

English Language Teacher Education Provision and Needs in Palestinian Universities

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1. Aims

This report aims to document the variety of pre-service English Language Teacher Training (ELTT) provided by the ten major universities in the West Bank and Gaza. This should enable the British Council, and others involved in education to understand the English Language Teaching (ELT) and ELTT needs of universities and the Palestinian graduate labour market.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) policies affecting university English requirements, and pre-service course standards required for Palestinian English school teachers to enter the profession are also summarised. Where relevant, other stakeholders' policies and programmes which affect ELT in higher education (HE) and pre-service ELTT in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) is described.

This information was gathered using desk-research, through email, and phone conversations. Each university that provides education to English teachers was contacted directly. The volume and detail of information gathered varied from university to university. Each summary has been presented for respondent validation (Bayliss, 2007).

2. List of universities covered in report

- a) Al-Aqsa University, Gaza
- b) The Arab American University Jenin
- c) Al-Azhar University, Gaza
- d) Bethlehem University
- e) Birzeit University
- f) Hebron University
- g) An-Najah National University
- h) Al-Quds university
- i) Al-Quds Open University

3. Overview of English Language Education in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza)

3a. Summary

Education in Palestine is compulsory for all children explaining the 95% literacy rates. Students must study from grade one (six years old) to ten (16 years old) in one of the 2,652 schools in the country (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). English language is a part of every student's schooling and since 2000 has been on the school curriculum from grade one to twelve. Apart from select private schools, all state and UNRWA schools (90% of the providers) prepare their students for the *Tawjihi* exam (usually taken at grade 12), in which there is an English component grammar, vocabulary comprehension, writing and reading.

Universities have varying requirements for students' level of English. Generally students in higher education contexts take *English 101*, and *English 102* in their initial years, unless they can prove their competence, an exam score or other may exempt them. 101 and 102 are the English classes, taken by the vast majority of university students.

At some universities there is a growing tendency for certain courses to have English as the medium of instruction and this is not restricted to the English literature, language and translation courses. For example business courses may have English language text books, lectures, or writing components.

At some UNRWA vocational training centres and Polytechnics there is an ESP focus. For example English for Engineering is taught at the Palestinian Technical University, and a wide variety of ESP courses are delivered at UNRWA vocational training centres.

ELT PROVISION OVERVIEW STATS

	Starting Grade	Number of taught hours per week	ELT assessment
Primary	Grades 1- 3 (UNRWA)	3	Course work, a midterm and a final exam in each semester
	Grades 1-3 (MoE)	4	
	Grade 4-6	4	National Exam in fourth and fifth grade
Secondary	Grade 7- 10	5	
Secondary	Grade 11 - 12	6	Course work, a midterm and a final exam in each semester for grade 11 End of year exam Grade 12 (Tawjihi)
Tertiary English depts	1 – 4 years 1 – 4 years	18 <i>Credit hrs</i> 18 <i>Credit hrs</i>	Course work, a midterm and a final exam in each semester*
Tertiary other depts	1st year	3-9 <i>Credit hrs</i>	Course work, a midterm and a final exam in each semester*

*Varies between courses and tertiary institutions.

3b. Current state of the Teaching profession with an ELT focus

Schools commonly have 2 - 2.5 English teachers in Palestine, with one teacher working another 'half timetable' in a second school. These ELTs often work within a certain age group either with grades 1-5, 6-10, or 11-12, though some teach a wider range of grades. However, reforms are planned for the teaching profession as a whole.

There is no current consensus on the minimum qualifications needed to be able to work as a teacher at specific school levels or for teaching different subjects.... The current situation does not encourage students to enrol in teacher education programs because there is no great weight given to such programs in the process of appointing new teachers. (2% at the Ministry of Education and 4% at UNRWA schools in the West Bank). The rest of the weight goes to experience, subject matter knowledge, and knowledge of education. All these are measured by an entrance exam in addition to other considerations such as the personality, which is evaluated in a personal interview. (MOEHE, 2008, p18)

The current lack of common standards means that English Language teachers may enter the profession with a wide variety of qualifications, linguistic competence, and classroom experience. One route to the teaching profession is to do either a BA or MA degree in English literature and translation, sometimes followed by later diploma study in Education, others qualify into the profession via a BA in Education.

Those who study education majors do not usually have a grasp of Language Teaching (LT) methodology specifically, having studied only general education theory. As Arabic is usually the medium of instruction in Education programmes, their graduates often do not develop the linguistic competence of the ELTs who graduate from them. The language competency of English teachers has not been assessed in studies but can be seen to vary, approximately between Basic A2 to Proficient C2 in CEFR terms. Teachers with better qualifications and proficiency usually teach Tawjihi (grade 12) and the other higher grades, while those with less language competence are usually given lower grades (though there are exceptions to this competency/level distinction).

There are large differences in teacher education curricula in higher education institutions.....There is also a big difference in the total number of “practice teaching” hours required, that is in field experiences at schools. The time spent at schools is very limited in some programs and in many cases, the experience taken from such practical training is not useful due to a lack of cooperation from the schools and teachers, or even because the cooperating teachers are not qualified themselves. (ibid, p20)

This report is able to show that the number of hours of ‘practicum’ varies between institutions from minimal, discreet, micro teaching to peers, as part of modules in TEFL, or advanced TEFL to 500 classroom hours of teaching and observation. However, the quality of this experience, and the support given to trainee teachers doing on the job training is unclear, nor the focus of this report.

All of the work being done is in an attempt to remedy a profession. The percentage of teachers ‘qualified’ is estimated at being around 30-40%. The thousands of teachers who are currently ‘unlicensed’ are the focus of the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession (CDTP) and work is already underway in this regard. The in-service work on assisting under qualified teachers is being paralleled by the universities who will be required to meet new targets on their pre-service teacher education courses. Adding to this complex development mix is high unemployment, 16.9% for the West Bank and 37.4% for Gaza (World Bank, April 2011) which makes competition for all jobs fierce.

3c.MoEHE requirements for pre-service training for teachers

“There are no clear and explicit standards for new teachers.” (ibid, p31)

With the current oversupply of teachers, there is an opportunity to improve standards. Several plans and strategies are in place. There is the Teacher Education Strategy in Education (TESE) which is being overseen by the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession (CDTP). It is hoped that this and other agencies will improve standards and subsequently the status of the teachers.

The CDTP is responsible for setting minimum standards for the teaching profession. This applies to all teachers, those joining and those in schools currently. For a long period of time, teaching has been seen as a job, it is the desire of this agency to have teaching viewed as a *profession again*. In order to

do this under-qualified teachers are being asked to improve their skills to meet Professional Teacher Standards (PTS) before 2013/14 with a view to teachers joining the profession from 2014/15 needing to meet New Teacher Standards (NTS).

The MoEHE as part of the Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine set out its vision for minimum pre-service teacher training, which includes:

- 125-144 credit hours of study
- 180 hours of field experience (Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine, 2008).
- Standard Teacher Education Curriculum
- Certain knowledge and understanding statements: e.g. *has knowledge of students' circumstances and ways of dealing with these*
- Professional skills: e.g. *has the ability to prepare clear, applicable teaching plans*
- Values standards: e.g. *reflect on his /her professional practices in order to respond to his / her professional needs* (MOEHE, 2010).

These above statements are for educators generally. University education programmes will be required to map their courses to meet these statements. This process of linking NTS to accredited institutions will be implemented by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC). Intended learning outcomes will need to be produced for each course of study, reflecting the difference between science teaching, and language education, for example.

For teachers to be licensed they will need to take either a subject specialist pathway or a general education pathway. The former will enable them to teach at upper-basic or higher level and entails getting a BA Degree + a diploma in education. The alternative is to take a BA Education which will enable a teacher to work in the primary sector. The pathways to the profession are detailed in Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine (MOEHE, 2008). This will, in theory at least, prevent English BA literature students from directly accessing teaching jobs upon graduation.

3d. Partners and programmes linked to ELT training

The World Bank focus has been on the discrepancy between employers' needs and education provision:

Key complaints from businesses against the current system of education in WB&G concern its relevance to modern demands of the workforce . According to the private sector, most topics are taught at education institutions through traditional methods of lectures, memorization, and examinations, with less emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on learning experiences. On the other hand, English is taught widely and comprehensively throughout the West Bank, equipping young Palestinians with a critical advantage for future work in an information-based economy.

(World Bank, 2011a, p.21)

They further note that significant links need to be forged between employers and universities, to overcome the serious issue of unemployment in OPTs which is 22% (UNDP, 2011). The September [report](#) mentions \$11million, to date, supporting the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF). Teacher education is very much a priority.

To further promote human capital investment through the education sector, and in the context of the Teacher Education Strategy and the MoEHE Five Year Development and Strategic Plan, the PA has emphasized the importance of pre-service, in-service, and general teacher training, and of improvements in the quality and relevance of education.

(World Bank, 2011b, p.29)

[QIF](#) (quality improvement fund) is a World Bank initiative that supports a number of pre-service teacher education projects. Each tertiary education unit in Palestine is expected to have a quality unit working on the reforms and standards. There are English faculty members involved in these discussions. An- Najah is the lead university for Social Sciences & English in the QIF project, in partnership with Hebron & Al Quds, who are leads for different fields. Staff from non-partner universities: Bethlehem, Birzeit & AAU go to An Najah for training. Canterbury University Education faculty supports on curriculum development, led by Tony Mahon and Sue Kendall-Seatter.

[Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission \(ACQA\)](#)

ACQA is a key stakeholder in the reform of Palestine's tertiary education institutions. It is their role to monitor the new teacher programmes, as they are the body which accredits universities.

[Centre for Developing the Teaching Profession](#)

CDTP is the key agency involved in the current reforms. They have been supported by UNESCO funding and have put together a database of teachers. From this database they are targeting training and delivering in-service training. The standards they have drafted are being implemented across OPTs. The remit for the CDTP runs until 2015.

[Amideast](#)

They have been involved in a number of teacher education projects including: a Palestinian Faculty Development Programme, which provided some teacher training in association with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). They also supported the Model Schools Network Programme (MSN), worked with 17 private schools initially, and then 40 state schools to act as demonstration schools, for basic education in OPTs. Funding for this was provided by USAid and some of the MSN programme (due to close this year anyway, but not extended) and other USAid projects have been cut following Palestine's recent acceptance to UNESCO.

[Qattan foundation](#)

The Qattan Foundation in Ramallah provides a number of services including a library for access to students, teachers, and researchers. It holds teacher education. As part of their current work they are running a drama in education project with teachers, encouraging them to bring drama to their classrooms.

[UNRWA](#)

UNRWA provides schooling to around one sixth of school students in the West Bank, and at least a third of school students in Gaza. It operates 700 institutions throughout the middle-east that cater to the needs of Palestinian refugees. Education is their largest programme. They provide vocational training, secondary and primary education. They have just begun an English language teacher education programme in Ramallah Men's Training centre (RMTC).

[Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre](#)

Although their website hasn't been updated since 2006, the PCDC has been a key player in recent reforms. These achievements include the publishing of new textbooks, including *English for Palestine, syllabus and coursebooks* which were produced in partnership with Macmillan publishers. In 2008 Macmillan Education and the Palestinian Curriculum Development Committee invited Simon Greenall, Scott Thornbury and Adrian Underhill to review curriculum reform, and their work included classroom observations and conversations with teachers, resulting in a report on textbooks, teacher training, curriculum and exams. Their recommendations for revisions are being incorporated in the

revised second edition of these books, with grades 1 to 4 entering use in Autumn 2011. Revised books for the remaining grades are planned to enter use over the coming four years.

4. Current English Language Teacher Training Provision by university

Each university that teaches English language teachers was contacted and asked to reply to the same set of questions, see below. Not all universities gave complete replies, and material considered irrelevant has been disregarded.

Facts and Figures

1. Which faculties / units / departments are involved in providing training to potential English language teachers at your university?
2. Which departments / faculties / units are involved in English Language Teaching and English language teacher training?
3. What is the current number of English Language teacher trainers in your unit / faculties/ departments / university?
4. What is the approximate number of students per academic per year in the department / unit / faculty taking *English as a main subject*, or are *English language teacher trainees*? (Please specify which)

Current pre-service provision for English Language Teacher Training to prospective English teachers

1. Which modules / courses that you offer are directly linked to English language teacher education (not Shakespeare, for example)? Please note course title and brief outline of course, if possible.
2. How many hours of supervised-teaching (trainees teaching under supervision) are included in your English language teacher training offer?
3. How many hours of classroom observation do potential teachers do as part of your courses?

Inter-university links

1. What are the inter-university structures? Shared people? Resources? (This may be international links e.g. a joint programmes between Al-quds, and Berkley University, in ELT teaching, or intra-nationally – Hebron University teachers working with the Palestinian Polytechnic on ELT training).
2. What are the main employment destinations of students from English language / teacher education departments?

4 a. Al-Aqsa University

As part of this Gaza University's English programme they have a *Teaching English as a Foreign Language Course*. It is described as:

a theoretical introduction to teaching English language as a foreign language Course students are expected to learn methods and techniques of teaching it through activities and group practices. Emphasis is laid upon pronunciation, vocabulary, reading and mastering all basic skills related to teaching English language as a foreign language.

4 b. The Arab American University Jenin

The AAUJ the Modern Languages Department in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is one of the few universities in Palestine offering **a full TEFL track** for undergraduates. This will close in line with the new National Teaching Strategies in 2013/14. There are two full time teachers on this course. The number of TEFL track students averages around 25 out of an average intake of 100 for English Majors. The other 75 students opt for the translation track. 27 credit hours of TEFL specific courses are available:

- **Introduction to Teaching English as a Foreign Language**
- **Theories and Methods of Teaching a Foreign Language**
- **Educational Technology**
- **Teaching Young Learners**
- **Evaluation and Testing**
- **Communicative Language Teaching and Materials Development**
- **Pedagogical Grammar**
- **Practicum**

It is noteworthy that students on the TEFL track train for a minimum of eight weeks (three days a week) at two different schools (private, public or UNRWA) during the spring semester of their senior

year after completing a minimum of 100 credit hours and the prerequisites specified in the curriculum. Each student is visited twice on site by an AAUJ Practicum supervisor, who also provides feedback to the student on site and at the university. The classroom teacher also completes two formal observation reports.

AAUJ has informal links in TEFL with Birzeit, Bethlehem and Nablus universities, and more formal links with the four Education Directorates in which trainees are placed. These are: Qabatia, Jenin, Tubas, and Tulkarem. In addition to this AAUJ has a leading role in the QIF ELT curriculum reform being undertaken with An-Najah, other universities with University of Canterbury, UK involvement.

The majority of the students take up teaching posts (primary or secondary) in government and private schools (employment opportunities permitting). Some students provide tuition, either formally, through an established centre, or privately in their homes. Other graduates move abroad and take up teaching posts, while a few go into industry, public relations and administration.

4 c. Al-Azhar University

The Department of English of Al-Azhar University, Gaza's Faculty of Arts offers courses in English language covering content such as linguistics, grammar, and phonetics. The Faculty of Education offers two courses in language teaching methodology: Methodology (1) which covers the history of the most traditional methods of teaching English, and Methodology (2) which covers more recent methods of teaching English such as the communicative approach and task-based learning as well as integrating ICT. Generally, these courses are lecture based rather than demonstrations of the approaches, though some micro-teaching by students does take place.

The faculty of Education is also involved in providing English Language Teacher Training (ELTT) via teaching practice which is a 3 credit hour module, where future teachers of English go to Gaza schools to practice and observe their possible future profession. Students observe host teachers for at least one week (10 English classes) as part of the teaching practice before going on to teach the classes under supervision.

The courses at Al-Azhar are run by two trainers who hold PhD degrees in TESOL and Teaching Methodology. They deliver educational programmes to 100-120 students (both female (50-70) and male (40-50) in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts each year and an additional 110-130 students (both females (70-80) and males (30-50) join the Department of English, Faculty of

Education. Those students major in two sections: Primary School Teacher of English and Secondary School Teacher of English. Most graduates become teachers of English at local governmental and UNRWA schools. Some alumni may work as administrators at NGOs while others go on to work as translators or in the media.

Due to travel issues in and out of Gaza, links are generally found with other universities in the Gaza strip, but ELT trainees are also linked by research projects conducted with, or at other West Bank universities.

4 d. Bethlehem University

At Bethlehem University the Faculty of Education in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts are involved in ELTT. The Faculty of Education offers a BA degree program called: **Bachelor of Education** with the option of majoring in **Teaching English**. Currently the number of students in this program is 82, of whom 15-20 graduates per year specialise in teaching English. There are 60 hours of observation, out of 360 teaching practice hours that take place over 4 practicum courses in schools..

Most of the 15 - 20 ELT specialists go on to work in public, private and UNRWA schools from grade 5-10.

Their course's pathway includes the following modules:

- English Writing Skills I
- English Writing Skills II
- Oral Communication Skills
- English Grammar
- Teaching Listening and Speaking
- Topics in Prof. Self-Development
- Introduction to Linguistics
- Teaching Reading, Writing and Grammar
- Second Language Acquisition
- Advanced Oral Communication
- Testing
- Psych. of Teach. and Learning
- Foundations of Education
- English Language Skills I
- English Language Skills II
- Measurement and Evaluation
- Initial School Experience
- Guidance and Counseling
- Instructional Materials
- Gen. Methods Grades 5-10
- Research Methods I
- Research Methods II
- Participating in Teaching
- Classroom Observation
- Teaching in Schools
- E-learning in Education

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- Prose Fiction
 - Educational Psychology
 - Special Teach. Methods Grades 5-10
 - Teaching Literature
 - English Literature
 - Literature of the Modern Period and the Post Modern Period

4 e. Birzeit University

At Birzeit University, all students take an English Language placement test which is used to stream students according to their performance. The faculty of arts, department of language and translation, which is a service department, delivers English courses to all university students regardless of their field of study. It offers four levels namely 101, 102, 141 and 231. Also there is a writing centre that assists students in advancing their English Language proficiency. English 101 and 102 use New Headway coursebooks, whereas English communications courses (141 and 231) use Making Connections. Other courses offered include ESP areas English for Journalism, Current affairs, Business, Law, Media, and Pharmacy.

In their English major programmes (offered from the department of English Language and Literature) they offer a major programme with a minor in Translation. One hundred students were accepted this academic year (2011). Typically, a quarter of the intake onto the English programme goes onto take their teaching diploma (provided by the education department). This combination of English degree + diploma takes around four–five years.

The education diploma offered by the faculty of education, is comprised of 60% general education and 40% ELT / subject specifics. These include: two methodology courses, input on assessment, psychology and two practicum courses where they are visited in the classroom by their university tutors.

It is currently possible to study for an MA in Education and TEFL here.

4 f. Hebron University

The English Department in the faculty of Arts at Hebron University is involved in English language teacher training. The department currently offers three pathways: English Language and Literature (aprox 80 students per year), English Language - Teaching Methods (approx 60 students per year. 90% go on to be teachers), English language/ Minor in French (around 25 students per year).

The English Language Teaching Methods programme is offered in the Faculty of Education. The instructors who are involved in this programme are said to be 'on loan' from the English Department, Faculty of Arts.

The TEFL track consists of these courses:

- TEFL Methods
- Methods of research writing
- Language testing and evaluation
- Classroom interaction
- Teaching English to young learners
- Materials development
- Syllabus design
- Advanced TEFL
- Inquiry methods in the EFL classroom
- Practical phonetics
- Second language acquisition
- Language planning (explores issues related to the political, economic, and social dimensions of the ELT profession, including foreign aid and interventions.)

There is some micro teaching done as part of advanced TEFL, and other courses, but not extensively, and not always in 'real' classes. Practicum is done through the Teaching methods course at the faculty of education.

Hebron University has frequent British Council contacts and courses, including TKT, and more recently classroom language. AMIDEAST provides training, and there are links with the French cultural centres who have opened a language centre / computer lab in the university.

4 g. An-Najah National University

An-Najah is a major player in higher Education in Palestine. Two faculties at An-Najah teach English, and ELTTs: in the faculty of Arts the English Department and language centre, and in the Faculty of Education the Curriculum and instruction Department. There are around 30 ELTTs / year, and 50 English majors.

Training to pre-service English teachers is provided by 4 trainers from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. In collaboration with MoEHE the department delivers in service training for teachers.

The key pedagogical courses offered to ELTTs are:

- Methods of teaching English Language I & II
- Current issues in Teaching English
- Practical Training in English Language (involves peer teaching and lesson critique)
- English learning
- Design and production of education aids for teaching English
- 200 hrs of observation / practice teaching.

An-Najah also has a **languages Centre** - a 'services unit' which provides English 100, 101 & 102 ('48 hours' each) for all ANU students. Students take a proficiency test - if they pass at 80% or above, there are exempt from English 101. If below 50% students must do English **100**, then take the exam again. The language centre also offers support and ESP courses.

The national university has a number of interesting centres, and departments of relevance. The curriculum and Instruction Department holds six teacher education programs, among them is the **English Teaching Methods program**.

The Centre for teaching & learning excellence - another part of AN, though on a new campus, was setup by A-mideast. Its focus is on:

- Assessment
- Active learning/ critical thinking
- Problem based learning
- E-learning/ Blended learning

They have links to a number of foreign institutions and work closely with the MoEHE and CDTP.

4h. Al-Quds University

Al-Quds University is based on two main campuses in Jerusalem. 14 English language teachers work in the English Department and Language Centre. The intake for the English department per academic year is around 100 students.

The courses linked to ELTT are below; the other 57 credit hours are more general in their nature.

- Applied Linguistics and Teaching Methodology (*This is an advanced course for advanced undergraduate students, providing opportunities to utilize findings in linguistic research and theory to solve problems related to different areas of language learning and teaching especially vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking and pronunciation, and reading.*)
- Advanced Grammar (*Using what students have previously learned, the course goes beyond traditional grammatical information in order to provide a cognitively based approach that prepares them for course in syntax, transformational grammar and applied linguistics, as well as the future demands of classroom teaching that require explication of language and usage*)

There is a limited amount of practicum on these courses, in the Applied Linguistics course students are supervised by a tutor to do some micro-teaching. Students do their own observations in actual classroom for about 20-50 hours per semester. It is not clear to the author how this is organised.

The English Department has ties with Hebron University, An-Najah University, and Canterbury Christchurch University in UK. AQU has recently begun cooperating with Bard college to offer a blended learning English language medium Master's course: Master of Arts in Teaching ([MAT](#)) programme which was inaugurated in 2004.

4i. Al-Quds Open University

It is the largest operation for ELTT in Palestine. Around 1000 students annually join the programme to become English teachers. The approximate number of trainers is about 30 full-timers who teach the different English courses in addition to ELT courses. In addition, there are around 30 teachers who work as part-timers also for ELT courses. They offer a four-year course of study which leads to a B.A degree in Education / English. It aims to meet the need for qualified English language teachers.

Its objectives are to help the learner to:

- acquire a reasonable mastery of the English language systems.
- communicate appropriately and correctly in speech and in writing on social, academic and professional matters.
- be aware of language structure and components.
- acquire sufficient knowledge of ELT theory, approaches and pedagogical practices.
- appreciate English literary contexts of various forms.

The program is a mix of language, linguistics, literature, translation and ELT. The program offers two ELT courses (6 credit hours) that aim to have students apply theory. In addition there is a course

called English language practical training (3 credit hours) in which students have to go to schools for practice which combines observation and teaching under the supervision of their teacher and the local school teacher. This is done over a period of a semester.

The department responsible for English language teaching is the English Department (part of the education program). The courses offered aim to prepare students to become English teachers.

4j. Islamic University, Gaza

There is a 'TEFL' programme at the IUG called [BA Education / English](#) (major/minor). 90% of the students are young female. IUG represent the largest Education / English provider in Gaza (785 current students). 65% of the teaching staff on the English major programme at IUG are PHD qualified. IUG also has the English Language Institute which offers a great opportunity for their students to do practice teaching. The courses offered at IUG:

- ELT methods 1 & 2
- Studies in English Language Curricula
- Educational Technology
- Educational statistics
- Islamic Educational Thought
- Research methods
- Curriculum theory and design

5. Summary and Opportunities

Localised knowledge centres

The ongoing Israeli military occupation presents many challenges (see Fennell, 2009 for an example). One noteworthy effect is the localisation of Higher Education. Movement is severely restricted which often leads students to prioritise travel access over other factors when choosing a university course. In the West Bank this means students are more likely to study in or near their home town, while travel out of Gaza to the West Bank is usually refused to young people. Al Quds Open University with its blended and online aspects may circumvent some of these restrictions. The impact of this 'localisation' is that there needs to be a geographically even spread of opportunities for studies, in all courses, around the West Bank and Gaza.

This localised nature of teacher education creates opportunities for localised learning. By facilitating meetings between local groups of English language teachers, or trainee teachers, we can create opportunities to form situated communities of practice. These support groups are powerful networks, particularly if they are locally driven.

Too many teachers, too few jobs, too little quality?

According to MoEHE in 2010, 2,354 English language teachers applied for school teaching post but only 157 teachers were employed (69 males & 88 females). In 2009, only 243 English language teachers were employed by MoEHE (92 males and 151 females).

(Al-Mazri, 2010, p18)

There is generally an oversupply of teachers, with some universities such as Al-Aqsa, Gaza and Al-Quds Open University turning out thousands of new teachers every year. It is not, therefore, a shortage of teachers that affects education quality, but rather the standard of teachers themselves

(Nicolai, 2007, pp95-97).

The relationship between teacher education standards and the perceived low quality of teaching has been noted by Palestinian planners. Both in-service and pre-service training improvements can improve attainment, and raise the morale and status of teachers as a group, who at present complain of low motivation, compounded by often heavy timetables, large classes (40-50 in some urban areas), limited time for preparation or development, and relatively low wages. These tough factors drive people away from staying in the career; however, this period of reform affords a number of opportunities.

The differences in the quality and content of pre-service teacher education programmes has led to a shift towards greater, and more centralised control over professional standards, and a greater focus on quality control mechanisms. This may lead to less students entering, or graduating from university teacher education courses. The aim is that, future recipients of teaching licenses are equipped professionally and linguistically.

Consultation with Ministry of Education and related departments

Education in Palestine needs to be competitive with local, regional and global offers. Currently, documents are being produced by CDTP that will set standards for teachers and higher education

institutions that train teachers. There may be an opportunity to make recommendations, or to support these steps, particularly with regard to standards expected of English language teachers. Departments of the MoEHE may welcome consultation regarding:

- international English Language Teacher standards, knowledge, and competencies
- recommending and assessing linguistic competence for ELTs
- advising on exams to measure the above linguistic competence
- planning of TEFL teacher pathway courses with universities

Faculty relations

At some universities, inter-faculty and inter-departmental relations may be more competitive than cooperative. This sometimes causes fragmentation which impedes cross departmental developments between language or arts, and education faculties. Often as a consequence Education departments get students with less linguistic competence, while English departments strive to fulfil demands for EL teacher education with staff bodies weighted towards literature and theoretical linguistics.

Building bridges to support working relations could in turn, assist the improvement of English Language Teacher education. Another potential opportunity exists to promote the value of practical professional training. Currently, prestige and resources are associated with literature and related subjects. By increasing the value associated with teaching, and related activities will in turn be good for the profession's perception, and identity. Publishing, or creating opportunities for local teachers' practical classroom based studies to be shared, as well as more theoretical academic voices could play a role in this respects.

University teaching oriented to teachers' vocational lives

University professors admit that the weakness of many of their courses, and their teaching, is that they are providing history of TEFL courses, or courses about approaches and methodology rather than demonstrations of, or having students practically apply techniques, or approaches. A notable absence from the data collected about these programs, is input on continual teacher development. It is unclear to what extent ELT professional development opportunities are highlighted and informed in pre-service training. Reflective teaching practices, for example, offer an independent route to development: and these teachers may develop without a great deal of supervision.

From this research it is not clear to what extent ELTTs are familiarised with the latest versions of English for Palestine syllabus, or newer resources and course books, while in university trainings, or are trained using the associated materials as exemplars for practice.

An example of our current work is that we are working with Hebron University in trialling a peer-training approach to the delivery of a British Council course – Classroom Language. Having been a participant in one course and observed most of a subsequent one, a university teacher is enthusiastic to team train on a course in January 2012 with a British Council trainer, and we are interested in seeing the university's own trainers run practical courses on classroom techniques. More opportunities may exist for the British Council to create professional development opportunities with faculty in other universities.

University language teaching

The English courses taught in most HE institutions, English 100, English 101 and English 102 are noted by some in universities and the MoEHE to be less effective than desired. If lectures and teacher centred language classes, are the predominant models for teacher behaviour this may lead to a reproduction of this model by the future teachers of English in their classrooms. Working with these teachers may be another opportunity, should institutions and individuals be receptive.

There is an opportunity to offer subsidised or free courses taught by ELT trainees, in the universities with language centres. For language trainees this opportunity could be a key moment in their professional development, gaining some shadowed experience in an adult education context before moving to practice in elementary and high schools. This opportunity could be a useful step prior to entering the frays of *real* school.

Supportive classroom learning

Some university staff commented that their university's ELT courses lack teaching 'practice'. Furthermore, it is unclear how the observation and practice element of the practicum courses offered is overseen, or how this experience is constructed as a learning-oriented one. The practical component of foreign language teacher education courses affords a significant opportunity for ELT trainees. By working with ELTs on their 180 hours, or more, of teaching practice we could better understand the situation in the field for trainee teachers. It is in the 'real' classroom where the links between theory and practice is made, and is an experience that needs a supportive learning environment. Any contribution we can make to this practicum experience would be mutually

worthwhile enabling us to better understand the classroom reality and trainee teachers to be supported.

UNRWA's new ELTT course

In UNRWA's vocational training centre, the development of an ELTT course is in progress, they might benefit from opportunities, discussion and association with developments in the MOEHE and universities.

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Other useful sources**MOEHE Palestinian Education Development Plan**

[http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Palestinian%20Autonomous
%20Territories/Palestine_Education_development_plan_2008_2012.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Palestinian%20Autonomous%20Territories/Palestine_Education_development_plan_2008_2012.pdf)

UNESCO Country Report

http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/palestine/rapport_1.html

World Economic Forum – Education

<http://www.weforum.org/issues/education>

Tertiary Education Project (part of the QIF)

<http://www.tep.ps/etemplate.php?id=3>
<http://www.tep.ps/etemplate.php?id=10>

USAID West Bank and Gaza

<http://www.usaid.gov/wbg/edo.html>

Accreditation Qualification and Certification (AQAC)

<http://www.aqac.mohe.gov.ps/>

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