

Trinity College London

Cert TESOL

Impact Study

(TCTIS)

Final Report

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Executive Summary

- This study examines the impact of the TCL Cert TESOL as an initial teacher training experience, focussing on the extent to which successful participants are prepared for work as TESOL professionals.
- The research design focuses on accounts of the 27 novice teachers, with two snapshots of their experience, captured in interview, in the first six months of work in a range of contexts around the world.
- The notion of 'impact' is operationalised in terms of learning, and draws on the ways in which the experience of work is constructed and underpinned by the experience of the TCL Cert TESOL course.
- As a validation study focussed on learning, the study demonstrates that the TCL cert TESOL, as an integrated curriculum of five assessed components, achieves its goal of developing entry level professional competence in TESOL.
- The analysis shows enduring positive attitudes about the TCL cert TESOL courses, which are strongest in relation to Teaching Practice (Unit 1), and least strong in relation to the Materials Assignment (Unit 4) and Unknown language Journal (Unit 5).
- In terms of links to practice in TESOL, the various components of the course contribute to a sense of readiness and professional competence, in terms of performance in the classroom, and coping in the wider professional and social context.
- The analysis suggests that the intensity of the learning experience on the TCL Cert TESOL, and the role of observation of trainers doing teaching throughout the course are key factors in making the TCL Cert TESOL course such an effective learning experience.
- These findings connect with current theoretical and research themes in initial language teacher education, particularly the role of engagement and affect in teacher learning, and the importance of integrating input, observation, feedback and performance in realising a socio-cultural theory-informed initial language teacher education curriculum. This complex learning 'diet' builds the 'furnished imagination' which is a key foundation in professional competence.
- There are opportunities for revising the Materials Assignment (unit 4) both as a learning component on the course, and as an assessment strategy at the end. Complications in this revision are the ways in which this component is integrated with Teaching Practice (Unit 1), and forms the external part of the assessment at the end. Managing these complications has not been part of the focus of this study.
- This initial impact study suggests a range of further studies to understand the processes of the initial language teacher education curriculum. These are outlined at the end of the report, but can be briefly summarised here: i) a continuation of the current study to track the development in work of novice teachers, with particular attention to coping with TESOL contexts different from the training context; ii) an investigation of the intensity aspect of the

full-time TCL Cert TESOL course, with particular attention to the ways it engenders emotional investment in learning and identity formation; iii) an investigation of the 'furnished imagination' concept as a means of understanding the amalgam of knowledge, techniques, strategies and personal insights which novice teachers take from the course into work; and iv) a validation study of the assessment of Unit 4.

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And most of all, the new teachers who participated in this study, and whose voices determine the messages in this report. They are the future of TESOL, and we do well to listen.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Trinity College London Cert TESOL Impact Study. It explores 'impact' in terms of learning, specifically teacher learning through the experience of the course, and its effectiveness as a preparation for work in the TESOL field. The study is grounded in recent theoretical and empirical work in language teacher education, outlined in Section 2. The research strategy – data collection on and from 27 new teachers – is set out in Section 3. The findings are presented in Section 4 and in the final section, conclusions, implications and opportunities for further research are considered.

1.1 Aims

The aims of the study, developed in conjunction with TCL TESOL section are:

- To explore trainees' perspectives on the strengths of the TCL Cert TESOL training programme;
- To explore the particular impact of the assessment procedures of the TCL Cert TESOL training course;
- To determine ways of enhancing the quality of the training programme, and of developing the TCL portfolio of offer in language teacher education.

1.2 Background of the study

This study was motivated by the interests of different stakeholders. Trinity College London TESOL section had led a range of developments in the programme specification and guidelines for implementation over recent years, and it was judged timely to systematically review the impact of these. The broad goal here was to understand the features of the Cert TESOL which could inform the development of new teacher education programmes in other contexts. The principal investigator (Kiely) has a professional background in TCL Cert TESOL training, assessment and moderation (including experience over 12 years as TCL Cert TESOL tutor, course leader, and moderator), and research interests in teacher learning, particularly how teachers learn both practical skills and the principles and concepts which underpin these.

This focus on learning has a sociocultural orientation: it draws on the work of neo-Vygotskians such as Karen Johnson and Donald Freeman, on the situated learning theory of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, and perspectives on identity and learning as conceptualised in Wenger's communities of practice theory. This perspective has the capacity to account for learning through interactions in social and professional situations, through cycles of performance and feedback, and through the formation of new or extended identities. It is a perspective which facilitated a consideration of how the new teachers in work 'did' English language teacher, how they talked and thought like TESOL professionals, and how this capacity related to the learning experience of the five units of the TCL Cert TESOL.

The focus on learning and identity in turn suggested a research strategy based on interviews rather than classroom observation: identities are understandable as discourse phenomena, with ideas, accounts, and justifications representing learning in the initial stages of becoming a teacher. Two other factors were important here: the interview approach aligned with the resources available for the study: it was understood from the outset that the new teachers would be in work around the world, and a telephone interview strategy was suited to this task. Second, the second researcher in the study (Askham) has a particularly strong background in interview-based research, particularly in exploring teachers' constructions of their work.

1.3 The TCL Cert TESOL Programme

The TCL Cert TESOL is a short course, often four or five weeks . It is recognised as a Level 5 qualification by the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Core requirements of the curriculum are not less than 135 hours 'organised' learning time, and a minimum of six hours teaching practice (TP) in regular classes, that is with six or more students. There are five assessed units:

- i) Unit 1: TP which includes lesson observation and maintaining a TP journal of lesson plans, materials, feedback and reflections;
- ii) Unit 2: Language Awareness (LA) which includes understanding of pedagogical systems of English grammar, phonology and vocabulary, and is assessed by test or other format;
- iii) Unit 3: Learner Portfolio (LP) which involves a detailed study of one learner, including analysis of errors and learning needs, assessment of capacity in the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, and outline of a learning plan for approximately 10 hours of lessons based on the analysis;
- iv) Unit 4: Materials Assignment (MA), which includes design and evaluation of materials used in lessons. This unit is externally assessed, that is, by the TCL examiner who visits the course on the final day and also undertakes a moderation of all course implementation and assessment processes;
- v) Unit 5: Unknown Language Journal (ULJ), which involves participation in approximately four hours of lessons in a new foreign language, and completion of a journal on the experience of this as a language learner, and as a trainee teacher.

2. The literature

There are separate literatures on initial teacher education (ITE) and second language teacher education (SLTE). In both cases there is a large body of theoretical studies, developed to identify key curriculum content and contribute to the organisation and implementation of programmes. This theoretical approach reflects a key feature of the knowledge relevant to teacher education: it is based on wisdom derived from practice rather than empirical research studies, and constructed by those who DO teacher education rather than those who RESEARCH it (Johnson 2009:20). The literatures on ITE and SLTE share an additional feature: they both focus on long programmes, typically in the context of three or four year BEds, or one year postgraduate courses. Short teacher training programmes such as the TCL Cert TESOL have over the decades of their existence received little attention, though in the past decade they have been the focus of PhD studies (Borg 2002; Brandt 2005; Hobbs 2007; Copland 2009). The general teacher education literature has focussed on curriculum design and organisational issues, with increasing attention in recent years to the role of reflection in learning, and in professional practice. The focus on reflection is also a major theme in SLTE, though in this field it has been eclipsed somewhat by the body of research in Second language Acquisition (SLA) in recent decades.

This literature review summarises the themes in the second language teacher education literature, identifying key themes relevant to the present study. These include the role of SLA; the issue of reflection and learning, the nature of pedagogic content knowledge (PCK) and the emerging attention to teacher identity

2.1 The role of SLA

The role of SLA in second language teacher education (SLTE) can be summed up in positions set out by academic leaders in the field – Jack Richards and Rod Ellis – in two major publications in the last two decades, Richards and Nunan (1990) and Burns and Richards (2009). In 1990 Richards established the scope of the SLTE field:

Knowledge and information from such disciplines as linguistics and second language acquisition provide the theoretical basis for the practical components of teacher education programmes (Richards 1990:3)

The epistemology here is one where ‘practice’ is the application of theory, and that theory is provided by SLA as well as linguistics (See PCK below). Rod Ellis, in discussing the locus of SLA in his chapter in Burns and Richards (2009) acknowledges the multi-dimensionality of teacher education, and the complex ‘practical knowledge’ that is central to the enterprise:

SLA in some form or other, constitutes a body of technical knowledge that should find a place in any teacher education programme, with the proviso, of course, that like any other body of technical knowledge, it can feed only indirectly into the practical knowledge that informs actual acts of teaching (Ellis 2009:141-2)

The hedged, tentative position constructed for SLA by Ellis contrasts with that set out by Richard two decades earlier. The SLA-driven view considered the cognitive processes of SLA as the basis for the SLTE curriculum, and the task of second language teachers was to facilitate such processes through

use of the appropriate tasks and activities in the classroom. This view is now considered partial, and underplaying the complexity of the work of the teacher. It has been complemented in curricular terms by perspective on reflection and teacher learning, pedagogical content knowledge and teacher identity.

2.2 Reflection and teacher learning

The key principles of Schön's reflective practitioner (1983) have been taken up in all teacher education contexts. Arguably the core ideas extrapolated by Schön from the study of expert professionals at work, were not new to the education field: the work of Dewey (1933) and Stenhouse (1975) for example, accord primacy to the notion that good practice comes from the insights and analyses of experienced practitioners or teachers. Reflective practice (RP) has been incorporated into SLTE in two ways: it is an enquiry paradigm for experienced teachers to explore their practice, understand it better, and devise strategies to enhance its effectiveness (Moon 2000; Richards and Farrell 2005; Farrell 2007; Kiely et al 2010). Second, the principles of RP have been harnessed to contribute specifically to initial teacher education: in Richards and Lockhart (1994) the goal is to engage trainee teachers in exploring aspects of SLA and the psychology of language learning in terms of phenomena experienced in the classroom. Wallace (1991) takes a broader perspective, aiming at establishing reflection rather than a set of particular behaviours and norms as the defining criterion of the professional second language teacher.

The focus on RP has given initial teacher education the task of forming the complete professional. Wright (2010) summarises a number of studies which show the fragility of this as an achievement. Akbari (2007) and Hobbs (2007; 2008) demonstrate the limited extent to which trainees reflect, and the limited capacity of such processes to resolve problems in classroom practice. The requirement for a high level of RP may be a function of the incorporation of reflection into assessment processes in initial SLTE: in writing journals and other descriptions of professional experience and opportunities for learning, trainees may be required to show original insights and analyses. The view from a situated and teacher identity perspective (see below) would suggest that a capacity to reflect and develop a personal, original and problem-solving approach comes with experience, membership of a supportive community of practice, and alignment with a complex range of professional norms, tacit as well as explicit.

2.3 Pedagogic content knowledge (PCK)

This term defined by Schulman (1986) covers the knowledge that teachers should have in order to do their work. In SLTE it has been constructed in two dimensions: knowledge about language; and knowledge about language use and language learning processes (Freeman *et al* 2009). In terms of knowledge about language, there are social and policy level expectations that the qualified teacher will be an expert in the language systems, rules and conventions relevant to the SL classroom. The dominant strategy for this currently is a language awareness approach (Andrews 2007). Studies by Andrews (1999, for example) and Peacock (2009) show the challenge of achieving the desired level of language awareness in longer BEd courses for L2 trainees in Hong Kong, while Borg (1998) illustrates the same phenomenon with L1 teachers in short courses. The understanding of language learning processes has been a focus on longer courses (Peacock 2009; Ellis 2009; Ellis 2010). A key challenge here has been the linking of such knowledge to lesson planning, task and materials design and classroom management (Peacock 2009; Wright 2010). The curriculum goal here is arguably the

root of the problem: the initial teacher education process is expected to form the complete professional prior to actual work as a professional.

2.4 Teacher identity

Second language teacher identity has emerged as a means of understanding both why teachers act as they do, and how they learn and progress in their careers, and is informed by professional learning generally (Wenger 1998), and specifically in language education (Tsui 2003; Miller 2009; Kiernan 2010). Miller (2009) summarises key themes from the literature, and characterises teacher identity as the ways teachers:

- relate to their work and context,
- understand, construct and perform their professional tasks,
- understand how others (such as policy-makers) see their role,
- draw on personal values in informing their decisions; and
- reflect and learn as they negotiate change in the work environment.

Identity then, is the coming together of the range of dimensions which distinguish the second language teacher as a professional. These are the focus of recognition by self and by others. Leung (2009) makes a valuable distinction between sponsored and independent professionalisms in our field. Sponsored professionalism is primarily that which is recognised by others, though qualifications, duties and posts within systems. Independent professionalism is more individual and personal: shaped by values, reflexive as well as reflective, and positioned to make critical and innovative connections on matters which affect learners, teachers and the TESOL context more widely: it is teachers' 'commitment to careful and critical examination of the assumptions and practices embedded in sponsored professionalism' (2009:53).

Identity is about performance. It involves an understanding of *doing* teacher, rather than just *being* teacher. This capacity to perform, to do teacher, is particularly important in understanding the achievement of initial teacher education programmes. These should enable the teacher to perform, creditably and appropriately from the first day. This characteristic of identity might be called employability: the capacity to take responsibility for the classroom, and ensure that students there have learning opportunities. The work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) on situated learning and communities of practice establishes a theoretical link between identity formation and learning. Drawing on Vygotskian, socio-cultural theory, they conceptualise learning as situated and transformative: we learn through interaction with more expert colleagues, and as we learn, we change; we form the identity of the professional. In this view the capacity to do can precede the capacity to analyse and understand. The latter is a long term process of developing insights, understanding the implications of these and devising practical strategies based on them for the classroom.

Freeman (2009) labels this understanding through work 'the Widening Gyre of SLTE', representing a current theoretical and research focus in the field. Johnson (2006; 2009) has developed the sociocultural perspective as a way of understanding how teachers learn, and also how the formal educational process can prepare them for learning in, from, and for practice. A key feature of Johnson's work, both in teacher education and in researching teacher learning, is the importance of bringing together observation, dialogue and practice in order to link learning to the complexity of

the task. This linking of input, teaching practice, interaction and feedback in an intense programme context is a given feature of all full-time TCL Cert TESOL courses.

The learning and the doing which are at the heart of constructions of teacher identity permeate other accounts of teacher development. A particularly interesting one for the task in this report is the 5-stage schema elaborated by Berliner in 1994.

Stages	Teacher characteristics
Stage 1: Novice level [all student teachers and many 1 st year teachers]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs context-free rules/ procedures about teaching • Operates rationally, but fairly inflexibly, in following such rules/procedures • Starts to learn the objective facts and features of situations and to gain experience.
Stage 2: Advanced beginner level [mainly 2 nd and 3 rd year teachers]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience begins to be melded with the verbal beginner level • Starts to acquire episodic and case knowledge, and to recognise similarities across contexts • Still unsure of self and of what to do when experience / case knowledge is lacking • May still have little sense of what is important in a specific situation.
Stage 3: Competent level [many 3 rd and 4 th year teachers + many more experienced teachers]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally in control of events going on around • Makes conscious choices about what to do • Has rational goals and is able to set priorities, decide on goals and choose sensible means for achieving those goals • When teaching, is able to determine what is or is not important • Still not very fast, fluid or flexible in behaviour.
Stage 4: Proficient level [a modest number of teachers from about 5 th year onwards]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intuition and know-how become prominent • Is able to view situations holistically and to recognise similarities between events • Can therefore predict events more precisely • Is able to bring case knowledge to bear on a problem • Still analytic and deliberative in deciding what to do.
Stage 5: Expert level [a small number of teachers, after at least five years]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an intuitive grasp of situations • Seems to sense in non-analytic and non-deliberative ways how to respond appropriately in classroom situations • With routine non-repetitive tasks acts fluidly, flexibly and without consciously choosing what to do or what to attend to • When a problem arises or with non-routine tasks, being able to bring analytic processes to bear • Is willing and able to reflect and learn from experience.

Berliner's 5-stage model of teacher development (Andrews 2007:140-1)

Two particularly interesting features of teacher learning are evident here. First, this envisages learning as a multi-faceted process of engaging with complexity, and of classroom performance guided initially by *rules*, then by *analysis* and finally by *intuition*. Second, this framing of teacher learning reflects two key themes in language teacher education: sociocultural perspectives as

developed by Donald Freeman (1998) and Karen Johnson (2006; 2009); and reflective practice, the 'case-knowledge' which according to Berliner, proficient teachers bring to bear on problems (Wallace 1991; Richards & Lockhart 1994; Richards and Farrell 2005). The Berliner characteristics of teachers provide a means of understanding the degree of teacher learning evident in the early stages of work, whether at the end of a 4-year course, a one-year postgraduate course, or a four week course, such as the TCL Cert TESOL.

This notion of comparison is not a focus of the analysis in this study. Rather it is to establish the TCL Cert TESOL as a credible programme of teacher education. The fact that at its shortest, it involves just four weeks of study, has engendered a deficit discourse. This is evident in studies such as Ferguson and Donno, who see contemporary practice as requiring a longer more broad-based programme of study.

A one-month course concentrating primarily on practical techniques may be attractive when teaching can be conceived of as the implementation of a particular method or set of procedures. Today, however, more than ever, such circumstances do not obtain. We live in the post-method age, and there is no theoretical consensus for any one methodology.

Ferguson and Donno (2003:31)

Caroline Brandt, whose professional and academic work is in the context of short courses, also lowers the bar in terms of what can possibly be achieved:

Such courses do not pretend to be anything more than they are: the delivery of a range of classroom survival techniques enabling the novice to approach the ELT classroom with a degree of confidence and the capacity to develop and experiment from that point forward.

Brandt (2006:263)

What Brandt is describing is not necessarily a low level of achievement: many employers would consider 'classroom survival techniques', 'confidence' and a 'capacity to develop' as a perfectly adequate starting point. And this level of development as a teacher could be seen as corresponding to novice and advanced beginner levels in the Berliner schema.

The focus on *rules* as a starting point in the Berliner framework has a further implication for understanding such short courses. This can be viewed in deficit terms, as framed by Ferguson and Donno (2003), and linked to views that such courses establish Present Practice Produce (PPP) as a methodological norm, leading to non-communicative practice in TESOL classrooms. Recent studies suggest that such a focus may be a legitimate starting point. Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) document in detail an approach in SLTE to induct trainees to the implementation of task-based learning. They contrast what might be considered a PPP approach (based on a *show, tell, guide* approach to teacher education (Myers 2002)) with a Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Skehan 1998; Ellis 2003) approach, and find that while the dispositions towards TBLT grow in strength during the taught curriculum, they fade in the Teaching Practice element, where trainees tend to draw on PPP-type practices. They identify three sets of reasons for this. First, the epistemological frame: in their lessons trainees felt input and practice were the more relevant activities. Second, cultural norms: trainees felt they had to perform as expert language users and competent trainees, and use of TBLT practice might appear experimental and unpredictable. Third, lack of support: trainees feel that

teaching in a way embodied in the course book, and best supported by mentors is the PPP-type practices (Ogilvie and Dunn 2002:171-5). This study illustrates the challenges of TBLT, and similar facilitative, responsive teaching styles, suggesting they are not the best starting point, but rather a more complex form of practice which teachers can develop towards, as the Berliner framework would suggest. John (2006), drawing conclusions from a study of teacher learning in a UK PGCE course, notes:

There is a need for student teachers to know how to plan lessons in a rational way before they can develop more complex lesson structures and become adept at juggling curricular elements.

(John 2006)

Farrell (2006) has demonstrated a similar tendency in TESOL: novice teachers tend to rely on rigidly planned lessons. Gatbonton (2008) shows how TESOL professionals evolve from novice to experienced by gradually adapting their approach: they shift the focus from the lesson objectives to the needs of the learners. Woods (1996), Breen et al (2001) and Wette (2009) describe how teachers in TESOL work out ways to adapt the curriculum, to make teaching less teacher-led and instructional and more interactive and situated as they progress in their careers. We can draw two relevant conclusions from this body of research findings. First, the task of initial SLTE is to establish foundations for professional practice, which may, as Berliner states, be rational, but inflexible and not adapted to context. Second, SLTE has to continue in work, so that after the initial training course, novice teachers feel that they are on the start of a long learning curve, and the workplace is supportive of this learning.

Recent studies in SLTE demonstrate how complex the task is. SLTE is not just about applying theories such as SLA, or establishing rigid techniques for lesson planning and implementation in the classroom. The opportunities for practice, the nature and context of feedback, peer interaction, and the skills of the mentor or supervisor are examples of researched dimensions of the SLTE curriculum that have been identified as central to the development of readiness for work as a TESOL (Arnold 2006; Barkuizen 2008; Brandt 2006, 2008; Busch 2010; DelliCarpini 2009; Farrell 2006, 2008; Hobbs and Kubanyiova 2008; Kiernan 2010; Long and Hoa 2010; Silver 2008; Vacilotto and Cummings 2007).

This study addresses this complexity. It examines the experience of learning of successful trainees on the TCL Cert TESOL, and relates this to their experience of work in TESOL. It addresses the impact of the learning experience of the five units of the course, in terms of readiness for work, of capacity to cope with the demands of work, and of ongoing learning through work. The theoretical significance of the study is in the analysis of the ways in which an intensive, tightly-structured curriculum experience prepares teachers for the complex, diverse, and unpredictable world of work of novice teachers.

3. Study design and methodology

This study developed from discussions about the potential of research to validate the current curriculum as a teacher learning experience, to identify specific areas for curriculum renewal, and contribute to the development of new teacher education programmes in the TESOL field. As Johnson notes: 'L2 teacher education has been something we have done, rather than something we have studied for much of our professional history' (2009:20). The focus of the TCL TESOL team, as expressed at annual standardisation conferences, was to complement this expertise in practice with formal research processes. The outcome of these discussions was a focus on *impact*, to understand the Cert TESOL as a teacher learning experience as a whole, and specifically to understand the specific contribution of the five assessed units of the programme:

- Unit 1 Teaching Practice
- Unit 2 Language Awareness
- Unit 3 Learner Profile
- Unit 4 Materials assignment
- Unit 5 Unknown foreign language learning experience.

This section of the report outlines the aims, the notion of *impact* which informed the research questions, design and methodology, and the processes of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Aims

This study was based on the following aims:

- To explore trainees' perspectives on the strengths of the TCL Cert TESOL training programme;
- To explore the particular impact of the assessment procedures of the TCL Cert TESOL training course;
- To determine ways of enhancing the quality of the training programme, and of developing the TCL portfolio of offer in language teacher education

3.2 Impact

We conceptualised *impact* as an outcome of learning. A key focus was the perspective from work in TESOL, in part because many studies and routine evaluations of courses take place at the end of the TCL Cert TESOL course (for example Brandt 2006, 2008; Ogilvie and Dunn 2010; Peacock 2009), and in part because this is a professional training experience, and the results in terms of successful learning, need to relate to the experience of work. Programme evaluation findings from the end of the course, combined with assessment data, provide valuable findings on the ways the curriculum has worked, for example, the performance of tutors, the value of lesson planning and materials workshops, etc. Where respondents focus on learning, it is likely to be a received view: learning was successful if the final grade was high. The perspective from work is different: here the focus is on the teacher's own performance, and the description of this, with explorations of the factors which contributed to it, is potentially a rich account of the Cert TESOL as a learning experience.

We conceptualised 'impact' in five ways:

- i) We wanted to explore *readiness for work* in TESOL, and *confidence* in terms of the tasks this involved.
- ii) We were interested in the extent to which the workplace was a platform for *continued situated learning*, not just in terms of the ongoing training and support offered, but in the ways the novice teachers engaged with emerging tasks and challenges.
- iii) *Identity formation* was a key theme, both in terms of how the novice teachers felt (link to readiness) but also in terms of how they articulated key values in the profession such as teacher talking time and teaching as facilitating language use in communicative settings.
- iv) We were interested in what initially was a somewhat vague notion of *furnished imagination*: a concept drawn from Schön's notion of 'repertoire' in reflective practice, and the role of observation and participation in Lave and Wenger's situated learning. Thus, furnished imagination captures what the novice teachers take from the Cert TESOL course in the form of models, techniques, performances and ideas which they admire, which guide their own first steps as professionals, and which over time lead them from 'doing' to analysing, understanding and owning.
- v) We anticipated the novice teachers would experience *varying levels of support in work*, and were interested in how they coped with these. We conceived a capacity to cope with workplaces which offered a high level of support as well as those with serious shortcomings as relevant impacts of the Cert TESOL learning experience.

3.3 Research questions

This impact lens together with the aims set out above led to three research questions:

1. How do teachers in the first months of teaching evaluate the training programme (TCL Cert TESOL) as a preparation for work?
2. What are the specific contributions of the five assessed components of the TCL Cert TESOL?
3. What are the implications for the development of the TCL Cert TESOL, and for the development of new initial teacher training (ITT) programmes?

3.4 Data Collection

Our approach to data collection was informed by three principles:

- i) We would focus on the voices of new teachers, their experiences as they recounted them.
- ii) We would collect data from teachers in work.
- iii) We would take two snapshots, in the form of telephone interviews: one 4-8 weeks into work, and a second 3-6 months into work.

These principles, relevant to the research focus and questions, and to the resources available, presented a number of challenges. These are presented in Table 2 below, with the action taken set out in the right-hand column.

Data collection challenges	Strategies adopted
Many successful trainees do not work in TESOL, or do so immediately after the course.	We had no evidence of the numbers who entered work and those who did not. We therefore invited a wide number of trainees to participate. The focus was on those who intended getting work in the sector immediately after the course (See Appendix 2).
Many successful trainees travel to other countries to begin work in TESOL.	We asked prospective participants for their emails and mobile telephone numbers, mindful that weeks later, they might be no longer using either of these.
Some teachers may secure short term work (especially in the summer period) and then not get work in TESOL at the time of the second interview.	We informed teachers at the first interview that we would carry out a second interview and endeavoured to time this when they were still in work, or soon after the end of work as long as this aligned with our time frame.
We could not contact current trainees directly, using contact data they provided as part of the application process to the TESOL course, due to data protection requirements .	We worked with TCL to identify centres which had courses finishing in Summer and Autumn 2010. We then asked the Course Directors in those centres to pass out invitations to trainees. These were then collected and sent to TCL or to the principal investigator.
We wanted to avoid any confusion between this study and the assessment of trainees on their Cert TESOL course.	We involved Course Directors to the minimal extent, and did not involve course moderators (who have an external examining role at the end of courses).
There was a risk that course providers would see the study as an evaluation of their centre.	We stated explicitly that the study would not be linked to any one course or centre. We deleted centre identity from our constructed data sets.
Participation in the study placed a demand on the time of novice teachers.	We recognised this, and stated that a payment of £50 would be made to each teacher who completed two interviews. We arranged for payment of this sum with TCL administration.

Table 2: Data Collection: challenges and strategies

We received contact details and consent to participate from 49 successful course participants. Appendix 2 illustrated the information provided to Centres and to prospective participants. Twenty seven (27) of these were successful in getting work, and in arranging an initial interview (some could not be contacted using the contact details initially provided, while others did not find work as planned). Of these 20 participated in a second interview.

We included a document strand in the data collection. We anticipated that the following would be relatively easy to collect, and might be revealing in the analysis of the learning experience on the Cert TESOL:

- i) Bio-data and consent
- ii) TP Journal summary
- iii) Unit 4 Assessment sheet

We collected consent forms from all 49 contacts. We asked centre or course leaders to provide TP Journal summaries, and received 25 of these, but only 13 for the 27 teachers who did first interviews. We asked the TCL administrator to provide the mark (out of 14) for the materials assignment (permission to access this was included in the consent form signed by participants). We collected 16 of these. It became apparent that this data set was not particularly revealing: only two of the 16 were below the 12-14 band, and the distribution of marks did not suggest that it would be useful to engage in a comparison between strong and less strong performers in the assessment of Unit 4.

Data on the experiences of the new teachers was collected mainly by interview. This was determined in part by resources – it would not have been possible to undertake any systematic observation of practice – and in part by the focus of the study. Our focus on teachers' voices, on their construction of the learning experience, and their expression of an early stage professional identity, suggested that an interview strategy would be most effective. As Kiernan (2010) notes:

Human identity is given shape through narrative discourse [...] The stories and anecdotes that people tell in conversation or when being interviewed serve to make a point, but also to say something about the teller (2010:10).

We were guided in designing the interview strategy by the approach of Kvale (2005): this approach starts from the notion that the interviewer is not mining a seam of fixed memories, attitudes and opinions. Rather, it is an interactive process of construction of positions, which with skilled prompts and follow-up questions, are made clear by examples, instances, and emerging insights. In line with this approach we outlined a short list of topics for each interview (which lasted approximately 40 minutes) and explored interesting angles in the responses to these.

The topics for the two interviews were as follows;

Interview 1

Biographical data

Focus on work, systems and experiences

Focus on 5 assessed training units

Strengths of the programme and suggestions for improvement

Interview 2

Further dialogue on learning experiences

Further dialogue on work experiences

An opportunity to reflect further on/revisit issues raised in Interview 1

See Appendix 3 for full details of the implementation of the interview strategy. The interviews were carried out by telephone or Skype, recorded and transcribed. The analysis is based largely on the transcriptions.

3.5 Data analysis

In this section we outline three main processes in data analysis: categorising the teachers from bio-data available; identifying patterns in the data which provided an overview of general aspect of the impact of the Cert TESOL; and exploring particular, telling insights which informed on the nature of the learning experience.

First drawing on the bio-data provided in Interview one, we placed the 27 participants in 5 categories, A-E, and gave each participant a pseudonym beginning with that initial as follows:

Total: 27	Background categories	Pseudonyms (<i>Italics – L2 speakers</i>)
A (n=8)	No relevant experience	Amber; Amy; Anita; Adam; Annie; Alfie; <i>Asha; Alice</i>
B (n=5)	Some language learning experience	Barrie; Betty; Bernice; Ben; <i>Biba</i> ;
C (n=7)	Some teaching, training or coaching experience	Chloe; Chris; Cathy; Cara; Connor; <i>Costa</i> ; Charlie
D (n=4)	Extensive relevant experience (language; teaching)	<i>Dahlia</i> ; Diane; Debra; Dilys
E (n=3)	Extensive experience in fields different from teaching or language	Eunice; Edna; Eve

Table 3: Research participants, in categories

The names reflect actual gender, and the four names in italics are English as L2 speakers.

The second process involved examining the interview transcripts. All the data on overall evaluations of the Cert TESOL experience and the five assessed units was identified, then 'eyeballed' to identify patterns and themes in the impact which those components had on the participants. The focus here was on identifying the 'typical', a conventional survey approach in educational research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007). The findings from this analysis process are presented in the next section of this report, as overall patterns, and as patterns in the comments on the five assessed units.

The third process was to identify the 'telling', a term from ethnographic research (Geertz 1973; Richards 2003). The goal here is not so much typical patterns, but particular personal insights which resonate in terms of the connections they make. Such telling observations by participants are particularly relevant to capturing perspectives on learning and on professional identity. These concepts are inherently complex and abstract, and direct, instrumental identification of themes and subthemes may not capture essential messages.

Both interview data analysis processes were informed by the experience of the researchers in teacher education in general and in the context of the TCL Cert TESOL in particular. The lead researcher (Kiely) has been a Cert TESOL tutor, course leader, and moderator for over twelve years, and in this capacity was familiar with a range of informal perspectives on the five assessed units on the course, especially as articulated by participants at the end of courses. The researcher (Askham) has extensive experience of interviewing, particularly in realising the Kvale approach, and has participated in different research studies which focussed on making sense of teachers' perspectives from accounts of their work.

A further measure to strengthen and validate our interpretative frame was undertaken. We led a workshop at the TCL Cert TESOL annual moderators' standardisation conference in Feb 2011. As a validation task, 20 comments on the units were presented to the moderators. Obvious identifiers were removed, and the moderators were asked to identify the unit in each case. They worked in pairs, drawing on their experience of discussions with trainees at the end of TCL cert TESOL courses. Twenty four sheets were returned. Allowing for clearly justified nomination of two units, a very high level of agreement was achieved – on average 16 out of 20. This shows that what we in our analysis identified as typical, resonated similarly with this experienced group. A copy of the workshop activity (with units identified) is attached as Appendix 4.

4 Findings

This section presents the findings of the study. It is set out in three main sections, trends in the comments on the programme as a whole, trends on the five assessed units, and telling accounts, which provide particular insights into both what was learnt, and the process of learning.

4.1 Typical perspectives on the programme

i) The Cert is an intense learning experience

A particularly striking feature of the evaluative comments on the course as a whole is the extent to which it is positive. The teachers all felt they had a very successful learning experience, and that they were well prepared for work in the sector. A key related observation made by all teachers is about the intensity of the course: they felt totally immersed in the TESOL philosophy and professional knowledge base, they experienced stress (at manageable levels) in planning for TP performances, and committed personally to meeting the challenges and deadlines presented. Thus, the intensity of the learning experienced generated a high level of investment, which in turn is likely to condition positive evaluative responses. Two separate design factors contribute to this phenomenon of intensity. First, the course, especially when taught over four or five weeks, is packed, with a wide range of topic areas and assessment challenges. Second, at the local course level, this density of activity is organised and distributed over the four weeks (and three intervening weekends) so that the intensity is both maintained and appears feasible.

This experience of intensity is not new to those familiar with the programme as course leaders, tutors or moderators: it is a typically strong strand in feedback at the end of courses as reported in TCL moderation reports. It is a feature, however, which has been represented as a problem, which should be alleviated as much as possible through efficiency in assessment specifications and guidelines, and careful timetabling over the four weeks. Our argument here is that while such advice is sound, we also must recognise the value for learning and identity formation of an intense course experience.

ii) They are amazed at what they have learnt

One pattern in the data related to the intensity of the learning experience is 'amazement' at what they have achieved. Many teachers experienced doubts during the course about whether they could cope with the input, deal with TP, and manage the deadlines. Thus successful completion was a source of confidence in itself. Even when in a range of areas, there was a recognition of limited understanding and skills – for example language awareness or classroom management – there was an aura of success, which often seemed to transform their sense of self, and contribute towards a strong foundation for the development of a distinct and robust professional identity. This theme is most evident in the first interviews, but, while there is some awareness of skills limitations in the second, for many there is a strong and sustained feeling of success in learning.

iii) They know how things should be

Where the knowledge of the English language systems, and the ability to manage the classroom were deficient, there was both a recognition of this at a personal level, and an awareness of what a

professional level of capacity was like. Thus, a pattern of confidence without arrogance is evident, allowing the teachers to perform creditably in the classroom, but continue learning through a range of means. This pattern is particularly important for an understanding of the TESOL professional sector as a Community of Practice (Wenger 1998), where the novice teachers are on the periphery, but comfortably and confidently so: they are aware both of this novice status (legitimate peripheral participation – LPP), and of the trajectory to the centre and full professional status.

- iv) They have furnished imaginations, the basis of a well-stocked repertoire, from observation of significant others during the course

The Cert TESOL course is an intense experience where input of lesson planning and task types combines with observation of experts in various forms (observation in actual and videoed classrooms; observation of the techniques used in input sessions; observation of a foreign language teacher in Unit 5) and attempts to perform and practice in both established and creative ways. This range of activity establishes a framework for contemporary TESOL, where there is a wide range of established techniques for the classroom, and also an important role for individual teacher creativity. We do not in the data have evidence of teachers feeling ‘I don’t know what to do’ a major problem described by Cameron-Jones (1991) in her study of learning on a BEd programme: rather, they know the WHAT, though may struggle with HOW to choose activities and materials, and HOW to sequence, link and implement them in actual lessons. These furnished imaginations are particularly important for identity formation (Wenger 1998), particularly when combined with the confidence shaped by successful achievement of the course, and what might be termed, admiration for the skills and capacities of those experts they have observed during the course.

- v) They strive for autonomy in the classroom

One of the key messages about professional identity formed in the course is the reality of the teacher being competent in managing their classroom alone. Many of the teachers showed an awareness of this, and in work, sought to achieve it, even when institutional policies on support of new teachers suggested otherwise. This orientation becomes stronger with experience: in the second interviews, teachers are generally working autonomously, drawing minimally on opportunities for support with lesson planning and classroom management. We suggest that this striving for autonomy links to an understanding of the role of creativity in teaching: of the teacher responsible for designing learning experiences which engage, motivate, and inspire a particular group. Thus, in addition to understanding the WHAT of TESOL ((iv) above), they also understand the WHY, the purpose of the classroom dimension of foreign language learning. The actual implementation is still a challenge, and requires a classroom which is a safe zone for experimentation, self-assessment and ongoing improvement of skills (with these dimensions of practice supported and encouraged by institutional management practices).

- vi) They find materials challenging

While the Cert TESOL has a required course book evaluation component, this is not clearly situated in one of the five assessed units. This, together with the high profile of creativity in the programme (reinforced by both the Materials Assignment [Unit 4], and the prevailing philosophy of many trainers and centres), may contribute to a somewhat limited understanding of the range of published materials available in TESOL, and widely used as the mainstay of regular courses. In

addition to course books, there are supplementary skills books, e-materials on disk, and internet resources on publishers' and schools' websites. An additional source of pressure here is the feeling of many that materials need adapting to meet the needs of particular classes. The challenge of locating the right materials is as much a feature of second interviews as in the earlier ones, suggesting that with increased experience and awareness of the materials also comes awareness of the issues in selecting and adapting. There is a limit to what can be achieved in a four-week course in developing familiarity with this vast resource: however we feel that this is an area where development can be recommended, both in terms of the Cert TESOL course design, and the support for teachers in initial stages of work in TESOL.

vii) They are ready to continue learning

These observations from the data overall illustrate the quality of learning on the Cert TESOL in terms of depth and professional relevance. In parallel with notes of confidence and competence in the data, there is a strand of awareness that there is much more to learn. This represents a platform for continued learning, which needs to be sustained in workplaces. The pattern is particularly strong in the first interviews: in the second interviews there is an emerging complacency, which might be a natural tailing off of enthusiasm and creative energy for learning, but might also signal that workplaces are not the positive learning environments they might be. In the concept of situated learning, the contribution of the formal curriculum – the scheduled activities in the four weeks of the TCL Cert TESOL – must interact with observation, interactions, and performances in the workplace setting in order to consolidate learning and ensure that the learning trajectory is progressed and is effectively oriented towards the centre of the profession. This challenge for TESOL teacher education rests largely with the interface between training courses and workplaces.

The next section presents the typical patterns in the data on the five assessed units of the Cert TESOL.

4.2 Typical trends in the data on the five assessed units

Unit 1 Teaching Practice (TP)

Three trends are evident in the interview data specific to Teaching Practice:

- a) The teachers were overwhelming positive about it as a learning experience. The opportunity to do actual teaching, the support of TP tutors and course peers, and the feeling of achievement from planning and implementing lessons contribute to the positive evaluations.
- b) Teachers were particularly positive about the feedback they received. Here the views differed from those noted at the end of courses by moderators, and reflected in published accounts such as Hobbs (2007) and Brandt (2008). It may be that the frustrations and irritations which seem particularly salient during and at the end of the course are quickly forgotten by most, and what remains is the more enduring sense of professional identity and appreciation of the learning experience which contributed to this.
- c) Some teachers felt that there should have been more opportunities for teaching practice, in terms of conventional TP (assessed), lessons without observers, and in real classes.

The strength of teacher identity formation evident across the data, appears due in large part to the effectiveness of the Teaching Skills development: teachers feel ready to teach, and in many cases ready to do this on their own, and ready to do it in very different circumstances from the TP in the TCL Cert TESOL. Particularly interesting is the value which seems to be attached to being able to 'hack it' without direct support from a mentor or manager: as though they feel that they should not need that. They seem to expect themselves to be a fully-functioning professional from the outset.

Unit 2 Language Awareness (LA)

Many find the learning about language systems and concepts a major challenge. This applies both to grammar and phonology and is experienced as a challenge across different assessed units: TP and the LP as well as the LA assessments themselves. This is a component where the L2 users of English, especially those with relevant previous experience such as Biba and Dahlia, report strengths and a capacity to assist others on the course.

The language analysis expertise is a varying element of a TESOL identity, with individuals feeling a sense of achievement in their LA learning, but also reporting awareness of the enduring gaps in their knowledge of grammar and / or phonology. Awareness of these gaps appears to be linked to performance within the TCL Cert TESOL, as much as to teaching experience since then. This may reflect both the enduring impact of learning challenges on the course, and to strategies in planning, preparing for and maintaining a focus in their teaching. Many teachers remembered specific difficulties with grammar and phonology, while others spoke of how they planned and prepared for teaching with an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

Unit 3 Learner Profile (LP)

The data on this component was positive, with most appreciative of the value of the Learner Profile. Reported benefits relate to getting to know a student, engaging with the complexities of assessment and error analysis, and teaching in one to one contexts. Some noted a lack of connection with teaching work – they felt it would be useful when and if they do more one-to-one teaching, but relevance to 'normal' classroom teaching is limited. This component was a major source of stress, largely due to the range of tasks involved in the profile and the time taken by transcription, analysis and writing up.

Unit 4 Materials assignment (MA)

A major trend in the data on this component was the feeling that it was less central than the other assessed units. This appears due to the fact that it was introduced later in the course when attention was focussed on TP and the LP. Preparation for the external assessment was often rushed and stressful, with often limited understanding of the ways it differed from TP and the TP Journal, and the ways it connected with the course book evaluation activity within the courses.

The materials designed and presented for assessment are seen as useful in specific ways: many aspire to using them in their teaching, and a few actually have. Thus, it may be that the sense of value in their own materials is an achievement of the course; and both the skills of materials evaluation, and materials as a context for teacher creativity are seen as useful, adding to the strength of teacher identity evident.

Unit 5 Unknown language journal (ULJ)

ULJ is seen as valuable as an experience and as a context of observation of good practice in teaching using the target language only. The experience of observation of and participation in these lessons constitutes a major contribution to imagined professional identity. Though several mention the limited opportunity to teach actual beginners in English, they note the relevance of the communication and pedagogic strategies used in this component. Thus this unit contributes to understanding as feasible key aspects of professional identity in TESOL: exclusive use of the target language; emphasis on participation of learners; and a focus on communication. One shortcoming evident in the data is the lack of attention to cognitive and affective aspects of the learning process. A minority are surprisingly negative about it, particularly in terms of the time it took on a very intensive course.

Table 4 presents a list of the themes and specific issues taken from the analysis of interviews.

Themes	Data – summary of evaluative comments on five assessed units
<p>1. TP The strength of teacher identity formation, due in large part to the effectiveness of the Teaching Skills development: teachers feel ready to teach, and in many cases ready to do this on their own, and ready to do it in very different circumstances from the TP in the TCL Cert TESOL. Particularly interesting is the value which seems to attach to being able to ‘hack it’ without direct support from a mentor or manager: as though they feel that they should not need that. They seem to expect themselves to be a fully-functioning professional from the outset.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective practical skills development (All interviewees) • Impact of tutors (Debra; Edna; Charlie; Alfie) • Value of observing tutors teach (Dahlia; Eunice; Biba) • Good to work with 2 different tutors (Amber) • Good to teach two different levels (Anita) • Better to have one tutor – avoid mixed messages (Ben) • Peer observation valuable for ideas (Biba; Betty) • Excellent feedback (Ben; Biba; Diane; Adam; Betty) • Feedback helped with confidence (Debra; Annie) • Excellent feedback but conflicting messages (Ben) • Feedback emphasized the role of continuing learning (Bernice) • Developed boardwork skills and confidence (Bernice) • Strong role for self-evaluation & reflection (Chloe) • Helpful in overcoming negative self-evaluation (Amy) • TP gave sense of achievement (Biba) • TP established importance of interaction in teaching (Chris; Dilys; Debra) • TP established the need for teacher to be self-sufficient (Connor) • Balance of planning and winging it in teaching (Chris; Betty) • Differences in training and work (Anita) • Stress of planning during the course ((Adam; Amy; Bernice) • Awareness of teacher talk - quantity and quality (Anita; Bernice; Edna; Adam; Cara)
<p>2. LA The language analysis expertise is a varying element of this identity, with individuals feeling gaps in their knowledge of grammar and / or phonology. Awareness of these gaps appears to be linked to performance within the TCL Cert TESOL, rather than as teaching experience since then.</p>	<p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA – better than other units (Cara) • Two levels – understanding it, and how to teach it (Alfie) • Disconnect between test and use in TP (Anita) • LA – context of ongoing learning (Dilys; Connor; Amy; Alfie; Costa) <p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very difficult (Amy; Connor; Adam; Eve) • Not helpful for TP (Anita) • Different from French and Spanish grammar (Ben) • Easy for L2 trainees (Biba; Dahlia) • Refreshed grammatical knowledge (Dahlia) • Built on previous learning (Edna; Chris) • The importance of language awareness for learning (Edna)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding grammar is the rationale for practice (Dilys) • Awareness of weakness and need for strategic avoidance (Connor) <p>Phonology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to learn (Barrie) • Stress timing and syllable timing difficult (Diane) • Very difficult and least helpful for teaching ((Anita) • Helped with confidence in teaching (Dilys) • Focus on RP only (Alfie) • Students don't use IPA (Eunice) • Useful for students using dictionaries (Barrie)
<p>3. Learner Profile</p> <p>Appreciation of the value of the Learner Profile is extensive, but for some there is a lack of connection with teaching work – people observe it will be useful when and if they do more 1-2-1 teaching, but relevance to 'normal' classroom teaching is limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to do (Eunice, Asha; Edna) • Too much paperwork (Biba; Amy; Amber; Asha) • Good for learning error analysis (Barrie; Edna) • Higher level profiles very challenging (Adam; Annie; Dilys) • Analysis of language a major part (Amy; Edna; Diane; Connor) • All the complex aspects of ability came up (Edna) • Good opportunity to learn technical terms (Adam) • Learner English really useful (Eunice; Dilys) • The LP pulled everything together (Cathy; Diane; Chloe) • Good on how to teach a student – needs anal; one-to-one (Debra; Amber; Biba; Edna; Asha) • Not taught one-to-one yet, so no sense of value of the unit (Chris) • There are elements of one-to-one teaching in all classes (Chloe; Biba; Eve) • Understanding what is involved in teaching reading (Cara) • Good to have a student who recognizes the benefit of teaching ((Edna) • Importance of trust and relationships in teaching (Betty) • The lesson should be observed (Anita)
<p>4. Materials assignment</p> <p>Materials are seen as useful in a general way; many aspire to using them, and a few actually have. Thus it may be that the sense of value in their own materials is an achievement of the course; and the skills of materials evaluation (as separate from the self-evaluation of teaching) are seen as useful, adding to the strength of teacher identity evident. Creativity and materials: one of the gaps between teaching on the TCL Cert TESOL and real teaching is the former is focused on being creative, and other people's materials (published or house) are the focus on real teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials are core part of lessons – value clear now (Amber; Connor; Amy; Debra; Betty; Bernice; Dilys; Eve; Chris; Connor) • Creativity a core part of the course (Barrie; Chloe; Ben) • Too much focus on creativity (Anita) • Materials adaptation valuable for the busy teacher (Connor) • Importance of improving materials for next time (Bernice; Amy; Cathy) • Good for evaluation of materials (Betty; Cathy) • Moderator picked holes in materials (Alfie; Chloe; Cathy) • Used them in work (Dahlia; Cathy; Edna; Eunice) • Focus on MA came late n the course (Eve; Dahlia; Cathy; Adam; Costa) • Instruction not very clear for MA (Chloe) • Stressful at the end of the course (Ben) • Good for adaptation of course book materials (Amber; Dilys) • Not enough feedback from tutors (Alfie; Chloe) • Adaptation for different levels is important (Eunice; Ben; Bernice; Biba; Diane; Debra) • Preparing for external assessment was stressful (Debra; Asha; Ben; Annie) • Material design – useful for up to date news in lessons

	<p>(Anita)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time to create really good materials (Adam; Debra; Cara) • Time-consuming (Edna) • Generic materials, less useful; more specific ones more useful (Dilys) • MA assessment expendable element of the course (Asha; Alfie; Chris; Annie; Debra; Charlie) • Materials should be part of TP (Charlie; Costa; Asha)
<p>5. Unknown Language Journal</p> <p>ULJ is seen as valuable as an experience and as a context of observation of good practice in teaching using the target language only. Few mention insights into the learning process as helping the understanding the perspective of their students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A waste of time – classes and journal writing (Barrie; Betty) • Irrelevant as I do not teach beginners (Anita; Connor) • Teacher did it very well (Dahlia; Amy; Amber; Ben; Eve; Cara; Eunice; Annie) • Useful to see techniques (Alfie; Eunice; Ben; Bernice; Amy; Biba; Adam; Annie; Costa; Charlie) • Useful to see effective teacher talk (Ben) • Interesting to see how materials are used (Diane) • Good to get the student perspective (Eve; Dilys; Adam; Chloe; Cathy; Dahlia; Debra; Cara; Eunice; Chris; Alfie) • Learnt a lot – shows what is possible (Edna) • Input that did not feel like input (Chris; Amy) • Great preparation for teaching children (Amber) • Useful demonstration of avoiding use of LI (Eunice; Anita; Ben; Bernice; Diane) • Uncomfortable and difficult, but gave me confidence (Dilys) • Journal writing was useful for learning (Asha)

Table 4: Summary of comments about five units in interview data

The typical patterns described here suggest that the overall experience of the five teacher categories – A-E – are not greatly differentiated. Apart from a tendency of the L2 teachers to find the LA component easy and more like a review of existing knowledge, they all have the same generally positive evaluation, and range of critical perspectives on the units. Two factors may explain this: looking back all appear to have been very well informed about the nature and focus of the course, so the expectations were generally accurate. Second, the intensity of the course, in terms of tasks and deadlines proved a learning and time management challenge for all, and thus ‘homogenised’ the experience overall. There is also little difference in patterns in comments in first and second interviews. In the latter, memories are still vivid, and often similar points are made with the same justifications and examples as earlier.

4.3 Telling voices

The aim in this section is to use individual cases to explore the nature of the learning experience as a way of accounting for its impact. These cases demonstrate the extent and depth of the learning on the TCL Cert TESOL. Each case focusses on one of the five units, and extends beyond the learning on that unit, to illustrate key aspects of professional identity formation. Whereas the previous section, in focussing on the typical, set out key patterns in the impact of the TCL cert TESOL, this section explores what is possible in terms of the learning experience.

Teaching Practice (TP)

And I also learnt how to become comfortable in standing back and allowing the students to work in their pairs or in their groups and being able to observe them without intruding on their conversation, take notes at the same time so I could have a clinic at the end or a revision session in the next lesson based on any mistakes that I heard. (Bernice)

Bernice, about four months into work as a teacher (interview 2), articulates what she has learnt about how to teach in a way which reflects core principles of contemporary communicative language teaching. First, she has changed her view of teaching from one based on instruction, to one focussed on interaction and facilitation. Second, she stands back, letting the students take responsibility for that interaction. Third, she takes her cue on input from them: she listens and responds to their errors and needs in the classroom, and is able to sequence learning opportunities. Thus, she succinctly sets out a model of practice, not just as an aspiration, but as achieved learning, and as a mode of teaching she is 'comfortable' with. Her account of her practice, what she has learnt, resonates with the TBLT type approach identified by Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) as that which is particularly difficult for novice teachers.

Bernice's experience points to the depth of learning which is possible in the Cert TESOL. She has a lot of experience of learning foreign languages, and had worked in EFL briefly in the past, but it was a very limited professional role:

I was directed by the company exactly what I had to teach, there was no deviation whatsoever [...] it was a case of turn up and do what I was told to do. (Bernice)

Her general view of ULJ was that it was unnecessary, because she had had so much experience of language learning. However, she noted its value in relation to teaching:

I learnt some techniques from it: we did ULJ at the beginning before we go stuck into our teaching, so I did see and experience different activities, different groupings of students, different correction styles, so I did learn different teaching styles from it. (Bernice)

The specific link between learning a teaching methodology from observation rather than instruction on it in input sessions is supported by other teachers. Dahlia, an experienced teacher who wanted the qualification but did not expect to learn anything new was amazed at what she learnt:

Some of the teachers were absolutely excellent teachers; they were very good role models. Just watching them was actually what you learnt most from. (Dahlia)

Here we see how the depth of learning, in performance and thus identity terms, deriving from the opportunities to observe their tutors, and discuss or reflect on that performance with them. Bernice and Dahlia illustrate how the experience has been transformative for them, and has enabled them to develop a professional identity recognisable by professionals across the TESOL sector.

Language awareness (LA)

This was my weakest side [...] I came through passing the test, but .. [...] I'm a lot better at selecting what I want to teach and focusing on it, and anything else I want to teach I make sure it becomes second to my main point. I'll keep it there, but I'll always make sure I'm teaching what I want to teach. (Connor)

Connor in talking about the Language Awareness component reflects an important depth in learning in three ways. First, he draws on his own self-assessment in relation to his LA knowledge: he recognises that 'passing the test' does not indicate adequacy. Second, he has developed a practical strategy for ensuring competence in the classroom: he selects his language teaching focus, prepares for that and sticks to it. Third, he is mindful this could exclude a student contribution to lessons: he recognises language points emerge in lessons, and his focus is to address these, but not allow them to hi-jack his lessons.

Connor reflects a generally pragmatic approach to tasks and interpretations of the social world. He experienced two TP tutors who were very different in approach: one was 'very laid back' and the other 'much more direct'. But rather than seeing this as a problem, he sees it 'as a very clever way of doing it, I appreciated that'. He felt the ULJ was 'flawed' because the role of absolute beginner in the target language is not one teachers of English are likely to find, but it helped him understand 'the amount of pressure and brain power required to listen to teaching in a second language, which was good'.

One other factor combines with his natural pragmatism and positive outlook to cement his learning in relation to language awareness: he admired the LA tutor:

The guy who was teaching up the grammar I respected, he was very good at grammar, but even so, even if he didn't know something, he was like, OK, I'll go and have a look, and we'll come back to it. Which I appreciated, it was good. (Connor)

For Connor, this interpersonal dimension of learning – the role of the significant other, as guide and model – is particularly important. His learning about language awareness, which is limited, is compensated for by learning about self – the role of personal strategies – and by engagement with the people who are key resources for learning, and the development of a professional identity.

Learner Profile (LP)

[The Learner Profile is] the most difficult [...] the most time-consuming but rightly so because I thought, besides the teaching practice, I thought this was really important. It really kind of encompassed everything in it, [...] it was putting everything into practice with one specific student. (Chloe)

Chloe's comment on the Learner Profile is significant in four ways: it reflects the challenge of this assessed task, a point which many teachers made. Second, it recognises that it encompassed everything: it was the teacher learning curriculum in micro. Third, although in design and structure, the LP is an analysis task, Chloe saw it as 'putting onto practice'. Fourth, she recognises the individual student focus as important.

These views reflect deep messages about TESOL as a profession: supporting learning is about analysis and action, and the focus as far as is possible is the individual student.

Materials assignment (MA)

I think it was necessary [...] it felt like it was a way to show that you understand that if you make a certain material, you know, just a way of showing that you understand that you can

do something better if it doesn't work perfectly the first time around. And so I felt like that was quite a theme in the course. (Amy)

Amy's views on the Materials Assignment are insightful in two ways: first the theme of improvement and improvability when it comes to materials. And second, the linking of this theme to the course as a whole. Amy was a trainee for whom the course was difficult. She found the TP 'stressful' and 'unpleasant'; she 'struggled with the grammar: it just wouldn't stay in my mind'. And in teaching in a private language school in a European city, she finds 'managing the classroom difficult'. But she has a belief that things can be improved. Her view of materials thus reflects a wider need, which may be a route to a more solid professional identity: to constantly seek ways of improving things.

In her second interview, she recounts a range of difficulties in her work, and materials play a role here: she experiences the challenge as 'information overload':

When I started I had to take on all these different courses and I didn't really realise that there's all this extra material that I could use. I was told we use this book, English File, and you can supplement it with other materials and I just thought information overload from all these different courses and whatever. I didn't realise so I totally missed this whole shelf. In this particular school they lock away most of the books at the end of the day and then at certain times of the day the library is open, but it's late in the day when I'm not usually there. I didn't realise that there's this top shelf with loads of photocopied material and I just didn't realise I had access to it and I didn't realise where to get it from. It's just one of those things, having the time, getting round to asking the questions, asking the right person where do I find this. (Amy)

The challenge of dealing with the extensive banks of materials available now is one for all new teachers. Many teaching contexts have their own sets of resources such as Amy describes. The focus of Unit 4 on the TCL cert TESOL is largely on creativity and materials design. It does not prepare teachers for the encounter with available and recommended resources in teaching contexts, and the extent to which it should or could is a matter for curriculum development.

The depth of her learning is evident in her response to the various challenges she has experienced. She describes how her engagement with the materials issues – one approach to getting it right in a difficult classroom – extends beyond this to a fundamental positioning on the role of the teacher and her professional identity:

I think that I'm learning that it is important to have that teacher student barrier and it doesn't matter how well you get on with somebody, or how much you like the students or dislike them or whatever, you just have to. It's not all about getting people to like you and you can't let your students make you run around after them. What I felt this week when I heard about this class, you know, I just felt like do you know what, what do people actually expect from an English lesson? Because it can't all be fun and when the teenagers were giving me hassle I just felt like, you know what, I'm working really hard here and I'm trying my best to make this interesting and fun, but it's not actually all about interest and fun. Yeah ok it's really great if you can get students to learn something in a really fun way, but the most popular and fun teacher won't necessarily teach the students as much. You're not

there to entertain them, but you are, so I think it's just about finding that right balance.
(Amy)

Amy's situated learning in this school context over five months may have lacked the support and guidance we would consider ideal. It has however, been deep and transformative, and has led her to important issues of identity, particularly in terms of classroom role and rapport with students, which enable her to see that the particular problems experienced are not just about materials, but about who she is in the classroom, and how that can foster commitment and engagement of students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Unknown Language Journal (ULJ)

Brilliant. It taught you more than any of the academic stuff could ever have taught you. It was just wonderful because it just put you right into the situation and the tutor that did that element of the course is so good. (Eunice)

Eunice captures three key points about this component. First, she sees academic learning in the component, though taught in a non-academic way. Second, she recognises the learning through the *doing* dimension of it, a point which is a key principle of communicative language teaching. Third, she recognises the unit as a model of good teaching, which serves to furnish her imagination and ongoing learning. Eunice's comment here reflects a key element of TBLT: what is learnt is an outcome of an activity, not just comprehension of something that is shown and told (Ogilvie and Dunn 2002).

Eunice is a retired public sector administrator who took the course as part of a desire for fresh challenges and experiences. While she found aspects such as time management and grammar difficult, she 'thoroughly enjoyed the course, I mean, I just buzzed on it to be honest'. She considered its impact as deep and transformative, where the many facets proved coherent, and unified as a relevant and satisfying learning experience.

This section has presented the findings in terms of the participants' bio-data, the overall trends on the TCL Cert TESOL as a learning experience, perspectives on the five assessed units, and some telling accounts which illustrate the deep and transformative learning experienced. The next section broadens the discussion, focussing on the research questions in order to identify key impacts of the TCL Cert TESOL, and ways in which it might further develop.

5. Discussion

This section explores the findings in relation to the research questions. It considers each in the context of two themes: learning teaching and professional identity. Each discussion section also addresses discordant voices in the overall pattern of findings.

5.1 Research question 1

How do teachers in the first months of teaching evaluate the training programme (TCL Cert TESOL) as a preparation for work?

The principal feature of teachers' evaluations of the training programme is their positive orientation. A key factor here is the level of engagement and investment which the course has secured, in large part as an intensive learning experience. This refers not just to the amount of activity, the number of performances and deadlines scheduled. It also derives from the novelty and challenge of these. Teachers express amazement at what they have achieved, at what they have learnt, and what they have become. In work they feel it works, and thus the evaluations are typically more positive than those captured at the end of the course.

The learning experience is both intensive and intense. In sociocultural terms, it engages, fosters participation and scaffolds learning in a range of ways (Johnson 2009). The activities which include input, observation and actual teaching performances furnish the imagination (Wenger 1998), such that a trajectory to professional identity is established and the way along this illuminated. The teacher trainers they have encountered 'practices what they preached: they consistently demonstrated good practice, not as deliberate modelling, but rather as the way they did it, resonating with Russell's (1997) account of the task of the teacher trainer. We can understand the impact of the intensive feature of the course as an emotional dimension to learning: much as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described the impact of 'flow' in classrooms: the teachers on the course are transported; taken on a roller coaster which challenges them to achieve what they are not sure is possible for them, supports them in this enterprise, and leaves them, if not with a sense of solid achievement, then with a clear understanding of what the goal is, and with a belief in their ability to achieve it.

Professional identity formation as a contribution of the TCL Cert TESOL course is evident in numerous sub-themes in the data, relating in particular to the way Miller (2009) (see Section 2 above) describes how teachers 'understand, construct and perform their professional tasks'. Edna notes how it have given her confidence, specifically in relation to making sense of her previous experience – she had been a charity organisation administrator who have some involvement with ESOL work.

Taking the course gave me a lot of confidence that I had been on the right track [...] perhaps my expectations of people were not as high as they could have been [...] they were pushing the students to go way beyond what I would have expected them to do. (Edna)

Specifically this confidence enables Edna to 'push' students, a key role of tasks, classrooms, and teachers in both SLA and task-based approaches to language learning (Swain 1985; Skehan 1998; Kramsch 2002).

For Connor, the professional identity message is about teacher talking time:

Reduce TTT, reduce TTT, something I definitely think about now. (Connor)

As Walsh (2000) notes:

TTT is not something experienced teachers focus on or worry about [...] a construct for initial teacher training. (2000: 136)

Thus, Connor is performing his novice teacher status, showing he has understood the nature of TESOL, where teaching is not just instruction, but about getting the students to use the language, a point made more explicitly by Bernice (see above), who not only aligns with contemporary classroom practice, but also registers transformation: she has become 'comfortable in standing back' and 'allowing the students to work in pairs or groups'.

Professional identity is not just about performance in the classroom: teachers also need to be team players in the staffroom, sharing experiences with and supporting colleagues. Annie reflects this aspect of professionalism.

If I went and asked for help, I'd be pointed in the right direction, but I'm more likely to ask my peers than go upwards. [...] Sometimes it's a bit of moral support as much as anything, [a colleague] will say, 'oh I don't feel I've taught them anything today, I don't feel they've learnt anything, so it's quite nice to say, that's alright [...] it does sort of make you feel better. (Annie)

Professionalism is also about ongoing learning, not just in terms of reflective practice (Wright 2010) but also in terms of a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to high standards (Leung 2009). In her second interview, approximately five months into work, Betty reflects this individually conditioned professionalism in a manner resonant of Leung's individual professionalism, which complements the sponsored professionalism of alignment with organisational norms:

Well I think the observations are just completely due to company policy. I actually ended up getting a really good review on my observation, so I was one of those top new teachers. I actually have my second one coming up next week, and they're going to observe because you have a follow-up observation, so it was great that I did so well the first time, but now I have to do even better. So I've kind of, you know, set the bar pretty high for myself. But after that, you aren't observed for a year. So I'm basically just looking to kind of getting it over with. (Betty)

The significance in terms of impact here is articulated through the voices of individual trainees. There are few discordant voices on this theme: all found the learning experience as intense, and all

noted the extent of learning. We may have captured a specific group: perhaps those successful in getting work, and willing to participate in the interviews may skew our findings. However, what our analysis is indicating is not a suspension of belief (as illustrated in the next section), but a clear assertion of the theoretical potential of the programme as a learning experience, and a rich and diverse range of ways in which this is achieved through investment by both course organisers and leaders and trainees.

5.2 Research Question 2

What are the specific contributions of the five assessed components of the TCL Cert TESOL?

In different ways the five assessed units constitute opportunities for learning. This is most strongly articulated in the case of TP, where the ongoing challenge of planning lessons, teaching them, engaging with feedback, and doing observations constitutes both an intellectual and imaginative challenge, as well as a personal journey of self-discovery. And as the data in the findings section illustrate, the learning taken on board reflect complex messages about the nature and goals of contemporary practice in TESOL. There are no discordant voices regarding this impact. Perspectives on the TP process and feedback which are not positive evaluations in themselves reflect an understanding of the real world where not everything is perfect.

The Language Awareness unit reflects a mix in terms of contributions to learning. While some claim to have learnt a lot, some did not, some felt it was revision (particularly L2 teachers) and some had their eyes opened about how little they had previously known about the grammar and phonology systems of English. This range of responses reflects a validity in terms of the extent to which these systems can be mastered in four weeks, thus attesting to our findings on learning overall. In terms of professional identity, the teachers show how they have taken on board two particularly salient messages: first a sound understanding of grammar and phonology systems is essential for confident professional practice, and where this is not firmly in place, specific strategies are required to manage that situation, as the discussion of Connor illustrates above. Second, the teachers all understand the importance of these structural aspects of language for learning, not just as a goal in themselves, but as strands in the complex weave of communicative competences.

An interesting sub-theme in the evaluations of LA relates to assessment: some felt the LA assignment or test per se was relatively easy, but the greater challenge was in other units, such as TP and LP. This is an observation which can be explored further in devising improvements to the Cert TESOL programme specification.

The Learner Profile Unit was universally found to be fascinating in terms of understanding a specific human context of second language learning, and challenging in terms of the diversity and range of tasks involved. As a learning experience it shares much with TP, with the individual intellectual challenges mixing with interpersonal and performance challenges. In this unit, much of the organisational task was also down to the trainee: arranging meetings, managing recording and transcription, and teaching the one-to-one lesson. There was general recognition of the way these tasks were set up, and supported in terms of instrumentation and guidance. Many saw the one-to-one teaching as a window into a non-classroom domain of professional practice. Again there were few discordant voices here: some whose profilees disappeared and they had to start again,

remembered the support extended to them in the crisis by tutors rather than the any aspects of programme dysfunction.

The Materials Assignment was a context of mixed feelings. Many felt the unit had a low profile in the course until the last week, when it was the focus of a flurry of activity in preparation for the external assessment. Others felt that it was part of TP, and still remembered the rationale for materials separate from the lesson the materials were designed for. Few connected the assessment task with course book evaluation (an activity within courses) or use of course books in TESOL practice. Two teachers mentioned being surprised by questions asked by the external examiners, one valuing this experience, and the other being 'upset' by a line a questioning which took her out of her depth. However, while discord resonates through evaluations of this unit, there is evidence of important learning in terms of messages about materials and the links to professional identity.

In terms of learning, the focus on materials encodes messages about creativity and imagination on the one hand, and about responding to interests –both students' interests and current affairs – as a way of constructing the curriculum on the other. In work, many teachers find selecting materials from the range available a challenge, but there is probably no way a pre-service course can pre-empt this. The capacity to rely on their own resources, materials they have created or used on the course is probably the best professional response to initial challenges here, with in-service guidance and support more actively helping in the first weeks and months of work. The challenge in terms of TCL Cert TESOL curriculum development is to find a way of raising the profile of this component, whether with TP or as a separate unit (as it in now), and to revise the assessment, so that there is a focus on materials as a mainstream TESOL issue, rather than as an appendage encountered at the end of the course (See next section).

The Unknown Language Journal is designed to facilitate learning in two ways: to afford insights into cognitive and affective aspects of the language learning process, and to provide an opportunity to observe (as a participant) techniques for teaching beginners without using the L1 to explain or manage the classroom. While learning in relation to the former – insights into cognitive and affective aspects of language learning – are limited in the data, there is a rich seam supporting the quality and depth of learning from participant observation. This learning is relevant to techniques, which some teachers used in TP and continue to draw on, and also to deeper messages about the actual possibility and practicality of managing the lesson and classroom in the target language. In professional identity terms, a major impact of thus unit is in furnishing the imagination: providing trainees with a body of practice they admire, understand and see as relevant, a rich resource to draw upon and develop in the workplace long after the completion of the training event.

There are some discordant voices on the ULJ. These relate to the lack of relevance and lack of need. The former are by informed by features of practice where they do not teach beginners, and the latter by extensive previous experiences of language learning. The opportunities here to develop the Cert TESOL programme specification to address these issues are explored further below.

5.3 Research Question 3

What are the implications for the development of the TCL Cert TESOL, and for the development of new initial teacher training (ITT) programmes?

As the discussion above illustrates, the TCL Cert TESOL works well as an intensive and intense programme of learning about TESOL and for the formation of a strong professional identity for TESOL. There are opportunities to develop the programme specification with respect to three units – LP, ULJ and MA.

It may be possible to reduce the number of specific tasks within the Learner Profile assignment without reducing the impact on the unit as a whole. Thus the assessments could relate to one or two skills, rather than all four as is currently the case, and the 10-hour syllabus could focus on ongoing learning in relation to this (or these) skill(s). This change would be minor and would not alter the essential research and performance characteristics of the unit.

The specification for the ULJ unit could profile the cognitive and affective aspects of language learning more sharply, so that the journals addressed this aspect. This will not limit its impact as a modelling of good practice, and thus furnishing the imagination, impacts which will occur anyway, as they are supported by the focus of the course as a whole, and the demands of TP. This change would also require communication on implementation within courses as to a large extent, the re-balancing of the two parts of the ULJ assignment is a matter of unit implementation rather than unit specification.

The Materials Assignment should have a greater impact in terms of awareness of course books and issues involved in using them. Any change to this unit should focus on connecting the course book evaluation activity on the course with aspects of materials design and use of materials in TP lessons. There are a range of ways in which might be achieved.

- The assessment specification could focus on two different tasks, one focussing on teacher designed material and a rationale in terms of language learning and lessons planning, and the other on using course book materials and adaptation.
- The assessment could be based on the evaluation of one coursebook which was used in TP. The focus of the external assessment could be two tasks, one on evaluation and adaptation of a language focussed teaching point, and one on a language skills point.
- The unit and assessment could be more closely integrated into the TP Journal assessment, with the external assessment focussing on one lesson plan and materials and the overall reflective commentary on the experience of TP.

There has been much discussion of the MA unit (for example, at annual standardisation conferences, and in moderators' reports). This discussion has focussed on achieving a greater clarity of purpose as a unit and as an assessment format. Because this unit is assessed externally, as required by QCA, all changes need to be prepared and presented in conjunction with that organisation. It is recommended therefore that TCL form a working group to review the range of feedback on the MA (including this study) and propose a revised unit and assessment specification.

6. Conclusion

The Cert TESOL is an intensive and intense learning experience, with learning supported by input, observation, interaction and performance. The intensity of the programme has transformative potential, with new teachers illustrating in many ways how they have become members of the TESOL professional community. They are amazed at what they have learnt. They may not have deep and coherent understanding of language learning or high level skills in facilitating this, but they know how things should be. They have furnished imaginations, the basis of a well-stocked repertoire, from observation of and interaction with significant others during the course. In work, they understand the role of the teacher in TESOL as a solo performer, and strive for autonomy in the classroom, as a way of performing this identity and also creating a safe space for ongoing experiential learning. They find the complexities of the language systems and the range of materials available challenging, but they are ready to continue learning. The substantive challenge in terms of teacher learning and consolidating professional identity formation is in ensuring the workplaces provide a balanced regime of support and freedom for new teachers so that they continue their learning in TESOL.

6.1 Some Implications

The TCL Cert TESOL works well as a learning experience for TESOL, but there are opportunities to continue to improve the programme specification and the assessed units. Some changes in the set curriculum might be considered, but many of the desired improvements need to be in the context of implementation. Specific small changes might be considered for the LP and ULJ units, with a more major overhaul, in conjunction with an understanding of QCA requirements for the MA unit. There is room for more changes within workplaces to ensure better support for novice teachers. Here the task is to ensure continuation of the learning and the professional identity formation process in work. One focus might be better guidance in relation to materials. However beyond a recommendation to prospective employers published on its TCL Cert TESOL website, there is very little TCL can do on this front.

6.2 Further Research

This study has created a novel understanding of the TCL Cert TESOL as a learning experience. It is however an initial study, investigating the links between the experience of novice teachers in work and their experience of the TCL Cert TESOL course. The study was carried out over a limited period (the first six months only) and with very limited resources, especially researcher time. There are four immediate ways in which the findings of this study could be taken further. These are outlined here in terms of research purpose and strategy: we can develop more detailed proposals as requested.

- i) A continuation of the current study to track the development in work of novice teachers, with particular attention to coping with TESOL contexts different from the training context

This study would re-establish links with teachers who initially volunteered to take part in the study. This would include teachers interviewed in this study as well as those not in work at that stage, but working in TESOL now. It is not possible to predict how many second year teachers could be recruited, but even if a small number, tracking their professional identity and career development, as they move to a point where they would be considering Diploma study would provide a novel and

much needed account of the impact of initial SLTE. It would also inform TCL on the ways in which their SLTE offer connects with career development in TESOL.

- ii) An investigation of the intensity aspect of the full-time TCL Cert TESOL course, with particular attention to the ways in engenders emotional investment in learning and identity formation;

This study has provided rich accounts of the intensity feature of the TCL Cert TESOL learning experience. A deeper account of this feature, with particular reference to emotional investment and identity formation, could be developed by undertaking a small number of course case studies. This could be undertaken through an interview and document strategy, which developed a day by day account of participating trainees and tutors. The findings of such a study would contribute a better understanding of intensity in teacher learning, and also provide TCL with an evidence base which it could draw on in TCL Cert TESOL curriculum Development.

- iii) An investigation of the 'furnished imagination' concept as a means of understanding the amalgam of knowledge, techniques, strategies and personal insights which novice teachers take from the course into work.

The current study has developed this concept to capture the WHAT of teacher learning: what trainees take from the activities of observation, feedback and discussion, and performance on the course. This could be investigated using interviews with early career teachers in TESOL (teachers with less than 7 years experience post initial qualification). The focus would be on their work, and through interviews, the genesis of the strategies, techniques and insights they value could be linked to initial teacher education courses, experiences in work, materials, etc. As a teacher learning and identity study, this research would be significant for the wider TESOL field, and establish TCL as an innovative funder in this area.

- iv) An investigation of the assessment in Unit 4

In the current study we anticipated using the external assessment results of Unit 4 as a means of categorising the participating teachers in terms of teaching skills strength. For a number of reasons this could not be carried through. One issue is the construct validity of this assessment, carried out by examiners/moderators at the end of each course. The key issue is whether the construct is narrowly on materials design and evaluation, materials as a representative element of a wider teaching methodology construct, or a more general notion of teacher competence for TESOL. There has been very little validation work in the assessment of SLTE (compared to validation work in English Language Proficiency, for example), and such a study would make a significant contribution, and establish TCL as a knowledge leader in this field.

The current research study constitutes a platform from which to develop these further studies. It establishes the TCL Cert TESOL as credible learning, with the potential for profound impact. The data and analysis show that learning is not just a function of course length, and volume of knowledge transmitted. Rather it is about engagement with a new identity, and embarking with a sense of personal belief on a learning trajectory. The course takes trainees on the first stage of this journey, ready for the second stage: the world of work where the learning continues.

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Appendices

1. The study proposal
2. Invitations and consent form
3. Instruments
4. Cert TESOL Standardisation Conference Workshop
5. Published papers (Abstracts)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL
TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON

Principal Investigators	Dr Richard Kiely, UCP Marjon Dr Jim Askham
Investigators' Affiliation	University College St Mark and St John (UCP Marjon)
Contact Investigators' E-mail	R.Kiely@bristol.ac.uk
Contact Investigators' Phone	0117 33 14 350
Project Title	Initial Teacher Training Impact: A study of the impact of Trinity College London Cert TESOL training in early workplace experience
Overall Aim	To understand the ways in which the TCL Cert TESOL has recognised impact and identify how this might be further enhanced
Date of Proposal	7 January 2010 Final version: 25 May 2010
Duration of the Project	12 months
Funding Requested	£15,500

THE PROPOSAL**Statement of issue**

Teachers learn in a range of ways. From initial training, they get techniques and insights into the fundamental structures of professional action. Once in work, the learning continues, and they learn how to adapt and extend newly acquired skills in response to workplace requirements, cultures and conditions. Learning through practice is likely to be deep and transformative, making it difficult to understand the ways in which the initial, pre-work training forms an essential foundation, and to identify ways in enhancing this training as a platform for essential workplace learning. New teachers, in the first six months of professional practice, are a key source of information on the processes of workplace learning and the ways initial training contributes to this. Such studies have proved

illuminative in mainstream foreign language teacher education (for example, Fletcher 2000; Gray 2001) but have not been carried out in the specific context of the short EFL teacher training. Thus, in the context of the TCL Cert TESOL which is an initial profession-entry level qualification, we understand 'impact' as *recognition* of the knowledge and skills learning on the course, and *readiness* to complement that with ongoing situated learning through working in TESOL.

Relevance to Trinity

The TCL Cert TESOL is a widely recognised entry-level professional training course and qualification. It is founded on the insights of practitioners over many decades, and evidence from providers, moderators and assessors suggest that in process terms it is a successful, effective professional induction. Developments led by both TCL and providers in recent years have drawn on evaluations of the course process, that is the experience of trainees as reported during and at the end of courses. Such evaluations can be augmented by evaluation data from new teachers in work contexts, where they can relate their experiences of learning on the TCL Cert TESOL to required practices determined by workplace requirements, cultures and conditions.

The proposed impact study has the potential to establish TCL as a provider which draws on both course evaluation and workplace impact study in the development of its programmes, and which works on an inclusive stakeholder basis in shaping its contribution to the sector more broadly. The involvement in research of stakeholders such as Cert TESOL graduates, course providers and employers holds the promise of a better understanding of foreign language (FL) teaching and teacher learning which meets the needs and expectations of the global English language teaching sector.

Research questions

1. How do teachers in the first months of teaching evaluate the training programme (TCL Cert TESOL) as a preparation for work?
2. What are the specific contributions of the five assessed components of the TCL Cert TESOL?
3. What are the implications for the development of the TCL Cert TESOL, and for the development of new initial teacher training (ITT) programmes?

Design and methodology

Aims of the study

1. To explore these trainees' perspectives on the strengths of the TCL Cert TESOL training programme from the perspective of the requirements of the professional world of work in TESOL;
2. To explore the particular impact of the assessment procedures of the TCL Cert TESOL training course in terms of learning which is relevant to requirements of the professional world of work TESOL;
3. To determine ways of enhancing the quality of the training programme, and of developing the TCL portfolio of offer in language teacher education.

Assumptions

Core assumptions underpinning this study are:

1. The TCL Cert TESOL training constitutes a generic introduction to the knowledge and skills of TESOL which serve as a platform for continuing, situated learning in work contexts.
2. Initial work experience of new teachers is an appropriate context for investigating the effectiveness in terms of professional action of the specific learning areas of the TCL Cert TESOL.
3. The assessed components of the TCL Cert TESOL provide a focus for learning during the course, and are likely to be remembered, and thus, effective data collection points on the overall learning experience from the perspective of work contexts.
4. The training has an important identity component which contributes to a sense of adequacy for the professional role and an impetus for ongoing learning.
5. TESOL work contexts vary in the support they provide for new teachers, and this has an impact on their sense of adequacy and their views of the effectiveness of the initial TESOL training.
6. Individual new teacher factors also affect perceptions of effectiveness of training once in work contexts. Language identity issues such as multilingual user; L2 teacher of English; L2 teacher of English in their own L1 context are particularly important in understanding the transition from formal (Cert TESOL course) to situated learning (work), and perceptions of professional effectiveness in this period.

The literature review included as part of the research in this proposal will investigate the evidence for these assumptions, and the particular orientations this evidence provides for understanding learning and professional impact in an initial teacher training (ITT) context such as the TCL Cert TESOL.

Method

1. Access to existing data (to be further explored with TCL)

Trainees willing to be interviewed

Trainee data sheet

Unit 4 (Materials Assignment) assessment sheet

Final summary from Teaching Practice (TP) journals

2. Telephone Interviews with new teachers in work in the 6 months after completion of ITT

Focus of the interviews:

The learning experience of new teachers

The work experience of new teachers

Strengths of the programme and suggestions for improvement

Structured sections (short answer questions, briefly confirming information in trainee data sheets):

Identity data

- age
- nationality
- first language
- educational experience
- educational qualifications
- prior English teaching experience if any
- prior teaching experience if any
- prior vocational training if any
- preferred locations for teaching after training

TCL Cert TESOL training

- length and intensity of training
- location of training (organisation, city, country)
- number of tutors
- size and composition of training group

Nature of trainees' post training work context

- location of teaching post (organisation, city, country)
- type of learners (level, age, purpose in learning)
- familiarity of teachers with first language of the country
- level of remuneration - comfort of lifestyle

Semi-structured section

Nature of trainees' post training teaching

- amount of materials and resources available to teachers
- amount of academic support available to teachers
- amount of practical support available to teachers
- Working with a mentor
- Value of TCL Cert TESOL assessed units:
 - Teaching Practice (TP)
 - Language Awareness (LA)
 - Unknown Language Journal (ULJ)
 - Materials Assignment (MA)
 - Learner Profile (LP)
- Suggestions for additional input or other improvements in ITT courses such as Cert TESOL

Procedure

1. We develop with TCL and course providers a way of identifying potential participants. One approach is a two-stage consent procedure and participant roles for TCL Cert TESOL providers and TCL administration.
2. The consent involves trainees agreeing on the basis of an initial information sheet to provide some Cert TESOL assessment data and contact details in order to have the option of participating in the study once in a TESOL work context. Then the research team will contact selected teachers to secure agreement for participation in the study.
3. A prepared research project data sheet circulated and explained towards the end of each course where the provider has agreed in principle to participate in this impact study. This sheet will have spaces for names, emails and telephones of trainees willing to be contacted to be invited to participate in an interview survey study when they are in TESOL work in the 6-month period following completion of training. The Centres have a key role here.
4. TCL, on receiving list from centres, will select approximately 9-12 trainees per month from different centres to ensure geographical spread, and representing low-, mid- and high- achieving categories using Unit 4 grade profile:
 - Low- achieving: 8-10 points
 - Mid-achieving: 11-12 points
 - High-achieving: 13-14 points
5. The lists will be made available to the research team who will contact all TCL-identified trainees with a view to collecting data from 30 in all. This may involve trainees over four months, say, June-September, or five (June – October)
6. The preferred mode of data collection is telephone or Skype interviews. Where the respondent would prefer to respond to an email, or use email in addition to telephone, that option will be provided.
7. Second interviews will take place between 4 and 8 weeks after the first. The purpose here is to clarify points in the first interview, and draw on teacher reflections stimulated by the process of the first interview.
8. Each interview will be audio-recorded where possible, and recorded by hand written notes, typed up and constructed, that is, organised according to informant and theme, as a qualitative database.
9. We envisage gathering data from 30 teachers in work.

Project schedule (including interim reports)

Month 1: Agree procedures with TCL for contacts with providers and trainees

Months 2-6: Data collection and construction; literature review

Month 6: Interim report to TCL on data collection phase

Months 6-9: Final stages of data collection; data analysis and report drafting

Month 9: Draft report to TCL

Months 10-12: Liaison with TCL on development of final report. This may include a workshop with TCL Cert TESOL development team, and development of joint conference presentations and academic papers with TCL stakeholders.

Month 12: Final report to TCL

APPENDIX 2a

Dear Cert TESOL Provider

We are working with the TESOL section of Trinity College London to carry out an impact study of the TCL Cert TESOL as an entry-level professional qualification. Our overall aim is to understand which teacher learning experience of the TCL Cert TESOL contribute to teaching skills, confidence and continuing learning.

The specific aims of the study are:

To explore these trainees' perspectives on the strengths of the TCL Cert TESOL training programme from the perspective of the requirements of the professional world of work in TESOL;

- 1. To explore the particular impact of the assessment procedures of the TCL Cert TESOL training course in terms of learning which is relevant to requirements of the professional world of work TESOL;*
- 2. To determine ways of enhancing the quality of the training programme, and of developing the TCL portfolio of offer in language teacher education.*

This study is not an evaluation of any particular centre. Data on specific centres and tutors will not be explored in interviews. The focus will be on the TCL required course units, and the learning experience of trainees working on these.

We will carry out this study using in-depth telephone interviews with recently qualified TCL Cert TESOL holders. We would like to help us recruit these teachers, by handing out and collecting in the attached data sheets, and by encouraging participation by those who expect to start work as teachers soon after the completion of the course.

We would be grateful if you could:

Print of the attached trainee sheet so that each trainee has one;

Encourage trainees who expect to take up work in TESOL after the course to complete the sheet;

Inform trainees that participation in this study will have no impact of Cert TESOL assessment (the moderator, for example, will not even know teachers are being invited to participate in the study);

Collect in the sheets at a specific time at the end of the course, for example, the day before moderation;

Return them with TP Journal summary forms or reflections to Martha at TCL.

Please contact R.Kiely@bristol.ac.uk if you have any queries. Thanks in advance for your assistance with this impact study.

Richard Kiely

(Consultant/ researcher)

Jim Askham

(consultant /researcher)

Invitation to Cert TESOL Trainees to participate in a TCL Cert TESOL impact study (TCTIS)

We are working with the TESOL section of Trinity College London to carry out an impact study of the TCL Cert TESOL as an entry-level professional qualification. Our overall aim is to understand the ways in which the learning experiences of the TCL Cert TESOL contribute to teaching skills, confidence and continuing learning as a TESOL professional. Your experience, on the TCL Cert TESOL and later in work, are central in this task, and very important for the ongoing development of the course.

We invite you to:

participate in two interviews (by telephone, Skype or email) in the months after completing the TCL Cert TESOL programme.

give us access to your TP Journal summary / reflection, and your Unit 4 assessment form.

We will get in touch after some weeks to finalise arrangements for participation. If this is possible, we will carry out two audio-recorded interviews, 4-8 weeks apart on your experience of working as an English teacher post TCL Cert TESOL.

We will pay £50 to those who participate fully as recognition of the important contribution this research and your part in it this study can make to the ongoing development of the course.

Your identity, and that of your workplace and your TCL Cert TESOL centre will be anonymised in all datasets. We invite you to volunteer, by providing your details below, and passing the form to the course leader

Name:

Telephone (mobile):

Email:

Work plans (brief summary):

I consent to participation in TCTIS, including researcher access to my TP Journal summary / reflection and Unit 4 assessment form. .

Signed:

Date:

Please contact R.Kiely@bristol.ac.uk if you have any queries. Thanks in advance for your willingness to participate in TCTIS.

Richard Kiely

(Consultant/ researcher)

Jim Askham

(Consultant /researcher)

APPENDIX 3a

Telephone Interviews with new teachers in work : Detailed procedure for Interview 1

Focus of the interviews:

The learning experience of new teachers

The work experience of new teachers

Strengths of the programme and suggestions for improvement

Identity data

Complete by hand: 15 minutes

Name					
age	<2 0	20 - 29	30- 39	40- 49	50+
nationality	British		Other:		
first language	English		Other:		
educational qualifications	No HE		First degree		PG degree
prior English teaching experience if any	No		Yes - duration		
prior teaching experience if any					
prior vocational training if any	No professional qualification		Professional qualification in 		

		
preferred locations for teaching after training	UK	Other:	
<i>TCL Cert TESOL training</i>			
length and intensity of training	FT – No of weeks:	PT – No of weeks:	
number of tutors	Input	Observation and TP	
size and composition of training group	Number of trainees:	An comments on peer support	
<i>Nature of trainees' post training work context</i>			
Number of weeks in work already	<2	2-6	6+
location of teaching post	Organisation:	City:	Country:
Likely duration	Permanent	> 6 months	< 6 months
Language of context	Fluent	Basic	Non-user
Type of learner	level	age	purpose
Pay	Well-paid	OK	Poorly-paid

Semi-structured section: 20-25 minutes

Nature of trainees' post training teaching- invite comments on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of materials and resources available to teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prescribed course book ○ opportunities to design own materials 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of academic support available to teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ help with lesson planning ○ help with materials ○ help with classroom management ○ extent t which help is needed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scheduled meetings ○ Help on demand 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of TCL Cert TESOL assessed units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teaching Practice (TP) ○ Language Awareness (LA) ○ Unknown Language Journal (ULJ) ○ Materials Assignment (MA) ○ Learner Profile (LP) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges experienced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Language analysis in planning and in the classroom ○ Teacher Talking Time ○ Lesson planning, deciding on materials and activities ○ Using coursebooks 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggestions for additional input or other improvements in ITT courses such as Cert TESOL<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What would have been really useful in the course○ What has not really been helpful	
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APPENDIX 3b

Detailed procedure for Interview 2

TCTIS

Second interview

1. Opening
 - How is work going?
 - How has it changed over recent months (planning; use of c/books; guidance/mentoring/training/performance management);
 - Prospects (career engagement; match with expectations)

2. The TCL Cert TESOL units and their impact (cue one by one)
 - Teaching Practice (TP)
 - Language Awareness (LA)
 - Unknown Language Journal (ULJ)
 - Materials Assignment (MA)
 - Learner Profile (LP)
 - Suggestions for additional input or other improvements in ITT courses such as Cert TESOL

3. Anything to add (how to get paid – email Martha Preston)

APPENDIX 4

Trinity College London
Cert TESOL Moderators' Conference
Brighton February 2011
Workshop

In small groups read through the comments below and discuss which Cert TESOL unit (1-5) each is talking about.

Please write notes on what led to your conclusion, that is, why you felt the unit being referred to was clear to you.

Comment	Participant (A-E)	Unit
1. I didn't get it, I struggled with it, it just wouldn't stay in my mind.		
2. I enjoyed it, it was tough, pulling everything together, so much to analyse and report on.		
3. I thought I should try different things, and [...] recognize what was good and bad, not that I had to play it safe all the time.		
4. I was quite horrified by it, and then I came out with an A in the exam.		
5. One of the more tedious parts of the course.		
6. I was sceptical at the start , but I learnt lots of things which I am applying in my own teaching now.		
7. I just felt tired of all the paperwork.		
8. It gave a false pretence that you have to be incredibly creative in your lessons.		
9. Extremely valuable [...] I learnt a massive amount in this part of the course.		

10. I really enjoyed it. I thought at the start. I would feel intimidated, but then I did not even think about that.		
11. It kind of fell by the wayside when we were going through everything else on the course.		
12. I found it extremely uncomfortable and difficult [...] I think it helps me empathise with the weaker students more.		
13. I've been a writer for several years [...] I was quite surprised by what I didn't know .		
14. You weren't just hammered, you know. It was done professionally, and it was supportive and encouraging.		
15. The percentage of the overall mark was quite low for the amount of work that went into it.		
16. Of all the assignments, the one that's probably the most expendable.		
17. It's a continuous learning thing, you can't learn this stuff in a month.		
18. A teacher in action , I picked up a lot of tips from that.		
19. I thought maybe it was a little bit rushed [...] if they'd taught 75% of the content that they did in each hour, it would have seeped in a lot more		
20. It was fun at the time, but I don't think I took anything at all away from it.		

IATEFL 2011 Brighton

Early Days: the experience of newly qualified teachers

Professor Richard Kiely

Dr Jim Askham

This paper reports on an impact study of a short initial teacher training programme in TESOL. The focus is the ways in which the teacher training and learning activities within the programme shape practice as a teacher. The data is primarily drawn from telephone interviews with newly-qualified teachers in TESOL work around the world.

This paper reports on an impact study of a short initial teacher training programme in TESOL. The focus is the ways in which the teacher training and learning activities within the programme shape practice as a teacher. The study has been funded by and carried out with the support of Trinity College London, the awarding body for the programme which was the focus of this study. It has involved recruiting newly-qualified teachers at the end of the TCL Cert TESOL course who expect to be in work soon after. The research draws on data from two main sources: telephone interviews with new teachers in work in the first weeks of employment, and again after one or two months, and documentation on their performance in the teaching practice component of the programme. The telephone interviews explored the experience of working in TESOL, how this is shaped by the teacher training programme, and how this combines with and is supported by situated, workplace learning in the TESOL work context. In this presentation, I describe the challenges of the research design and methodology, key features of the early work experience of the newly-qualified teachers, and emerging implications for initial teacher training course designers and for those in professional contexts who support newly-qualified teachers.

APPENDIX 5b

British Association of Applied Linguistics

Language Learning and Teaching Special Interest Group

University of Aston, July 2011

The performance of silence: novice English language teachers and their Teacher Talking Time

Richard Kiely, Centre for International language Teacher Education, UCP Marjon

Jim Askham, University of Leicester

This paper examines how novice teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) learn to talk less in the classroom. It draws on data from an impact study (funded by a grant from Trinity College London Research Programme) of an initial teacher education programme which documented the experience of 27 newly-qualified teachers during the first month of work in the TESOL sector. The data included documentation on their experience of the programme, a telephone interview 4-8 weeks after starting work, and a second interview 12-20 weeks after that.

A key theme in the data on their classroom performance in work is the issue of teacher talking time. It remained a resonant message from the training experience, and a performance criterion which allowed the teachers to assess how well they were doing. They consider the performance of silence in this way as the mark of the TESOL professional. The perspectives of these teachers allow us to understand teacher learning in this context as identity formation, supported by situated learning. In their training programme experience, they observe teachers who facilitate rather than instruct, and use gestures and other visual prompts to get students to speak and interact. These observations furnish the imagination, guide reflection and self-assessment, and sustain a notion of professional identity and membership of a community of TESOL practice, even when the practice (in their workplace classrooms) is isolated, tentative, and uncertain. One outcome of this is an understanding of teacher talking time as a sensitively -interpreted concept for reflection and self-evaluation, rather than as a methodological principle for the objective evaluation of lessons and teaching.

APPENDIX 5c

Abstract accepted and full article invited for special issue (Ed. T.S.C. Farrell) of TESOL Q

Furnished imagination: the impact of pre-service teacher training on early career work in TESOL

Richard Kiely & Jim Askham

This paper presents the findings of an impact study of a short teacher training course in TESOL. Impact is conceptualised as teacher learning, particularly perceived achievements in learning, and professional identity formation, evidenced in the ways teachers talk about their approaches to work in classrooms and courses. The theoretical framework for the research draws on sociocultural theories of learning, particularly the situated learning theory of Lave and Wenger (1991) and identity formation within communities of practice (Wenger 1998). In making these links and linking them to a specific programme for teachers in TESOL, a programme which has traditionally drawn on trainee evaluations reported during and at the end of courses, this paper furthers our understanding of how teachers learn in a pre-service course in ways which translate to competence, confidence and readiness for ongoing learning in work contexts.

The programme is a short intensive course in TESOL, normally taught over four weeks. The curriculum has five separate assessed components: a practicum which includes classroom and video observation, a course in pedagogical language analysis, mainly grammar and phonology, a study of an individual learner which includes assessment activities, teaching a one-to-one lesson and planning for ten hours of further lessons, a new foreign language learning experience, and a materials development project. We tracked 27 successful graduates of this programme during the early stages of work in six countries in Europe and Asia. We interviewed each teacher in the first 3 months of work and again during months 4-6. The focus of the semi-structured interviews was the learning experience of the teacher training course, and the experience of working as a new teacher in TESOL.

The analysis of the interview data reflects a positive and intense learning experience on the course, which establishes both confidence and a clear idea of what the TESOL task involves. The new teachers had a capacity to relate specific learning experience in the course components to often different contexts of work. The assessment of learning achievement is strongest where they consider the component as well organised and taught.

We relate these findings in the data to two specific aspects of socio-cultural theories of situated learning. First, they recognise the value of the tutors on the course – the trainers who support the practicum, provide input on language systems and teach the new foreign language module are also teachers observed in language classrooms. As ‘significant others’ they guide, provide feedback and demonstrate the practices which are at the heart of the curriculum. This in turn establishes a rich, integrated learning experience. Second, the impact of this experience is a furnished imagination: the teachers know what is possible and what is required in TESOL. The skills to realise these practices in TESOL may not be in place, or be tentative and insecure, but they have the imagination to guide their work as teachers and ongoing learning. These two focal points illustrate how the teacher learning evidenced in this study corresponds to a process of professional identity formation, with the new teachers relating strategically to the personal intellectual and social dimensions of TESOL.