A Vision for the Future on ESL/EFL Teacher Education

Dr Helena Sit
School of Education
Faculty of Education and Arts
The University of Newcastle, Australia

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Abstract:
Australian universities have been attracting diverse students to English language education programs that prepare teachers of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), both domestically and internationally. The preparation of language teachers mainly follows three models: the craft model; the applied science model; and the reflective model (Wallace, 1991). In traditional curricula for ESL/EFL teacher education, a knowledge-based framework usually contains four key elements for teachers to attain: study of languages, second language acquisition and learning, language teaching, and social-cultural context of language teaching and learning. These four elements are based on the fundamental concepts of language teaching by Stern (1983). Based on evaluation and reflection upon the evolution of the teacher training models, this paper attempts to examine how existing programs for ESL/EFL teacher education are constructed and implemented. A new model of curriculum for ESL/EFL teacher education will be proposed and discussed, resulting in a deconstruction from the “four elements” to the “four domains”, namely, educational domain, social-cultural domain, technological domain and institutional domain. These interrelated domains provide a holistic picture of ESL/EFL teacher education. Language learning and teaching are dynamic, fluid, diverse and context-dependent processes. Rather than remaining reliant on fixed prescribed and imposed practices, ESL/EFL teacher educators should elaborate innovative programs and courses to align with stakeholders and prepare students for careers in a rapidly changing, highly comparative global workforce.

Key words: Teacher Education; Language Education; International Education; L2 Curriculum and Pedagogy

About the speaker:

Dr Helena Hing Wa Sit is a Senior Lecturer in Education (TESOL) from Faculty of Education and Arts, the University of Newcastle, Australia. Prior to joining the University of Newcastle, she worked as a Lecturer in Academic Development (Higher Education) at Macquarie University and a Researcher at the University of Hong Kong. Her research expertise includes Language Education, International Education and Cross-cultural Studies. Helena has been involved in projects on second language education (English and Chinese) and international education. Previous projects included genre-based pedagogy and innovation of bilingual education (English and Chinese) and discourse analysis in Hong Kong.