

## A Path to an Innovative Teacher Education Design: Significance of Teachers' Professional Identity as a Central Construct

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### **Abstract**

Teacher education program as a focal platform of teacher identity construction has extensively been explored recently. This study examines the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) teacher education model's effectiveness in fostering teacher professional identity. Utilizing Freeman's (2020) evaluation model, the ESA model's content and design were analyzed. A qualitative case study followed one participant over a year, using written narratives, interviews, and demos. Applying document and thematic analysis, findings showed 93% alignment with Freeman's knowledge base and identified three key themes: forming personal beliefs, overcoming self-doubt, and developing global citizenship. The study underscores the importance of incorporating intercultural topics, AI, and digital tools into the ESA program, highlighting its value for pre-service teachers, educators, curriculum developers, and researchers in understanding teacher identity.

**Keywords:** design theory, language teacher education, pre-service teacher, teacher education model, teacher education program, teacher professional identity.

## Путь к инновационному дизайну педагогического образования: Профессиональная идентичность учителей как центральное понятие

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### **Аннотация**

Программы педагогического образования как основной инструмент формирования идентичности учителя широко изучаются в последнее время. В настоящем исследовании рассматривается эффективность модели педагогического образования Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) в развитии профессиональной идентичности учителя. Содержание и дизайн программы ESA были проанализированы с помощью модели Фримана (Freeman, 2020). Качественное исследование с привлечением одного участника проводилось на протяжении года, при этом использовались письменные данные, интервью и демонстрационные ролики. Тематический анализ и анализ документов выявили 93% совпадений с базой знаний Фримана и определили

три ключевых направления: формирование личных убеждений, преодоление неуверенности в себе и развитие глобальной гражданственности. Исследование обосновывает необходимость включения межкультурной тематики, вопросов искусственного интеллекта и цифровых инструментов в программу ESA, подчеркивая ее ценность для будущих учителей, педагогов, разработчиков учебных программ и исследователей.

**Ключевые слова:** теория дизайна, языковое образование, будущий учитель, модель педагогического образования, программа педагогического образования, профессиональная идентичность учителя.

## Introduction

The quality of teacher education has frequently been argued for content knowledge (Freeman et al., 2019), pedagogical knowledge (Trent, 2010), techniques (Lin et al., 2008), and integration between theory and practice (Korthagen, 2004). Similarly, some scholars assert that teacher education programs (TEPs) do not meet the needs of the new generations of teachers and students (Lee, 2005). They argue that the curriculum of TEPs requires to be re-engineered to empower the candidates in shaping their selves so that they can control the complexities of the classroom. Some other researchers highlight the fragmented modules, inadequate time, and a failure to effectively bridge the gap between theory and practice (Darling-Hamond, 2006).

TEP is introduced as a complex social phenomenon encompassing the what and how of teaching. This intricacy arises from the dynamic nature of both the TEP as a continuously evolving context and the teacher professional identity (TPI) as a continually reshaped construct. To tackle the focused challenges integrated with the complexities of social contexts, researchers call for designing, organizing, and evaluating TEPs to equip teachers with the required knowledge (Fairly, 2020; Prabjandee, 2020; Tajeddin & Tavassoli, 2023).

To bridge the gap, this paper is an attempt to explore language TEPs in terms of a shared emphasis on pre-service teachers' professional identity construction over the years. Next, guided by Freeman's (2020) evaluation model and the design theory in teacher education (Freeman, 2020), the newly developed model (ESA) is examined in terms of knowledge base and design. By conceptualizing the ESA model for pre-service teachers as a booster of teacher identity construction, two questions arise: How is the teacher knowledge designed in an LTE model? And how does an LTE model promote a teacher's professional identity development? With these ideas in mind, the researcher attempts to evaluate the newly developed model and explore one pre-service teacher's identity formation over one year. Finally, the findings are discussed and concluded.

## Literature Review

The field of teacher education, in general, and language teacher education, in particular, has evolved under internal and external pressures (Burns & Richards, 2009). The internal criticisms have influenced some changes in teacher education programs such as content knowledge and courses (Shulman, 1987), teaching skills (Richards, 1998), teacher educators' role (Mutlu-Gülbak, 2023), practicum experience (Gebhard, 2009), reflective techniques (Biria & Haghighi Irani, 2015; Wallace, 1991), teacher identity (Trent, 2010), and length of the program as intensive & extensive programs (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Moreover, external forces such as globalization and the necessity for training qualified teachers have influenced the development of diverse LTEPs.

### *Theoretical Background*

Social constructivism sees knowledge as socially constructed and learning as an essential social process. Jordan et al. (2008, p. 3) identify social constructivism as an

“amalgam of theories which emphasize collaborative meaning-making”. This implies that acquiring teaching skills is not a straightforward task from teacher educators to student teachers. Teacher identity is a socially constructed concept that appears through multiple developmental stages (Varghese et al., 2005). Despite this, Westbrook et al. (2013) note that pedagogical studies often overlook learning theories like constructivism, leading to teacher resistance to constructivist methods in language classes.

#### *Global and Local Teacher Education Models*

In the contemporary globalized world, teacher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of LTE systems across nations. Furthermore, finding innovative models to prepare student teachers for the realities of language classes and seeking solutions for unresolved issues in LTE is a current struggle for researchers and practitioners. This concern has led to the integration of traditional and alternative approaches in teacher education resulting in a variety of models aimed at developing qualified teachers. Several practitioners proposed different models almost all of which agreed upon three major frameworks: the craft model, the applied science model, and the reflective model in training teachers (Barahona, 2014; Kennedy, 2015). In 1991, Day sheds light on the Integrative Model as a comprehensive model encompassing the strengths of the previous models. Placing reflective practice at the heart of the integrative model, he mentions that this model requires systematic reflection on a variety of activities because merely exposing learners to some activities cannot guarantee a complete combination of types of knowledge. This requires incorporating a series of systematic critical practices in a cycle of teaching, reflection, hypothesis formation, and additional actions. Consequently, reflective and critical practices are internationally placed at the core of the innovative models. Experts believe that reflective practices can encourage student teachers to have an active role in mediating their learning through which they will be able to link the theories they learned in their teacher education courses to practices of their contextual elements (Freeman, 2016). As Barahona (2014) mentions, China, Canada, and the USA have been utilizing critical LTE models in pre-service and in-service programs, while Chile follows the features of the craft, the applied science, and reflective models as a hybrid model.

Embracing Wallace’s (1991) Reflective Model, the Onion Model which was based on a more holistic approach assumes a qualified teacher is a combination of different harmonious and interrelated levels of reflection which initiates with inner levels, the deepest area, progressing to reach the outer levels (Korthagen, 2004). Structurally, the Onion Model is a multi-level model focusing on both process and product approaches comprising six levels of reflection namely environment, behavior, competencies, beliefs, identity, and mission (Korthagen, 2004).

Encouraged by educational globalization, Kumaravadivelu (2012) proposed the Modular Model including five modules knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing, and seeing (KARDS). He believes that TEPs should be designed and delivered in a way to be responsive to both global and local demands and mentions that teacher educators take the global perspectives as their skeletal framework to construct the details of the program matching to the specific conditions of the educational context. Additionally, because the Modular Model is cyclical, interactive, and integrative in nature, it can compensate for the shortcomings of traditional models of second language teacher education as discrete, product-oriented, and transmission-oriented approaches and is promising to develop teachers professionally through a holistic, process-based, and transformation-oriented model.

*Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Identity*

The literature draws attention to the influence of LTE in shaping teacher identity in different ways (Flores, 2016; Friesen & Besley, 2013). However, the conflict between teacher education programs and the complexities of the real classroom contexts led Flores (2001) to highlight the influence of workplace conditions on identity formation by comparing pre-service programs. Integrating identity with knowledge and practice, Miller (2009) proposed four themes such as a focus on the nature of identity, understanding the complexity and importance of context, the need for critical reflection, and identity and pedagogy.

Varghese et al. (2005) identified three key themes of identity: multiplicity and susceptibility to change, link to contexts, and connection to discourse and power relations. These themes are essential for promoting TPI in TEPs (Prabjandee, 2020; Trent, 2010; Yazan, 2019). Freeman (2016) adds that classroom socialization helps construct both teaching identity (learning how to teach) and teacher identity (learning how to be a teacher), emphasizing the need to recognize and develop these identities as both classroom knowers and language users.

*Language Teacher Education in Iran*

In Iran, LTE is offered at both universities and institutions. University programs offer degrees such as BA, MA, and Ph.D. in TEFL/TESL, while institutions provide certification licenses.

There is no consensus on the design and content of TEPs among institutes in Iran, but university TEPs follow a more standardized format. Institutes offer localized courses, short or long term, on topics like teaching language skills and components and classroom management, tailored by teacher educators. Teacher Training Courses (TTC) typically range from 20 to 120 hours. Prospective teachers, chosen through proficiency tests and interviews, join TTCs designed by the institute. Programs last one to three months and may allow Cambridge certificate holders to skip certain steps. Ultimately, successful candidates present sample teachings and, if accepted, are selected to instruct at the institute.

Despite significant improvements in Iran's language teacher training, practitioners report several drawbacks. Researchers criticize private institutions for using a transmission-oriented approach and lacking a systematic method that aligns goals, learners' needs, teaching methods, and outcomes (Naseri Karimvand et al., 2014; Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2013). Long class hours are also seen as detrimental to the quality of TEPs, impacting English language classes in schools. Studies suggest shifting from a trainer-centered Craft Model to trainee-centered Reflective, Critical, and Modular Models to keep up with advances in technology and language teaching methods (Kennedy, 2015).

A comparative study by Nezakat-Alhossaini and Ketabi (2013) identified additional issues in Iran's TTCs, such as lack of motivation, evaluation systems, and practicality, compared to Turkey and Australia. They recommended a more unified, goal-oriented, and updated TEP in Iran. Tajeddin and Tavassoli (2023) evaluated 18 pre-service TEPs and found them overly focused on traditional theory, lacking effectiveness in promoting teacher development. To bridge this gap, they proposed a four-step technique involving theoretical concepts, discussion, practical application, and review. Consequently, it appears that theory/practice challenges in Iran's language teacher education remain a significant concern.

*Empirical Studies in Language Teacher Education*

Unlike the extensive studies on TPI, little has focused on LTE design that centers on TPI across institutions. Reflective practices, which enhance pre-service teachers' reasoning skills and relationships with students (Lee, 2005), have been used as mediational tools for developing TPI. These include reflective journal writing (Abednia et al., 2013), action research (Trent, 2010), critical reflection (Tao & Gao, 2018), and video reflection (Maclean & White, 2007). While reflective practices have many merits, such as improving problem-solving and decision-making skills, Day (1991) notes drawbacks like a lack of organization and shared discussion. He argues that effective teacher education requires a systematic and integrative approach, emphasizing the critical analysis of teaching knowledge and activities.

Research indicates that TEPs that allow trainees to implement language teaching theories significantly enhance teacher quality and professional skills. Several studies in Iran (Masoumpanah et al., 2019), Turkey (Arslan & Gülden, 2018), and Myanmar (Chaw & Kopp, 2021) show that incorporating practical experience into TEPs improves teachers' confidence and reduces their anxiety about classroom management.

Boojari et al. (2023) compared the content and structure of TEPs at Farhangian University with private TEPs in Iran. Participants criticized Farhangian University for irrelevant courses, excessive theories, and lengthy curricula. Interviews with teachers showed a preference for intensive TEPs over a four-year program. The study found that language institutes offered more qualified programs than Farhangian University. Researchers suggested that teacher educators and curriculum developers should modify the syllabus based on teachers' needs by raising awareness.

In several cross-national comparative studies, scholars have explored and contrasted teacher education curricula from various perspectives (Bavakhani et al., 2019; Ekoç, 2022; Wang et al., 2013). Flores (2016) investigated the quality of TEPs in nine countries, including Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, Finland, the USA, Poland, Singapore, and New Zealand. She found consensus on fundamental challenges related to the knowledge base, critical reflection, and teachers' professional identity. Emphasizing teacher identity development as central to TEPs, she described teacher education as a 'space of transformation' and concluded that TEPs should focus on both teacher knowledge and its transformation. Given contextual differences, Flores highlighted the importance of cultural, historical, and social factors in assessing TEP effectiveness.

Similarly, Bavakhani et al. (2019) compared the curriculum and revision models of teacher education in Australia, Singapore, and Turkey. They found that Singapore and Turkey follow a centralized system, while Australia is moving towards standardized models. The study indicated that both Singapore and Turkey are revising TEPs to prepare competent future teachers. The researchers concluded that Iran's TEP system could benefit from implementing Singapore's proven model.

Wang et al. (2013) compared Chinese TEPs in China and Australia, focusing on their different sociolinguistic contexts. They aimed to explore whether Chinese TEPs could be internationalized to meet the growing need for Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) teachers both within and outside China. Data from narratives and in-depth interviews with six pre-service teachers and six teacher educators were analyzed using an interpretive approach and comparative analysis. The study found differences in objectives, content, delivery methods, and assessment. The researchers concluded that incorporating compulsory practicum experiences, communicative activities, and intercultural themes into Chinese TEPs is essential for internationalization. They also expressed concerns about TEPs' inability to keep pace with the international needs of globalized societies.

Alternative global studies in Chile (Barahona, 2014), Thailand (Prabjandee, 2020), Brazil (Höling et al., 2023), and Cambodia (Sok & Heng, 2024) have commonly highlighted LTE as a crucial component for shaping the quality of teacher education systems. These studies emphasize the importance of integrating theory and practice, maintaining a critical stance on the knowledge base in LTE, and enhancing teacher identity development (Prabjandee, 2020). Additionally, they stress the need to balance content knowledge with effective pedagogical knowledge to improve the quality of teacher education.

Overall, the abovementioned evidence reveals that TEPs developed in previous decades were not primarily designed to shape the professional identity of pre-service teachers. Given that teacher identity is now an explicit focus of LTE (Yazan, 2019), the current study examines a design-driven LTE model (ESA) that prioritizes pre-service TPI as a core component in Iran. Therefore, data collection and analysis procedures were guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the teacher knowledge base designed in the ESA language teacher education model to develop Iranian pre-service teachers' professional identity?
2. How is an Iranian pre-service teacher's professional identity constructed during the ESA language teacher education model?

## Methodology

Following the purpose of the current research, the first line of the study delves into the architecture and evaluation of an innovative design-driven teacher education model (ESA). The second line will be a thorough description of how this model mediated one participant's TPI over one year. Due to the nature of the present research, a qualitative case study with a social constructivist perspective and a longitudinal approach was integrated into the design to examine the development of TPI in the ESA teacher education program.

### *Design and Context of the Study*

The study was conducted at a Tehran college certified by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, focusing on teacher education. The three-module Teacher Education Program (TEP), Engage, Study, and Activate (ESA), was designed in 2014 to train professional teachers. Graduates are qualified to work at the institute or elsewhere. The program, launched with twelve participants and repeated annually, began in February 2017 and concluded in March 2018. Participants attended five-hour weekly sessions for 44 weeks, totaling 240 hours, to earn a completion certificate. It is worth mentioning that ESA has been evaluated from diverse angles with a focus on TPI development (Haghighi Irani et al., 2020).

Due to the complex nature of TPI construction influenced by personal and contextual factors (Pennington & Richards, 2016), teacher education models should incorporate multiple theoretical perspectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). The ESA model was inspired by Kumaravadivelu's KARDS (2012) and structured using design theory principles (Freeman, 2016), forming an alternative to the PPP model. Design theory in teacher education highlights components essential for effective teacher learning, offering an alternative to traditional teaching norms. It suggests that a TEP provides student teachers with "tools and opportunities to use them" (Freeman, 2016, p. 231).

### *Design of the Knowledge Base in the ESA Model*

To align with the aforementioned standards, the ESA model was developed in three circular modules (See Figure 3.1.).

1. **Engage (E)**: Designed for 19 weeks (95 hours) to engage students with teaching knowledge and concepts both theoretically and emotionally (Harmer, 2015; Trent, 2010).

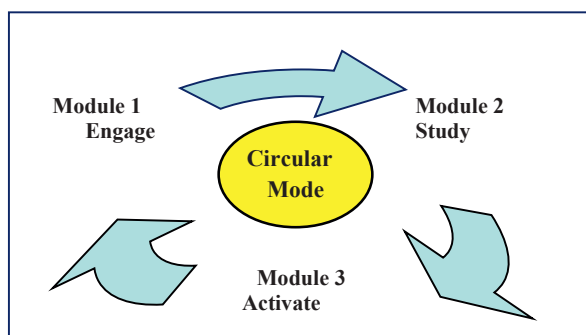


It covers language and teaching knowledge, language skills, lesson planning, managing the teaching and learning process, and teaching methodology.

2. **Study (S):** Spanning 20 weeks (120 hours), this phase links theory to practice (Farrell, 2018). It revisits phase one topics, focusing on classroom management, teaching activities, and techniques. Trainees conduct ten-minute language teaching mini-demos, which are discussed and peer-evaluated.

3. **Activate (A):** Planned for five weeks (25 hours), this phase connects the previous phases and applies learned knowledge in real teaching contexts. Student teachers begin their first teaching experiences with support from their educators. Topics include educational psychology in practice, teacher beliefs, learner differences, motivation, learning processes, classroom tasks, learning contexts, and language assessment. This stage ends with a written exam on educational psychology and language assessment.

Detailed content and pedagogical knowledge in the ESA model are presented in Appendix A.



**Figure 1.** A schematic representation of the three-phase teacher education program (Adapted from Haghighi Irani et al., 2020)

### *Participants*

Dina was one of eight Iranian EFL pre-service teachers in the ESA program during the 2017-2018 study. None had prior teaching experience and all came from non-English majors. They were selected through purposive sampling (Mackey & Gass, 2022) by the institute's principles. Dina, aged 35, was chosen as a case study because she agreed to share detailed self-narratives and video recordings of her initial teaching context. Her narratives illustrate changes in her professional identity over time within the ESA model. Dina was informed that her name would be replaced with a pseudonym and her information would remain confidential.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

Triangulation in applying instruments can protect the researcher from biases and help them make more valid and reliable conclusions (Riazi, 2016). For the first line of the study, document analysis was utilized and for the second line, the data were collected through narrative writings, three semi-structured interviews, and observations of the participant's mini-demos, long-demos, and initial class videos over the span of one year.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

Data were gathered through Dina's written narratives, which are valuable for constructing and engaging with teacher identity (Fairley, 2020). These narratives helped

identify changes in her pre-service teacher identity. The researcher provided Dina with guidelines for her narratives at the start. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted, focusing on her initial motivation to become a teacher, self-evaluation compared to the first day of practicum, reflections on teaching classes, perceptions of online and offline assignments, and the strengths and weaknesses of the modules. Three interviews were conducted and transcribed throughout the program, one at the end of each module. Observations were another data collection method. During the Study module, Dina's ten-minute mini-demos and long demos were observed, discussed in class, and received feedback from the educator (the researcher) and other student teachers.

#### *Data Analysis Procedure*

In examining the design of content and knowledge in the ESA language teacher education model, Freeman's (2020) evaluation model was used for its relevance in evaluating LTEPs and fostering pre-service TPI development. This model's levels of mastery align with Kelchtermans' (1993) conceptualization of TPI, which includes task perception, self-esteem, job motivation, self-image, and future perspective. These aspects will be explored in the second part of the study, focusing on the emergence and growth of TPI in the participant, through document analysis.

The data analysis for the second part of the research employed thematic analysis through an iterative process, alternating between reading written narratives, interview transcripts, and observation field notes. Initially, data were coded by reading and rereading for each module. These codes were then categorized into themes, which were compared across the three modules. Emergent themes were aligned with Kelchtermans' (1993) conceptualization of TPI. To ensure trustworthiness, member checking was applied at two levels through descriptions and interpretations by the participant (Dina) (Riazi, 2016). Despite minor misunderstandings, consensus was reached on data accuracy and interpretation. Additionally, Dina's demos were analyzed to ensure trustworthiness and to examine professional identity changes not evident in other data. Her behavior and voice during demos were analyzed for hesitancy, confidence, and assertiveness.

## **Results**

### *The First Line of the Study: The Evaluation of the Knowledge Base in the ESA Model*

Investigating innovative LTE models and their delayed evaluation is crucial for understanding teacher identity, transformative practices, and ongoing changes (Farrell, 2019; Kiely, 2019). To assess potential shortcomings in the ESA model's source and design, this study aims to evaluate the program's knowledge base several years after its implementation. To evaluate the effectiveness of the ESA program's knowledge base, Freeman's (2020) model was used as the general framework, while Tajeddin and Tavassoli's (2023) tables of components provided detailed sub-categories for the knowledge base evaluation.

To address the global and local dynamics in English language teaching and support classroom complexities and pedagogical requirements, Freeman (2020) outlines five areas to be considered as the knowledge base in LTEPs. He asserts that any effective LTE model must first address 'the content,' which refers to 'what is taught' in classrooms, specifically the English language. Candidates enrolled in the ESA teacher education program were required to have C1 and C2 proficiency levels of the CEFR, as determined by an initial interview with the institute's official team. The first module of this program, Engage, focused on Language knowledge. It involved reading relevant texts about language and language teaching, watching videos, writing analytical reports, discussing, and receiving feedback on language errors from teachers or peers. This module covers the first



component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge base model in LTEPs. (For the purpose and content of each module in the ESA model, see Appendix).

The second area in Freeman's (2020) LTEP model includes 'the teaching force' area, focusing on teachers' characteristics and classroom activities like management, lesson planning, and assessment (Tajeddin & Tavassoli, 2023). Classroom management and lesson planning are covered in the second module, while language assessment is practiced in the third module, Activate. This sequence ensures that theoretical knowledge from the first module is applied in practice.

The third component of Freeman's (2020) knowledge-base model in LTEPs focuses on 'the learners,' addressing 'who are learning it and why.' This includes learner characteristics, learning strategies, motivation, and psychology. In the ESA model, learner characteristics and strategies are covered in the second module (Study), while aspects like learner motivation are addressed in the Activate (A) module.

The fourth area in Freeman's (2020) knowledge-base model addresses 'the pedagogy,' focusing on 'how it is being taught.' This area covers techniques and strategies for teaching language skills and components. In the ESA language teacher education program, these were implemented in the second module (Study: S) for pre-service teachers. This module included simulations and role plays, critical observations of in-service teachers using validated checklists, and ten-minute demos.

The fifth and most significant area in Freeman's (2020) knowledge-base model is 'teacher education,' which addresses 'how teachers are being prepared and supported in teaching.' This area includes activities to encourage teacher reflection, identity, creativity, and autonomy, along with demos and feedback to build pre-service teachers' self-confidence. These activities were integrated across all three ESA modules. They involved in critical discussions after watching and analyzing teaching videos, peer feedback on mini-presentations, creating lesson plans and classroom tasks, and developing test items. The goal was to help pre-service teachers negotiate their professional identities and understand components of teacher identity such as task perception, self-esteem, job motivation, self-image, and future perspective (Kelchterman, 1993).

Overall, it appears that almost all of the components (93%) in Freeman's (2020) knowledge-base categories were sufficiently covered in the ESA teacher education program. Among the 86 subcategories of the five components evaluated by Tajeddin and Tavassoli (2023), 93% were addressed in the ESA model. However, 7% of the subcategories—such as online teaching, the history of ELT, corpus linguistics, certification criteria and scoring, political dimensions of language teaching, and professional code of ethics—were not included.

#### *The Second Line of the Study: The Development of TPI in the ESA Model*

The second line of the study aims to explore how an Iranian pre-service TPI is constructed during the ESA LTE model. To identify the perceived changes over the ESA program, narratives, interviews, and observation notes were coded horizontally across the three modules, and meaningful themes were compared. Findings from Dina's narratives and interviews revealed high levels of confidence and motivation during the Engage module. Dina's passion for learning about teaching provided a strong foundation for shaping her teacher self before entering the second module. In her first interview, conducted at the end of module one, she expressed a strong desire to become a language teacher.

Three themes were identified based on Dina's monthly narratives and three interview sessions. To ensure accuracy, these themes were cross-compared with the educator's

notes on observing Dina's short and long demos at the end of the Study and Activate modules (S and A).

#### *Constructing Personal Beliefs*

Narratives have been viewed as a valuable learning tool in educational contexts such as TEPs (Yazan, 2019). In this study, Dina felt somewhat shocked by the syllabus and videos of teaching methods during the first module. The complexities of language teaching in the ESA program differed from her expectations. In the second module, she wrote about feeling positive and responsible as a teacher. Dina highlighted the strong influence of critical discussions after watching videos of language teaching in the Engage Module and reflective feedback on her performances in the Study Module as key factors in shaping her beliefs as a teacher. Through her narratives, she depicted how her initially frustrating perception of teaching shifted during the first two modules.

At first, I was a little shocked and confused. The books and the syllabus were frightening.

I wondered how I could put them into action. Now, I realize how complex teaching is. (E Module)

Discussions were pretty effective in motivating me to continue as a teacher. Teachers are people who can change everything. They show their students the route. They teach them how to think and how to solve their problems. After a while, I could understand the concept of teaching and the teacher's role.

Now, I can feel more responsible about the impact of teachers on learners.

#### *Promoting Self-Acceptance and Overcoming Self-Doubts*

Promoting a clear image of abilities in teachers can help them improve their practices and overcome tensions (Prabjandee, 2020). This allows teachers to accept their weaknesses and strengths, and find their style and voice in teaching. As Dina transitioned from the Study Module to Activate, she began to trust herself as a teacher. In her writings, she noted the positive impact of narratives on her mindset growth and self-acceptance. Dina's identity as a teacher started to emerge as she faced challenges performing her first and second mini-demos on teaching a grammar point. Her words illustrate the shift from self-doubt to gradually shaping self-confidence:

I think I have no experience in teaching. I would like to know how to be a good teacher, not exactly in an academic way. Maybe in the future, I'll think about it. But for now, I want to be a good English teacher.

Now, my gestures and the way I sit are like a real teacher. I feel I have grown up and I'm eager for the rest of the way. Now, I believe I can be an extraordinary teacher.

#### *Developing a Sense of Fulfillment and Global Citizenship*

Developing a sense of fulfillment and feeling like belonging to a global community are expectations when a pre-service teacher overcomes the initial challenges of becoming a teacher. In Dina's case, achieving a sense of self-image and self-confidence through performing mini-demos heightened her expectations. She expressed a strong desire for further knowledge in teaching and professional development. Embracing the ESA Model with technology played a crucial role in enhancing Dina's cultural understanding as a lifelong learner and a global educator, preparing her to equip students with essential skills. Dina commenced her teaching practicum in the final sessions of the Study Module and conducted her first actual class at the institute during the Activate Module. Data analysis revealed that the pivotal moment for Dina in constructing her identity as a teacher

occurred during the transition from the Study to the Activate modules. This marked a significant change as she became passionate about pursuing a teaching career and felt confident in her ability to make a positive impact on future generations.

Everything started for me after the first phase when we started the practical phase. When I saw how other countries are working on teaching, I thought why we should not do the same thing for our own country.

The sense of belonging to a big community is a nice feeling. It encourages me to read, work, and know more than before. Watching videos of some international high-quality teachers helps me know that teaching can be practiced beyond our society and be globalized.

#### *Analysis of Mini-Demos*

To accurately reflect the quality of findings and explore changes in teacher identity that may not have been fully articulated in narratives and interviews, Dina's behavior and voice were assessed for hesitance, confidence, and assertiveness. Video-recorded demos were observed meticulously by the researcher and a colleague. These observations were cross-checked with the insights derived from Dina's narrative writings and interviews. The findings indicated that Dina had made notable advancements in being physically active and demonstrating control over her self-confidence, tone of voice, body language, eye contact, and movement during her teaching demonstrations.

#### **Discussion**

This study investigates the development and evaluation of an innovative teacher education program focused on constructing pre-service TPI. The emergence of teacher identity within this newly established TEP was examined through a qualitative case study design, utilizing narrative writings, interviews, and observations of short and long teaching demonstrations.

Using the innovative ESA model, the process of teacher identity formation in one participant revealed three themes: constructing personal beliefs, promoting self-acceptance and overcoming self-doubts, and developing a sense of fulfillment and global citizenship. These themes align closely with Kelchterman's (1993) conceptualization of TPI.

To address the first research question concerning the development of the knowledge base in the ESA model and its role as a foundational context for TPI, Freeman's (2020) model of the knowledge base in TEP and Tajeddin and Tavassoli's (2023) list of subcategories were utilized. Evaluating the ESA knowledge base across content, teaching force, learners, pedagogy, and teacher education components, it becomes evident that the innovative TEP aims to align closely with the requirements for fostering TPI.

Continuous program evaluation is recommended to accommodate ongoing changes and reflections on various aspects of the program (Kiely, 2019). This suggests that the ESA model has evolved through multiple revisions since its inception in 2014, adapting course durations, sources, and activities to better meet educational needs. Emphasizing the context in which teacher identity is formed, this alternative version allows educators greater flexibility by incorporating reflective activities tailored to diverse local contexts. These activities help student teachers activate their content and pedagogical knowledge through practical demonstrations (short and long demos) in modules S and A before entering actual teaching roles.

While many institutes traditionally neglect the 'content' aspect, specifically English language content (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010), the ESA model prioritizes this component.

It achieves this through readings and providing feedback on students' written and spoken reports throughout the practicum, particularly in module E. The ESA model comprehensively covers subcategories such as learner characteristics and teacher education components as evaluated by Freeman (2020).

Modules E and S within ESA extensively address the characteristics of learners, encompassing factors like age, level, abilities, and motivation. Module S, in particular, emphasizes teacher preparation through activities such as weekly discussions where student teachers review videos and mini-demos conducted by peers, as well as observing classes taught by in-service teachers. In this module, students also engage in reading and practicing teacher autonomy, reflection, and identity development. These practices highlight ESA's commitment to thorough teacher preparation and the holistic development of student teachers.

In general, the ESA model of TEP achieves balance across key aspects like content, teacher, learner, pedagogy, and teacher preparation, as found in prior studies (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010). It effectively bridges the theory/practice gap by integrating thorough presentations on language teaching theories followed by critical discussions and feedback sessions, aligning with literature on effective teacher preparation (Farrell, 2018; Prabjandee, 2020).

To address the second research question on how an Iranian pre-service teacher's Professional Identity (TPI) develops during the ESA model, data were collected through narrative writings, three semi-structured interviews, and field notes from video-recorded mini-demos, long demos, and Dina's initial teaching sessions over one year. Data analysis identified module transitions as pivotal moments in Dina's teacher identity formation.

Initially, in the E module, Dina's self-beliefs were shaped through critical thinking and reflective activities supplementing her content knowledge. Moving to the S module, a noticeable decrease in self-confidence was observed initially during her practicum, though it improved with experience in front of the class. A significant shift occurred at the start of the A module, where Dina overcame self-doubts and began seeing herself as part of the global teaching community.

The practicum experience, learning about learner psychology, and professional development in language teaching complexities in module A guided her through these changes. This finding aligns with Prabjandee's (2020) study emphasizing practicum, narratives, observations, and student reactions as crucial factors in TPI development. However, contrary findings from Barahona D. (2014) suggest challenges for Chilean student teachers in integrating theory and practice.

The participant's multiple levels of self reveal the complexity of teacher identity. The first theme, 'constructing personal beliefs', combined self-esteem and self-image in Kelchterman's (1993) framework of teacher identity levels. The second theme, focusing on '*promoting self-acceptance and overcoming self-doubts*', improved Dina's educator perception and aligned with Kelchterman's '*task perception*' level. Incorporating Kumaravadivelu's (2012) modular model—knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing, and seeing—helped Dina navigate uncertainty, supporting Hassani et al.'s (2020) argument on learning to make judgments. Lastly, the third theme, '*developing a sense of fulfillment and global citizenship*', integrated *job motivation* and *future perspective*, driven by Dina's passion for learning, desire to influence students positively, personal growth, and enthusiasm to equip students with essential skills.

Regarding the aforementioned findings, several caveats need consideration. The ESA teacher education model was innovatively designed based on design theory and Kumaravadivelu's (2012) model but lacks focus on developing online teaching skills and leveraging digital platforms for language teaching in today's globalized context. Future

iterations should integrate generative AI tools to enhance student teachers' productivity, addressing the evolving landscape of education technology.

To effectively address the complex process of teacher identity (Pennington & Richards, 2016) and meet globalization demands, it is essential to incorporate intercultural subjects, professional codes of ethics, and artificial intelligence techniques into the pedagogy and teaching force components of the ESA program.

Additionally, the study's limitation to one participant suggests the need for broader data collection across diverse groups of student teachers, educators, and curriculum developers in varied contexts to generalize findings more robustly.

Lastly, while the ESA model was tailored to local and national settings, revised editions should aim to address global complexities within teacher education, ensuring relevance and effectiveness in a globalized educational landscape.

## Conclusion

The findings indicate that the ESA teacher education model facilitates the growth of pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills, and professional identity by promoting interdisciplinary and critical thinking, along with a sense of social responsibility. The model's flexibility and iterative structure, coupled with its practical duration, underscore the importance of rethinking teacher education as a transformative space. This study proposes that the ESA model nurtures professional, reflective, and critical teacher identities, equipping educators to navigate the evolving challenges of globalized language education.

The ESA model introduces three critical challenges for second language teacher educators, curriculum developers, and stakeholders in the profession to address in future studies. These challenges include 1) resistance to adopting a new teacher education model, 2) inadequate resources like technology and training for faculty and staff, which may hinder the ESA model's effectiveness, and 3) unpreparedness of institute staff to implement the new model. Overcoming these barriers is essential for ensuring the model's success. Teacher educators should prioritize systematic considerations in shaping teacher identity to effectively manage these challenges.

Overall, BRICS nations can advance teacher training programs and address educational disparities by prioritizing technology-based teaching methodologies and emphasizing the development of TPI. Given the influence of prescriptive standards on LTEPs (Freeman, 2016), curriculum developers should strike a balance between prescribed knowledge and the adaptable context of teacher education. It is recommended that new editions of programs like ESA leverage digital platforms to enhance teacher education systems collectively, supporting sustainable development goals.

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**APPENDIX**

*Specifications of Each Phase in an ESA Teacher Education  
(Adapted from Haghighi Irani et al.2021)*

<b>Items</b>	<b>Module 1 (Engage)</b>	<b>Module 2 (Study)</b>	<b>Module 3 (Activate)</b>
Purpose	-Motivating learners -Preparing trainees to start practice teaching -establishing engagement conceptually and emotionally -negotiating teacher professional identity	-integrating theory & practice -putting the known knowledge into practice -starting to practice teaching in front of the class and discuss	-Activating the known knowledge of Phases 1&2 -practicing application & production -creating tasks & tests -providing feedback
Content & Activities	-learning knowledge about language & teaching -doing systematic & reflective discussions & written reports in pairs & groups -reading texts, watching videos & webinars, joining online international teaching groups	-presenting knowledge of teaching in practice -doing simulations & role plays -doing field training as observations of in-service teachers' classes and providing notes and comments	-Focusing on the assessment for developing tests -focusing on learning theories for developing tasks -developing tests for language skills & components
Assessment	-taking the final test (Teaching Knowledge Test 'TKT' Моч), 50% -trainees' Portfolio, 50%	-presenting mini & long teaching practices & a final demonstration, 50% -trainees' portfolio, 50%	-taking a written open-ended test, 50% -trainees' portfolio, 50%
Time Duration	95	120	25