgment in real-time, the dynamic nature of empathy is squandered?
5. Did you feel that the practice of emotional decoding or 'naming emotions,' during teacher-student interactions was challenging?
6. Do you see yourself implementing this practice during teacher-student interactions in the future?
7. Did you feel that the intervention facilitated or enhanced your own empathy? How?

When asked if he presumed himself to be empathetic by nature, William asserted that given the thirty four years of language teaching experience he possesses, if he was not empathetic with his students then he may not have necessarily remained within the profession for that many years. He said:

> It seems to work [on being empathetic.] Students seem on the whole to respond well and learn so I think hopefully what I'm doing is empathetic… I do feel emotions and I do recognize them in others… Although I do use humor, I try never to be cruel.

Furthermore, when asked how he decoded the emotions of the learners, William indicated that he assessed the use of non-verbal cues such as level of interest and 'looking into the eyes of learners' to gauge whether the students are engaged or beginning to drift away. He goes on to assert that emotional decoding is a natural part of the teaching process in that the teacher is consistently asking if he is talking at them or engaging them. William sheds further light on this by highlighting the importance of 'reading the room' and maintaining it is an integral component to teaching.

In relation to instances in which William believes it is necessary to show greater empathetic willingness, he referred to the fact that in addition to preparing them for their majors, he is also prepping them for life outside of the classroom. Using the influence of American culture to illustrate – which he claimed his students portray a keen interest in-- the participant explained that if these students were to travel to the United States, the inappropriate use of language could potentially be "life-threatening." In this sense, William asserted that he is making an effort to empathize in that he wants them to be able to go out and understand that language and behavior have consequences.

When questioned about the corrective process with respect to the dynamic nature of empathy, William indicated that it is relatively important within a classroom context. For instance, he stated that in the event that he 'got the empathy wrong' or, 'read the situation wrong,' and the learner subsequently felt aggrieved, then he would make a point to talk to the student after class and subsequently manage the situation – especially if there is a 'physical manifestation' in that he can clearly see that he has upset the learner by their respective reaction.

In terms of the practice of naming learner emotion, William explained that mindfully looking at the faces of the learners in an effort to work out and subsequently name their emotions poses certain challenges. For instance, he stated that at times it can be difficult to physically see the faces of the learners, which can stem from physical barriers such as those who wear caps or simply due to the physical position of the student within the class that can prevent the instructor from distinctly seeing their faces.

When William was asked whether he foresees himself implementing the practice of naming learner emotion in the future, he replied:

> I'd like to think it is something that I automatically do without having to put a name to it. However, putting a name to it might actually help. So for instance, with the kid asking about their essay marks at the beginning of the class, maybe I could have said 'look, I know you are worried and I know you want to see your writing. I promise, I'll have it done' and if I named it [the emotion] and saw that he was genuinely worried because he knows what he wrote instead of thinking 'poor me' and complaining about my hard life, it would have definitely have been a useful practice.

Finally, in response to whether the intervention can prospectively facilitate teacher empathy, William asserted that he does in fact believe the empathy building process can expedite empathy and that whilst empathy training was not a part of his own teacher training experience, the current intervention could be relatively beneficial to the CELTA course for instance, in terms of presenting a module on empathy training. He goes on to say that looking at empathy and being able to read learner emotions is hugely useful for teachers and that he would like to think it is an area teacher training programs are currently looking into.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

4.5.1 The idiodynamic software. The charts generated via William's input of self-reported levels of empathy during teacher-student interaction indicate a series of spikes and dips in the participant's idiodynamic ratings. As can be depicted from Figures 1 and 2, there is considerable diversity in terms of the patterns of change in the participant's self-reported empathy. William showed high ratings of empathy, with the peak obtaining a response rate of 10 during the first classroom observation and approximately 7 during the

second classroom observation. In addition, William also indicated low self-reported levels of empathy of -2 during the first classroom observation and approximately -7 during the second classroom observation. Most of William's dips pertain to his response to mobile phone usage within the classroom. William permitted students to keep their phones during the lesson; however, he consistently rated his empathetic responses to the classroom management issue as low. This may stem from William's personal attitude towards the perceived hindrance of mobile phones on student learning which in turn translates into 'negative reactions' from him. This will be discussed in greater detail later.

The data generated via the idiodynamic method provide evidence as to the efficacy of using it to measure the empathy of language educators on a moment-to-moment basis and with triangulated quantitative and qualitative data. The results of William's idiodynamic charts indicate that empathy does not transpire at a determinate point in time but instead progresses dynamically over a specified period. Therefore, the construct of empathy appears to be part of an incessant and complex system in which levels of empathy evolve or alter from one moment to the next.

In addition, Main (2017) discusses the corrective process in relation to empathy, i.e. the notion that empathy entails more than a one-time judgment of another's emotion in that an inaccurate interpretation of the emotion necessitates corrective action, which further manifests the inherently dynamic nature of the concept. William carried out the practice of a corrective process and as such validates the very dynamic nature of the notion of empathy during the teacher interview. William discussed his response to 'getting the empathy or the situation wrong,' especially in the event of a physical manifestation in which the learner appeared to be physically aggrieved, by accentuating the corrective steps he took, i.e. to communicate with the student after the class. This suggests William is consistently exploiting the facial, postural and emotional cues of his students' to determine the accuracy of his interpretations (Main, 2017).

4.5.2 The intervention survey. A review of William's responses to the three questions posed in the Intervention Survey indicate that the retrospective empathy building process can affect the empathetic responses of language teachers in that, based on the reading of the learner's emotion, William altered his response to two of the instances of teacher-student interaction. Additionally, there was a discrepancy between William's

original low rating of empathy and his underlying reason for the rating during the second phase of the intervention. In other words, whilst William initially rated particular moments of teacher-student interaction as low in empathy, during a re-examination of specific teaching instances as per the instructions of the Intervention Survey, often times William reconsidered his low rating. This may suggest a lack of clarity as to what an empathetic response entails in his mind and possibly stems from the conflicting definitions of the construct in relevant literature or the negligence of past and present teacher training programs to incorporate elements of empathy training.

In relation to the first instance of low self-reported empathy, i.e. classroom observation #1: Video cue 1 (0:01:19 – 0:01:29), whilst the participant initially marked himself low, when probed on whether he would have altered his response after naming the emotion of the learner, he highlighted the manner in which he discreetly and personally approached the student who happened to be using his mobile phone. William therefore commended his response and communicated contentment with the 'quiet' nature of the interaction.

Reading the emotion of the learner prompted William's realization that his pedagogical response was, in fact, appropriate. Although he noted the student was "slightly ashamed," he maintained that he was "not actually bothered." Thus, despite the fact that William did not alter his response in light of naming the emotion of the learner, the practice did bring about a heightened awareness of the effectiveness of his response to an interaction he originally rated as low in empathy. Had the participant not been subject to the intervention, this cognizance may have not been brought forth in the manner that it did.

Another look at William's self-reported levels of empathy revealed that the majority of his dips were in relation to the inappropriate use of students' mobile phones during classroom-based activities. It is possible that William rated these interactions as low as a result of the adverse emotions that such instances personally brought forth in him. For instance, he explicitly indicated that 'seeing students in class on social media' triggered negative feelings. As such, William may have subconsciously presumed that all of his reactions to the students' use of mobile phones were instances of low teacher empathy.

However, in spite of William rating instances of interaction in relation to students' phone usage as low in empathy and opting not to alter his response to the above pedagogical

situation, he nonetheless demonstrated a greater awareness of what an empathic response entails. In other words, there is a realization that an empathic response relates to the appropriateness of the response in light of the emotion of the learner involved. Irrespective of the dip in William's idiodynamic chart, a second observation of the incident through the lens of empathy and subsequently, learner emotion, drew his attention to the communicative nature of the interaction and the confidence that 'calling a student out for wrong-doing, but quietly and personally' is in fact an effective empathetic response to a perceived negative situation.

During the second instance of teacher-student interaction, i.e. classroom observation #2: video cue 1 (0:0:10 – 0:0:37), William acknowledged the learner's emotion (i.e. 'unhappy'/'worried') and his observed ineffectiveness in responding to the student, who enquired about the marks of a submitted academic essays. William made a conscious note of the 'defensiveness' of his response, which he maintained was triggered by an internal dislike towards the process of correcting as a whole. He explored this in greater detail during the interview when he indicated that he should have recognized the emotion of the learner as 'worried' in retrospect. He said:

> Maybe I could have said 'look, I know you are worried and I know you want to see your writing. I promise, I'll have it done' and if I named it [the emotion] and saw that he was genuinely worried because he knows what he wrote instead of thinking 'poor me' and complaining about my hard life, it would have definitely have been a useful practice.

William's response in the aforementioned scenario reflects the theory of empathy as a means of consciously exposing the affective or psychological state of another and offering an affective response that is more appropriate to the other's situation, than one's own (Hoffman, 2000). This is given he explicitly recognized his reaction to the student in the video was reflective of his own emotions. His response in retrospect, would have entailed answering to the emotion of the learner and as such delineating a reply more appropriate to the learner than to himself. In this instance, William showcased empathy in-action.

The third instance of teacher-student interaction which prompted a dip in the idiodynamic chart, i.e. classroom observation #2: video cue 2 (0:02:19 – 0:02:35), was in

reference to William's interaction when checking on the completion of a student's homework assignment. However, similar to his response to classroom observation #1: video cue 1 (0:01:19 – 0:01:29), William was uncertain to the underpinning reason for the low self-reported empathy. When he cued to the video during his second observation of the instance, he reassessed the interaction and subsequently maintained to have been 'quite empathetic' – thus discrediting his initial self-reported rating.

Changes in William's self-reported empathy levels may be attributed to his focalized and intentional assessment of the instances as per the instructions of the Intervention Survey, in comparison to his first more fleeting observation of the interaction. This is as William studied instances of teacher-student interaction in light of the emotion learners may have been experiencing during the given interactions. In relation to the initial observation, William simply rated moments of teacher-student interaction concerning his perceived level of empathy devoid of an explicit set of guiding questions such as the three posed in the Intervention Survey, which William responded to while cueing to given clips. In this sense, it may be that the learner's emotion was not part of the participant's judgement process when initially scoring his empathic responses. William's misjudged ratings of empathy as a direct consequence of neglecting the emotion of the learner during the interaction brings about important implications. For instance, a teacher can initially presume a pedagogical response to any given teacher-student interaction to be high in empathy. However, in reassessing an interaction in light of the emotion of the learner, the teacher may deduce the response to be on the lower end of empathy. Without a thorough reexamination of the given interaction with an emphasis on the learner's emotion, the teacher may continue to apply similar pedagogical responses in moments of teacher-student interaction mistakenly trusting they are endorsing practices of teacher empathy. Such a situation depicts a reverse of that which occurred with William during the intervention in that he misinterpreted low self-reported ratings of empathy. Nonetheless, a retrospective empathy building process which utilizes learner emotion and occurs over the teacher's own pedagogical practice, may facilitate a deeper understanding of what the construct of empathy entails and as such, guides the teacher towards practicing empathy in-action.

In the third interaction, i.e. classroom observation #2: video cue 3 (0:02:50 – 0:03:03), William encountered yet another instance of mobile phone usage during class.

William indicated that whilst he had been "dismissive" during the encounter, he should have responded to the two students' nonchalant attitude more seriously to convey the consequences and seriousness of their lack of effort. William's desire to communicate the gravity of the situation to the students in a 'non-dismissive' way presumably depicts a greater empathic willingness on his part. According to Tettegah and Anderson (2007), teacher empathy is the capacity to express concern and recognize the perspective of the student (Tettegah & Anderson, 2007). A reflection of the above mentioned scenario prompted William's concern for the students' behavior in relation to their learning and had him contemplating a response that may have communicated his apprehension to his learners.

Moreover, according to Cooper (2007), three types of empathy are present in an educational context; fundamental, profound and functional. The first type contains key characteristics necessary for the initiation of a relationship (e.g. adopting a non-judgmental approach, attentiveness, carful listening, portraying signs of interest). The second type entails a deeper understanding between the teacher and the students and includes the capacity of the teacher to demonstrate personal levels of concern, which in turn, facilitates more meaningful relationships. Finally, the last type, functional, is primarily seen within larger classrooms where the teacher is incapable of developing personal and individual connections with each student.

In the mobile phone instance, it can be argued that William demonstrated the second type of empathy, i.e. profound, in that he demonstrated personal concern for students' learning at an academic level. He said 'I should have reflected the seriousness of the issue and the fact that they HAVE to pass to if they want to get into their major and continue as students at the university.' William named the emotion, i.e. 'indifferent' and recognized the value of accentuating the seriousness of students' actions in the hopes that this would prompt a more positive response towards the learning process, as opposed to his initial reaction which entailed a combination of both dismissiveness and lighthearted humor. Despite the learners' indifferent attitude, the alternative pedagogical response, which stemmed from naming the emotion of the learners, illustrated that whilst the learning process may not be a 'priority to them,' it remained a serious concern to the teacher. As

such, the retrospective empathy building process permitted William to practice profound empathy.

Finally, the last teacher-student interaction, i.e. classroom observation #2: video cue 4 (0:04:31 – 0:04:40), showed William responding to another incident of inappropriate mobile phone usage during the lesson. Despite William's claim that he made the decision to not ban mobile phone usage, he must subsequently 'live with' the respective consequences and would therefore have not changed his response to the interaction. He did indicate, however, that he was "being snarky" and could hear the "irritation" in his voice. In addition, although William chose not to alter his response, he recognized the negative emotions that the situation elicited. This awareness may prompt William to shift his attention away from the adverse emotions which arise in instances of mobile phone usage in the classroom and towards an emphasis on the emotion of the learner instead.

In reference to William's response to whether the intervention can facilitate teacher empathy, he positively discussed the intervention's capacity to be utilized as part of a module on empathy training for pre-service and in-service teachers. In addition, he asserted that the awareness of teachers in relation to empathy and reading learner emotion is a vital component of the teaching process. However, as the results of the Intervention Survey indicated, the William's decision to alter his response to a pedagogical interaction with low self-reported empathy after naming the emotion of the learner, was not always made. In other words, William showed that the process of emotional decoding did not always lead to a change in response or more specifically, the elicitation of empathetic responses. On the other hand, the intervention revealed that whilst an alternative empathic response was not always indicated, there was a heightened awareness of his empathy.

It is possible that William could not clearly identify what an empathetic response in a learning situation looks like. This is evident from the questioning of his self-ratings when he reexamined the same instances of teacher-student interactions. However, it is important to note that this could have been attributed to the unforeseen effects of naming learner emotion as per the requirement of the second phase of the intervention. In other words, whilst initial observations of teacher-student interactions led to low self-reported ratings of empathy, second-time observations of the same given moments required William

to decode the emotion of the learners' and based on these interpretations, William may have subsequently opted to change the initial low rating.

Another possible explanation for the misjudgment in relation to initial ratings of empathy may be due to the nature of the particular interaction. As seen, William stated that inappropriate usage of mobile phones during classroom activities stirred up negative feelings in him. This may have caused him to rate instances of teacher-student interacting during such moments as low in empathy as a result of an underlying assumption in that his response was not empathetic in nature. However, as evidenced upon reassessing such interactions, William did not always alter his response and instead, concluded that he actually was practicing empathy.

According to Warren and Hotchkins (2015), teachers negotiate the exploitation of empathy in their interactions with students by conducting different personal and professional adaptations in an effort to produce the most favorable result for the students involved. Whilst William did suggest certain adaptations in his responses to given instances of teacher-student interactions, this was inconsistent. The inconsistency may have been due to the unanticipated effects of naming learner emotion on judging the relevance of a positive or negative empathetic response or indicative of a general lack of coherency in what an empathetic response does or does not entail in William's mind. As literature shows, there is no universally agreed upon definition of the construct of empathy. This could have impacted William's capacity to accurately diagnose moments of positive empathic responses during teacher-student interaction. Nonetheless, the retrospective empathy building process enhanced William's awareness of learner emotion and highlighted the effects of mindfully decoding learner emotion on his empathic responses.

4.6 Summary of Findings

This thesis highlighted the gap between the benefits of teacher empathy as outlined in literature and the need for an empathy building practice/process which serves as a means for empathy development in teachers. Findings indicated that even though teacher perspectives toward empathic teaching were positive, teachers may not actually engage in systematic or evidence-based empathy building practices. In addition, there is a seeming lack of clarity with regards to the definition of the construct of empathy in teaching, which

may confound teachers and prevent them from exploiting empathy development practices. This thesis generated the following responses in relation to the outlined research questions:

1. **How does retrospective empathy building, using the practice of naming learner emotions, encourage a language teacher to reassess his/her empathetic responses during given moments of teacher-student interaction?**

William's responses indicated that empathy building practices can facilitate the empathic willingness of language teachers. This is depicted by William's adaptation of his responses toward two of the five instances of teacher-student interaction. Moreover, the practice of naming learner emotion prompted William to reexamine his self-reported empathy. This was exemplified by William's cross-examination of self-reported low empathy when naming learner emotion in relation to three instances of teacher-student interaction. At best, the retrospective empathy building practice of the present study possibly solidified William's conception of what an empathic response represents, signified by how the practice of naming learner emotion can be integral to empathic teaching and presented a means for prompting empathy in-action in the context of the classroom.

2. **To what extent do we see variation in empathy over a given period of time and is there evidence in that a dynamic systems approach can be used to document changing levels of empathy?**

The results of the idiodynamic graphs indicated a series of spikes and dips in relation to the participant's self-reported empathy during instances of teacher-student interaction across two separate classroom observations. This suggested William's empathy was continually in motion and contingent on external as well as internal variables (e.g. the particular attitudes or behaviors of students and/or the negative dispositions of the teacher towards a given situation etc.). As such, the findings portrayed the dynamic nature of the construct of empathy and the capacity of a dynamic systems approach to document these variations.

3. **To what extent can retrospective empathy building concerning pedagogical practice on a moment-to-moment timescale serve as a viable means of empathy development?**

Despite William's higher than average Toronto Empathy Questionnaire score and the assertion in that naming learner emotion is a practice he "automatically" does "without putting a name to it," the intervention nonetheless supported him in critically reviewing self-reported pedagogical responses low in empathy, practicing emotional decoding, and contemplating more empathetic responses toward the learners in turn.

Moreover, whilst William indicated that he "habitually reads the room," he nevertheless confessed to certain challenges pertaining to the practice of naming learner emotion in real-time. For instance, he said "in the teaching situation, that's completely unnatural" [in reference to mindfully naming the emotion of the learner during classroom practice]. In other words, he sheds light on the prospective complexity of implementing the practice of naming learner emotion during teaching pedagogy, which he refers to as "unnatural," in real-time. He also highlights the struggles of "just looking at the students to work out what their emotion is." This further validates the viability of the empathy building process within the current study as it permitted William to practice the naming of learner emotion concerning his own pedagogical practice at his own pace. The present retrospective empathy building process denotes a non-intrusive means to apply empathy in-action over one's pedagogical practice without the added worry of teaching. Further practice of the outlined empathy building process may allow the teacher to attain a certain level of confidence in naming learner emotion in their own time and as such, easing the transition of the practice to the actual classroom in real-time.

Moreover, whilst William explicitly revealed that the intervention enhanced his empathy, he also advocated for specific teacher training courses such as the CELTA course, to consider implementing a similar module on empathy training.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis investigated the effects of a retrospective empathy building process occurring over pedagogical practice and utilizing on learner emotion to enhance the empathic responses of a language educator. The findings indicated that an enhanced awareness relating to empathy in-action in teaching, what an empathic response entails and the interactional and social nature of empathy. Moreover, the case study participant's responses during treatment, i.e. to the Intervention Survey, suggest that the retrospective empathy process can support the facilitation of empathic responses. This is given the participant altered his pedagogical responses to two of the five selected teacher-student interactions subsequent to a review of the communication event and naming the learner emotion.

The findings therefore attested to the necessity of developmentally shifting from the broad and general conception for the need of teacher empathy to a more specific and applied conception of the theory in action (Boyer, 2010). Given the positive impact of empathy in teaching and learning as outlined in relevant literature, educators who seek positive change owe it to themselves to designate time to the evaluation, construction and reconstruction of their pedagogy through an empathic lens. Moreover, in relation to the research which suggests that in comparison to previous generations, the millennial generation is significantly less inclined to demonstrate empathic concern for others (Konrath, O'Brien & Hsing, 2011), it becomes of even more prominence to attempt to rectify the reported deficiency and ultimately set an example to others.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study is not without its limitations. The most apparent of these is in relation to the size of the participant sample. The study honed in on the experiences of an individual case study participant in an effort to collect in-depth qualitative data that would not have been possible with a large sample size. Although a larger sample may have permitted more generalizable as well as conclusive results, this study went for depth rather than breadth.

The second limitation pertains to the brief duration of the intervention period. In the event that it had been feasible to extend the duration of the intervention period thus

increasing the classroom observations, William might have been able to produce further insight in relation to the impact of the idiodynamic intervention. In addition, the familiarity of the initial intervention may have prompted William to reflect more systematically the second time round as he presumably grew more accustomed to the process.

A third limitation is related to the nature of the construct, i.e. an empathic response, which is difficult to gauge, define and measure. Therefore, the current study, which investigates how the retrospective empathy building process effects the empathic responses of the teacher may have been affected by the nature of the construct. Furthermore, the inconsistent ratings of William in relation to self-reported levels of empathy may have indicated the teacher's inability to define instances of low or high empathy, possibly stemming from the ambiguity surrounding the definition of empathy in literature as well as the lack of research which depicts the theory in action. This study may have gained from ascertaining William's capacity to report positive or negative instances of empathy of himself and others via a pilot study as well as determine the solidity of the participant's understanding of the construct.

Future research which is conducted longitudinally and includes a greater number of case study participants with contrasting Toronto Empathy Questionnaire scores may alleviate the aforementioned restraints and produce more decisive outcomes. In addition, thoroughly exploring participants' perceptions of the construct of empathy and investigating their ease in relation to examining empathic responses prior to the intervention, may yield more qualitative data. Further research should also strive to account for the perceptions of learners' in relation to what empathic teaching entails and identify the extent to which the practice of naming learner emotions positively impacts the responses of the teacher in the mind of the learner. Finally, studies which investigate the variables that may impact the dynamic nature of the construct of teacher empathy in the context of the classroom and in real-time, is needed.

5.3 Implications

The findings produced by the current study accentuate the need for explicit training or instruction in relation to developing empathy in language teachers. Whilst William claimed to be naturally empathetic and recognized the necessity for effective teaching to incorporate an empathic willingness, he nonetheless encountered challenges in decoding

the emotions of learners and in interpreting an empathetic versus non-empathetic pedagogical response. Therefore, despite a concurrence with literature in that empathic teaching is an integral component of the teaching process, William struggled to apply the theory in action. This could have been due to the fact that he had yet to be exposed to any form of empathy training through the course of his professional career.

Such training should ideally become part of preservice teacher education in which student teachers explore conceptualizations of the construct of empathy and develop a thorough understanding of its significance in teaching. In addition, the retrospective empathy building process assessed in the present study offers student teachers an opportunity to reflect on empathy-enhancement strategies such as, for instance, naming learner emotion, in an effort to cultivate their analytical and critical thinking skills. This may enhance student teachers' understanding of how empathy-development techniques work for them and help to elicit more creative and relevant pedagogical responses which build on the construct of empathy. In the present study, the retrospective empathy building tool concerns the teacher's own practice and therefore encourages self-reflection.

As teachers are explicitly trained to demonstrate greater empathy, it is likely that it will become a natural component of their pedagogy. As Gordon (2011) maintains, although empathy cannot be taught directly, it can be cultivated intentionally and akin to any other skill, it demands practice. The retrospective empathy building process outlined in the present study can provide teachers with the opportunity to practice empathetic responses based on learner emotion in various teaching moments and increasing their awareness of emotional decoding, what an empathetic response looks like, and the dynamic nature of the construct of empathy.

The findings highlight the dynamic nature of empathy. According to Main (2017), the focal point of empathy research has traditionally accentuated the internal experiences of the empathizers, which can obstruct our understanding that empathy involves an interpersonal and a relational process. Moreover, contemporary conceptualizations neglect to portray the depth of the empathic process and fail to present useful implications in terms of how individuals can learn to be better empathizers (Main, 2017). The present study indicates the empathic process is continuously evolving and is contingent on different variables such as the emotions of the students, the feelings of the teacher and/or

subconscious attitudes towards particular pedagogical issues. Empathy should not be viewed as a static trait in language education but as a social and interactive process that is not only dependent on the empathetic tendencies of the empathizer, i.e. the teacher, but on the perceived openness or resistance of the individual being empathized with, i.e. the student and how this may impact the empathetic response of the teacher (Main, 2017). Such interpretations of empathy as an interpersonal and relational process in research on teacher empathy can lead to valuable repercussions as the teacher develops a heightened awareness of how the construct can be optimized.

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Appendix A

Background Survey

Important Reminders!

As part of the IRB requirements, eligible participants are reminded to ensure that they have already completed the ***Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research Study*** sent prior to this survey and emailed it back to me. In addition, it is important to remind participants of their right to withdraw from this study at any given time. Kindly notify me if this is the case. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. I sincerely hope the experience is a positive one to you as well as your students.

Survey Title: *Background Survey*

Researcher: Alaa Tamimi, MA TESOL, AUS. Email: g00029823@aus.edu

Purpose of Study: This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements set within the MATESOL program at the American University of Sharjah. Your participation is voluntary and is deemed as consent from you to use this information solely for research purposes. All collected information will remain purely confidential. Thank you for your participation.

I. Are you currently working for an educational institution?

Yes ☐ No ☐

II. Are you a language educator?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered 'Yes' to <u>both</u> questions, please proceed to the following page. If not, thank you for your time. Your participation ends here. Kindly save your responses and email this document back to me.

III. Please complete the table below.

Background Information:

Name	
Age Range	a. under 30 b. 30-39 c. 40-49 d. 50 or over
Place of Employment (POE)	
Year/s of Teaching	
Year/s of Teaching at POE	
Current Teaching Subject/s	
Current Student Level	
Previous Teaching Experience	
Educational Qualification/s *(including any teaching certifications)*	

Appendix B

Toronto Empathy Questionnaire

Below is a list of statements. Please read each statement carefully and rate how frequently you feel or act in the manner described. Circle your answer on the response form. There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer each question as honestly as you can.

Statement		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	When someone else is feeling excited, I tend to get excited too	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal	0	1	2	3	4
3.	It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully	0	1	2	3	4
4.	I remain unaffected when someone close to me is happy	0	1	2	3	4
5.	I enjoy making other people feel better	0	1	2	3	4
6.	I have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me	0	1	2	3	4
7.	When a friend starts to talk about his\her problems, I try to steer the conversation towards something else	0	1	2	3	4
8.	I can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything	0	1	2	3	4
9.	I find that I am "in tune" with other people's moods	0	1	2	3	4
10.	I do not feel sympathy for people who cause their own serious illnesses	0	1	2	3	4
11.	I become irritated when someone cries	0	1	2	3	4
12.	I am not really interested in how other people feel	0	1	2	3	4
13.	I get a strong urge to help when I see someone who is upset	0	1	2	3	4
14.	When I see someone being treated unfairly, I do not feel very much pity for them	0	1	2	3	4
15.	I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness	0	1	2	3	4
16.	When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards him\her	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix C

Information Sheet

What is Empathy?

According to Hoffman (2000), empathy is “an affective response more appropriate to another’s situation than one’s own.” Tyler Colasante defines the notion as "the intrapersonal realization of another's plight that illuminates the potential consequences of one's own actions on the lives of others'" (as cited in Hollingsworth, Didelot, & Smith, 2003, p.146). In other words, empathy entails the ability to relate to the perspective of another and provides a means for individuals to lead compassionate and socially aware lives.

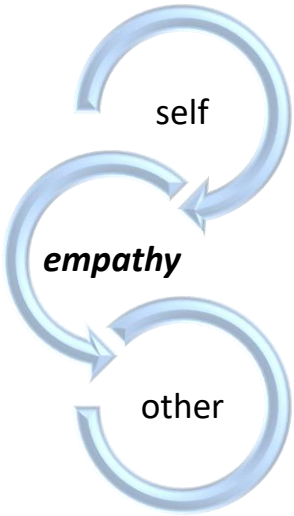

Figure 1. Correlation of Empathy between the Self and Other

Importance of Empathy in Teaching

The field of educational psychology as well as other similar domains recognizes empathy as an imperative factor in teaching and learning as well as prosocial development. According to Tettegah and Anderson (2007), teacher empathy is referred to as the capacity to express concern and recognize the perspective of the student. The empathy-attitude action model proposed by Batson et al. (2002), suggests that the induction of empathy towards a stigmatized group, does not merely augment positive attitudes towards the group but also increases their willingness to help.

A component of social and emotional learning, empathy has shown to improve learners' academic performance and lifelong learning (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Empathic teachers possess a flexibility of the mind which permits the crossing of borders and subsequently the acceptance of differences (Elena, 2014). An empathic mindset prompts the teacher to develop culturally responsive practices imperative to facilitating learning in today's increasingly diverse classrooms. In spite of this, research indicates the millennial generation are significantly less inclined to demonstrate empathic concern for others in comparison to previous generations (Konrath, O'Brien & Hsing, 2011).

Purpose of Study

The theoretical influence of empathy in teaching has been deliberated extensively in contemporary research. However, to what extent the characteristic is deemed a 'learnable skill' and by what means, appears to be limited in literature. This prospectively inhibits in-service educators from practicing empathy in-action at a didactic, meaningful level.

The present study purports to investigate to what extent empathy can be recognized as a skill that can be facilitated, developed or at best learned. Given the sheer imperativeness of effective communication in language teaching, this study encourages teachers' to facilitate their empathy by the practice of mindfully deciphering learner emotions. According to Peart and Campbell (1999), it is this ability to perceive issues from the perspective of the students' and empathize with their respective thoughts and feelings which permits the teacher to hone suitable teaching methods and effectively guide their academic and emotional development (as cited in Zhu, et al., 2019)

In an effort to induce empathy amid in-service teachers, the empathic practice endorsed in this study is to consciously decode the emotions of students during given moments of teacher-student interactions. This entails the teacher to read the student's facial expression, name the emotion of the student (e.g. 'reserved') and contemplate an appropriate pedagogical response on the grounds of the learner's emotion.

This research essentially proposes that the deliberate practice of coining students' emotional state during given moments of teacher-student interactions can potentially facilitate teacher empathy.

Important Reminder

It is important to remind participants of their right to withdraw from this study at any given time. Kindly notify me if this is the case. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. I sincerely hope the experience is a positive one to you as well as your students.

Appendix D

Idiodynamic Charts of Case Study Participant

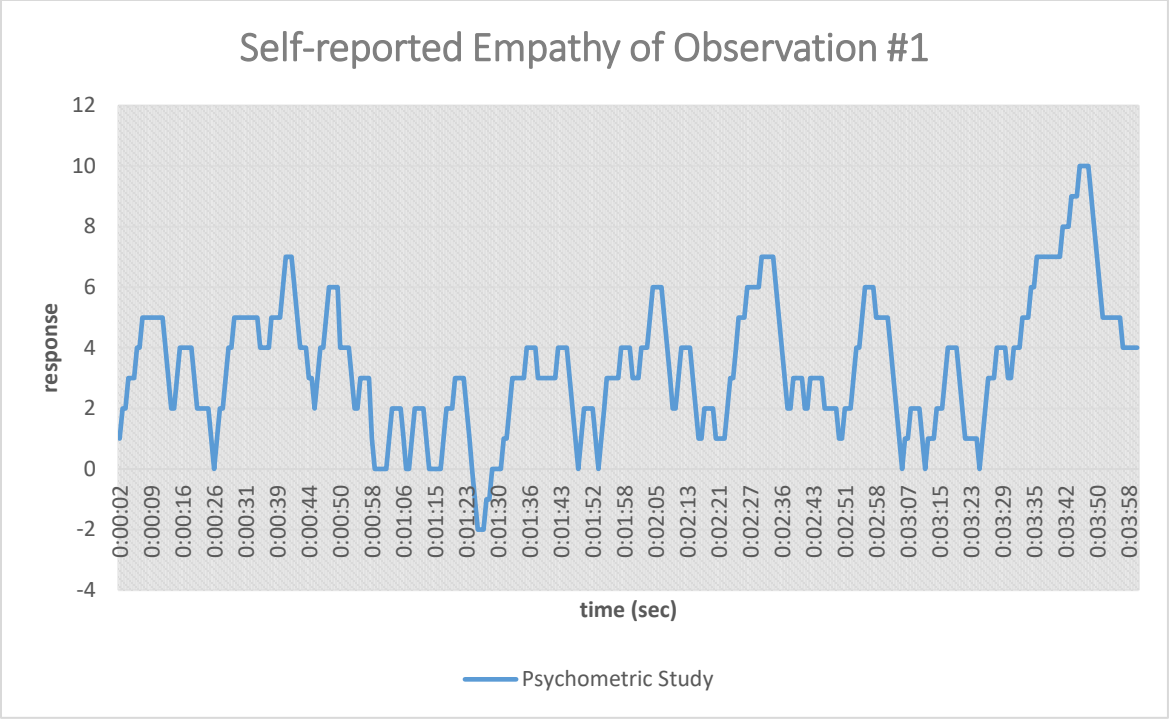

Figure 1. Idiodynamic Chart of Classroom Observation #1

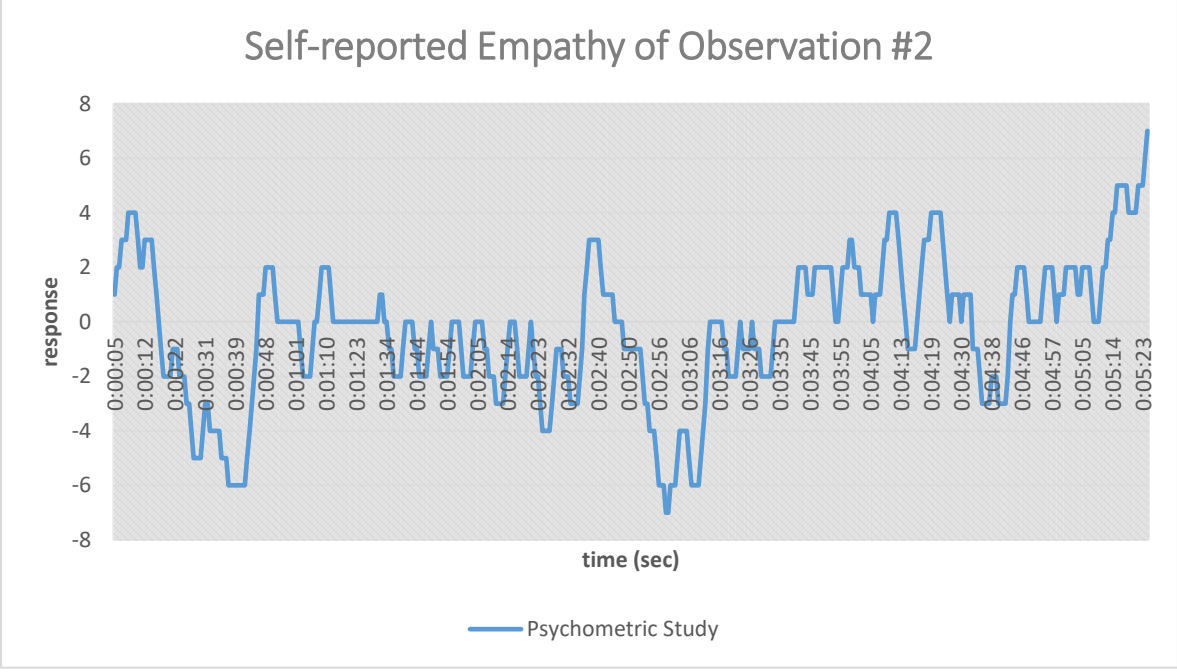

Figure 2. Idiodynamic Chart of Classroom Observation #2

Appendix E

Intervention Survey

Please cue to the five places outlined below and for ***each*** cue, kindly answer the following three questions as detailed and as thoroughly as possible in the spaces provided.

1. **Why did you rate yourself low on empathy?**
2. **Can you name the emotion of the learner?**
3. **Now what would you have done differently (given you have recognized the student's emotion)?**

In the event that there is an interaction between the instructor and more than one student, we advise that you attempt to identify the emotions of each individual *or* identify the 'vibe' of the cluster as a whole.

The video files have been sent to you electronically and are titled 'Observation #1' and 'Observation #2.' The respective charts for each classroom observation are attached to this email, for your reference.

Observation #1

Cue video at: 1:19 – 1:29

1.

2.

3.

Observation #2

Cue video at: 0:10 – 0:37

1.

2.

3.

Cue video at 2:19 – 2:35

1.

2.

3.

Cue video at 2:50 – 3:03

1.

2.

3.

Cue video at 4:31 – 4:40

1.

2.

3.

Vita

Alaa Tamimi taught English as a foreign language at an international language institute in Dubai for adults for two years. During her time at the institute, she offered courses in IELTS and TOEFL training, general language training and corporate language training.

Alaa holds a BA in Business Administration, with a major in Marketing, from the American University of Sharjah (AUS). She also holds a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) from the British Council. She is currently in the process of obtaining her MA TESOL at AUS, where she worked as a graduate research assistant.

Her main areas of interest include teacher empowerment and motivation, theories of instruction in second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingual education.