



EDITORIAL

TESOL in Context: English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) and Initial Teacher Education

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A number of issues and pressures are currently converging in the area of teacher education for EAL/D specialists. These include a time of increased challenges in recruiting teachers to schools across Australian schools and systems; and concurrently, increased government and public attention to the nature of teacher education programs in Australian universities. With the suggestion of a ‘multilingual turn’ in applied linguistics being raised a decade ago, it is valuable to consider how this is reflected in contemporary teacher education, in relation to developing a multilingual stance and preparing pre-service teachers for multilingual pedagogies in EAL/D teaching. This multilingual turn, which recognises the pedagogical value of students’ full linguistic repertoires, provides a crucial lens through which to examine the papers in this collection, each of which grapples with how teacher education can move beyond monolingual assumptions.

This special issue brings together papers that examine EAL/D education in Australia, from a wide-angle view at the provision of courses across Australian universities, to discussion of the content of pre-service teacher learning and the approaches used to deliver it, and diverse considerations for pre-service teachers and teacher educators in developing a multilingual stance in classroom practice.

In the opening paper *How do Australian universities prepare pre-service teachers to teach EAL/D to multilingual learners in Australian classrooms?*, Carly Steele and colleagues audit EAL/D teaching in ITE programs across Australian universities. This research explores the gap between

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teacher preparation and the demands of teaching EAL/D learners in schools in the context of decreasing employment of specialist EAL/D teachers and devolving responsibility for EAL/D provision to individual schools.

The mandatory minimum standard for EAL/D teacher education, based on AITSL's Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), requires programs to address "linguistic diversity" but not to teach specialist EAL/D knowledge or pedagogies. The picture painted by this research is somewhat bleak, with only 26% of 215 ITE programs across 37 universities offering EAL/D education beyond this minimum. The concentration of EAL/D units in primary education degrees identified in this study suggests that English language learning is not seen as important in early development or when specialist knowledge is being learnt in high school. It was also found that in the condensed curricula of postgraduate teacher education programs, EAL/D units are often jettisoned.

The inequality experienced by EAL/D learners in schools is reproduced in teacher standards and teacher education. The researchers identify that strengthening the regulatory instrument of the APST is necessary, so that EAL/D education is at least taught to the level articulated in the Australian Curriculum's recognition of specific learning needs of EAL/D students. While this foundational mapping reveals significant gaps in current provision, the following papers demonstrate that where EAL/D education does occur, innovative approaches are emerging that offer pathways forward.

In their paper *Pedagogical translinguaging as "troublesome knowledge" in teacher education*, Ollerhead, Moore-Lister, and Pennington examine the ways in which teacher education students incorporate pedagogical translinguaging into their professional knowledge and practice. Using the framework of "troublesome knowledge", the researchers analyse the reflections of three teacher education students. They demonstrate that these students face challenges in enacting linguistic differentiation, connecting their own linguistic ability with teaching effectiveness, and moving from theory to practice in relation to translinguaging. Though it may be easier for teacher education students with lived experience of language learning to adopt a translinguaging stance, practical enactment of translinguaging pedagogy is still troublesome, particularly given the 'English-only is best' belief entrenched in Australian education.

Recognising these cognitive and emotional challenges faced by teacher candidates can support the development of more effective teacher preparation programs, by identifying where obstacles may be located and how they may be addressed. This includes recognising the disadvantaged position of monolingual teacher candidates and developing ways for students to experience translinguaging pedagogy through their teacher education, in order to develop translinguaging stance and pedagogy in our teacher education students.

Building on these challenges of moving from theory to practice, Singh, Caldwell, and Mu focus on a specific pedagogical skill that underpins effective EAL/D teaching: grammatical knowledge and metalanguage. This is necessary knowledge for teachers of EAL/D, and specifically in the use of the South Australian teaching and assessment tool known as LEAP levels (Learning English: Achievement and Proficiency levels), a diagnostic assessment framework whose application depends on teachers having sophisticated understanding of English grammar.

During a course for pre-service primary teachers specialising in English and EAL/D, PSTs received instruction in grammar from a systemic functional linguistics perspective and were then given practice in applying the LEAP tool. In-person workshops were supplemented by online training materials including five videos covering specific grammatical concepts and metalanguage. The researchers used a pre-quiz and post-quiz to measure the effectiveness of this instructional approach.

Although the authors caution that this is a “modest (though valuable) intervention”, their results demonstrate that PSTs’ grammatical understanding improved. As well as statistically significant improvement in quiz results, PSTs also gave positive feedback about the effectiveness of the learning materials. This suggests that explicit grammar instruction with self-directed learning components is valuable as a foundation for EAL/D teaching and assessment.

Drawing parallels to the Australian context, Canadian researcher Anwar Ahmed considers the politics of language and culture in teacher education in *Initial Teacher Education and the Emotional Geography of Languages: A conceptual intervention*. In both contexts there are rising challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers, and teacher preparation is increasingly politicised. Ahmed asserts that teachers’ competencies are not stable and continuous learning is necessary, with a particular contemporary focus on multilingualism, translanguaging and fluidity, under the banner of Critical Multilingual Language Awareness. In Australia although the ‘multilingual turn’ is apparent in academic discourse, practical applications in schools and teacher education are harder to identify, and further work is needed to overturn the monolingual bias in education – with an important role for innovative teacher education.

Ahmed offers Emotional Geography of Languages as a conceptual framework to inform curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education. It combines the dimensions of affect, space and connection to land, particularly in contexts of diversity. EGL can be used to explore the dynamic and resilient emotional relationships people develop with language and place, and their impact on identity – both for teacher candidates and their future students.

Working within the monolingual ideologies of Australian schooling means that developing a multilingual stance and enacting multilingual pedagogies is challenging. In the final paper of this special issue, *Breaking deficit views through a “language as resource” orientation: One teacher’s*

journey of shifting lenses, Catriona Vo and Julie Choi share their long-term collaborative partnership which has supported Vo's transformation as a teacher and Choi's development as a teacher educator.

Through “dialogic restorying”, the authors share and reflect upon key moments over a seven-year period, analysing shifts in understanding and practice. Elements include language portraits, informal conversations, action research and a conference presentation. We see the development of the teacher's relationship with multilingualism and a Language-As-Resource stance in classroom practice, and the teacher-educator's development to a collaborative co-learning approach.

This paper illustrates clearly that personal and professional transformation takes time, well beyond the period allocated to teacher education in universities. The implications for ITE are multiple – learning for teachers is an ongoing process; there is a need for iterative opportunities for teachers to build understanding of multilingualism, language and identity; and a collaborative, caring and reciprocal learning approach between pre-service teachers and teacher educators is central to transformative teacher education.

These perspectives on teacher education give us cause for both concern and hope. It is troubling to see the limited opportunities that Australian pre-service teachers have to learn about EAL/D learners and how to teach them. The monolingual mindset (Clyne, 2008) that plagues school curriculum and education is replicated in teacher education curriculum. This limits the knowledge and skills that teachers are able to graduate with and is a contributory factor in the shortage of EAL/D specialist teachers currently plaguing Australian schools.

Without mandates on universities, courses will be focussed on what is seen as important for the ‘mainstream’, and EAL/D education will continue to be limited, with core offerings subsumed under the banner of linguistic or cultural diversity. Though in some cases there are universities offering EAL/D units or sequences of courses as a specialisation catering to local needs, force of policy is needed to retain these courses and enable institutions to offer more than the current minimum, and that begins with stronger identification of teacher professional standards addressing EAL/D learning. These findings point to several urgent actions: universities need policy incentives to expand EAL/D offerings beyond minimum requirements; teacher education programs require dedicated time for iterative practice with multilingual pedagogies; and professional standards must explicitly articulate EAL/D competencies to drive systemic change.

On the other hand, the expertise in the research and teaching conducted by EAL/D teacher educators across our universities is a signal of optimism for the future. In this field academics are variously interrogating ITE curriculum and pedagogy from a social justice lens with a focus on EAL/D learners; developing and testing innovative approaches to teaching specialist technical knowledge; and developing reflective and critical teachers with a productive multilingual stance.

The range of innovative approaches that EAL/D teacher educators are implementing and investigating indicates that this continues to be a space for meaningful research, critical reflection and implementation of responsive and effective pedagogies.

Beyond their content contributions, these papers also demonstrate innovative methodological approaches to EAL/D teacher education research. From large-scale program audits to longitudinal collaborative partnerships, they illustrate the range of research methods needed to understand and improve this complex field.

It is clear that the mosaic of knowledge, experiences and dispositions needed to become a knowledgeable, skilled, and agentic EAL/D teacher begins with the possibility of engaging in specialised teacher education. This requires provision of courses by universities, and design of these courses to include specialised knowledge and effective ways of teaching this. Ongoing thorough critical review of ITE courses is needed to incorporate lessons from research – that is, an expanded (and expanding) understanding of what knowledge is important; how this knowledge interacts with current practice in both schools and higher education; and therefore how pre-service and early career teachers can be most effectively supported to develop and incorporate this knowledge into their professional identities and practice. Of course, it is equally important that we continue to interrogate and reflect upon our own developing knowledge and practice as EAL/D teacher educators. The challenge ahead lies in scaling these pockets of excellence: how can the innovative approaches documented here move from individual initiatives to systematic transformation across Australian teacher education?

References

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