INVESTIGATING TESL TRAINEES’ PERCEPTION ON THE LEVEL OF READINESS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUBJECT IN SCHOOL

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INVESTIGATING TESL TRAINEES’ PERCEPTION ON THE LEVEL OF READINESS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUBJECT IN SCHOOL

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science with Education (TESL)

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MAY 2008
"I declare that this thesis entitled "Investigating TESL Trainees' Perception on the Level of Readiness in Teaching English for Science and Technology Subject in School" is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for my degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree".

Signature : 
Name : Fazziana Binti Alyub
Date : 02 May 2008
Especially dedicated to my beloved parents, brother, sisters
and dearest Uzier.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study generally attempts to investigate TESL trainees’ perceptions on their level of readiness towards teaching English for Science and Technology subject in school. It attempts to identify the level of readiness in the areas of knowledge in the EST subject, teaching skills as well as interest in teaching the subject as perceived by the TESL trainees. Questionnaires were distributed to 40 Fourth Year TESL trainees. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The findings show very positive pattern which indicated that TESL trainees have positive perception towards their readiness in teaching EST subject. Also, this study proves that TESL trainees have a high level of readiness in the area of knowledge in the EST subject, teaching skills and interest in teaching the subject in school. This study hopes to provide TESL trainees with the information they need for self reflection and to equip them with skills and information for their own EST classes when they become teachers later on. At the same time, it is hoped that the study could assist curriculum planners to design more comprehensive and cohesive curriculum in the future in order to prepare TESL trainees better in the field pertaining to science and technology.
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidik persepsi guru pelatih TESL tentang kesediaan mengajar matapelajaran English for Science and Technology di sekolah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti tahap kesediaan dari aspek pengetahuan mengenai matapelajaran EST, kemahiran mengajar serta minat dalam mengajar matapelajaran tersebut sepritimana dari pandangan mereka. Soal selidik telah diagihkan kepada 40 orang guru pelatih TESL Tahun Empat dan data yang dikumpulkan telah dianalisa menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Hasil kajian menunjukkan maklumbalas yang positif di mana, guru pelatih TESL mempunyai persepsi yang baik terhadap kesediaan mengajar matapelajaran EST. Selain itu, kajian ini membuktikan bahawa guru pelatih TESL mempunyai tahap kesediaan yang tinggi dari aspek pengetahuan mengenai matapelajaran EST, kemahiran mengajar serta minat dalam mengajar matapelajaran tersebut di sekolah. Dari dapatan kajian yang diperolehi, adalah diharapkan dapat membantu guru pelatih TESL dengan memberi maklumat yang diperlukan untuk refleksi kendiri dan menyediakan diri dalam pengajaran mereka kelak. Pada masa yang sama, kajian ini diharap dapat membantu pembangun kurikulum agar dapat membentuk intipati kurikulum yang lebih komprehensif dan tersusun di masa akan datang agar dapat memberi lebih kesediaan kepada guru pelatih TESL dalam bidang sains dan teknologi.
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<td>KBSM</td>
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In line with globalization and the rapid advances in information and communication technology (ICT), knowledge is available in greater volume and speed than ever before. Learners should be taught the various ways of accessing this information and to use the information to advance their knowledge in various fields.

As a result, a new subject called English for Science and Technology (EST) was introduced in school. The syllabus lays the foundation in the use of English in the field of science and technology for the present use and also for further studies at tertiary level. It aims to provide students with the language basis to access and understand material on science and technology and to express ideas and concepts in English. The objectives of the subject are to:
1. obtain information by reading and understanding different text in science and technology in English;
2. obtain information by listening to and viewing texts on science and technology in English from audio-visual and electronic sources such as talks and television programmes;
3. access and understand information on the Internet and other electronic media;
4. present information on science and technology at an appropriate level in both the written and spoken form; and
5. think critically and give their points of view on issues pertaining to science and technology.

(Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris Untuk Sains Dan Teknologi 2001, KBSM: 2001:1)

As future English language teachers, students who are doing Bachelor in Science with Education (TESL) are expected to ensure that the objectives of the EST subject can be achieved in their teaching. Therefore, the future English language teachers need to have certain characteristics in order to achieve the aims. According to Boyer (1990, cited in Dill, 1990), a teacher needs to have characteristics such as (i) knowledge, (ii) values and (iii) skills in order to be effective teachers. Cutlip and Shockley (1997) state that the characteristics of a quality teacher as someone who is (i) expert in a subject field, (ii) uses a variety of teaching methods and (iii) interested in students.

Besides that, Subahan and Abdul Raof (1991) feel that a teacher has to possess the basic of education, the mastery of academic lesson content, the usage of pedagogic principles and professionalism needed. Marsh (1996:311) states that “…professional possesses a set of relevant attributes such as knowledge, abilities, skills and attitude”. The professional in this context is referred to teachers. Dill (1990) pictures a teacher as someone who knows something unknown to others, presumably the students. In this matter, in order to equip students with all the EST objectives mentioned above, it is a necessity for the teachers to equip themselves with all the knowledge and skills required in teaching the subject. It can be summarized that the level of readiness can be evaluated from three aspects, which are knowledge, skills and professionalism.
1.2 Background of the Study

EST subject is a new SPM subject introduced in 2003 by the Ministry of Education. It is an English test based on science and technology. It does not aim to teach the science and technology subject. Rather, it is designed to help students develop an ability to grasp the basic concepts and ideas in science and technology and to understand methods of scientific thoughts and enquiry in English, common to all kinds of scientific and technical discourse. The areas covered include general science, physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, environmental education, and technologies.

English language teachers are responsible to teach this new subject. Every English language teacher will have the chances to teach this subject no matter whether they are new graduates or senior teachers. As the subject was introduced a few years ago, it caused anxiety among English language teachers on how to teach the subject at first. The anxiety might be due to several factors such as lacking the knowledge competence, lacking the experience in science and technology fields, lacking of teaching skills, lacking of interest and motivation towards the subject.

TESL trainees who have minimum exposure and experience in teaching EST will be facing more difficulties in carrying out the responsibilities to teach the subject compared to senior teachers. According to Honeyman & White, (1987) Liu, (1990); Summers, (1990), cited in Noran, Aida and Zakaria (1996:1), “lack of experience with computers is normally associated with high anxiety”. If TESL trainees lack the experience in handling computers, it will cause anxiety when they are required to teach students on how to search information on the Internet.
Although teachers are not expected to be the content experts as the science and technology teachers, they still have to know the basic concept, phenomena, ideas and processes of science and technology. This will require teachers to update themselves with information pertaining to science and technology. Teachers are required to search for information regarding the subject matter, process the information and then deliver it to students.

The success of teaching the EST subject cannot be a reality if teachers do not have ideas on how to go about doing it. So, it is crucial for the TESL trainees to prepare themselves before stepping into the real world of teaching EST. They are expected to have the right attitude, interest, self-readiness, subject competence and the right teaching methodology and skills in order to perform their duties more effectively and successfully.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The success of teaching the EST subject depends on teachers who work in schools. In an educational context, teachers’ roles are diversified in nature. Identifying the problems and the means to overcome any problems that could lead to the failure of teaching EST subject will go a long way to enable teachers to perform their multiple roles effectively.

Looking back at the objectives of the EST subject in the KBSM syllabus, teachers must possess the knowledge and skills that have been outlined in the syllabus before they can start teaching the students. Teachers must have the knowledge on how
to access and understand the scientific texts, basic concepts and ideas of scientific thoughts and enquiry in English to all kinds of scientific and technical discourse. As the EST subject recommended the communicative methodology for teaching this subject as stated in Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris Untuk Sains Dan Teknologi 2001, KBSM (2001:1), teachers should have the knowledge and skills on how to devise activities that will promote communicative learning in EST classrooms.

Other than having knowledge and skills, interest in teaching the subject is also important. It is because interest will influence the teachers in doing something consciously or unconsciously as stated by Crow and Crow (1980) in that, interest is the main power that maintains someone’s career.

Therefore, investigating the TESL trainees’ perceptions on knowledge in EST subject, teaching skills and interest towards the subject would indicate whether they are ready to teach the subject later on.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study generally attempts to investigate the TESL trainees’ perceptions on the level of readiness in teaching EST subject in the areas of knowledge in EST subject, teaching skills and interest towards teaching the subject.
1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1.5.1 determine the perception on the level of readiness in the area of knowledge in the EST subject among final year TESL trainees in teaching English for Science and Technology.

1.5.2 determine the perception on the level of readiness in the area of teaching skills among final year TESL trainees in teaching English for Science and Technology.

1.5.3 determine the perception on the level of interest among final year TESL trainees in teaching English for Science and Technology.

1.6 Research Questions

The research questions which this study is designed to answer are:

1.6.1 What is the final year TESL trainees’ perception on the level of readiness in the area of knowledge in the EST subject in teaching English for Science and Technology?

1.6.2 What are the skills needed as perceived by the final year TESL trainees in teaching English for Science and Technology?

1.6.3 What is the level of interest as perceived by the final year TESL trainees in teaching English for Science and Technology?