

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ENGLISH TEACHER: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OR PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE?

Well-planned language teacher education programmes usually include courses on language pedagogy, knowledge of the language system and proficiency in English. However, do teacher trainees believe that such knowledge and skills are necessary for them to be good English teachers? If they do not, they may not be willing to internalise what is taught. This study aimed to examine the pre-service and in-service teacher trainees' perspective on the importance of language proficiency and Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) training in making them good English teachers. And secondly, it sought to identify the relationship between mastery of language and methodology in the abovementioned groups. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques were employed for data collection. Findings from the focus group interviews revealed that the pre-service and in-service teachers differed in their views, but in both cases many still did not value the importance of language proficiency and training in making them good English teachers. They reported that these two aspects can be acquired on the job. In addition, the correlation of their CGPA (as the indicator of subject matter knowledge) and MUET Band scores (as the indicator of English language proficiency) was found to be moderate. As a conclusion, this study recommends that quality practices such as stringent teacher trainee entry criteria, consistent internal and external course evaluation, appointment of experienced lecturers and implementation of policy that acknowledges the value of language proficiency and language pedagogy must form the foundation of language teacher preparation programmes.

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