Crossing the Boundaries in English Language Teaching

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Meeting Challenges and Building Opportunities

Edited by

Emna Maazoun and Salah Troudi

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CHAPTER 1

MEETING CHALLENGES AND BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES: AN INTRODUCTION

SALAH TROUDI AND EMNA MAAZOUN

The decision to produce an edited volume centring around challenges and opportunities in English language teaching (ELT) arose from our interest in the nature of the challenges experienced by learners and teachers, and the different opportunities available for them to overcome common and emerging obstacles. We are aware of the increasingly powerful position of English as a foreign and second language (EFL/ESL) in any educational system in countries where it is not a first language. Major educational, logistical and financial facilities are put in place to support students and teachers. These of course vary according to national economies and budgets allocated to education. Even in countries where financial resources are very limited ELT is given priority in the planning and enactment of professional development programmes, materials development, pedagogical interventions and evaluation. These efforts reflect national educational strategies and priorities emanating from a conviction that English plays a crucial role in national development, economic growth, and global relations.

In addition to the assumed and claimed benefits of Teaching EFL, we are equally aware of its contested nature and controversial position in some parts of the world. The spread of English as a global language is not exempt of ideologies and vested economic interests that benefit hegemonic political and economic powers (Kubota, 2019; Phillipson, 2015). While providing learning and employment opportunities, English can also be a gate- keeper to many. With increasing economic disparities around the world those with limited access to resources will be denied similar opportunities for learning and employability.

The challenges that are associated with EFL/ESL are diverse and it is beyond the scope of this volume to address all of them. We have chosen to

organise the contributing chapters into areas such as professional development, approaches, teaching of language skills, assessment and technology. Given the interconnectivity between these areas there is an unavoidable degree of overlap in the content of some of the chapters. Some could have been placed in more than one section as they address several interconnected aspects of ELT. The majority of the chapters are research studies conducted in different parts of the world and represent Africa, Asia, North America and Europe. Methodologies such as action research, experimental pre-test post-test design, exploratory mixed methods, and comparative document analysis guided these studies and different quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data from learners and teachers.

The book is divided into three parts. These are as follows: teacher learning: theories and practices, approaches and pedagogies and skills and assessment.

Teacher learning: Theories and practices

In chapter two Salah Troudi starts the section with a theorical piece posing the question of whether language teacher education can have a role in preparing teachers and learners to face, and possibly address, some of the world's major problems and pressing needs. To do so he proposes a critical framework of teacher preparation and development informed by a holistic view that considers education beyond the pursuit of pragmatist goals of scholastic attainment, performance and employability. Troudi's critical framework is based on three interconnected elements that need to be part of any language teacher education programme. These are philosophy of education, values and ethics of care, and wellbeing. The main argument is that established elements of teacher knowledge such as content, pedagogy, technology and curriculum should not be developed within a philosophical and ethical vacuum.

Focusing on the two variables of teaching experience and institutional context, Emna Mazoun's third chapter addresses how EFL teacher identity is constructed, evaluated, and measured. Forty Tunisian EFL secondary and tertiary teachers answered a questionnaire that revealed significant differences between the two groups and considerable variance among the tertiary teachers. Maazoun acknowledges that achieving a sound psychometric measuring of professional identity in education is still a challenge and calls for continuous improvement in measurement methods.

In chapter four Wafa Almulaifi reports on a collaborative study conducted in Kuwait with ELT in-service primary school teachers working

in the public education system. This interpretive and qualitative project explored the complex relationship between ELT teacher agency and professional development, highlighting their interdependence and their shared impact on educational improvement. It also addressed the ethical considerations that must be integrated into the design of professional development programmes. One of the main findings of Almulaifi's mixed-method study is how restrictive school environments and supervisory expectations can conflict with the professional growth ELT teachers seek. Through her transformatory and collaborative intervention, she demonstrates how she has challenged the top-down model of professional development in Kuwait which has often failed to recognise teachers as ethical professionals with the right to shape their own learning.

In the next chapter Tunzala Rzayeva Vagif analyses the current architecture of in-service professional development for English language teachers in Azerbaijan. To check its alignment with international practice and identify areas of improvement a horizontal comparison of arrangements in Denmark, Finland, France and Germany is conducted. This is done though a documentary analysis of national legislation, ministry reports, and donor evaluations. The main findings suggest that Azerbaijan mirrors its European peers. Information technology, inclusive pedagogy and leadership are widely visible in programme descriptions and reflect global competency frameworks. However, differences in governance, pedagogy and accountability are pronounced.

Ohud Alderaan's chapter six reports the qualitative accounts of semi-structured interviews and written accounts by 19 EFL instructors from different remote universities in the Kingdon of Saudi Arabia. This is a rare study of teachers' professional identities in remote universities in the Arab world. The main findings revolve around the identity conflicts experienced by the participants as several remoteness-related contextual factors were behind issues of conflicting identities between who the participants are and who they wish to be.

In chapter seven Hela Chaabouni Fourati, Emna Maazoun and Salah Troudi examined the learning process of Tunisian non-specialist primary EFL school teachers as they transitioned into the role of English language facilitators. The study explored these teachers' views about a training programme and its effect on their linguistic and pedagogical knowledge. The study reflects pedagogical and linguistic challenges met by EFL teachers of young leaners in a context where foreign language policy underwent several changes and English was introduced at the primary level without having enough pedagogically trained and linguistically competent

teachers. The training programme introduced by the authors of the chapters was a significant opportunity to meet these challenges.

Approaches and pedagogies

Kosay Alshewiter's chapter eight is a theoretical piece which takes the reader through a thorough review and comparison of several theories and approaches that have played a major role in the development of ELT in the last few decades. Grounding his discussion in the Jordanian EFL context, Alsheweter moved between challenges and opportunities faced by EFL professional in several areas such as curriculum and syllabus design, classroom pedagogy and methodology, martials and assessment. The chapter is a reminder that pedagogical approaches to EFL are mostly informed by major theories of language learning and teaching.

In chapter nine Silvia Nassar's study focuses on Palestinian EFL teachers' professional development needs in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The participants worked collaboratively on designing five PD sessions. A significant feature of the chapter is that the reported study positioned teachers within a cyclical reflective model enabling them to shape the PD intervention as it unfolded. Their ongoing feedback informed subsequent sessions ensuring that the sessions were not simply delivered to teachers but developed with them. An equally important point in this chapter is the severe political, social, and institutional challenges and constraints experienced by Palestinian teachers and the opportunities provided by Nassar's intervention which fostered greater agency, contextual relevance, and a sense of collective support.

The next chapter by Maha Aldarei reports that higher education EFL instructors in Oman believe in the importance and value of learner-centred pedagogy and its emphasis on autonomy, collaboration, and reflection. However, their practices are shaped by exam-driven assessment, curriculum rigidity, and hierarchical management structures. Despite these challenges her qualitative interviews reveal that teachers exercised agency through adaptive strategies, cultural reinterpretation, and informal professional collaboration, creating spaces for bottom-up reform.

Based on the premise that language, culture, and identity are at the nexus of language learning, Hania Salter-Dvorak's chapter eleven addresses the complexity of presenting, teaching and assessing culture in the language classroom. She reviews different approaches to framing the learner vis-à-vis learning culture. She argues that the approach that frames learners as 'intercultural speakers' provides a rich framework for language learning, interpretation, and reflection. This contrasts with the other two approaches

that frame the learners as spectators and outsiders. Salter-Dvorak stresses the importance of the context of learning English and the difference between communicating in an English-speaking community and one where English is a lingua franca.

In the next chapter Ahsan Chandio argues for the importance of environmental education especially in the most climate-vulnerable countries such as Pakistan. Despite official policies recommending the integration of environmental education into the national curriculum, little is done in classroom practice. Informed by critical pedagogy and eco-pedagogy Chandio's version of environmental education is transformative. It is an action-oriented pedagogy that promotes critical engagement and environmental social justice. His interpretive and critical research with Pakistani EFL teachers revealed that despite major curricular and structural constraints they had positive views towards environmental integration and embedding sustainability themes into their lessons.

In chapter thirteen Amira Lagha demonstrates how sociocultural features function as both opportunities and challenges in the process of interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers of English for specific purposes and subject teachers in the Algerian higher education context. Grounded in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, her qualitative phenomenological study revealed that university instructors' lived experiences of collaboration are marked by paradoxical effects. On one hand, traits of high-power distance and uncertainty avoidance provide enabling structures and clarity. However, they simultaneously constrain collaboration through hierarchical rigidity, power imbalances, and risk aversion. Lagha calls for the design of sustainable and context-sensitive approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration in Algerian universities.

In chapter 14 Hoang Minh Triet Nguyen and Salah Troudi report the findings of an exploratory case study that investigated how Vietnamese EFL teachers at a high school perceive the adoption of a school-wide Learning Management System (LMS) into their teaching. The study also looked at the pedagogical and technical challenges experienced by these teachers. As a core component of digital education infrastructure, the school where the study was conducted selected K12Online, a locally developed platform, as the school's official LMS. The teachers revealed several challenges such as lack of specific EFL training, students' online access, interface complexity and limited student engagement.

In chapter 15 Canan Köse investigates how EFL teachers in Turkish state universities perceive and use artificial intelligence in their classrooms. Grounded in a theoretical framework of critical digital literacy and Critical AI literacy, the study is critical in nature and aims to place teacher agency,

ethical decision, social responsibility at the heart of the use of AI and digital technologies. A pedagogical focus was on the challenges and opportunities EFL teachers experience when incorporating GenAI into language teaching and assessment. Several important factors were uncovered such as students' lack of voice and the absence of institutional guidelines related to ethical and critical use of AI which puts the burden of decision-making entirely on individual teachers.

Nour el Houda Bouacha's chapter 16 is in the area of EFL materials evaluation. Using a questionnaire and a focus group interview she collected data from Algerian secondary school students about their view of EFL textbooks. An empowering feature of the study is that learners are positioned as materials evaluators expressing their voices about a main source of language input. They exhibited clear awareness of textbook features such as content, design, varied and engaging topics and activities, meaningful practices and adequate supporting materials to allow for individual learning, and clear and practical lessons and instructions. The study is a clear reminder to textbook developers and EFL teachers to involve students in decision making processes about materials design and selection.

Skills and assessment

In chapter seventeen Amina Affes and Kirsten Hummel investigated the effect of starting age, age of acquisition, to learn English as second language on pronunciation accuracy. Their descriptive correlational study investigated whether L2 starting age (4 years vs 6 years old) of Francophone children enrolled in an English immersion primary school in Canada has an effect on L2 pronunciation (segmental-level, foreign accent perception, and intelligibility) when tested at nine years of age. Among the main results is that learners who began English at age four achieved higher pronunciation ratings for some target sounds than those who began at age six. One major implication is the distinction between foreign accent and intelligibility. While foreign accent may persist to some extent Francophone participants were able to communicate effectively and be understood by the experimental group of native speakers.

Chapter eighteen by Yanyan Yang puts forward the argument that static assessment which measures only students' fully developed and independently applicable abilities fails to assess learners' emerging skills that are still in the process of maturing. Yang presents dynamic assessment as an alternative to provide a more comprehensive way of assessing EFL learners' development. Working in the Chinese higher education context and using an interaction analysis informed by the Vygotskyan experimental-

developmental method, she traced the performance of an EFL student across four moments. Her analysis demonstrates how development emerges not only in interactional sensitivity but also in conversational competence that typically escapes standardized forms of assessment.

Chapter nineteen by Kaveh Jalilzadeh, Christine Coombe and Meryem Akçayoğlu's study starts with the premise that teachers' emotional experiences are especially important in English language teaching (ELT) because communication, interaction, and relationship-building are central to pedagogical practice. Their study adopted a phenomenological approach to unveil how classroom assessment techniques influence Nepali EFL teachers' mental tension and stress. Their interviews demonstrate that assessment can be a source of negative feelings and stress and that the work environment can intensify a range of emotions. The authors recommend that programme leaders and teacher educators offer professional development input to enhance teachers' assessment and professional identity through practical methods.

In chapter 20 Shabana Kamal investigates ESL teachers' perspectives on using Achieve3000, an online reading platform, as an extensive reading (ER) tool to enhance English proficiency and academic achievement among Arabic-speaking students in the United Arab Emirates. Her interpretive phenomenological study indicated that participants viewed Achieve3000 positively, highlighting its role in enhancing students' reading motivation, literacy development, and academic performance. However, there were challenges of technical difficulties, limited leadership support, issues adapting the platform, and supporting struggling readers. To address these challenges, the teachers recommended integrating multimedia, interactive features, and gamification elements, refining assessment tools, enriching content for diverse learner needs, and increasing leadership involvement in training and professional development.

In the next chapter Thi Phuong Thao Le and Salah Troudi's interpretive study addresses the still controversial issue of Vietnamese EFL teachers' use of non-native English accents (NNEA) in their listening classrooms. All participating teachers demonstrated a positive attitude toward using NNEA and acknowledged its critical role in equipping students for authentic, real-world communication and in fostering confidence in their own linguistic identity. However, they also raised issues of a lack of students' familiarity with diverse accents and resistant attitudes to NNEA. This student resistance is rooted in a native-speakerism ideology, which is heavily reinforced by the significant negative washback effect of standardised tests that almost exclusively prioritise native accents.

In the last chapter Ru Shang investigates the effectiveness of task-based language (TBLT) for learning four types of vocabulary knowledge, namely, recognition, recall, comprehension and use in comparison with the present-practice-produce (PPP) teaching method. She used mixed method design of a quasi-experiment, observation and interviews of EFL teachers and students in China. From a pedagogic perspective, the study found that TBLT was effective in recall knowledge but not in recognition. However, in the comprehension and use parts, although there was no significant difference between TBLT and PPP classes, TBLT classes still gained more than PPP classes. Shang makes recommendations for EFL professionals to focus on the facilitative features of vocabulary learning.

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PART ONE

TEACHER LEARNING: THEORIES AND PRACTICES

CHAPTER 2

DOOM, GLOOM AND HOPE: CAN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

SALAH TROUDI

Introduction

In this chapter, I raise several questions and issues about the nature of teacher education in general and, in particular, the roles of language teachers in preparing and supporting learners to face and challenge some of the main problems affecting the world today. To do so teachers and teacher educators need to approach their own learning holistically and see education beyond the pursuit of pragmatist goals of scholastic attainment, performance and employability. This endeavour, it must be acknowledged, is by no means an easy feat. To be able to transcend the constraints and demands of neoliberal and utilitarian views of education that prioritise evidence-based practice, evaluation and performance objectives over the development of the self, teacher education must undergo a substantial change. This will necessitate a look at an approach that is fundamentally based on moral values and principles such as equality, peace, inclusion and social cohesion.

We clearly live in a world marred by social injustice, excessive violence, extreme poverty, devastating wars amounting to genocides, environmental disasters, extremism of different sorts, racism and segregation, encroachment on freedoms and human rights, totalitarianism, hunger, aggressive capitalism, exploitation of labour, consumerism, and social decohesion. All these are being made worse by a rise in populism, extremism and nationalism. However, there any many wonderful sides to our world that we can enjoy provided we know how to protect them. This also rests on our ability and desire to live together in peace and harmony.

In this chapter the phrase 'teacher education' is used loosely to include teacher preparation, teacher training and continuous learning or professional development. What role, if any, can continuous education and teacher

preparation play in addressing all or at least some of these ills of modern society? Or shall we pretend nothing happens beyond the classroom walls and the school boundaries? The latter proposition is undoubtedly an easier option and a trouble-free approach, focusing on curriculum guidelines, syllabi, and often rigid lesson plans. However, I believe that education remains our main hope to make a difference. It is arguably neither guaranteed nor the most direct solution, but it seems both logical and pragmatic given the overall important place of education in society, shown by the amount of time young people spend in schools during their formative years, and the huge budgets dedicated to education.

A critical reflective look at the state of public education in many countries will expose several undeniable challenges and shortcomings. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present an analysis of these challenges, but some of the major problems such as budgetary constraints, access to good quality education, teacher preparation and burnout, low teacher morale, low levels of literacy and numeracy, school dropout, lack of student motivation, and struggles with the academic demands of the school curriculum deserve to be mentioned. The main question guiding the different sections of this chapter is: What conditions does teacher education need to observe or satisfy to make a difference to the lives of teachers and students? The question, of course, precludes a strong conviction in the role of teacher education in helping states achieve their immediate and long-term aims of helping their citizens live in peaceful and fair societies.

Elements of Language Teacher Education

An established approach to language teacher education, especially at the preparation stages, is a focus on the elements that constitute teacher knowledge. The main principles guiding the development and implementation of a teacher education programme or syllabus are often based on a framework that revolves around three elements: content, pedagogy, and technology. Mishra and Koehler's theoretical framework, known as the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework (TPCTK), calls for an integrated approach to these three types of knowledge. They argue that this model represents teacher knowledge as "complex and situated" (2006, p.1017). Instead of looking at knowledge of technology as an additional element to add to one's approach to teaching, technology is considered as inseparable and is theoretically, pedagogically and methodologically integrated.

Teacher evaluation largely reflects this approach to teacher knowledge. Teachers are often observed and evaluated on these three elements and other

factors such as administrative tasks/duties, punctuality, and collegiality. For example, at the content level, in TEFL and TESL preparation programmes and continuous professional development (CPD), a lot of time and effort is dedicated to the specificities of the main language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers, therefore, are prepared and/or trained to acquire the appropriate technical knowledge that will enable them to help their students achieve different levels of language proficiency. Given the ever-changing and expanding nature of English, it is evident that this knowledge of the language skills and corresponding pedagogies is not enough to intellectually and pedagogically represent the very wide spectrum of English. My view is that a teacher knowledge framework is essential in preparing a practising teacher to serve the objectives of the syllabus and pedagogically ensure that the students are supported by relevant materials, appropriate lesson plans and conducive teaching methodologies. However, the main argument of this chapter is that this approach to language teacher education needs to be expanded to include other important elements if educational institutions are to contribute to finding a solution to some of the major world problems stated above. Elsewhere, in Troudi (2005), I raise the issue of critical and cultural knowledge for teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). To the importance of a cultural knowledge that reflects a deep commitment and understanding of learners' ethnic and social contexts, I now add other elements such as the role of geographical knowledge, especially of countries where English is spoken by substantial numbers of the population. Countries from the outer circle (Kachru, 1985, 2005), their cultures and human geographies ought to be part of a teacher's knowledge to be able to fairly represent 'Englishes'. This is an element of critical pedagogy that seeks a more inclusive approach to the teaching of English in both content and pedagogy (Pennycook, 2001).

There is available a rich literature on language teacher education and CPD. In its majority this literature is informed by the above-mentioned model of teacher knowledge with its focus on content, pedagogy and technology. There is also a wide recognition of the role of reflection and critical reflection, and teacher-initiated research as forms of CPD. The rationale behind this focus is that teachers around the world mainly need to develop better methods, be involved in the different elements and stages of the curriculum, and conduct action research to find out ways of improving their performance. This is motivated by factors such as student attainment, achievement, and measures of accountability. It must be stated in this context that under the rise of neoliberalism and its effects on educational reforms in the last three decades, many educational systems around the world have experienced a rise in standardised testing, efficiency models,

and competition between schools. Educational reforms in countries like the USA and England were influenced by performativity measures and market-driven policies, resulting in more educational inequality rather than better education (Hursh, 2000). To this end, CPD for English language teachers has largely accommodated educational performativity models which resulted in a strong focus on ways to increase teacher efficiency, students' proficiency and overall performance on tests. However, it needs to be stated and acknowledged that collaborative and participatory models of CPD and teacher development have been put forward as major approaches to engage teachers in many parts of the world. For example, a British Council CPD project published in an edited volume (Hayes, 2015) offers global perspectives on EFL teachers' professional development and its nature as a lifelong experience. The contributors present a wide array of innovative CPD practices to fit specific and contextually informed needs. In general, CPD is still characterised by a job-embedded focus with a priority to immediate and emergent curricular and pedagogical issues and challenges.

Having said this about teachers' participation and involvement, there is still a dichotomy between the content and focus of CPD, which is generally informed by efficiency and performativity principles, and the methodological approaches to CPD, which these days tend to be dialogic with a focus on teacher involvement and participation to foster their sense of agency.

A Critical Framework of Teacher Preparation and Development

In the second part of this chapter, I propose a more inclusive approach to teacher preparation and continuous development. The framework includes the main elements of teacher knowledge addressed above as they are central to any educational programme. They directly influence students' learning and achievement, but I argue that content, pedagogy and technology should not be developed within a philosophical and ethical vacuum. Philosophy of education, values and ethics of care, and wellbeing can fundamentally inform teaching and learning, and the development of a teacher preparation programme should include in its curriculum and syllabus content that addresses the nature and roles of educational philosophy. Teachers need to know about the different philosophical and ethical views and debates that can shape their professional lives and students' experiences. Therefore, the aim here is for teacher preparation institutions to plan for the addition of modules, courses or components on these suggested elements: philosophy of education, ethics, and wellbeing. Likewise, formal CPD programmes and

self-initiated CPD endeavours should not ignore these three elements which provide a more wholesome and inclusive perspective on education.

Philosophy of Education

Technical and practical teaching skills, classroom management strategies, curriculum and syllabus development, content and materials selection, needs analysis, and evaluation tools and procedures, are basically the most important areas of a teacher's professional life. Additionally, research and professional development activities are increasingly seen as required elements of teaching. However, without a wider perspective on the nature of education, what education is for, and its challenges and contribution to society, these areas risk becoming simply mechanical and instrumental activities. To address these issues, philosophy of education, a branch of philosophy, provides a framework for teachers to learn and ask questions about theories of learning such as behaviourism, constructivism, or cognitivism. Philosophy of education is in itself a complex array of disciplines as it draws on fields such as psychology, sociology, politics, ethics and aesthetics.

A teacher preparation component or module on the nature of education will address the idealism and realism of its philosophy through theoretical debates of what constitutes knowledge and how we go about acquiring it. Importantly, given the ever-changing world we live in, these modules must also acknowledge the massive economic and geopolitical forces affecting education. The main ones are pragmatism, efficiency, managerialism, business-like operations, profit, and marketization.

According to Philips (2013) educational philosophers ask epistemological questions about the kind of knowledge that should be taught at schools, who it benefits and who benefits most from it. Part of their interest are the theories and agendas that inform school curricula and how knowledge is presented in materials, and whether it represents all kinds of knowledge in each society and all social classes, ethnicities, religions and personal orientations. Some related issues are pedagogical about the ways children can be taught at school, and whether the focus should be on their personal and psychological development or purely cognitive and instrumental. The types of social skills schools are expected to develop in a child is another philosophical interest.

Teacher educators and planners of teacher preparation programmes have choices and decisions to make about what to include in the syllabus of a module on philosophy of education. Teachers can be introduced to influential education thinkers and philosophers like Freire, Dewey, and

Giroux, and their views, contributions and effects on theories of education and practice. It is also important to be familiar with the influence of some branches of philosophy on education. For example, moral philosophy, moral education, and philosophy of science have all influenced educational curricula, content and management and leadership in schools. There is also the argument that philosophy of education should engage in debates about the different theories of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of existence (metaphysics and ontology). Barrow (2013) adds contemporary educational issues as central to the interest of educational philosophers. The argument I am making here is that future teachers need to be part of the debate on topics that directly affect schools, learners, teachers, and society at large. Educational policies, issues of access to schools, provision for learners with special needs, parents' involvement in schools and their rights to be part of decision-making processes are among the issues teachers are very likely to face in their careers. It is therefore imperative that teacher preparation programmes include such issues and ensure that teachers have a comprehensive understanding of education.

A philosophy of education component needs to avoid an anglophone or a Eurocentric focus, especially if the sociocultural and geopolitical context is not European. Islamic, Eastern and countries of the Global South have long contributed to the development of knowledge, and their perspectives and approaches to education ought to be acknowledged and considered in matters of syllabus and methodology.

Schools of thought are also an important component to include in a philosophy of education syllabus. It is likely that many teachers did not study philosophy either in their secondary or tertiary education, especially those who followed scientific and technical tracks. An advantage of a schools of thought approach is that despite their differences in principles and ideologies they all raise questions about the nature of reality, truth and knowledge (Barrow, 2013). These questions are central to education and debating them will help teachers reflect on their roles and how they perceive education. Knowledge of these schools of thought, which include idealism, realism, pragmatism, naturalism, existentialism, and Marxism will contribute to the development of the intellectual element in a teacher's quest for knowledge. With critical theory and its influence on critical pedagogy, Giroux (2024) argues for the possibility of the teacher developing into a transformative intellectual. Within each school of thought there are differences of positions and even ideologies and there is even a debate about whether some are distinct philosophies or just ideologies. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve into these differences. Quoting Barrow's statement, the main point here is that "those who want to study and

understand education do indeed need to consider the nature of truth and knowledge, what is to be human, what constitutes reality, what is natural in all of that word's various senses, and what aspects of nature we should be concerned about" (2013, p. 25).

Values and Ethics of Care

In addition to a technical or instrumental pedagogy that aims to facilitate the implementation of an educational syllabus and support students' learning, a critical framework views pedagogy as an educational approach with a mission to change the world to a better place and a sustainable future given the increasingly fragile ecosystem we live in. There are therefore multiple pedagogies put forward by educationalists who conceive of education as a future endeavour to solve major challenges for next generations.

Pedagogy of possibility (Simon, 1992, Pennycook, 2001) is one of these pedagogies; for example, Simon (1992, p. 55) views pedagogy as a political practice. He argues that to establish a pedagogy of possibility, desire must be the driving force. His view is that we need to be motivated by "the desire to awake or incite a particular passion in those with whom we teach, a passion that invests with a particular urgency, the challenge to taken-for-granted social truths and the struggle for a more just and compassionate moral order capable of sustaining the diversity of life which inhabits our planet". After almost four decades Simon's words describing the current human condition and challenges around the globe still ring very true. Freire (2004), Giroux (2002), and Bourn (2021) among others embrace a pedagogy of hope with the main premise that hope is anticipatory and mobilising. It is an alternative approach to facing the challenges and complexities dictated by forces such as globalisation, neoliberalism, populism, and the aggressive and continuing depletion of natural resources.

These pedagogies were met by criticism for their idealism and unrealism. Bourn (2021, p.68) acknowledges voices that see them as "illusionment, unrealistic optimism and a feel-good emotion about the future and change".

Informed by an ethics of care and responsibility, teachers, and language teachers in particular, are able to place several important issues and themes at the heart of their syllabi, materials and classroom conversations. For example, learners of English as foreign or second language are familiar with topically and thematically structured materials and lessons. To the extent that is contextually and linguistically possible, teachers can enrich the students' learning experiences and intellectual engagement by bringing wider social and human condition issues into the boundaries of the

classroom. This will make up for the superficiality of the consumerist and trendy topics put forward by many commercial materials and motivate students to think of solutions for problems and catastrophes caused by social injustice, wars, human displacement, modern slavery, hunger, environmental disasters, decline in human rights, spread of contagious diseases, poverty, unequal access to education and health care. Topics such as the right to peace and security, inclusion and equality for all regardless of differences in race, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, and occupation will equip students with a realistic view of the world and encourage them to be empathetic to those less fortunate. Methodologically, teachers have a wide array of possibilities to involve their students in discussing issues of major importance to them and the rest of humanity. Through established teaching approaches such as task-based learning, project-based learning and participatory techniques students can be encouraged to develop strategies and scenarios, and to design action plans to solve many of these problems. These will be contextually situated but with relevance to the wider world. I chose to focus on values and ethics of care instead of professional ethics as the latter is often linked to codes of ethics and moral guidelines that teachers need to adhere to. These are put in place by educational institutions to ensure that teaching and related activities are done responsibly. Ethics of care transcend duties and responsibilities for they emanate from one's conviction that teaching is essentially about caring for others out of love of making a difference to their lives.

I argue that ethics of care is needed as a philosophical and theoretical paradigm to inform all these pedagogies. When there is care there is hope and possibility. One's sense of ethics, values and morality should guide one's teaching. Without care our sense of humanity will be questioned. Teaching is not a straightforward endeavour and not a job or occupation that finishes by the end of the working day. It is a complex web of factors, practices, views, policies, responsibilities and decisions that are bound to affect and shape the lives of the learners. For this reason, educationalists and especially teacher educators need to look at teacher preparation from much wider perspectives than those of economically and managerially driven approaches. Likewise, in Johnston's words, "it is only by confronting the moral complexity and ambiguity of our teaching that we can hope to identify the good and right things to do in any given set of circumstances, that is, to know the right way to teach (2004, p.21)."

In addition to the ethical treatment of the teaching content and the inclusion of critical and controversial issues in the syllabus, teachers need to consider the personal and professional values that they hold as the core

of what it is to be an educator. Values such as fairness, courage, integrity, justice, equality, and rights play a role in shaping one's character. Teacher preparation programmes, therefore, ought to consider these values and provide a space for teachers to reflect on them and consider how they can maintain and defend them.

Among the many challenges teachers experience in their professional lives is adherence to their professional values and principles. Many teachers "live in a professional schizophrenia, torn between institutional policies and their pedagogical principles (Troudi, 2006, p. 288)." In the UK, many primary and secondary stage teachers have left the profession as they could not cope with the mounting pressure of an unrealistic workload, administrative duties imposed by ruthless managerialism, and bad behaviour.

It should be stated here that the notion of an ethical teacher in the first half of the 20th century was informed by religious and social notions of what is considered to be of good character. With the continuous influence of liberal and instrumental approaches to education and their focus on performance, competition and employment concepts such as teaching efficiency started to have an important place in teacher evaluation. Central to the concept of ethics in education is thinking about educational institutions, the roles of taught subjects and content and the teacher's responsibility as moral agent (Bech and Murphy, 1994). Likewise, Crookes' views ethics as "a way of understanding purposes, roles and institutions (2009, p.142)." There is of course abundant literature on ethics and education but what is still missing is placing ethics as a fundamental part of teacher preparation and CPD programmes. There has also been recent research on the role of teachers' knowledge and sensitivities to ethical issues in their profession. For example, Alumulaifi's (2025) critical participatory action research study was designed to raise Kuwaiti primary school teachers' ethical awareness as part of several professional development sessions. She used a mixed method approach to the introduction of ethics (Soltis, 1986) whereby teachers were provided with main theories and frameworks of ethics that are of relevance to education in general and to the Kuwaiti context. The Islamic teachings on ethics were central to the theoretical input, given the important role religion plays in the Kuwaiti society. The practical part of the intervention included discussions of ethical challenges and group work to explore strategies and techniques to reach ethical decisions for certain cases and scenarios.

Language education is our hope for we cannot conceive of an educational curriculum of any institution in the world without a language component. Language is the medium of thought, education, knowledge, and innovation. It is also the language of war, hatred, violence and so many

atrocities in the world. Through a critical look at what we teach in first and foreign language classrooms and how we approach content, materials, methodology and evaluation we have a chance to make a difference to the lives of our current students and future generations.

Wellbeing: A Good Quality of Life

There is perhaps a universal consensus that stress, work-related stress in particular, is a common and an accepted feature of modern life. This is clearly the case for teachers regardless of educational context, experience, and quality of the curriculum. While some might associate chronic work-related stress with developed countries (Gustems-Carnicer and Calderon, 2019), I would argue that teachers in poorer countries and underprivileged parts of the world are likely to suffer from the lack of appropriate educational facilities, poor work environments, top-down policies and financial difficulties. For example, many teachers spend a lot of time every day to get to schools using dilapidated transport systems in harsh climates. There are still schools that lack necessities like water and toilet facilities. These are all obvious causes of work-related stress.

The proposal for teacher preparation programmes is to enrich their curricula by stressing the importance of a balanced approach to life and measures to protect oneself against work-related stress. Teacher educators can draw on the main tenets of positive psychology to support teachers to use different resources to protect themselves and prevent anxiety, mental exhaustion and burnout (Mercer & Murillo-Miranda, 2025). In addition to issues of mental health, a module on wellbeing will need to focus on the importance of a good quality of life for teachers to be able to do their jobs. Cases, scenarios, and studies can be used as part of a methodology to illustrate measures of developing emotional resilience and methods of stress reduction. Preservice and in-service teachers need to be supported to avoid work encroaching on their private lives. Likewise, educational institutions have a duty to support teachers, and this can be done by providing a conducive work environment where teachers feel secure, respected and appreciated by all involved. Personal life issues, health, loss of loved ones, relationship problems, and child-related issues all affect one's concentration, motivation, and job efficiency/performance. The effect on one's mindset does not disappear because one is in the classroom facing learners. It is not easy to compartmentalise one's feelings and problems and leave them outside the classroom.

Teachers also need to adopt self-supportive and protective strategies. They are conscientious with a high sense of responsibility and

professionalism, but they might also be too demanding of themselves and their students with overly high expectations and perfectionist tendencies. Some teachers are totally devoted to their jobs with little time left for their private lives. If possible, a sense of balance between the demands of work and the rest of life's elements should be adopted. Perhaps with a self-care approach that requires more attention to the physical, social, aesthetic, creative, and imaginary aspects of their lives, teachers can achieve a more satisfactory sense of being and a fruitful contribution to society.

Concluding Points

The proposal for teacher education programmes to adopt a critical framework based on the three elements of educational philosophy, values and ethics, and teacher wellbeing emanates from an attempt to put the teacher's intellectual development and psychological wellbeing at the centre of any curriculum for teacher preparation. The purpose is to counter the demanding and potential damaging effects of managerialist, neoliberalist measures and policies on teachers' performance and quality of life. I am hopeful such an approach to teacher education will benefit teachers, students and society at large.

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