3 Early language learning
teacher education

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Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on teacher education for teachers of English to young learners (TEYL). Following Freeman (2009), in this chapter teacher education (TED) is understood to serve as an umbrella term, referring to the training and professional development opportunities that teachers undertake in preparation for the job of teaching (hereafter referred to as pre-service teacher education) as well as those that they undertake throughout their career (hereafter referred to as in-service teacher education). Teacher education therefore refers to both planned and unplanned learning opportunities which may take place both in and outside of the workplace.

TED has grown into an important area of inquiry within the field of teaching English language teaching, and the articulation of an English language teacher education (ELTED) strategy is increasingly commonplace in both government and institutional documentation. In part attention to and interest in ELTED reflects a growing awareness of the central role this plays in improving teacher quality, acknowledged to be a critical variable in helping students achieve learning outcomes (Hattie 2003, cited in Enever 2014). It also reflects the rapid expansion and reform of English language instruction worldwide, which is fuelling demand for competent teachers and effective approaches for their preparation and development (Richards 2008), particularly as teachers’ access to professional development opportunities is widely seen as pivotal to the success of educational innovations (Wedell 2009).

One of the most significant worldwide reforms of ELT in recent years has been the lowering of the start age of English instruction. Today English instruction is an established component of the primary school curriculum in most countries and is being offered to younger and younger learners, with recent estimates suggesting that more than 7 million teachers are engaged in the TEYL field (Knagg and Ellis 2012). Given this situation, it is not surprising that the development of a teacher workforce with the knowledge and skills to work with young learners (particularly in primary schools) is increasingly reported as a priority by policymakers and researchers alike (Enever 2014), and as a result that the need for teacher education provision targeted at these teachers is quickly becoming an important agenda.
The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed examination of the current situation regarding TED for TEYL (or TEYLTED). While TEYLTED is an important focus of a growing body of literature and research for teachers of children with English as an additional language in English-speaking countries, for reasons of space, primarily the focus in this chapter will be on a consideration of TEYLTED for teachers in non-English speaking contexts.

**Historical perspectives**

The emergence of ELTED can be seen to be closely aligned with the development of the field of foreign and additional English language teaching as a distinct professional activity. Richards (2008) argues that the earliest forms of ELTED that emerged in Europe in the 1960s were short training courses designed to equip teachers with the sorts of knowledge deemed necessary to prepare them for work in the field. Since then ELTED activity has expanded considerably worldwide, and an understanding of the scope of ELTED and what a pedagogy for TED should comprise has continued to evolve. In what follows, I will first briefly chart the shifting landscape of ELTED over the last 50 years. This can be seen to provide a useful contextual background to subsequent discussion of the comparatively recent evolution of TEYLTED in the last two decades, which is itself a response to the emergence of TEYL as a new branch of language education.

**The expansion of ELTED provision**

A growing emphasis on ELTED with its role in maintaining professional standards to ensure a well-qualified and well-prepared teaching workforce is one of the key indicators of the growing professionalization of the field of TESOL (Burns and Richards 2009), and this is reflected in the expectation in most countries that prospective English language teachers complete a formal accredited pre-service training programme typically comprising a number of content modules and a practicum component (Wright 2010). It is also reflected in the steady and growing appreciation of the importance of in-service education to practising teachers in recognition that this is crucial to maintaining the interest, motivation and creativity needed to sustain and improve the quality of professional work (Richards and Farrell 2005). In-service education may take many forms ranging from short training workshops to encouraging teachers to form informal networks, and promoting teachers' self-initiated professional development by making funding and time available for teachers to attend conferences, undertake further accredited learning and other self-directed professional development activities.

**The evolution of principles and practices underpinning an effective ELTED strategy**

Alongside this expansion of TED as an activity, there has been a gradual evolution in our understanding of the knowledge base of ELTED (Johnson 2009b). This knowledge base, or what Freeman (2009, p. 11) calls the ‘scope’ of ELTED, comprises attention to three inter-related components:

1. The content that needs to be addressed underpinned by a conception of what good teaching is and what the essential knowledge and skills of teachers are.
2. Teacher engagement or a view of how teachers learn to teach.
3. The influence of teacher education on teachers’ practice.
An examination of the historical trajectory of ELTED shows a shift away from a view of the knowledge base of ELTED as merely subject or theoretical knowledge towards an appreciation of the importance of the practical know-how that teachers accrue from their day to day experiences in the workplace. As Freeman and Johnson (1998) point out, the traditional knowledge base of ELTED has been generated from theoretical and research perspectives in the parent disciplines of applied linguistics and second language acquisition, and this has left its mark on the design of pre-service programmes in particular, which often place a heavy emphasis on theory (Wright 2010). However, a move to incorporate insights from professional learning theory in Europe and North America in the 1990s gradually led to a growing appreciation of the importance of promoting an understanding of another form of knowledge – pedagogical knowledge, or knowledge of how to teach within ELTED (Johnson 2009b) – and subsequently to appreciate the ways in which teachers transform and synthesise theoretical and pedagogic knowledge through their teaching into what Shulman (1986) calls pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). While the first two forms of knowledge represent a body of pre-existing external knowledge, PCK is seen as personal knowledge and profoundly interactional, resulting from teachers’ efforts to address practical problems in their classrooms (Kumaravadivelu 2012). The growing recognition of the centrality of PCK to effective teaching means that helping teachers develop and refine this is viewed as an important goal of ELTED (Johnson 2015).

This appreciation of the importance of PCK and the emphasis on teachers as ‘knowing professionals’ (Johnson and Golombek 2002, p. 1) resonates with and has been accompanied by a move to embrace constructivist models of teacher learning over the past two decades. These are ones that view teachers as actively engaged in a process of knowledge generation rather than merely passive consumers of knowledge produced by others and view teachers’ knowledge and skills as socially constructed as they are situated in their engagements with others in their working contexts (Johnson 2015). These perspectives have had a number of important influences on the field of ELTED as discussed below.

Firstly, they have been the stimuli for a large and growing body of research which seeks to better conceptualise teacher knowledge and understand its development and transformation. Research into teacher cognition and more recently teacher identity (e.g., Borg 2009; Miller 2009) has helped shed light on the role of beliefs, emotions, relationships with others, biography and the social worlds teachers occupy (both within and outside school) on teachers’ ways of knowing. This has added to a view of teacher knowledge as wide-ranging and has helped shape a view of teacher learning as ‘a long-term complex developmental process’ (Freeman and Johnson 1998, p. 402).

Secondly, these perspectives have been influential in shaping much of the current thinking on the purpose of teacher education and what is seen to constitute effective ELTED pedagogy. Specifically, they have focused attention on the process of teacher learning and how this can best be supported. There has been a gradual shift of emphasis away from a view of teacher education as primarily focused on equipping teachers with new ideas to be employed at a later date through the provision of top-down, expert-driven training programmes towards a view of teacher education as enabling; that is contributing to the gradual development and ongoing transformation of teachers’ own knowledge and skills (Richards 2008; Prabhu 1987). In line with the growing recognition of teachers as legitimate producers of knowledge, an enabling approach to teacher education is one that sees the role of teacher education as supporting teachers’ development and is centred on helping teachers improve what they do over time through the adoption of a reflective model of teacher education (Johnson 2009b). That is a pedagogical model which seeks to uncover teachers’ tacit
beliefs about teaching, helps them identify agendas for change and provides them with a set of research skills and strategies to investigate and improve their classroom practice (Wright 2010; Malderez and Wedell 2007).

Thirdly, the emphasis on the role of social activities and community relationships in teacher learning highlighted by these perspectives has also contributed to a growing appreciation of the importance of school-based ELTED (e.g., Richards 2008) and the value of activities such as classroom research, peer observation and working with a mentor or coach, allowing teachers to process and try out new ideas encountered in a more formal training session. Finally, given the importance of interaction to teacher learning highlighted by these perspectives, activities which require teachers to collaborate are also increasingly advocated as effective ways to support teacher learning (Johnson 2009a). Moreover, creating informal networks and professional learning communities is seen as an important priority in many contexts. While these may take place within a school, increasingly, the creation of online teacher communities is advocated as an important component of an effective ELTED strategy (Richards and Farrell 2005).

The emergence of interest in the influence of TED on teachers’ practice

Underpinning all ELTED initiatives is an assumption that teacher education will help teachers with their work, and, as such, establishing the extent to which it does is seen as an important dimension of an effective ELTED strategy, as Freeman (2009) has highlighted. Until recently, however, little explicit attention has been given to this aspect of ELTED. The acknowledgement of its importance going forward is evident in recent literature and has been heightened by the growing pressure for accountability within the current standards-driven and evidence-based culture in education (e.g., Freeman 2009; Richards 2008).

The development and evolution of TEYLTED

While the introduction of English into primary school curricula in a number of countries in western Europe started more than 25 years ago, it is arguably the dramatic increase in the numbers of teachers engaged in teaching ever younger learners, both in Europe and elsewhere, in the past 15 years that has been the main driver for an emphasis on the importance of TEYLTED initiatives in recent literature. An appreciation of the need and importance of TEYLTED is evident in part in the emergence of publications which provide training resources designed to be used by trainers and others with a vested interest in supporting TEYL teachers (e.g., Slattery and Willis 2001), as well as in setting up special interest groups within professional associations and the availability of specialist web-based resources for TEYL teachers provided by publishers and others.

Pre- and in-service TEYLTED initiatives targeted at prospective or practicing TEYL teachers are also increasingly commonplace. This is evidenced, for example, in the inclusion of specialised TEYL modules in internationally recognised entry-level certified programmes primarily targeted at first language English speaking teachers, such as those offered by Trinity House and International House. Similarly the internationally recognised Cambridge Teacher Knowledge Test (TKT) has a specialised component on TEYL, and the British Council offers a dedicated online certified programme for primary English language teachers (CiPELT). At a national level, TEYLTED provision can be seen to follow a trajectory that Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) observe is commonplace in providing support with educational reforms; namely, to initially prioritise in-service support and to move to
establish pre-service support at a later date. Thus in most countries the development of add-on short training programmes to help in-service teachers acquire basic competence in TEYL instruction is seen as a priority area. However, an observable trend in countries where TEYL has now been established for some time, such as in much of western Europe, Turkey and parts of East Asia, is the growth of pre-service TED to ensure that teachers are better prepared and trained for work with young learners from the outset, although this provision is not necessarily always targeted at TEYL teachers in particular (Enever 2014).

Critical issues and topics

As is evident from the historical overview above, while TEYLTED is now firmly established as a priority in many countries worldwide it is still very much a work in progress. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to describe a number of critical issues and topics that need to be addressed to ensure adequate and effective TEYLTED provision.

Access to TEYLTED

There is a widespread consensus that currently there is a shortage of qualified teachers to address the needs of the huge numbers of children engaged in EFL worldwide, not only in countries with relatively short histories of TEYL, such as a number of Asian countries, but also in countries where English has been part of the primary curriculum for some time (Garton 2014; Baldauf et al. 2011). Given this situation, there is clearly an urgent need to both increase TED provision at the pre-service level for teachers entering the field as well as in-service provision for teachers already engaged in TEYL. Yet in many parts of the world pre-service provision remains inadequate. In addition, while some form of inset provision is commonplace in most countries around the world, this is often limited or patchy at best, with teachers in rural areas particularly poorly served (Garton et al. 2011). Thus an urgent priority is to identify ways of increasing the availability of TED opportunities for TEYL teachers in a given setting which acknowledges and works to identify solutions to existing challenges to ensure provision is adequate and appropriate for all.

Meeting the needs of a complex TEYL teacher demographic

Another challenge is the huge diversity in the sorts of teachers currently involved in TEYL, particularly at the primary level, as large-scale transnational studies undertaken by Emery (2012) and Rixon (2013) have shown. In some contexts responsibility for delivering English teaching in primary schools is assigned to generalist or homeroom teachers. While generalist teachers may be trained primary teachers, they may need (and not have received) training in English language instruction and may also have limited English language proficiency. In many contexts specialised English teachers who have transferred from secondary schools are responsible for TEYL. While these teachers will typically have received training in additional language instruction and have a good command of English, they may not be aware of important differences between teaching older learners and children and may be unfamiliar and need support with the use of more child-friendly teaching methods. In addition, in many parts of the world a shortage of teachers means it is still not uncommon to recruit full- or part-time English speakers (both local and first language speakers) who are not qualified teachers, even in countries where TEYL is well established, such as in Europe (Enever 2014). These teachers (sometimes referred to as semi-specialists) present yet another set of training needs.
The need for specialised initial TED for TEYL teachers

Cameron argues that one widespread misconception about TEYL is that it is ‘a straightforward process that can be undertaken by anyone with a basic training in ELT’ since ‘the language taught to children only needs to be simple’ (Cameron 2001, p. xii). Undoubtedly this view contributes to the continued use of unqualified teachers in many TEYL settings and fuels the common practice of reserving specialist and semi-specialist teachers for work with older young learners. Yet the picture emerging from the growing number of accounts of child language learning (see Rich 2014, pp. 26–27, for a summary of these) highlights how TEYL is a demanding and skilled process, particularly with children in the early grades of primary school. Insights from literature and research have highlighted how TEYL teachers need to develop a distinct repertoire of teaching skills and occupational knowledge to work effectively with young learners which include, for example, careful pacing to address children’s limited concentration span and planning of short engaging activities (Cameron 2001).

These factors, alongside the fact that TEYL teachers are a critical variable in children’s English language learning and are often the key, and in some settings the only resource and source of English input (Copland et al. 2014), presents a strong case for ensuring that specialised pre-service TED is offered to TEYL teachers. Yet in many contexts (even those with a long-standing tradition of TEYL) pre-service provision for English teachers is generically targeted at all prospective teachers, whether of adults or children (Enever 2014). With respect to the preparation of general primary school teachers, while in a few contexts add-on modules are offered to TEYL teachers as part of pre-service TED initiatives, these initiatives are rare, meaning that many general primary teachers do not receive support with special and discreet teaching skills required for additional language teaching.

Better mechanisms and procedures to establish the effectiveness of TEYLTED

While an appreciation of the importance of TED for TEYL teachers means that TED initiatives of some form or another are now in place in almost, if not, all of the different contexts where TEYL is offered worldwide, little is known about the effectiveness of existing provision. More systematic attempts to understand the extent to which teachers are benefiting from and making use of knowledge and skills gained in existing TEYLTED initiatives in their classrooms are important. These can build a picture of what constitutes quality TEYLTED provision and what are the stumbling blocks to realising this, such as poorly trained teacher educators, unsupportive school cultures and teachers’ own attitudes and motivations which may impact their uptake of TEYLTED opportunities (Freeman 2009; Richards 2008).

Current contributions and research

In this part of the chapter, literature and the results of published research studies which are contributing to our current understanding of TEYLTED are considered. These include insights from recent transnational studies which reference TEYLTED as part of a broader survey of a number of aspects of current TEYL provision (e.g., Garton et al 2011; Emery 2012; Rixon 2013; Enever 2011) as well as a number of country-specific studies particularly focused on pre- and in-service TEYLTED provision, primarily undertaken in Europe and in Asia. The number of published research studies is still limited, and the fact that the vast majority of these have been published within the last 5 years is one indicator of the ways in which consideration
of support for TEYL teachers is a recent and still emerging priority. Below I present a number of cross-cutting key themes identified from my analysis of these studies.

**Existing TEYLTED provision**

One of the contributions of the large transnational studies in particular has been the development of a solid empirical base regarding the current TED provision for TEYL teachers. With respect to pre-service provision, Rixon’s (2013) survey of primary English policy and practice in 64 countries around the world highlights the general lack of attention to English language teaching in pre-service teacher education for generalist primary teachers, with only 26 of the 64 countries currently having provision for this. Several studies also provide insights into the still limited or non-existent provision of suitable pre-service education for specialist TEYL teachers in many contexts (e.g., Baldauf et al’s 2011 discussion of the situation in Asia).

In contrast, the picture regarding in-service teacher education provision appears more promising, with the results of a large-scale survey undertaken by Emery (2012) of 2,500 TEYL teachers world-wide, revealing that 85% of TEYL teachers reported that they had received some form of in-service training. However, other studies have highlighted how access to in-service provision remains a problem, with governments struggling to keep up with demand and ensuring equitable access (e.g., Zein 2016; Gimenez 2009). In addition, with regard to in-service specialised training for generalist primary teachers in particular, Rixon’s (2013) study identified that this was only in place in 27 of the 63 countries surveyed. Moreover, as Coburn (2016) has highlighted with reference to the situation in Norway, for example, what is provided often fails to meet demand.

**The importance of TED to TEYL teachers**

A number of studies highlight how the need for TEYL teacher education provision is not only a pressing concern among policy makers but is something that many TEYL teachers and students themselves identify as important. For example, 79% of the teachers surveyed by Emery (2012) indicated that they felt they would like more support, a view that was echoed by teachers in a number of country-specific studies as well (e.g., Kourieos 2011; Zein 2016; ChInh 2017).

**Insights into priority content areas for TEYLTED**

A major focus of many of the research studies identified was to uncover teacher perspectives on what sorts of knowledge and skills are needed for TEYL teachers to do their jobs effectively and what the implications of this are for TEYLTED provision. Some studies approached this explicitly (e.g., Brining 2015), while others sought to infer needs by asking teachers to stipulate what aspects of their work they found challenging (e.g., Garton et al 2011). Support needs were also identified from teacher accounts of the perceived inadequacy of pre- or in-service initiatives they had attended (e.g., Kourieos 2011). Analysis revealed widespread consensus on priority content areas for TEYL provision from these different lines of inquiry.

1. **Support with practical challenges faced in the classroom**

A priority area for teachers is support with practical challenges they face (e.g., such as dealing with differentiation and identifying suitable resources). Given that, as Kourieos
(2011, p. 170) noted in her study, many teachers operate with a ‘solutions-orientated’ perspective with regard to the purpose of TEYLTED, an emphasis on this is perhaps not surprising.

2 Support with the theoretical underpinnings of TEYL

The importance of providing teachers with a grounding in key principles of child learning is also implicit in many of the research studies I reviewed which focus on the difficulties teachers face. For example, Brining’s (2015) study highlighted the concerns of the mainly first language speaking teachers in his study whose entry-level certified programme had placed emphasis on the development of skills and techniques for TEYL and very limited attention to important principles of child development and language learning. Other studies highlighted that teachers found much of the theoretical content they received irrelevant and did not target their needs as TEYL teachers (Kourieos 2011; Zein 2016). Taken together, these findings suggest that inclusion of relevant theoretical content in TEYLTED provision is important in the preparation and ongoing support of TEYL teachers.

3 Support with language proficiency and language awareness

There is widespread recognition in the literature on the importance of ensuring that TEYL teachers receive adequate support with English proficiency and knowledge about the English language which can be drawn upon in their teaching (e.g., Butler 2004; Garton et al. 2011; Nunan 2003). Given that these things are the bedrock of teachers professional competence it was not surprising that this was also seen as a priority by teachers in research studies as well (e.g., Kourieos 2011; Coburn 2016).

As Wright (2010) observes, since the vast majority of English teachers worldwide are not first language speakers, attention to improving teachers’ language proficiency is an established component of much specialist ELTED pre-service provision, including that targeted at TEYL teachers. Yet in studies which sought out teacher perspectives on their experience with pre-service TEYLTED provision, programmed support with English language proficiency and language awareness was typically seen as either inadequate or, because this often focuses on general language improvement, as inappropriate to their teaching needs (e.g., Kourieos 2011; Dagarin and Andraka 2007).

Effective TEYLTED pedagogic practices

Collectively, insights into the value and effectiveness of TEYLTED pedagogic practices provided by studies highlight that TEYL teachers advocate for the more teacher-centred, interactive and collaborative reflective approaches currently advocated in mainstream ELTED, as reported earlier in the chapter. Thus, for example, a concern raised by teachers in several studies was the disproportionate time devoted to the transmission of theory compared to the teaching practice in pre-service programmes which was seen as crucial to the development of confidence in teaching. (e.g., Mattheoudakis 2007; Dagarin and Andraka 2007; Kourieos 2011).

A related concern identified in research studies, one that is linked to the theory-practice imbalance mentioned above, is teachers’ dissatisfaction with teacher education programmes that adopt a non-participatory transmission-driven model of TEYLTED, rather than an emphasis on, reflection, experiential learning and practice opportunities which teachers
see as important to help them make connections between TED provision and their teaching realities (e.g., Kourieos 2011; Mattheoudakis 2007). The importance and benefit of the opportunity to engage in dialogue was also highlighted by a number of studies. For example, this was seen as important to both pre-service and in-service teachers in Kourieos’s (2011) study, both within formal teacher training programmes, with mentors in schools and through the provision of informal networking opportunities.

Central to those studies which documented innovations in TEYLTED and teachers’ reactions to them, the introduction of an online element to enhance access to in-service TEYLTED provision was a recurring theme (e.g., Rich et al. 2014, Coburn 2016; Karavas 2014). In all of these studies, the opportunity provided for teachers to engage in online discussions with other teachers and teacher educators was reported to be a valuable learning opportunity. In those studies where this was used to compliment face-to-face training sessions (e.g., Karavas 2014; Coburn 2016) it was also seen as an important way to extend and increase continuity between training sessions and teaching realities.

**Challenges to the success of TEYLTED provision**

While research studies have tended to address the issue of quality TEYLTED provision through the lens of content and teacher education pedagogy as described above, a small number of studies have also identified other challenges which can affect the success of teacher education initiatives. Zein (2016) highlights, for example, how in Indonesia selection procedures identifying who can attend training programmes is a problem which can impact a teacher’s chance of gaining access to training. Another challenge impacting the delivery of effective TEYLTED is the knowledge base and experience of the teacher trainers themselves (e.g., Kourieos 2011; Zein 2016). In these studies, teachers also commented on the challenges posed by poorly prepared support personnel in schools, such as mentors and advisors, which together with poor channels of communication between external training providers and schools, were perceived to have a detrimental effect on the ongoing support of teachers.

**Recommendations for practice**

As noted earlier in the chapter, in many parts of the world teachers do not have adequate access to pre-service and/or in-service TEYLTED provision. Moreover, even when they do, as Garton (2014) observes, this often seems to have little tangible effect on teachers continuing to lack the confidence, skills and language proficiency to teach TEYL effectively, pointing, at least in part, to weaknesses in existing provision. In light of this, this discussion of best practice considers both effective ways to improve access to TEYLTED provision as well as quality in terms of the design and delivery of TEYLTED initiatives.

**Effective ways to maximise access to TEYLTED**

It goes without saying that it is important for policy makers and others with responsibility for TEYLTED to make sure that steps are taken to ensure access to quality pre- and in-service TEYLTED initiatives that meet teacher needs. With regard to pre-service provision, clearly policy makers need to make sure that sufficient places are made available on pre-service programmes to ensure that there is a ready pool of teachers who have both the
know-how and English skills needed to teach children effectively. With respect to in-service provision, as was discussed earlier in the chapter, practising teachers’ support needs can take many forms, including targeted training, help in locating resources, and opportunities to learn from and dialogue with other teachers. An effective in-service TEYLTED strategy needs to ensure equitable access to all of these different forms of support for practising TEYL teachers who are typically dispersed across a wide geographical area.

**The use of cascade models**

A popular strategy for ensuring teachers’ access to training workshops in particular is to employ a cascade model of delivery. This entails delivery of a workshop to a group of trainers, teachers or lead teachers who then disseminate the workshop to other teachers in their region or school. Cascade models are attractive because they are cost-effective and use existing staff as co-trainers. However, cascading can, as Hayes (2000, p. 137) observes, result in ‘the dilution of training’ meaning that ‘less and less is understood the further down the cascade one goes’. Hayes (2014) proposes two strategies to maximise the efficacy of cascade models of training delivery: firstly to consult a range of stakeholders when designing the materials so that the presentation of new ideas is carefully aligned with and accommodates teaching realities; secondly, to ensure that reflective opportunities for trainers are incorporated in training material at each stage of the cascade, allowing for a degree of reinterpretation and increased sense of ownership of the material by all those involved in delivery.

**Technology-enhanced solutions to issues of access**

Technology offers considerable potential to maximise access to both formal and more informal forms of in-service education and is gaining in popularity around the world. With respect to the delivery of training workshops in particular, it can be deployed to provide teachers with clear models of good practice which can be shared online or through DVDs. It also offers the potential for training sessions to be delivered via video links or for online teacher training modules to be taken by large numbers of teachers long-distance. However, there are a number of potential challenges associated with the use of technology to enhance formal TEYLTED provision. Apart from technological issues, such as teacher access to a fast and reliable internet connection, without sufficient attention to two-way interactive opportunities and activities which encourage teachers to reflect on and process new ideas, there is a danger that online training programmes may serve as more of a briefing function than a genuine opportunity for teacher learning. In addition, these require moderators to help ensure teachers stay on track and maintain their motivation, particularly as drop rates are often very high (Rich et al 2014). Bearing these points in mind, technological forms of training often work best as a compliment to face-to-face delivery of teacher education.

While the use of technology for training purposes needs to be approached with some caution, it offers considerable potential as a way to provide informal support for TEYL teachers. In a number of countries, online portals (created via platforms like Moodle) are proving to be an effective way of sharing resources (including for those teachers who are developing themselves) and creating networking opportunities for teachers via discussion forums (e.g., Karavas 2014)
The characteristics of quality TEYLTED provision

Echoing Freeman’s (2009) conceptualization of the scope of teacher education mentioned earlier in the chapter, the issue of quality in TEYLTED needs to be considered with reference to three important and interrelated dimensions of provision:

1. What needs to be addressed (or CONTENT).
2. How this can be effectively delivered (or PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH).
3. How the success of an intervention can be established (or EVALUATION AND IMPACT).

In what follows, an account of good practice with regard to each of these dimensions will be considered.

Identifying content for TEYLTED programmes

Establishing teachers’ needs is a first step in developing an effective teacher education strategy for both pre- and in-service teachers. This will not only ensure that content is relevant and beneficial to teachers but will also help ensure their engagement with TEYLTED initiatives and increase the impact of this on teachers’ classroom practice. Consultation with teachers and other stakeholders in schools and observation of TEYL classrooms are therefore important steps to be taken.

More broadly, as the results of studies discussed earlier in the chapter have highlighted, effective TEYLTED provision needs to include attention to targeted support in all of the following:

- Knowledge of and fluency in English.
- Knowledge of children’s foreign language learning and appropriate teaching strategies.
- Knowledge of the different cognitive, affective and psychomotor stages children journey through.

Good practice in the delivery of effective TEYLTED

Drawing upon the review of teacher learning presented earlier in the chapter as well as the perspectives of teachers identified in research studies above, a number of operating principles should underpin the development of effective pedagogical approaches to deliver the content areas outlined above.

1. TEYL teachers benefit from pedagogic approaches which help them make connections between new input received and their pre-existing understanding and experience of classroom teaching and learning. As Hayes (2014) argues, this means that support initiatives should be school focused at least, if not also school based. Moreover, they should be grounded in and responsive to a thorough understanding of wider contextual realities which impact possibilities and constraints in teachers’ current or future school worlds.

2. Given the ongoing and lifelong nature of teacher learning, it is important to employ pedagogical approaches which help teachers to continue to develop over and beyond any formal input sessions that they receive. This means that it is important to ensure
that support initiatives are designed not only to focus on equipping teachers with new knowledge and skills but also to serve an enabling function, providing them with resources and strategies to ensure they have the capacity to continue their learning journey over and beyond any formal input they receive.

3 It is important to include pedagogical activities which help teachers interrogate their existing beliefs borne out of their previous experience as learners and/or their existing experience of teaching to date. Beliefs are powerful filters which impact how far and in what ways teachers engage with new ideas, but these are often tacit. By creating activities which require teachers to make these more explicit, teachers are ‘readied’ to receive new ideas, to see how well these align with existing beliefs or provide powerful alternative ways of working.

4 Dialogue and collaboration with other teachers is a powerful way to support teacher learning, and finding ways to create and increase opportunities for peer learning are therefore important.

These core principles are ones that underline the importance of placing the teacher and their teaching worlds at the centre of TEYLTED endeavours. They also highlight that reflection, experimentation and dialogue should be core components of TEYLTED pedagogy.

In terms of formal provision, whether in the form of pre-service programmes or in-service workshops and reflection, experimentation and dialogue should be combined in ways that:

1 Demonstrate the interconnection between theory and practice.
2 Reveal teachers’ prior experience and knowledge.
3 Help teachers develop action plans for future practice.

In pre-service programmes in particular, attention to practice implications should be seen as an essential component of content modules, such as those which focus on theoretical knowledge, language proficiency and awareness and teaching methodology, rather than confined to the teaching practice component of the programme, as is often the case. Not only will this enable student teachers to better see the relevance of these modules to their future teaching, but it can also help ready teachers for the final practicum component of their studies and ensure this is a more beneficial and enriching experience.

Table 3.1 describes an illustrative procedure of how the interconnection between theory and practice can be created in formal teacher education sessions, drawing upon the principles of reflection, experimentation and dialogue.

This procedure is centred on transforming teachers’ existing knowledge base and understanding rather than merely the transmission of new ideas. As such this approach entails the use of active-learning and guided discovery techniques and tasks which seek to ‘disturb’ teachers’ established ways of thinking and guide them towards new understandings and action points that can be refined by experimentation.

One of the limitations of formal training programmes, however, is that these do not typically provide teachers with the additional in-school support needed to help put change into practice, and this is often reported as a reason for their limited impact on teachers’ practice. Teachers need sustained support over time if they are to transform their practice, and it is important for attention to be given to issues of continuity when planning TEYLTED initiatives. In pre-service programmes, the training of school-based personnel who can act as effective mentors and coaches during the practicum stage is therefore crucial. With regard to in-service provision, where possible, adopting a day-release approach to training
is helpful as this allows teachers to try out ideas in school and share their successes and challenges in a follow-on training session. However, where this is not practicable, online forums can play an important support role as discussed above. More broadly, promoting classroom research with teachers is helpful as it provides teachers with a useful set of techniques and strategies to promote self-initiated cycles of reflection and experimentation (Wright 2010).

**Good practice in monitoring the quality of TEYLTED**

Developing a strategy to evaluate TEYLTED initiatives is an important dimension of effective TEYLTED provision at every level. This should be focused on generating data which not only reveals teachers’ views of TEYLTED initiatives themselves, but should also include surveys, interviews and classroom observations which examine the ways in which TEYLTED initiatives are facilitating learning and change in teachers’ practice. The results of these evaluations can then be fed back into improving course design for future cohorts of teachers.

**Future directions**

Although still small, the growing body of research and literature reported in this chapter has provided some important insights into quality TEYLTED provision for a rapidly growing and complex TEYL workforce. It has also signalled some of the contextual constraints that can diminish the quality and likely impact of these initiatives, such as issues around access and the quality of teacher educators. More research into these complicating factors alongside work on the impact of school cultures is important in identifying appropriate forms of effective TEYLTED at a local level and understanding teacher investment in these.

At a practical level, to improve the quality of TEYLTED going forward it is important that more attention be paid to improving the expertise of TEYL teacher educators who play a crucial role in determining the quality of the support that teachers receive. In addition, as discussed above, more attention also needs to be paid to the development and application of a systematic strategy for the evaluation of TEYLTED provision to establish its efficacy and quality.

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**Table 3.1 Steps to the interconnection between theory and practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Introduce the focus of the session (e.g., using games) and invite participants to reflect on a past or recent experience related to the focus that they have had (as a learner or teacher).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Ask them to interpret or explain the experience (e.g., their feelings/challenges/successes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Listen to other participants’ experiences and look for points of similarity and difference (local knowledge).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Read or listen to input from theory or research on the session focus and/or watch a model demonstration of effective practice (external knowledge).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Process the various opinions and viewpoints to derive new or revised perceptions and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Invite participants to reflect on new ideas to try out in future practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Time permitting, participants can plan how they will implement new ideas and undertake micro-teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Based on Malderez and Wedell 2007).
Further reading

   This book provides an excellent and comprehensive overview of theory and practice in ELTED today.

   This article provides a valuable account of issues facing the development of TEYLTED in Europe, many of which are also of wider relevance to the development of TEYLTED in other contexts.

   This article illustrates how an effective teacher education strategy can be developed to help ensure the success of a TEYL reform. In particular, it highlights the value of technology-enhanced solutions to successful TEYLTED initiatives.

   This book provides a clear and accessible account of how to design and implement effective teacher education programmes.

Related topics

Policies, difficult circumstances, the age debate

References


Butler, Y. G. (2004). What level of English proficiency do elementary school teachers need to attain to teach EFL? Case studies from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. *TESOL Quarterly* 38 (2) 245-278.


