

EAP TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

EAP (English for academic purposes) as a field of academic enquiry and research has changed enormously over the past few decades. EAP practitioners are now able to draw on a large body of work that has both expanded and deepened the intellectual, theoretical and empirical foundations available to inform and direct praxis. EAP practitioners are now able to draw on, inter alia, research in academic discourse communities and disciplines, genre analysis, contrastive rhetoric, corpus-based research, ethnographic studies, critical EAP and academic literacies for guidance. A cursory glance at the contents page of this handbook is testament to the increasingly wide range of interests and specialisms within EAP, and the launch of the Journal of English for Academic Purposes in 2002 ‘was a clear indication that EAP had come of age as an independent academic field’ (Hamp-Lyons, 2011a:93). With equal enthusiasm, Hyland states that EAP ‘has done a good job of consolidating a position at the forefront of language education’ (Hyland, 2012:30).

EAP is an educational endeavour but it is also a ‘business’ (Turner, 2004:96), a ‘major industry’ (Hyland, 2012:30) and a ‘multi-million dollar enterprise, not merely around the world, but often within just a single country’ (Hamp-Lyons, 2011a:93). Whilst Hamp-Lyons (2011a:101) might claim ‘for us, teachers and scholars, EAP is not about profit’, it would be unwise to conclude that EAP practitioners are divorced from the profit imperative that at least partly shapes their world.

The expansion of provision of EAP has been accompanied by an increase in demand for EAP practitioners. This, combined with an increasingly sophisticated understanding of EAP, would suggest an equivalent increase in interest in practitioners – particularly in terms of their education and development. Yet this is not the case. There is little published research exploring practitioners’ education and development, very few practitioner accounts of their development and equally limited opportunities to study for award-bearing postgraduate qualifications specialising in EAP. Put simply, it appears as if the development and education of practitioners is of only very marginal interest (Basturkmen, 2014; Belcher, 2012).

Drawing on the existing, impoverished base of literature and research, this chapter aims to critically explore the topic of EAP teacher education. We begin by considering who EAP teachers are, before going on to consider EAP education and development initiatives which are available to them. From foregrounding a diverse, fragmented picture of the profession,
we find limitations in the UK-centric discourse which currently dominates EAP teacher education. We also identify a range of challenges which hamper progress in this area.

The final section draws together the various critiques articulated in the chapter, and argues for, first and foremost, a greater concern for the EAP practitioner. Ultimately, we suggest that, given the diversity of ‘EAPs’ around the world, EAP teacher education would benefit most from a more critical, reflexive orientation, which would lend itself more readily to the diverse needs of EAP practitioners who work in a variety of different social, cultural and ideological contexts.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to make some general points about distinctions which are made in the literature between ‘training’, ‘development’ and ‘education’. Whilst ‘teacher training’ typically refers to initial, preparatory teacher education (cf. Richards, 2008; Mann, 2005) which is usually seen as being associated with a particular context, and the development of certain skills (Richards, 2008), ‘teacher development’ by contrast tends to be used to refer to the longer-term process of development which teachers are engaged in throughout the course of their careers (cf. Borg, 2011; Mann, 2005). A further distinction can also be made between ‘professional development’ activities which have a more career-oriented, instrumental and utilitarian remit (typically referred to as ‘continuing professional development’), and those ‘teacher development’ activities which are more often a voluntary activity and are more inclusive of personal and moral dimensions (Mann, 2005: 104), and perhaps more indicative of teacher autonomy. Whilst ‘teacher education’ was originally used to refer to the initial preparation of teachers (Richards and Nunan, 1990), it has since tended to be used, as it will be here, as a superordinate categorisation of all types of second language teacher learning processes and activities (Borg, 2011; Crandall, 2000; Richards and Nunan, 1990). Whilst teacher education and development are presented separately, they are, in reality (especially in EAP contexts), overlapping and due to significant changes which are occurring in the broad field of teacher education, it may be that in future traditional distinctions between the terms come to be replaced, as Richards (2008) suggests, by a reconsideration of the whole nature of teacher learning as a form of socialisation into the profession.

**EAP practitioners**

Who EAP practitioners are, what they do and where they work reveals a plurality of identities, roles, contexts and praxis, suggesting that EAP is best understood heterogeneously rather than monolithically. To illustrate this point, EAP practitioners may be called upon to teach, for example, foundation, presessional, insessional and credit-bearing EAP and content-based courses, as well as supporting research students and staff who wish to publish, present and teach in English. This takes place in diverse language contexts, with students and staff who have a wide range of proficiency in academic English and academic experience. Courses may range from generic skills for English for general academic purposes (EGAP) to highly specialised English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) courses in, for example, postgraduate dissertation writing for maths students. Courses might be taught in public or private school, further and, most commonly, higher education contexts, which are resource-rich with good tutor–student ratios, opportunities for individual language consultations, and relatively light teaching loads with time and support given to practitioners for research, professional development, conferences, studying and scholarly activity. However, the opposite might equally be the case, with practitioners teaching in difficult conditions, with very large classes, high teaching loads, little support, few resources and very few opportunities to develop.
Practitioners’ educational backgrounds may vary greatly, from no formal qualifications to teach English, to doctoral level practitioners with specialisms in EAP. Many positions are held by highly qualified and proficient non-native speakers (NNS) and others by BANA (Britain, Australasia, North America) practitioners (with a wide range of qualifications). Institutions in which practitioners work have a variety of missions, ambitions and identities from Ivy league, global research intensive universities to community-focused rural universities in developing countries. EAP units might be attached to academic departments, run as a for-profit service unit or exist as an independent centre. Practitioners may be working in regions and countries that have strong historical and well-established roots in EAP, whilst others may be in more isolated contexts where EAP is only beginning to emerge in educational institutions.

Opportunities for practitioners to develop, discuss and disseminate on topics of professional interest exist through a wide range of regional, national and international journals, organisations and associations. Usually these opportunities exist within a broader English for specific purposes (ESP) or language for specific purposes (LSP) community, as EAP is still considered to be a branch of ESP. Organisations with international aspirations, such as IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), have active ESP special interest groups with newsletters and seminars. The European Association AELFE (Asociación Europea de Lenguas para Fines Específicos) publishes the journal Ibérica and organises an annual international conference on LSP. National organisations such as GERS (Groupe d’Étude et de Recherche en Anglais de Spécialité) in France also organise annual conferences and publish a journal, Asp. NFEAP (The Norwegian Forum for English for Academic Purposes) organises an annual conference, as well as hosting a discussion forum for practitioners in Norway and beyond. The Brazilian publication, The ESPecialist, is a well-established journal, published mainly in Portuguese.

BALEAP, over 40 years old, is worthy of special mention. Formerly the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, it is now simply BALEAP, and carries the strapline ‘the global forum for EAP professionals’. BALEAP has aspirations to federate EAP practitioners globally and, as yet, there is little evidence that its ambitions are being fulfilled. However, BALEAP regularly organises professional interests meetings (PIMs), organises large international conferences, publishes proceedings, offers accreditation to EAP centres and promotes EAP teacher education and development. Furthermore, the endeavours of BALEAP to encourage education and development constitute the only systematic attempt to articulate and frame the competencies required of practitioners and provide formal recognition of EAP practitioners’ development. These endeavours will be discussed in detail in the Education and Development sections below.

Organisations around the world, such as those already mentioned as well as, for example, the Asia-Pacific Rim LSP and Professional Communication Association and the Chinese Association of ESP, all offer the possibility for practitioners to meet and collaborate, although the extent to which associations and publications are embedded in practitioners’ professional lives and identities is open to question given the heterogeneous positions, roles, resources and opportunities of EAP practitioners discussed above. A global and connected community of EAP practitioners has yet to emerge and this needs to be addressed if teaching English for academic purposes (TEAP) education and development is to encompass and be enriched by the experience, expertise, needs, challenges and interests of practitioners working in a much more varied range of contexts and cultures.
Education

Whilst the literature in relation to second language teacher education is now substantial (Borg, 2011), information relating specifically to teacher education for EAP is notably absent from this body of work. Historically, discussions of teacher education have also typically been absent from both key EAP texts (inter alia Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 1997), as well as articles published in JEAP and the English for Specific Purposes Journal (Morgan, 2009, being a notable exception). Although attention has been given to this area in isolated circumstances over the years – see, for example, the BALEAP PIM on Teacher Training in 2001, Sharpling’s discussion of EAP teacher training and development needs in 2002 and Alexander’s 2007 study of teachers making the transition from ‘General English’ to EAP (discussed in more detail on page 554) – there has otherwise continued to be a dearth of published research and literature on the topic.

In 2008, BALEAP acknowledged the ‘gap […] in EAP-specific teacher qualifications’ (p.2) with the launch of their Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (CFTEAP) (discussed on pages 554–555). Since then it seems that the topic of teacher education has begun to appear in some of the mainstream EAP literature; Bruce’s (2011) Theories and Concepts of English for Academic Purposes has a whole section devoted to the teaching of EAP, and a whole chapter on the topic of EAP and Teacher Competencies. However, the discussion has little to add to our understanding of EAP beyond providing a description of the BALEAP CFTEAP. Hamp-Lyons’ (2011a) chapter on ‘English for Academic Purposes’ also concerns EAP professional development, but mainly laments the lack of provision in this area. BALEAP has also recently held a PIM specifically on the topic of Teacher Education.1

As there is currently no particular qualification requisite for entry to the EAP profession, teachers tend to have a variety of different qualifications. In the UK, teachers typically come from an English as a foreign language (EFL) background, and as such hold mainstream, general, English language training (ELT) qualifications such as a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) or Trinity Certificate in TESOL, with some also holding diplomas (typically the Cambridge DELTA and Trinity Diploma in TESOL). Most also hold a Masters degree in TESOL, ELT or Applied Linguistics. In recent years, steps have begun to be taken to establish guidelines regarding EAP teacher qualifications, with the BALEAP CFTEAP recommending examples of appropriate qualifications for the UK context. The CFTEAP’s list of qualifications is quite wide and includes generic ELT qualifications such as those mentioned above, despite the questions that have been raised within the profession about their appropriacy for the EAP context, and their ability to prepare teachers for the ‘specific’ demands of teaching EAP (Bell, 2012; Errey and Ansell, 2001; Krzanowski, 2001; Roberts, 2001; Sharpling, 2002). The most specific entry on the list is an ‘ELT/ESOL/Applied Linguistics focus in undergraduate or postgraduate degree’ (BALEAP, 2008:11), and whilst these types of Masters degrees are available at a large number of universities in the UK, only a small minority of them advertise optional modules in EAP or ESP (see, for example, advertised programmes at King’s College, the Universities of Birmingham, Central Lancashire, Nottingham, Leeds, York and Westminster).

By contrast, at present in the UK, only a handful of specialist EAP training courses and Masters programmes are available. Masters in TEAP are currently offered at The University of Leeds and The University of Nottingham.; Postgraduate Certificates in TEAP are run by Leicester University and Sheffield Hallam University; and short courses are offered by a range of course providers including Aston University, LSE,2 NILE,3 Oxford TEFL and
A glance at the course descriptions which are available online reveals differences between the aims and approaches of these courses. Many courses tend to take a pragmatic approach to teaching discrete knowledge and skills (for example, Leeds, NILE, SOAS) such as those described by the BALEAP CFTEAP (Leicester), and have a primary concern for showing teachers how EAP differs from teaching English in a general context (Aston, Oxford TEFL, Sheffield Hallam). The course run at Nottingham is notably different insofar as it presents a description of a course which intends to ‘incorporate much more than basic mastery of classroom management skills and knowledge of language systems’ in order to develop ‘innovation’ in EAP practitioners.

The part-time and online MA TEAP at Nottingham University attracts practitioners from all corners of the world (i.e. South and North America, Europe, Australasia, The Middle East, Asia and Africa) and from diverse work settings (i.e. bilingual schools, and public and private universities and colleges). The programme consists of three core modules exploring the what of EAP (academic discourses and literacies), the how of EAP (EAP pedagogies) and the why of EAP (academic contexts). Practitioners also choose four electives from a wide selection (e.g. EAP assessment, issues in EAP, EAP and new technologies, and learner autonomy) and then write a dissertation on an aspect of EAP. The programme is carefully designed to enable practitioners to engage with a wide range of writing and research genres/tasks (e.g. case study, reflexive narratives, discourse analysis, ethnography, empirical research) with diverse epistemological and ontological premises.

The MA in TEAP encompasses what one would expect of such a programme with a focus on developing the competencies and knowledge required to teach EAP effectively in diverse sociocultural, linguistic and educational settings. This includes inter alia: needs and rights analysis, critical thinking/pedagogy, curriculum and syllabus design, genre analysis, academic literacies, EAP methodologies, disciplinary differences and academic voice. However, the programme moves beyond the usual parameters of such programmes by engaging with a host of critical sociopolitical, cultural and economic themes and forces that largely shape the practice of EAP. Practitioners are exposed to tasks, texts and dialogues that explore, for example: neoliberalism in higher education, competing and conflicting academic values and ideologies, and the identities, roles and representations of practitioners and students. The programme is grounded in a sociologically informed and critical framing of EAP, a foundation which is essential if practitioners are to participate fully in shaping rather than simply being shaped by current educational and ideological discourses.

Currently, the number of available specialist EAP qualifications is low, and significantly, some courses which started in the past have not stood the test of time. This is perhaps not surprising given that they are not well-supported by the wider profession. First, despite calls within the profession for specialist qualifications, their status remains unclear; these types of qualifications, to date, have not been included in BALEAP’s CFTEAP ‘examples of appropriate qualifications […] for the UK context’, and job adverts continue to cite Masters degrees in ELT/TESOL/Applied Linguistics, and even DELTAs, whilst making no mention of TEAP qualifications. In addition, it is not yet clear what role these qualifications should play; whilst Bruce (2011:105), noting the problems faced by teachers who have ‘pre-service teacher training for general English’, suggests that ‘specialized training courses and qualifications are being developed and offered to prepare and equip teachers of EAP’, the outlines which are currently available online reveal that not only are these courses being marketed towards those who wish to begin teaching EAP (see, for example, Oxford TEFL, Sheffield Hallam) but also those who are already established in the EAP (LSE, SOAS) or ESP professions (Leeds). Given the price of higher education courses at the present time,
and the lack of job security in many EAP positions, it may be that outsiders, in particular, wishing to break into the EAP profession might prefer to invest in a more generic Masters. Those within EAP, already established and armed with a teaching qualification, may question investing considerable time, effort and resources into studying. It is unclear how well-known these courses are throughout the world, but given the lack of visibility of description and analysis of these courses, it is likely that more needs to be done to make these courses more visible to the EAP community.

Development

Whilst there is again little in terms of published research and literature concerning how teachers learn to teach EAP and develop in their role, there are a handful of studies from the UK (often undertaken as part of MAs in TESOL and related subjects) which attempt to investigate this area. Whilst these studies have different foci, what they collectively reveal, from speaking to teachers themselves, is that amongst many factors, one of the greatest challenges involved in transitioning to EAP is developing the specialised or context-specific knowledge that teachers feel is required (Alexander, 2007; Campion, 2012; Post, 2010). Although one of the studies (Post, 2010) suggests that the challenges could be overcome with the development of effective pre-service training, others find that teachers tend to view their development as EAP practitioners as a long-term process (Alexander, 2007; Campion, 2012; Elsted, 2012), and that, therefore, opportunities for longer-term, on-going development initiatives are what teachers find to be most valuable. Amongst these types of development initiatives, a recurring point from the research is teacher participants’ comments about the value of informal learning opportunities. Teachers single out activities such as ‘looking things up, reading, asking questions [to colleagues], talking to other teachers, talking to subject specialists’ (Campion, 2012:35), ‘sharing ideas with colleagues, using EAP coursebooks, reading books or journals and attending meetings’ (Alexander, 2007:4) and collaboration with subject specialists (Martin, 2014). Such comments are sometimes framed, however, as a type of coping strategy in the face of a lack of more formal development routes (Alexander, 2007; Campion, 2012).

Two of the most significant recent responses by the profession to the lack of formal provision for EAP teacher education and development have been the inception of the CFTEAP in 2008, and the more recent development of the TEAP Accreditation Scheme in 2014.

The CFTEAP consists of descriptions of competencies in four main areas: academic practice (academic contexts, disciplinary differences, academic discourse, personal learning, development and autonomy), EAP students (student needs, student critical thinking, student autonomy), curriculum development (syllabus and programme development, text processing and text production) and programme implementation (teaching practices, assessment practices). Originally conceived in order to ‘provide guidance for the professional development of less experienced teachers’ (BALEAP, 2008:2), the framework has evolved to take a range of roles including underpinning the BALEAP criteria for course accreditation, induction programmes for pre- and insessional tutors, providing a basis for teaching observations, a tool for individual teacher development, and informing, either implicitly or explicitly, some of the isolated pieces of research that have sought to explore the experiences of EAP teachers (see for example, Alexander, 2012; Post, 2010).

Considered as an ‘invaluable resource’ (Hamp-Lyons, 2011a:100), CFTEAP represents a ‘comprehensive statement of the knowledge and skills required by teachers of EAP’ (Bruce, 2011:104) and it appears to have been adopted by the profession in the UK. However, it
does raise some important concerns. At a time when BALEAP is bidding to become the ‘global forum for EAP professionals’, the CFTEAP appears to be UK-centric – lacking contextual sensitivity and range – and it is unclear whether this framework is indicative of all of the competencies required of EAP practitioners elsewhere. There is no documented account of the methodology used to select specific competencies for inclusion. Where the framework is mentioned in the literature, we simply get more description (see for example, Blaj-Ward, 2014; Bruce, 2011) rather than analysis or critique. The framework relates to practitioners ‘bid for membership of, and participation in the EAP discourse community’ (Bruce, 2011:110) and represents appropriating and reproducing this set of competencies. The emphasis here is on knowledge and understanding of discrete attributes and skills. Movement beyond assimilating and reproducing to developing and transforming EAP praxis is absent from this framework, as is accommodation for, or recognition of, a more critically informed praxis and practitioner role. Morgan (2009) also observes, more generally, the lack of teacher education programmes (in EAP) inspired by critical pedagogy; Morgan’s (2009) own MS programme appears to be the rare exception. The lack of scrutiny of this framework is particularly concerning given that the framework represents an idealised holotype of the EAP practitioner employed, as discussed above, to inform a range of activities and decisions. Although the framework draws extensively from the current theoretical and research foundations of EAP (the inclusion of learning styles perhaps being the obvious exception), there is a risk of ‘fossilisation’, unless BALEAP updates the framework to include emerging developments in the field and beyond. Finally, given the paucity of research examining the professional activities and lives of practitioners in a variety of contexts, it is difficult to know the extent to which the framework is comprehensive, selective, lacking or containing bias. However, the fact that the framework was compiled by senior practitioners and debated within BALEAP before publication engenders a degree of confidence that the framework is a reflection of professional consensus at least within the UK.

More recently, the BALEAP TEAP Accreditation Scheme has continued to extend its description of the role of the EAP practitioner, this time by providing more detailed information relating to the capabilities and aspirations of teachers at different stages in their EAP teaching career. In 2014, BALEAP launched the Scheme, which is based on its CFTEAP, in order to ‘enhance the quality of the student academic experience through facilitating the education, training, scholarship and professional development of those in the sector’ (p.4). The aims of the scheme are divided up into what it provides for the profession and what it provides for individuals.

The scheme details three different pathways which are offered as means of continuing professional development: Associate Fellow (a practitioner in the early stages of their TEAP experience), Accredited Fellow (an experienced TEAP practitioner with substantive teaching and student support responsibilities) and Accredited Senior Fellow (a TEAP practitioner with sustained experience across all areas who has impact at departmental level and institutional level and beyond). Achievement of Associate Fellow is through submission of a portfolio for internal verification (by a recognised TEAP CPD member institution), whilst achievement of Fellow and Senior Fellow is though submission of a portfolio for assessment by the BASC (BALEAP Accreditation Scheme Committee).

The TEAP scheme comprises a set of five main units: A. Academic Practices (Academic Contexts, Academic Discourse, Academic Disciplines), B. The Student (Student Needs, Student learning), C. Course Delivery (Teaching Practice, Assessment and Feedback), D. Programme Development (Course Design, Quality Assurance and Enhancement), E. Professional development, research and scholarship, and one optional unit: TEAP Mentor.
and Assessor. Associate Fellows are only required to demonstrate competency in area C. Course Delivery, whereas Fellows and Senior Fellows are expected to cover all of the units. Each unit has detailed descriptions of expected ‘professional knowledge and values’ together with areas of activity where competency can be demonstrated, and examples of suitable evidence. So, for example, in unit C. Course Delivery, the list of areas of ‘professional knowledge and values’ includes points such as ‘how to select and adapt appropriate materials’, and the corresponding example of ‘CPD tasks and indicative evidence’ is ‘published EAP course material evaluation and use’ (BALEAP, 2014:19). The unit on teaching practice also requires teachers to undergo a number of formal classroom observations, the record of which is required as part of the submitted portfolio.

Completed TEAP Portfolios in total are expected to contain: the portfolio of evidence, a reflective account of professional practice (1,500 words, 3,500 words or 7500 words, depending on the award being sought) and referee statements.

In a similar vein, the British Council (in connection with BALEAP) also provides information regarding ‘Pathways in EAP’, a section of their website which provides information relating to a ‘CPD framework for teachers of EAP’. This framework, like the Accreditation Scheme, provides CPD information for EAP teachers at ‘entry level’, ‘experienced’ and ‘expert’. For each stage, information is provided about possible characteristics, needs, skills to be developed as well as advice and suggestions for how to progress at that particular stage. To progress from ‘entry level’, for example, the suggestions include: understanding and actively engaging with the competencies in the BALEAP CFTEAP, reading EAP teacher development literature, especially EAP teacher handbooks, engaging with the teacher’s books for EAP courses, identifying experienced EAP teachers who can advise and lend materials, attending EAP staff development workshops and conferences, and joining relevant online discussion forums (BALEAP, n.d.).

The pathways also includes various indicators at each stage concerning: positive signs of development, ways in which teachers should be supported by their institution, things to beware of and how these sorts of potential dangers can be tackled by the teacher’s institution.

Whilst fully acknowledging that this scheme is, potentially, an extremely valuable contribution to promoting, encouraging and recognising the importance of development, there are three concerns relating to reflection, experienced and novice practitioners, and values that we wish to raise regarding the conceptual underpinning of the accreditation scheme.

First, the emphasis on reflection in the accreditation scheme reflects the new orthodoxy in language teacher education with a focus on (social-) constructivism (Crandall, 2000; Richards, 2008; Wright, 2010), emphasising teacher education (in the broadest sense) as theorising practice. Reflection is a ‘widely accepted’ axiom in education (Burton, 2009:298) and a great deal hinges on the view that reflection drives and sustains development.

However, the promise of development through reflection has been questioned on a number of grounds, such as: there is little evidence of a link between reflective practices and teacher or student performance (Akbari, 2007); reflection has a range of meanings mirroring very different and competing educational ideals (Fendler, 2003:20); reflective practices redefine theory as practice with a commitment to a relativist and subjective stance on knowledge and theory (Lawes, 2003:22); reflection will depend on the practitioners’ opportunities to participate in institutional decision making (Aoki, 2002); and academic reflective practices assume that teachers are unable to reflect without direction from experts (Fendler, 2003). These critiques of reflection and the multiple meanings attached to reflection for divergent ideological and educational ends raise questions as to the status, quality and purpose of reflective practices.
Second, EAP practitioners often come to EAP as ‘novices’, with only a teaching qualification of some kind. The reality appears to be that EAP practitioner education usually takes place as development, and that expertise is accorded by virtue of experience. An inherent experience bias is evident in these schemes, which seems to reflect the general tendency in the EAP literature for presenting a deficiency model of ‘novice’ EAP teachers, with a seeming over-concern for pointing out how these teachers are ill-prepared for an EAP role (see for example, Alexander, 2007, 2010; Bruce, 2011) and for investing their more experienced counterparts with greater value and privileges, solely by virtue of the fact that they have been doing the job for a longer period of time. A glance at the Pathways descriptors relating to ‘how to progress at this level’, for example, tells us that while ‘experienced teachers’ should be ‘contributing to articles about EAP’ and ‘attending and speaking at workshops, seminars and conferences’, those with less experience should only aspire to engage in ‘reading EAP teacher development literature’ and ‘attending EAP staff development workshops and conferences’ (BALEAP, n.d.). The effect is thus to limit the aspirations of teachers at the beginning of their EAP careers, effectively denying them a voice. In addition, the reliance on learning by a form of reproduction (i.e. ‘close mentoring’ from more experienced colleagues (Pathways) and meeting preordained descriptors (CFTEAP)) might have the effect of stifling potential for transformation, or failing to provide any space for innovation by newcomers (and indeed experienced practitioners). How EAP is to grow and develop as a praxis, when its ambitions for teacher development are primarily to seek to reproduce existing practice, is unclear.

There is inevitably a pragmatic need for new EAP practitioners to learn about the new contexts that they find themselves in, but the problem seems to be one of balance. Much more nuanced, sensitive and careful consideration of novice EAP practitioners’ experience, skills and qualifications, and how these might enhance EAP rather than simply act as a threat to good practice, is needed.

Finally, the BALEAP TEAP Accreditation Scheme contains a section entitled ‘Profession knowledge and values’ (p. 14). Among the eight areas of knowledge (including a range of norms, conventions and values relating to teaching and learning, feedback, assessment and evaluation), of particular note is the area of ‘institutional values and their implications for professional practice’ (ibid), which is reduced to only three domains (equality of opportunity, sustainability and internationalisation). Furthermore, and of greater concern, practitioners are required to apply knowledge of values, conventions and norms. Clearly, it is essential that practitioners do have knowledge of the values, norms and conventions of their institution and, more broadly, of academia. However, this raises a serious issue concerning the role of EAP practitioners in higher education, and it appears that practitioners are again cast in a subservient position where there is no suggestion (or encouragement) that they ought to be more actively engaged in shaping the values, norms and conventions of education. The casting of the practitioner as one who applies the rules of others is detrimental to the recognition and status of practitioners, and risks contributing to their (continued) marginalisation.

The framing of values is also unnecessarily restrictive. We would argue that practitioners should be engaging in broader research, and contributing to debates surrounding critical sociological and political discourse regarding higher education and its values, because they profoundly shape EAP. The EAP discourse community should be much more visibly engaged and reflexively committed to articulating and questioning perspectives on values (although there are examples from critical EAP pursuing this directly or indirectly, e.g. Appleby, 2009; Chun, 2009; Singh and Doherty, 2004; Macallister, this volume). In short, EAP practitioners need to reflexively articulate their own values and to question the values that emerge, somewhat surreptitiously at times, within the EAP discourse community.
Concluding remarks

Tasked with surveying EAP teacher education and development, we have adopted a critical approach highlighting challenges, obstacles and (huge) gaps in this area, which contribute to a somewhat dystopic overview. Our chapter mirrors Belcher’s observation that the ‘community that ESP professionals know the least about is their own’ (Belcher, 2012:544) with a tendency to neglect the needs of ESP/EAP practitioners (Richards, 1997). The status and marginalisation of the practitioner is a constant, if often minor, theme in the literature (e.g. Hall, 2013; Strauss, 2012; Robinson, 1991).

A persistent trope in the literature relates to the impoverished status of EAP practitioners, the reasons for which are often attributed to social/economic factors. EAP centres in UK universities and elsewhere are subject to ideologies and policies enforcing a neoliberal agenda of increasing commodification, competition, marketization and the promotion of student-as-consumer. Stevenson and Kokkinn (2007) provide a recent litany of concerns: lack of a common title for professional roles, roles poorly understood by others, no clear or appropriate career structure, promotion or rewards system, and the increasing casualisation of teaching. Hamp-Lyons (2011b:4) notes that EAP in Britain is entering a period of declining status, citing three universities (Glamorgan, Edinburgh and Nottingham) divorcing EAP academics from practitioners in different departments, and renaming practitioners as support workers, professional or teaching-only staff. One recent and increasingly common trend is the outsourcing of university EAP provision to private for-profit providers.

BALEAP’s noteworthy (particularly in the absence of other initiatives) systematic initiatives to guide or standardise practitioner competencies, development and education have been singled out for critical analysis. It is significant that BALEAP has chosen to focus on development and education at this particular historical moment, and this could be interpreted at least in part as a response to fundamental changes in UK higher education that, as noted above, have contributed to an uncertain, fragmented and fragile professional environment.

BALEAP’s response both to this, and the significant expansion in demand for EAP practitioners, is to try to promote professionalism within EAP, and seek greater recognition of EAP in the wider higher education community (through education and development) by laying out the competencies and standards required to teach EAP. Practitioners are assimilated into the EAP discourse community through a norm-enforcing practitioner development framework. One of the unfortunate consequences of assimilation is a neglect of EAP strands which stress a norm-transgressing critical perspective; those that can encourage change and innovation rather than reproduction.

The potential for innovation and change in EAP is further hampered by the legacy of ESP on current EAP teaching. EAP as a profession is, it seems, capable of inflicting damage on itself. Turner (2004: 96) suggests that EAP has ‘colluded in its own marginalisation’. Hamp-Lyons (2011a:92) situates the origins of EAP as a ‘grass roots, practical response’ which immediately positioned EAP as poor relation and damaged the development of EAP as a legitimate field. This can be partly attributed to its ESP legacy of adopting ‘the butler’s stance’ (Raimes, 1991) – where teachers have contributed to allowing universities to marginalise EAP units by adopting a support role within departments (Hyland, 2012). The legacy of ‘the ad hoc, small-scale, quick fix attitude’ (Hamp-Lyons, 2011a:92) and an ‘intellectual short-cut mentality’ (Turner, 2004:97) remains as legacy of its ESP/EAP origins and contributes to a ‘more patchwork and fragmented field’ (ibid). This quick-fix attitude has persisted, particularly in presessional courses, and perpetuates the ‘maximum throughput of students with minimum attainment levels in the language in the shortest...
possible time’ philosophy (Turner, 2004:97). This propagates the notion or myth that having achieved the minimum attainment required in the shortest period possible ‘implies a finality’ (ibid:98). A concomitant notion is that insessional provision caters for weak students – what Swales eloquently calls the ‘ivory ghetto of remediation’ (Swales, 1990:6). The focus in EAP on study skills and language work promotes the notion that EAP is intellectually vacuous (Turner, 2004). This raises the question of the pertinence and purpose of assimilating practitioners, through norm-enhancing/enforcing education and development into EAP practice which, potentially, maintains and reinforces marginalisation and perpetuates self-inflicted wounds.

We are aware that the concerns raised in this section may not resonate with all readers, and readers in various contexts and locations may have a different cluster of educational issues to contend with in their everyday professional lives. This observation highlights the need for more accounts of practitioner education and development globally to enable more inclusive and pluralistic models for education and development to emerge that better represent the diversity of EAP, and also federate the profession around a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of practitioners. The risk at the moment is that because UK initiatives, through BALEAP and UK universities, are the most explicit and complete models of development and education, they will dominate discussion, even though they are largely a response to (UK) specific social, economic and ideological circumstances, as well as enactments of UK visions of and for EAP. The relevance and pertinence of their expectations and frameworks to others elsewhere is unclear.

EAP practitioner development and education, regardless of context, should, we argue, be underpinned by reflexivity. This would entail critical understanding and assessments of the range of ideologies, theories, pedagogies and research that have shaped the teaching of EAP (such as those in this handbook). Equally significantly, reflexive education and development should entail developing a deep understanding of the values, socioeconomic forces and politics that frame local, as well as global, education and enactments of EAP. Through a thorough and critical understanding, practitioners can, first, begin to question, reaffirm or modify their own values, actions and commitments, and, second, assess the extent to which their values are dissonant with the values that prevail. Suggesting a worldlier, more sociologically informed vision of education and development enables practitioners to transform praxis with a deeper understanding of their own values, the values that shape their practice, the affordances and constraints of their educational context for transformation and, importantly, where norms need to be enhanced and where they can or should be transgressed.

Notes

1 EAP and Teacher Education, 29 November 2014, Sheffield Hallam University.
2 LSE refers to the London School of Economics and Political Sciences.
3 NILE refers to Norwich Institute of English Language Education.
4 SOAS refers to The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

References


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