Teacher educators' perspectives on preparing student teachers to work with pupils who speak languages beyond English

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Despite a well-documented and significant increase in the population of children in UK schools who speak language(s) beyond English at home, the national Newly Qualified Teacher survey regularly reports that new teachers do not feel confident or prepared to work effectively with 'EAL children'. Whilst understanding the experiences and exploring the attitudes of newly-qualified, in-service and experienced teachers have been the subject of research around the world, the perspectives of teacher educators have not been adequately researched.

This article reports on a mixed-methods study investigating teacher educators' views on their role in preparing future teachers to work effectively with multilingual children. A survey was conducted with 62 teacher educators who have responsibility for inclusion or EAL teacher training, which was followed up with a series of semi-structured interviews. Key findings suggest that there may be a mismatch between the perceptions of teacher educators and newly qualified teachers, as the vast majority of the participants reported that they were either confident or very confident about teaching student teachers how to teach EAL children. Additional themes explored were related to concerns over a performativity culture in education, and to balancing linguistic diversity training alongside other pressing priorities in initial teacher education.

Keywords: EAL; initial teacher education; preparedness to teach; attitudes; teacher training; England; teacher educators; teacher trainers; languages beyond English

Introduction

Due to a significant increase in global mobility, linguistic diversity in classrooms has been growing year on year for a number of decades (Curran 2003; Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez. 2008). Therefore teacher education that produces teachers that are responsive to this linguistic diversity is increasingly important given how influential Initial Teacher Training/ Education (ITT/ ITE) can be on teachers and their beliefs and

classroom practices (Richards and Taylor 1998). Research into teacher education for linguistically diverse regions has led to proposals for effective ways of working to increase new teachers' capacity in some areas, particularly in the USA (Catalano and Hamann 2016; Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez. 2008; Parla 1994).

However, this is not universally the case (Coady, Harper and de Jong 2011), as research elsewhere in the USA uncovered, and teacher education for linguistic diversity in the UK has perhaps been particularly ill-supported, with that country's newly qualified teacher (NQT) survey each year reporting on a new cohort of teachers who feel under-prepared for working with children designated as speaking English as an Additional Language or 'EAL' (Cajkler and Hall 2009; Franson 1999). This is in spite of the fact that it is now generally considered to be inevitable that a mainstream teacher in the UK, for example, will, at least at some point in their career, teach pupils for whom English is not their first language (Cajkler and Hall 2009), The NQT survey in 2017 reported that new teachers felt that EAL pupils were those that they felt the least prepared to work with (Ginnis, Pestell, Mason and Knibbs2018). However, whilst such surveys offer a very clear picture of the viewpoints of the newly qualified teacher, and other research has shown a similar picture of lack of confidence from experienced teachers (Wardman 2012; Murakami 2008), the views of teacher educators responsible for the training of NQTs in the UK context have not been adequately considered to date. This paper contributes to addressing that gap as it is important to seek the current perspectives of teacher educators before giving serious consideration to what changes could or should be made to the ITT/ ITE curriculum.

Teacher educators and their role

As Goodwin et al. (2014) point out, quality teacher education relies on quality teacher

educators and they observed that teacher educators reported that they often feel unprepared for their role. Czerniawski et al. (2018) report on a study that considered the nature of the teacher educator role in the UK context and discovered a complicated mixture of priorities and pressures at play in their work. They define a teacher educator as someone who is professionally engaged in the initial and ongoing education of teachers. In common with them, we are focused in this article on those teacher educators who are employed by a University. Czerniawski et al. (2018) discuss the significant changes happening within the teacher education context in the UK, and especially in England, including the changing demographic of new teachers, due to the instigation of teacher training options like Schools Direct. Again, for the purposes of this article, our focus is not on these types of teacher training, but rather the more traditional higher education teacher educators.

Goodwin et al. (2014) reflect on the very limited research in existence on the role of the teacher educator and Czerniawski et al. (2018) discuss the lack of explicit training for many as they transition into this role from mainstream classroom teaching in the UK, which means that there is a tendency to bring the training practices that they themselves experienced with them into this role (Lortie 1975). This is, in addition to the pressures of working in a higher education context with the requirements for undertaking doctoral work and producing research alongside focusing on educating the next generation of teachers, an important factor to consider in understanding teacher educators' professional contexts. As such our research endeavours to add to the currently limited research on the role of the teacher educator in initial teacher training to explore the links between the teacher educators' perspectives and that of student teachers, and NQTs based on prior research (Murakami 2008; Starbuck 2018).

Teacher Education and linguistic diversity

There are very few studies of teacher education with regards to capacity building in dealing with linguistic diversity in the UK (Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013). EAL students are officially defined as pupils who are known to or believed to speak a language which is not English in the home (Arnot et al. 2014). Alongside a wider debate on the value of the labels used in the field of English language teaching (Cunningham 2018), there is also discussion around the need to be critically aware of the term 'EAL' because it encompasses a broad range of learners who come from various linguistic, ethnic and educational backgrounds, resulting in varied levels of English (Demie 2018). The complexities inherent in understanding how to best teach this diverse group of children are exacerbated by the consequences of the policy of mainstreaming of EAL from the 1980s in the UK (Franson 1999; Leung 2016), from when English as a Second/ Additional Language ceased to be seen as a separate subject within the National Curriculum. This has had implications for Teacher Education as the Teaching Standards associated with learning how to manage EAL are not as central as other aims (Butcher, Sinka and Troman 2007).

There has been a continuous and distinct lack of external guidance and support for teachers teaching EAL learners (Mistry and Sood 2012), which has become even more pronounced since the last of the UK governmental publications on working with this population was produced in 2009. EAL specialists to support schools are now in short supply, due to funding cuts, and still 'no real consensus has yet been achieved as to what constitutes an appropriate pedagogical framework' (Murakami 2008, 268) for this group. Although the government inspectorate for UK schools (Ofsted) suggested that a more tailored curriculum and staff professional development are required to improve the education of EAL pupils, a lack of funding and support for this remains

(Mistry and Sood 2012) and specific reference to EAL was, in fact, removed from the national inspection framework documents in 2015.

Franson, et al. (2002) argue that there is a distinct need to establish and identify what constitutes as good practice when teaching EAL pupils, to establish how pre-service (and in-service) teacher-training can be developed and improved in relation to developing their teaching skills relating to teaching EAL pupils. Mistry and Sood (2012) noted that the lack of a co-ordinated government strategy has resulted in teachers across the UK having insufficient training to access or follow the strategies and assessments certain schools have in place to support their learners. Skinner (2010) argues that it is naïve to assume that teachers will be able to 'learn on the job' how to successfully support EAL learners, because, although good EAL teaching practice has the potential to benefit all pupils, the same cannot be said the other way around. Starbuck's (2018) research reinforces this as most of her participants described receiving minimal to no training that would help them teach EAL pupils, which leads to a lack of confidence in new teachers, alongside the additional pressure of needing to work out independently how to adequately support this diverse group of pupils. Noting that Ball and Muhammad's (2003) internet survey of teacher education programs in the USA found that few dealt in any depth with the topic of linguistic diversity, we echo Catalano and Hamann's (2016, 275) claim that the 'research gaze needs to turn more squarely on teacher education programs' in order to ensure that future ITT offers what pre-service teachers need to feel prepared in an age characterised by an increase in linguistic diversity in classrooms around the world (Lucas and Villegas 2010)

Research design

Against a picture of limited resources and support for EAL in schools and consistent reports from NQTs about feeling ill-prepared, and Franson et al.'s (2002) argument that

there is a need to further understand how EAL training is provided on teacher training courses to best identify how it can be improved, this study aims to explore the under-researched area of teacher educators' views on training teachers to work in linguistically diverse classrooms by posing the following research question:

> *How do teacher educators view current provision in Initial Teacher Training in the UK, with a specific focus on student teacher preparedness to teach children classified as EAL?*

A mixed-methods approach was taken with data gathered using an online questionnaire (see table 1 for questionnaire items and Supplemental Material for a summary of all responses) and a series of follow-up interviews (see table 2 for interview questions and Supplemental Material for a summary of responses). A consent form was designed in accordance with the British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines (2011) and clearly informed participants that their responses would be anonymised and that they had a right to withdraw at any stage. The questionnaire data remained anonymous, whilst the interviewees were given pseudonyms which are used in the discussion shown below. University ethical approval was granted for the project.

Questionnaire
1. How long have you been a school teacher? 0-3 years4/ -6 years/ 7-10 years/ More than 10 years
2. How long have you been a lecturer teaching on Primary/Secondary Education courses?
3. How much experience do you have with learners who have English as an Additional Language (EAL)?
4. Please describe your experiences with EAL learners?
5. Are issues relating to teaching EAL incorporated into the modules you teach? If so, how?
6. How confident do you feel about teaching student-teachers how to teach EAL learners? Not confident/ Slightly confident/ Confident/ Very confident

7. Do you feel that the teaching of EAL is incorporated into Primary and Secondary Education degrees and PGCEs sufficiently enough that your students would feel comfortable teaching EAL learners?
8. Do you perceive teaching student-teachers about EAL to be challenging?
9. How do you perceive the balance of EAL teaching to student-teachers? Mostly theoretical/ Mostly practical/ A combination of theoretical and practical
10. Do you think any improvements could be made regarding how student-teachers learn about EAL learners? Yes/ No If yes, please expand.

Table 1: Questionnaire items

Interview questions
1) What region of Great Britain are you from?
2) What EAL training did you receive in your Initial teacher training?
3) What feedback do you receive from your cohort?
4) The current evidence shows that students don't feel prepared, so where do you think the mismatch is?
5) If the curriculum and current training practices are not focused on EAL, what are the current priorities? What do you think they're focussing on in schools?
6) What do you think the biggest barriers for learning are for the children (with EAL)?

Table 2: Interview questions

Questionnaire Participants

The participants are 62 lecturers from higher education institutions in the UK that provide primary or secondary education courses to STs. The Universities and College Admissions Service website was used to do a search of all the ITT courses offered at institutions in the UK to find relevant participants. This list was then used to search the institutions' websites for relevant staff profiles, i.e. staff involved in teaching modules on ITT relating to teaching STs about EAL. Upon finding relevant staff profiles, a list was made of their names and contact email addresses. The questionnaire was then sent to 204 ITT trainers across the UK, 62 of whom responded (30% response rate). Please

see the table below for specific figures regarding responses to each question within the distributed questionnaire.

Question number	**Responses**
1	62
2	60
3	60
4	58
5	55
6	55
7	55
8	59
9	55
10	55

Table 3: Questionnaire responses per item

Questionnaire Participant Characteristics

School teacher for more than ten years	50
School teacher for 7-10 years	5
School teacher for 4-6 years	7

Table 4: Length of teaching experience

0-1 year	2
1-5 years	22
6-10 years	14
11-15 years	4

16-20 years	5
21-25 years	2
26-30 years	3

Table 5: Higher Education lecturing experience

Significant	18
Enough	2
Some	8
Not very much	3
Insufficient	5
10+ years	10
5-10 years	2
Experience with Higher Education EAL students	1
Taught EAL pupils before	5

Table 6: Experience with EAL learners

Did not receive any EAL training, or if they did, they did not remember it.	6
Received a bit of EAL training, but could not fully remember	1
Received extensive training in EAL due to her course being based on equality	1

Table 7: EAL training

Questionnaire participants were invited to leave their email address if they were happy to be contacted regarding a Skype or phone call interview. Following the survey, the researcher (first author) undertook eight semi-structured interviews. Seven of these participants had completed the questionnaire, and the final one was an additional participant interview.

After the interviews were conducted the data was transcribed and the questionnaire and interview responses were thematically analysed initially by examining word frequency to establish the key themes enabling a quantitative analysis into the word frequency whilst revealing the key themes within the data. Colour coding was then employed to enable separation of the data to further examine specific responses and their implications. As the interview data was essentially an extension of the initial questionnaire data and as such served as an additional commentary which corroborated and supported the initial data set, we subsequently analysed the data as one complementary, interlinked data set.

Findings and discussion

Both the questionnaire and interview data sets were thematically analysed and revealed that the key emerging themes were focused around priorities in the education sector; the balance between practice and theory in ITT; and the very notion of what being adequately prepared as a ST means to the participants. In addition to those themes, the reported confidence levels from TEs with regards to preparing STs to work effectively with children who speak languages beyond English was a theme of note. Findings on these themes are presented and discussed below.

Education sector: priorities and attitudes

As a result of the initial questionnaire data revealing that EAL is not a current priority in ITE, a key follow-up question was about the current priorities in ITE and in schools. This line of enquiry allowed us to understand why EAL is not currently a main priority within ITE, as without this understanding of the current priorities we cannot effectively put forth valuable recommendations for how ITE on EAL could be improved in alignment with the current schools' and curricular priorities. In addition to this, we also asked TEs what they consider to be the biggest barriers for EAL pupils' learning in mainstream schools, as this provides an insight into why ITE on EAL is offered in the way it currently is.

Given the fact that four interviewee participants describe the current performativity focus of schools to measure students' and teachers' abilities it is perhaps unsurprising that EAL is not an explicit focus in ITT. However, Elena argues that the issue is not simply a national issue; school priorities stem from their cohort of pupils and their parents so it follows that if schools have pupils who are viewed as EAL then supporting EAL pupils becomes a priority for said school. Yet, it stands to reason that, as stated previously, due to an increasing number of EAL pupils in mainstream schools the need for quality support for EAL pupils should be an explicit and permanent priority for the education sector and, as such, for ITT. In some ways, it could be argued that the EAL agenda is already a priority within the curriculum, admittedly an implicit one, as it permeates through the inclusion agenda as an ongoing education priority. On the other hand, the low and decreasing levels of engagement with other languages in the UK (Lanvers 2017) suggests that EAL as a focus is unlikely to become more pressing in the current climate.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the education sector should step away from viewing EAL as a 'problem' in the classroom and instead move towards viewing the teaching of EAL pupils as 'good inclusive teaching practice' for mainstream classes. This may then lead to STs feeling more confident in their awareness of and ability to teac individual pupils in accordance with their specific needs.. Additionally, when considering participants' descriptions of needing to address the negative attitudes towards EAL pupils that is seemingly held by the education sector, Bailey and Marsden (2017) argue the detrimental effect such an attitude can have on such pupils. Sharples (2017) takes it a step further, arguing that viewing EAL pupils as students with a specific *need* rather than as students who, like all other pupils have individual needs, but who also have a positive linguistic and cultural repertoire and prior education experiences they can bring into the classroom, can lead to pupils only being assessed by their ability to cope in an unfamiliar curriculum. Furthermore, teaching STs such practices would serve to benefit all pupils in the classroom, as would incorporating individual pupil's linguistic and cultural diversity into the class.

Balancing the practical and the theoretical in ITT

Four questionnaire participants explicitly discuss the problematic narrative surrounding EAL in the education sector. One questionnaire participant stated that the training their STs receive is:

> *lodged into the 'EAL' narrative which approaches multilingualism as an educational problem to be overcome by instrumentally ignoring multilingualism and replacing emerging bilingualism with enforced monolingualism.*

Furthermore, as one questionnaire participant stated, one of the main challenges for teacher educators when teaching STs about EAL is challenging their cohort to

reconsider the preconceived notions in the education sector as it continues to construct EAL *'as if it was a 'need' rather than a 'bonus'*. The majority of questionnaire participants (n = 40) considered that improvements could and should be made to ITT with regards to the coverage of EAL issues in the curriculum. Seven participants bemoan the fact that due to time constraints on ITT courses, it is impossible to cover everything in depth and report that, as a result, students inevitably do not receive enough input about EAL. Two participants explicitly stated that their STs request practical strategies they can apply to EAL pupils in the classroom. In addition, many (n = 18) separate extracts from the questionnaire data across multiple items, and all interviewees highlighted the need for, and value of, more practical classroom experience with EAL pupils. This strongly suggests that the perception of current training (by both STs and TEs) is that it is either too short or too theoretical. However, some participants (questionnaire: n = 3; interview: n = 1) suggested that it would be beneficial to provide STs with a theoretical understanding of Language acquisition during EAL training as it will aid with STs practical understanding of how best to support their students learning EAL. Three interview participants also discussed the importance of STs being made aware of the benefits of learners maintaining their first language and how it can be used as a resource in the classroom for promoting diversity. Bailey and Marsden (2017) stated that whilst most of the teachers they interviewed said they had received no specialist EAL training, those that did said they received lecture-based training as opposed to practical classroom-based training, which still left them feeling unprepared to teach and support EAL pupils. Cajkler and Hall (2009, 163) note that their participants 'indicated [a] desire for training into how to include or differentiate for EAL learners, especially new arrivals and pupils in the early stages of acquiring English'. This is despite research from elsewhere demonstrating that it is

deeper language awareness training that has the most impact of STs (Lucas et al. 2008). One participant discusses training their STs to support learners with individual needs through differentiation tactics, thus supporting another participant's argument that teaching EAL pupils is like teaching any pupil as they are simply part of the mainstream. This echoes a common refrain in the teaching community that 'good teaching for EAL is simply good teaching' (Gershon 2011).

Two participants stated that they provide their STs with guest experienced practitioners to deliver a session on EAL, suggesting that in some cases the practical teaching advice provided is tokenistic and so not necessarily useful input. The importance of placement experience is mentioned 23 times throughout the course of the collected questionnaire data, outlining the need for more placement experience involving EAL for STs, as STs' 'preparedness' is dependent on sufficient experience and training (Butcher, Sinka and Troman 2007; Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013). One participant commented that:

> *classroom teaching of students only accounts for a very small amount of their* [STs] *learning. Placements in schools with EAL learners should be offered for as many trainees as possible.*

Currently, it seems that the minority of STs are provided with opportunities to work with EAL pupils as only nine questionnaire participants explicitly stated that their students were given an opportunity to work with, and teach, EAL pupils in the classroom. However, this is dependent upon EAL populations and the institutions' partnership schools. Given that, it seems perhaps unsurprising that TEs seem split over how effectively they have prepared their STs to teach EAL as seventeen explicitly stated that they felt their students have sufficiently incorporated EAL into their ITT so students would feel comfortable teaching EAL, whilst another seventeen explicitly

disagreed. These findings contradict existing studies (Franson 1999; Starbuck 2018) where teachers overwhelmingly expressed feeling inadequately trained and prepared to teach EAL pupils, resulting in them lacking confidence in their ability to meet the needs of their EAL learners. As such, it is unsurprising that twenty participants suggested that ITT with regards to EAL could be improved by ensuring STs across the country gain adequate practical experience of teaching EAL learners, regardless of the location they are studying in. However, it is vital that such experiences are not tokenistic as one questionnaire participant states that practical experience at their institution involves *'spend[ing] a day at one of our partnership schools which has a large proportion of EAL students'*.

The nature of 'preparedness' in Student Teachers

The data initially suggest that more is needed to establish what 'preparedness' actually is in relation to STs leaving their ITT feeling ready to teach. What such 'preparedness' should, and currently does, mean to both TEs and STs seemingly causes disparity within the data. One of the participants suggested in the interview that some of the negative issues around ST preparedness are based in STs' own misapprehensions about what being prepared actually means. Six questionnaire participants and all interviewee participants posited that it may be seen as unreasonable to expect STs to report feeling prepared to work with EAL at the point when they leave ITT courses. It could be argued that being 'prepared' is about ensuring teachers have a general understanding of the area and tactics they can use with EAL pupils, whilst simultaneously being aware of the networks and resources available to them.

Teacher Educators' confidence levels in preparing STs to work with EAL

The majority of questionnaire respondents stated that they feel confident about teaching

STs how to teach EAL learners (n = 21: very confident; n = 25: confident), and there were more participants that (n = 31) reported they do *not* perceive teaching STs about EAL to be challenging than those (n = 24) who say they do.

Despite all questionnaire participants stating their cohort receive some form of input on EAL on their ITT course, participants were equally split on the question of whether they feel their student teachers would feel comfortable teaching EAL learners, suggesting that participants' views on how useful the EAL training is on their courses is varied. Yet, previous research shows that the overwhelming majority of student teachers report feeling unprepared to teach EAL upon completion of their ITT (Franson 1999; Murakami 2008; Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013; Bailey and Marsden 2017; Starbuck 2018).

All interviewees, and some (n = 6) questionnaire participants in this study argued that feelings of 'competence and confidence come with experience'. One questionnaire participant observed that it is more important for STs to 'think critically, ask the right questions and know where to go for resources', and another stated that *'trainees may be competent to teach but not totally confident'*. It is, therefore, dealing with the expectation that STs *should* feel comfortable and confident at this stage that is considered potentially challenging for some TEs.

Interview participants were told about the apparent disparity between our questionnaire findings and previous research (i.e. that teacher educators seem to be more confident about equipping STs to work with EAL children than NQTs have regularly been reporting) and asked where they thought the potential mismatch was. Helen argued that teachers work on instinct upon being out in the field because they no longer have access to academic research in the same way STs do, thus supporting Medgyes (2017) and Paran's (2017) argument that more needs to be done to prevent

this, and as such they may feel unprepared as instinct comes with experience. Lucy, on the other hand, argued that EAL training used to be more heavily incorporated into the ITT programme, but, over the last five years, this has changed with more of a focus on phonics (in her own field of practice, at least); this could potentially explain the disparity.

Furthermore, Carole suggested the disparity could be because of a lack of time and a variety of experiences had by STs on placements; for instance, their mentors in schools are not equipped to deal with EAL pupils, possibly resulting in STs leaving placements feeling overwhelmed and underprepared. Many participants supported this viewpoint, arguing that practical placement experience with EAL pupils correlates with STs leaving ITT courses feeling prepared and confident. Kate corroborated, suggesting that it is a lack of appropriate and effective deployment of EAL support staff, leaving schools feeling potentially ill-equipped to support EAL pupils. Sophie and Rosie suggested that ultimately it is relevant experience that will make the students confident, no matter how prepared institutions may attempt to make them. Rosie wents on to argue that the reason for the disparity could be that although teaching EAL learners in mainstream classrooms should simply be good inclusive practice, STs believe it is more complex than that and it follows that, if teaching EAL in mainstream classrooms is demystified when taught to STs, they may feel more prepared to teach it.

Conclusion

This study has revealed a disparity between how TEs perceive the training for STs on linguistic diversity and EAL during ITT courses and how STs and in-service teachers viewed their ITT on EAL (Murakami 2008; Foley, Sangster and Anderson 2013; Starbuck 2018; Ginnis et al. 2018). TEs reported feeling that they felt they had sufficiently prepared their teachers, contrary to findings from researchers (Franson

1999; Ginnis et al. 2018) who have reported that teachers have expressed that they felt inadequately trained in the teaching of EAL. They acknowledged that this confidence in their provision does not necessarily equate to STs and NQTs feeling confident or 100% comfortable as this is something, they argue, comes with experience. However, this study has suggested that there is a disparity between how STs, NQTs and TEs define 'preparedness', 'comfortable' and 'confident'. Consequently, further research would be valuable to unravel precisely what these concepts mean to the groups in question and whether they are indeed attainable at the point when surveys of new teachers aim to assess these feelings.

It must be acknowledged that the questions asked undeniably influenced the answers given as it is impossible to separate questions from their responses as they inevitably affect the answers (Roulston 2011; Mann 2011). As such, it is important to acknowledge the word choice in the questions because 'comfortable' and 'confident' could be perceived differently to 'prepared', thus leading to a potential different response. This, therefore, reinforces the need for future research to establish what is meant by these terms in the data. However, the word choice in the questions did serve to yield interesting results regarding what TEs feel is required for STs to feel prepared to teach EAL. All interviewee participants and 24 questionnaire data extracts argue that the opportunity for practical placement experiences with EAL pupils correlates with STs leaving ITT feeling more prepared and confident. Consequently, there is a distinct need expressed for more placement opportunities with EAL pupils and more specialist training from experienced practitioners, who could provide STs with practical techniques and guidance to create and alter resources based on the individual needs of pupils, including students for whom English is an additional language.

This study suggests that there *is* a clear disparity between what STs feel they need and what TEs believe STs require to be prepared to help EAL learners to succeed in accessing the curriculum in mainstream schools. Research elsewhere also indicates there is a further disparity between what many argue schools require to support such learners and the amount of appropriate funding schools receive as well as the policies that schools are expected to conform to (Nowlan 2008; Demie 2018). As such, it is vital that while future research seeks to define and identify what STs, teachers and TEs define as being 'prepared', it is also important for improvements to be made and successfully implemented, that TEs, researchers and practitioners continue to critically evaluate the current situation and engage with those in policymaking in an attempt to make beneficial changes for all (Conteh 2012; Schneider and Arnot 2018).

Implications and recommendations

This paper sought to establish teacher educators' perceptions of the usefulness of ITT on EAL for STs and how it could potentially be improved. Some participants argued that ITT on EAL could be improved by teaching STs about Language Acquisition, so they can understand the importance of maintaining the L1 and potentially using it as a resource in the classroom. It could be argued that this understanding of the process of language acquisition could prevent the negative attitudes towards home language usage in the classroom and the potential for subsequent enforced monolingualism discussed by Conteh (2003) and Cunningham (2019), and in turn this could help create a positive model of multilingualism as a resource (Catalano and Hamann 2016) within the education sector.

In addition to this, many participants believe that placement opportunities need to improve to enable STs to have experience with EAL learners; how practical this is remains unknown as it depends on each institution's connections with other schools.

However, to compensate for this, it is undeniable that teachers would benefit from practical advice given by experienced practitioners on how to develop resources for EAL students as well as practical teaching strategies (NALDIC 1999; Franson et al. 2002; Conteh 2015). Furthermore, it seems TEs and STs alike would benefit from sharing existing resources and accessing local and national networks.

Finally, as it seems that current priorities in the education sector consists of tests, performativity and results according to numerous interview participants, it seems that ITT courses need to equip STs to deal with the challenge of getting all students through such regimented tests, whilst also differentiating materials to best support learners, whilst simultaneously creating an inclusive environment where students' home languages are welcomed in the classroom; a task that may be increasingly challenging but also increasingly necessary as the EAL population continues to increase and funding seems likely to remain low.

To further establish ways in which ITT on EAL can be improved, future research needs to be conducted to establish exactly how much time is spent on EAL training and whether said training is compulsory. In addition to this, future research also needs to contemplate what is meant by *practical* training on EAL. Furthermore, when considering how ITT can make STs feel prepared to teach EAL learners, researchers need to carefully define terminology such as 'comfortable' and 'prepared' in the context of the question they are asking in order to yield specific results, which will help further establish what is currently done and what more can be done to ensure STs feel prepared and, most important of all, *are* prepared to work with emergent bi/multilingual students.

Such improvements are, of course, limited by time and funding. Consequently, as stated previously, a future line of enquiry is required to attempt to establish how much time is spent on EAL training to uncover how much timed input STs receive. This

also raises the question as to how effective it is to have such short ITT courses in Great Britain, as they seemingly do not have enough time to cover all the necessary areas, such as EAL, in enough depth for STs to feel sufficiently prepared.

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Supplemental material

1: Questionnaire items and summary of responses

Questionnaire questions	**Summary of response given in questionnaire**
11. How long have you been a school teacher? 0-3 years 4-6 years 7-10 years More than 10 years	4-6 years: 7 7-10 years: 4 10 or more years: 50
12. How long have you been a lecturer teaching on Primary/Secondary Education courses? Open answer	0-1year: 2 1-5years: 22 6-10 years:14 11-15 years: 4 16-20 years: 5 21-25years: 2 26-30years: 3
13. How much experience do you have with learners who have English as an Additional Language (EAL)? Open answer	Significant (18) Enough (2) Some (8) Not very much (3) Insufficient (5) 10+yrs (10) 5-10yrs (2) 1 participant discussed experience with HE EAL students 5 had taught EAL pupils.
14. Please describe your experiences with EAL learners? Open answer	• 39 explicitly describe their practical experience with EAL pupils. • 6 described their experiences with EAL pupils positively. • 2 stated that EAL is part of the mainstream. • 1 mentioned EAL pupils are in the minority in the classroom. • 2 had never taught EAL pupils. • 1 discussed their initial worries of supporting EAL pupils and how they noticed what they provided for their EAL children supported the whole class. • 1 described their learners' levels of English. • 4 discussed their experiences in specific relation to their careers.

15. Are issues relating to teaching EAL incorporated into the modules you teach? If so, how? Open answer	Yes: 52 No: 3 (but stated it is taught in others' modules) • 1 described inclusion of EAL into their modules as following the 'EAL' narrative "which approaches multilingualism as an educational problem to be overcome by instrumentally ignoring multilingualism and replacing emerging bilingualism with enforced monolingualism". • 3 - it is covered alongside issues of diversity and equality. • 1 described teaching techniques. • 1: "Trainee teachers ask for practical strategies." • 3: it is covered by an external specialist. • 2: students had classroom experience in one of their modules. • 2: some (superficial) input was given. • 1: "An optional programme is offered". • 1: "We hold a conference day for our students, focussed on EAL, as well as referring regularly to the implications for EAL learners, within our teaching."
16. How confident do you feel about teaching student-teachers how to teach EAL learners? Not confident Slightly confident Confident Very confident	Not confident: 1 Slight confident: 9 Confident: 25 Very confident: 21
17. Do you feel that the teaching of EAL is incorporated into Primary and Secondary Education degrees and PGCEs sufficiently enough that your students would feel comfortable teaching EAL learners? Open answer	Yes: 17 No: 17 Depends: 3 Other: 20

18. Do you perceive teaching student-teachers about EAL to be challenging? Open answer	Yes: 24 No: 31
19. How do you perceive the balance of EAL teaching to student-teachers? Mostly theoretical Mostly practical A combination of theoretical and practical	Mostly theoretical: 3 Mostly practical: 5 A combination of theoretical and practical: 48
20. Do you think any improvements could be made regarding how student-teachers learn about EAL learners? Yes No If yes, please expand.	Yes: 40 No: 1

2: Interview questions and summary of responses

Interview questions	**Summary of responses**
7) What region of Great Britain are you from?	Yorkshire: 2 North West: 1 East Midlands: 1 South of England: 3
8) What EAL training did you receive in your Initial teacher training?	• 6: no training in their ITT (as far as they can recall). • 1 received a bit, but they could not fully remember. • 1 received extensive training.
9) What feedback do you receive from your cohort?	• 1: good feedback. • 1: mixed feedback; dependent on how high EAL is on the school's agenda as to how much support they receive. • 1: their cohort are pre-ITT, but they do education placements. The cohort says they find the EAL work helpful "but obviously they're not having to always apply them because its dependent on the circumstances they find themselves in"

	• 1: lower than 'feel confident to teach in my subject' for EAL in the NQT survey. • 1 described how their students do not always identify who EAL learners are. • 1 argued due to the general approach to EAL, student teachers view EAL as a hinderance rather than a benefit. • 1: "we were looking at 39% of students who felt that their preparation or that their confidence was either very good or good… 61% said their confidence was either satisfactory or unsatisfactory".
10) The current evidence shows that students don't feel prepared, so where do you think the mismatch is?	• 1 argued the need for more clarity on what best practice is. • 1 described how previously EAL was a priority in teacher training, but it is slowly being placed into the English modules due to the government agenda. • 1 argued time constraints are an issue, and that the teachers in their placement schools have not had any training in supporting children with EAL themselves, another issue is that it is placement dependent as to whether they get practical EAL experience. • 5 argued it is primarily about confidence, something which correlates with their practical experience.
11) If the curriculum and current training practices are not focused on EAL, what are the current priorities? What do you think they're focussing on in schools?	• 4 argued the current priorities are at pushing academic results and meeting OFSTED criteria. • 1 participant argued that the "EAL agenda permeates through the whole [of] inclusion".
12) What do you think the biggest barriers for learning are for the children (with EAL)?	• 2 argued the biggest barrier is the lack of opportunity for EAL pupils to communicate with others through play. • 1 stated that one of the main issues is around educators valuing

	the home language and using that as a starting point. • 2 argued one of the biggest barriers is the curriculum focus on passing exams. • 1 argued it depended on their age when they arrived. • 2 argued the lack of funding for specialist assistance is a hindrance.