VEO Europa: Newcastle University Case Study 1

Introduction

Case Study Teacher 1 (T1) is an experienced teacher of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). She has been teaching for 13 years and holds BA and PGCE.

T1 was selected for a case study as a good example of the use of VEO for self-directed CPD and of how VEO can be used when writing assignments for professional qualifications. This case study also provides an example of how a tagset was developed in order to help a teacher with a teacher training qualification.

She is taking the Cambridge Delta course (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) – a postgraduate-level qualification http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/delta/, which is open to experienced teachers in the proficient to expert stages on the Cambridge English Teaching Framework. In order to complete the second module of the course, T1 needed to compile a portfolio of coursework, including written assignments and assessed teaching practice. T1 elected to use VEO for self-recording of lessons in order to develop her practice in line with feedback received on diagnostic observation undertaken by her Delta tutor.

The Research Context

T1 teaches English to classes of adult speakers of other languages at a community-based satellite centre of an urban college of Further Education in the North East of England. The classes are held weekly at 6pm for two hours. Classes consist of up to 15 adult learners in a flexible, modern classroom with an internet-linked computer and interactive whiteboard. Complex organisational structure of the college: rapid turnover of staff and changing responsibilities meant that VEO was not implemented in a systematic way at the college and was offered as an option for staff to pursue for CPD.

The VEO Story

T1 was recruited to the study through initial contact with the college of Further Education. Involvement in the VEO Europa project was optional and she attended two VEO training sessions.

Citing a lack of time, she worked with the Newcastle University RA Liz Hidson to develop a tag set to match her identified needs based on Delta feedback from her tutor. This was intended to allow her to focus on these areas, with the video providing both evidence of progress and material for reflection, which could feed into assignments.

3 lessons were video recorded. In her first video session, the lesson was recorded from start to finish by Liz Hidson with no live tagging. Review and reflection took place independently afterwards. In her second video, Liz Hidson used the Delta tagset to identify key episodes in the lesson. T1 reviewed these tags independently afterwards. In the third video Liz Hidson used the same tagset.

In this case it was clear that professional development was supported by VEO in that:

- VEO was used for self-directed CPD
- Usage was mapped to qualification assessment criteria
- T1 was able to review own teaching in light of tutor feedback
- T1 was able to use reflections as part of portfolio of evidence for qualification
- Lessons were recorded, then reviewed, feeding into both teaching and assignment

The main points and issues observed in relation to T1 were that: she showed willingness to be observed and engage in reflection with no obvious signs of discomfort at being observed. She was hindered by lack of institutional access to iPad or other mobile device. She cited lack of time to devote to developing VEO skills and lack of technology as issues. The varied locations for teaching (different campuses) reduced capacity.

Diagram / visual representation of the way that VEO was used
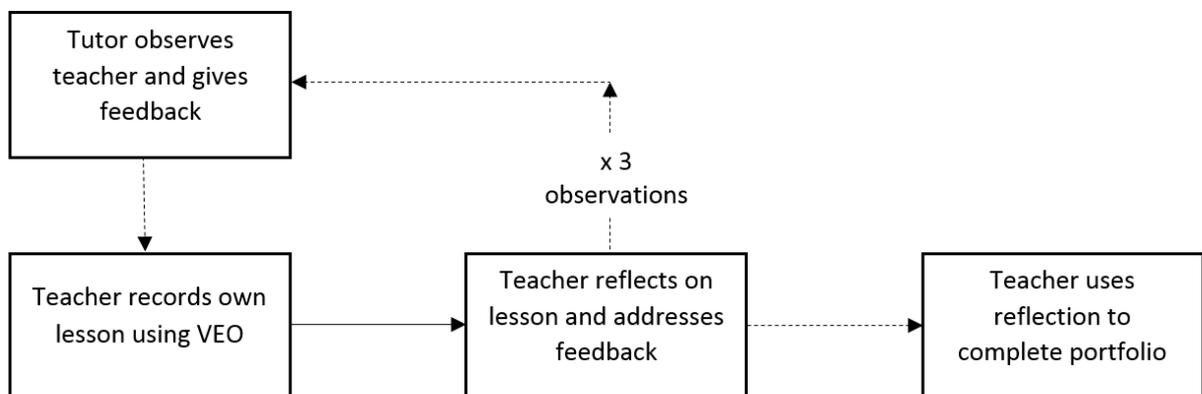
The Customised Tagset

This case study provides an example of how a tagset was developed in order to help a teacher with a teacher training qualification. The DELTA syllabus states that successful candidates will:

"7.1 Review and develop their own practice in the light of data from their own and others' experience and from specific theories of language, language learning and learning theory
7.2 Reflect critically on their own beliefs about learning and teaching and how these influence their approach to teaching
7.3 Reflect on feedback received from learners, colleagues, tutors and managers and how this is used for their own development as a teacher"

The tagset was intended to allow the teacher to develop these skills and to focus on specific areas of development. The tagset which was developed is shown below.

DELTA Tagset

- Explicit explanation of language rules/vocabulary
- Feedback on content
- Feedback on language accuracy
- Dealing with students' language queries in the session
- Opportunities for learners to record new vocabulary
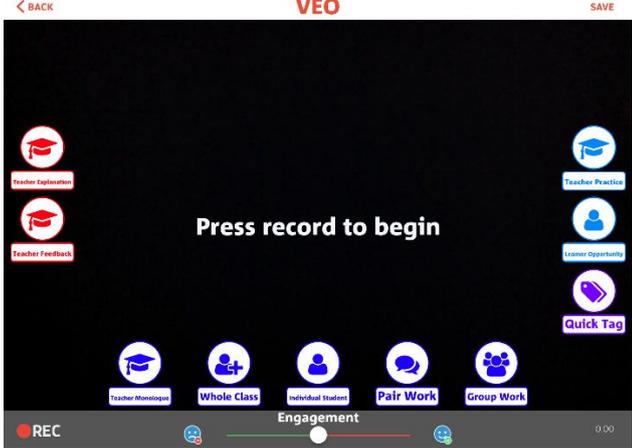- Contextualised/meaningful language practice

Left		Right

Teacher Explanation
   • **Explain: Language rules + ? -**
   • **Explain: Vocabulary + ? -**
 	
Teacher Feedback
   • **Feedback: Content + ? -**
   • **Feedback: Accuracy + ? –**
   • **Feedback: Vocabulary + ? –**
   • **Feedback: Grammar + ? –**
   • **Feedback: Pronunciation + ? -**
	Version: DELTA 1.4
	
	< BACK VEO SAVE
	
	Press record to begin
	
	● REC Engagement 0:00
		Teacher Practice
		   • **Meaningful practice + ? -**
		   • **Contextualised practice + ? -**
		
		Learner Opportunity
		   • **Learner: Record new vocab + ? -**
		   • **Learner: Language queries + ? -**
		
		Quick Tag
		   • **(Anything else you want to highlight)**

FOCUS		
Teacher Monologue	**Whole Class** **Individual Student** **Pair Work**	**Group Work**
← - - - - - - - - - - ENGAGEMENT - - - - - - - - - - →		

Figure 1: Customised VEO tagset

Figure 2: Example of VEO lesson observation

Evidence of Development

The teacher had 3 lessons recorded over a period of about 5 months and the tagset customisation facility of the VEO app proved useful in enabling the development of the targeted DELTA skills. The following points of development were noted:

T1 noted in her action plan that she needed to develop in the areas of correction and creating opportunities for meaningful language practice, providing strategies for achieving this. These two areas might initially be thought to have the potential to work against each other, in that correction typically focuses on errors of linguistic form. By contrast 'meaningful language practice' might imply that meaning and fluency would be prioritised, with linguistic errors being allowed to pass.

In the first video, there is evidence of problematic sequences involving correction of language forms:

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Extract 1
1    T:    yeah (1.3) what can you remember about the motorbike
2          (0.4)
3    L:    he uhh (1.0) drived a motorbike
4    T:    good drive or
5    L:    (unclear)
6    L:    no
7          (0.7)
8    T:    do you drive a motorbike
9    L:    no no
10   T:    wha- what would you say L (0.7) you
11   L:    i'm not driving the motorbike
12   T:    do we say drive different word not drive a motorbike
13         (0.7) what do you say for (unclear)
14   L:    ehh
15         (0.4)
16   T:    bike
17         (1.2)
18   L:    what do i (unclear)
19   T:    ss (2.3) ruh- (.) ra-
20         (5.0)
21   L:    this is beginning (unclear)
22         (0.7)
23   T:    ri- (0.5) rrr
24         (2.7)
25   L:    ride
26   T:    ride brilliant (unclear) well done ride well done
```

Here the error of collocation and tense : 'drive a bicycle' rather than 'rode' in line 3 is not corrected until line 26 and even then the infinitive form is produced rather than the past simple 'rode'. There is no further practice after line 26. Furthermore, a long break from meaningful practice has occurred to deal with a problem which did not impede

communication. The many pauses and hesitation phenomena suggest difficulty in maintaining the flow of interaction.

The repair technique here in line 4 – teacher initiation of self-repair by the student "good drive or" – does not make specific what the trouble is to be repaired and the learners are not able to perform the repair. T's subsequent attempt to clarify what is to be repaired in line 8 "do you drive a motorbike" again does not work because as we see in line 10, L takes this to be a genuine question and replies "i'm not driving the motorbike".

In retrospect, it seems that a more appropriate correction technique in this context would have been immediate explicit correction, e.g. "he rode a motorbike".

In lessons 2 and 3, by contrast, there are no further examples of such lengthy and unsuccessful repair sequences. In lesson 2, which was delivered 4 months later, we can see examples of much more economical and successful correction:

Extract 2

```
1    T:    yeah how often do you speak english on the phone

2          muhammed

3          (0.3)

4    L1:   just (0.3) one day for (1.6) one day for (1.1) whole

5          weeks

6    T:    yeah once a week maybe

7    L1:   once a week yeah

8    T:    yeah do you wanna ask saeed ask saeed (0.2) how
           often-
```

In the above extract, we notice that the error correction sequence is much shorter. It is more successful, in that there is immediate uptake from the student, and very little disruption, as evidenced by the lack of pauses or hesitation phenomena. The correction technique employed in line 6 is a very different one, namely embedded correction (Jefferson, 1987, p. 95), that is, a correction done as a by-the-way occurence in the context of a social action, which in this case is an action of agreement and confirmation. This form of correction and expansion is highly reminiscent of adult-child conversation, and the technique being used by the teacher here is often termed *scaffolding* (Johnson, 1995, p. 75). The linguistic repair is performed in a mitigated way because it is prefaced by an action of agreement and approval and a tentative "maybe" is added. Therefore, this type of embedded correction can be treated as a by-the-way matter which does not interrupt the flow of talk. We can see in line 7 that this is how L1 responds to the embedded correction, displaying uptake of the corrected phrase with a "yeah" of confirmation added.

Extract 3

1	T:	(1.8) i'm gonna give you (0.2) some numbers (0.9) okay can you match the
2		number (1.9) with the information (0.4) so four billion (.) what's four billion
3		(0.5)
4	L2:	four billion
5	L1:	four billion is phone number
6	T:	good numbers in the- number of phones in the world
7	L1:	in the- in the world
8	L2:	in the world four billion
9	T:	fantastic yeah good what's twenty

In the above extract, T has asked a pair of students to match a series of numbers to a series of pieces of information. In line 5, it is evident that L1 has matched the two correctly, but T analyses the statement "four billion is phone number" as not being sufficiently explicit or well-formed enough. Again the technique employed is embedded correction, with a "good" providing positive evaluation of the correct matching, followed by a correction of the phrase. Again we see uptake of the correction by both students in lines 7 and 8 and an absence of pauses or hesitation markers. So the correction has again been achieved economically and without disturbing the flow of activity.

So we have seen evidence of a positive change in correction practices between lessons 1 and 2. The successful introduction of embedded correction techniques means that T1 is able to both perform correction and promote meaningful interaction, thus achieving both of her targeted objectives.

Extract 4

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1    L7:  i can say (0.5) my er (0.2) worst habit (0.4)
2         (unclear) too late
3    T:   heheheh
4    L7:  heheheh
5    T:   yes (0.4) L7 perfect (0.3) my worst habit is
6         lateness
7    L7:  yeah lateness (0.3) yeah
```

In the third recorded lesson, 3 months later, learners are being asked to identify their worst habits. As L7 always arrives late for lessons s/he tries to express that in line 1, but the linguistic formatting is imperfect. After mutual laughter at the aptness of this observation, T provides positive feedback in line 5 aimed at the message and then corrects L7's turn into a well-formed clause. L7 demonstrates uptake in line 7.

In conclusion, we can see that T1 identified an area of professional practice – correction – which she wished to improve. In lesson 1 we saw an example in which the correction sequence was overlong and not very successful. By lessons 2 and 3 T1 has acquired more economical and effective repair techniques and has been able to employ them in class. The improvement appears to be a result both of input from the DELTA programme and reflection on her performance.

Data Informing the Case Study

Pre-VEO questionnaire	Complete 03/11/2016
Video 1 and transcript	Complete 08/11/2016
Video 2 and transcript	Complete 02/03/2017
Video 3 and transcript	Complete 08/06/2017
Reflection 1 and transcript	Complete: 13/12/2016
Reflection 2 and transcript	12/06/2017
Reflection 3 and transcript	12/06/2017
Interview and transcript	12/06/2017
Post-VEO questionnaire	12/06/2017
Other data	• Delta qualification specification • Customised tag set • DELTA written assignment • DELTA action plan