TEACHER EDUCATION AND ESP

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ABSTRACT

In today's globally connected world, effective English education is essential. Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TESP) has been considered a separate undertaking from English language teaching. It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. This paper makes an attempt at making a study about the vitality of Teacher Education.

KEYWORDS: ESP, Teacher Education, English Language, Teaching, Methodology

INTRODUCTION

In today's globally connected world, effective English language education is essential. ESP is generally defined as education for specialized English. As ESP is related to situated language usage, need analysis plays a key role in designing an ESP programme. Language Teachers for Specific Purposes have a lot in common with teachers of general foreign language. For both it is necessary to consider linguistic development and teaching theories, to have insights in contemporary ideas regarding their own position and role as well as the position and role of foreign language learners in education and to face new technologies offered as an aid to improve their methodology. Therefore it is essential to study the importance of teacher education in teaching ESP. This paper makes an attempt at making a study about the vitality of the same.

DEFINING TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

Teacher education refers to both pre-service and in-service programmes which adopt both formal and/or non-formal approaches. It is a continuing process which focuses on teacher career development.

An amalgamation of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development. Thus, teacher education is seen as a continuous process, beginning with a phase of initial training and continuing throughout the teacher's professional life throughout regular and sustained periods of in-service training. Teacher education generally includes four elements: improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and the development of practical skills and competences. What constitutes effective teaching may be subject to debate—it would be simplistic and reductive to

insist on a monolithic definition of effective teaching, considering the multiplicity of factors that come into play—but most would agree that the basic purpose of teaching is to enable learning. The most effective teaching is that which results in the most effective learning. Therefore it is necessary to study about the need of Teacher Education.

NEED OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education is concerned with the aspects such as, who (Teacher Educator), whom (Student teacher), what (Content) and how (Teaching Strategy). It empowers the student teachers with the skills (teaching and soft skills) that would enable them to carry on the functions in the most efficient and effective manner. Teacher education therefore pays attention to its content matter. According to UNESCO (2005), teacher education "addresses environmental, social, and economic contexts to create locally relevant and culturally appropriate teacher education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers." Teacher education has become necessary for the effective teaching and learning process. Here are some of the aspects which explain the need of teacher education is:

- **Complexity of the Profession**

To teach is a complex and demanding intellectual work, one that cannot be accomplished without the adequate preparation. The teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The teacher's work has become more complicated and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy, sociology, modern media and materials.

- **To Improve the Quality**

Teacher education is important because of its impact upon teacher quality. The focus on quality arises out of an intention to improve education and because many of the quantitative aspects that were of concern in earlier times have now received attention. The focus on efficiency has increased in importance because of the need to make better use of scarce resources and avoid waste. Educators would also want other indicators of quality, such as knowledge, understanding, intellectual integrity, creativity, and a love of learning. In a sense, increased enrolments and reduced drop-out rates are taken as indicators of improving quality

- **Improves Efficiency**

Teacher education not only ensures that teachers are – and remain competent, but it also allows to assure that they stay motivated through time. There is a concern about how to best adjust the mixture of inputs into the system to increase efficiency—how to get the best balance between curriculum reform, materials production, reorganization of structures, teacher training (in-service, pre-service), introducing new technologies, and improving the educational environment.

- **Makes Innovative**

Teachers are of central importance in improving the quality of education. This implies that innovations in (in-service and pre-service) teacher training are a good form of investment. Great reliance has also been placed on curriculum innovation as a device to improve quality. If the teachers do not understand the reforms, cannot apply them, and/or are not committed to them, they will not be able to carry out the reforms. Carefully planned design and development is useful for ensuring that prototype innovations are viable. It has also been established that planning is necessary to enable innovations to be judiciously introduced into the system.

- **Brings Changes and Up-Dates**

Changes have tremendous implications for educational development. For teachers, this also means change via in-service education/training and, more importantly, through self-education to update knowledge and skills—which is not easy to effect.

- **To Meet the Changing Needs**

It is recognized that, to assist teachers in adapting to their changing occupational roles in schools and society, much innovation and reform is necessary in the professional training of teachers, in the professional support services available, and in the use of non-formal and informal teacher education methods and distance education. It is only through such innovation and reform that the career-long professional development of teachers is possible.

- **To Address the Theory-Practice Gap**

A persistent issue that has plagued teacher education is the disconnect between theory and practice. The theory-practice gap was identified as a serious concern by all Alliance members (Cho, 2008; Farrington, 2008; Gambhir et al., 2008; Husbands, 2008; Rasmussen, 2008).

- **Preparing Teachers for Diverse Learners**

Another major issue that comes in the effectiveness is the diverse nature of the learners and the diversity of their needs. Attention needs to be given to how teachers establish pedagogical relationships with students and how such relationships are used to engage students in learning as there is a lack of research in this area. Such an understanding would also be relevant and useful in preparing teachers to effectively work with students differentiated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and language.

- **Developing ICT Literacy**

In the 21st century information economy and knowledge society, the need for the development of ICT literacy in teachers and students cannot be ignored. Choi, Han, Cho and Lee (1996, as cited in Pang,1999) define information literacy as the ability to adapt to an information society and to use electronic equipment, including computers, multi-functional telephones and other modern communication tools, in order to access information as needed. Developing ICT literacy not only allows for the access and navigation of information but also self-directed learning, as it has the potential to free students from the constraints of time and space. It includes the ability to search for, manage and retrieve information rapidly and to work collaboratively with others. The teacher can be made proficient with well planned, imaginative pre-service and in-service training programmes. With the advent and development of computer and information technology and changes in the teaching methodologies teacher education has become vital and inevitable.

ROLE/IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Many teachers of English are increasingly concerned about being held accountable for their student's progress as measured by standardized tests. Clearly, teachers of English need the appropriate training to be able to meet their student's language and learning needs and to facilitate academic growth of their students, yet most teachers lack this training. Holistic teacher building is necessary and therefore teacher education needed more emphasis than mere training.

The teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The teacher's work has become more complicated and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy sociology, modern media and materials. Teaching modalities are moving away from teacher-centred learning to shared learning in classrooms to help create conditions in which teachers and students learn together. The teacher can be made proficient with well planned, imaginative pre-service and in-service training programmes.

Teachers should be able to:

o   Author and publish experiences and researches conducted.

o   Be central and key participants of curriculum reform and innovation.

o   Encourage learners to work together in a cooperative spirit, help each other with their work as well as be able to evaluate themselves.

o   Help learners publish their own work online portfolios.

o   Write a bank of learning activities for learners to access at their own pace.

o   Give learners a wider choice of learning activities according to their own interests and capabilities.

o   Build up a personal portfolio of their best teaching plans so as to share among other teachers.

o   Create exciting learning environment of active knowledge creation and sharing.

o   Use new teaching methodologies to make the lessons better and effective.

o   Be up-dated in the trends.

o   Able to use the modern technical gadgets.

Teaching English for Specific Purposes and Teacher Education

The role of the ESP tutor transcends the limited framework of language teaching, to involve institutional awareness and a detailed knowledge of specialized discourse. An ESP tutor needs to research and assist students in understanding and constructing texts in their disciplines and to actively 'engage with the disciplines' (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998). An understanding of the complex workings of the institution must also be gained, to provide meaningful advice and assistance to students in terms of their applications, conditional offers and test strategies. One of the most effective current approaches to training is to encourage self-assessment and self-evaluation among new and more experienced teachers (Bowen and Marks 1994: 40-41). Thus, a crucial aspect of ELT training might be to develop an appropriate professional disposition, rather than to concentrate specifically on levels of knowledge within the teacher. This might allow relatively inexperienced teachers to adapt as necessary to their new working environment. According to Margo DElli Carpini the TESOL Technology standards for language teachers are comprised of four goals:

Goal 1: Language teachers acquire and maintain foundational knowledge and skills in technology for professional purposes.

Goal 2: Language teachers integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills with technology to enhance language teaching and learning.

Goal 3: Language teachers apply technology in record-keeping, feedback, and assessment.

Goal 4: Language teachers use technology to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiency.

These goals give clear guidance in terms of the importance of technology use in the language classroom and the types of skills that language teachers need to develop in order to meet the needs of their ESL, and provide guidance to teacher education programs about the experiences teacher candidates (TCs) should be exposed to during their professional education programs.

ROLES OF ESP TEACHER

ESP practitioner can have several roles. Many linguists admit that the ESP teacher` work involves much more than teaching. As ESP teaching is extremely varied some authors (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998) use the term "practitioner" rather than "teacher" to emphasize that ESP work involves much more than teaching. They distinguish the following key roles of ESP practitioner:

- Teacher

- Course designer and materials provider

- Collaborator

- Researcher

- Evaluator

As a Teacher

ESP is a practical discipline with the most important objective of helping students to learn. However, the teacher is not the primary knower of the carrier content of the material. The students, especially where the course is specifically oriented towards the subject content or work the students are engaged in, may know more about the content than the teacher. The teacher has the opportunity to draw on student's knowledge of the content in order to generate communication in the classroom. When the teaching is a specific course on, it is vital that the teacher adopts the position of the consultant who has the knowledge of communication practices but needs to "negotiate" with the students on how best to explore these practices to meet the objective they have.

The relationship is much more of a partnership. In some situations the role of ESP teacher extends to giving one-to-one advice to students (e.g., in non-English speaking countries students will have to publish in international journals and need advice in both language and discourse issues). ESP teachers need to have considerable flexibility, be willing to listen to learners, take interest in the disciplines or professional activities the students are involved in, and to take some risks in their teaching.

As Course Designer and Material Provider

Since it is rarely possible to use a particular textbook without the need for supplementary material – sometimes no really suitable published material exists for identified needs - ESP practitioners often have to provide the material for the course. This involves selection of published material, adapting material if it is not suitable, or writing it. ESP teachers also need to assess the effectiveness of the teaching material used whether it is published or self-produced. However, since the

teachers are encouraged by their employees to write new material there is a danger of constant re-invention of the wheel; advantages of published materials are ignored even when they are suitable for a given situation.

As Researcher

Research has been particularly strong in the area of EAP (genre analysis). Regarding the research into English for Business Purposes, there is a growing interest in investigating the genres, the language and the skills involved in business communication. ESP teachers need to be in touch with the research. Teachers carrying out a needs analysis, designing a course, or writing teaching materials need to be capable of incorporating the findings of the research, and those working in specific ESP situations need to be confident that they know what is involved in skills such as written communication.

As Collaborator

It is believed that subject-specific work is often best approached through collaboration with subject specialist. This may involve cooperation in which ESP teacher finds out about the subject syllabus in an academic context or the tasks that students have to carry out in a work or business situation. Or it may involve specific collaboration so that there is some integration between specialist studies or activities and the language. It might involve the language teacher specifically preparing learners for the language of subject lectures or business presentations. Another possibility is that a specialist checks and comments on the content of teaching materials that the ESP teacher has prepared. The fullest collaboration is where a subject expert and a language teacher team-teach classes; in EAP such lessons might help with the understanding of subject lectures or the writing of examination answers, essays or theses, while in ESP they might involve the language teacher and a business trainer working together to teach both the skills and the language related to business communication.

As Evaluator

The ESP practitioner is often involved in various types of evaluation - testing of students, evaluation of courses and teaching materials. Tests are conducted 1) to assess whether students have the necessary language and skills to undertake a particular academic course or career which is important in countries such as the UK, USA, Australia where large numbers of international students do postgraduate course or research and need internationally required tests, e.g. International English Language Test Service (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and 2) to assess the level of their achievement – how much learners have gained from a course. Evaluation of course design and teaching materials should be done while the course is being taught, at the end of the course and after the course has finished, in order to assess whether the learners have been able to make use of what they learned and to find out what they were not prepared for. Evaluation through discussion and on-going needs analysis can be used to adapt the syllabus.

Training of ESP Teacher

Training of the teachers is very important for ESP courses because they should be well specialized so that they can meet students` needs. Therefore, the staff or the teachers should follow some steps about themselves.

- **Selection**

It means that not every teacher can be specialized for these courses but only those who feel that they can do such a thing and they are ready to contribute for it. Thus, the first step is selection phase.

- **Continuing Personal Education**

Teachers should be well-educated people. There are variations in how the trainee's personal education is improved – either simultaneously with his/her professional training; or consecutively where first two or three years of study with no elements of training as a teacher are followed by the fourth year containing methodology of foreign language teaching or one year post-graduate course of teacher training; or, as in many countries, by in-service courses.

- **General Professional Training as an Educator and Teacher**

This element involves what all teachers need to know regardless of which subject they teach. This means that educational psychology, social psychology, and the principles of educational thought are crucial and the elements lead the trainee to understand the nature of education, outline the organization of education, know and manage the different skills of students, and also understand the role of syllabus and teaching materials.

- **Special Training as a Teacher of a Foreign or Second Language**

This element is also important because special training of teacher make them understand student's needs better, which is in fact very important for ESP courses because based on what they need the teachers can offer them the appropriate knowledge and this knowledge would be very helpful to them.

BENEFITS OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Today, teacher education programs offer teachers ways to keep their classrooms and curriculum fresh, exciting, and highly educational. They also teach new teaching styles, and offer further teacher education certification. In-service training which endeavours to update a teacher's professional knowledge throughout his or her career, policy guidelines have emerged to link promotion criteria and procedures with periodic in-service teacher training, and to develop multi-media training packages for in-service training for all categories of teachers.

New programs have shown a great deal of benefit, such as the ability to earn teacher education certification, improve their general skills, improve overall organization, improve time management, improve educational technology knowledge, and learn ways to better motivate students. All of these aspects have been shown to result in better student grades, and a higher level of classroom interest.

Creating a setting that interests students, makes them feel comfortable, and encourages them to participate in classroom activities and ask questions, leads to a more effective lesson, and greater overall learning.

By providing teachers with teacher education programs they are able to continue their own educations, gain vital skills that they may not have been able to learn while taking college courses, and stay current with new techniques. Not only is it critical for teachers to know their material, they must also be able to help students in order for them to truly succeed. These programs provide just that, educating teachers on the best ways to instruct and motivate students for the best possible outcomes.

SOME OF THE COURSES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

Tesol, Tefl, Celta, Celtyl, Delta, Ielts train the trainer, Clil, Tkt, Cae

CONCLUSIONS

Continuing education is important with regard to teachers and teacher education, as it enables teachers to keep abreast of the latest developments in their subject and skill areas. Lack of having uniformity in terms of teaching ESP materials, the absence of ESP teacher training programs, and misconceptions about ESP courses are instances of ESP teacher's failure in successful implementation of ESP courses.

Scott (2001) argues that while TESoL, TEFL, etc. courses for teachers provide a good foundation for the teaching of general language, they are insufficient for the teaching of EAP. This scholar believes that EAP's "distinctiveness derives from its aim, which is the promotion of student learning on courses within higher education institutions" (Scott, 2001: 19). Errey (2001) agrees that specialized teacher training is needed, involving principles and approaches appropriate for EAP and ESP. Hence there is an urgent need to recognize teacher's work as complex and demanding, and improvement in teacher quality requires a re-conceptualization of how we prepare a new generation of teachers, and this is where the Teacher Education plays the essential role of Teacher Development.

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