



Futurology: Round Table Discussion notes

Global concerns

- Change hinges on the political, social, and economic contexts
- Gaps btw stakeholders in TESOL because of a lack of trust and communication --> causes friction btw practitioner and policy makers
- Rise of nationalism/populism; exclusion of shared resources & school exchange opportunities
- Refugees are a heterogeneous group; displaced people are not going away; need to regulate aid
- Focus on schools in not well-known areas; interest in access found in conflict areas
- English being used for something other than communication: entrance into university, getting a job... less of a language and more of a tool; identities are not languages
- Make the "elephants" a part of the conversation; put egos aside
- English should be seen as a door opener, a facility to democratization
- Negativities against the dominant societies that are also seen as the sources of English affect teaching and learning; there needs to be an appreciation of diversity as well as intercultural communication and global understanding
- Publishers create a global curriculum to create global citizens
- A raise in access to women getting an education
- What to do with the money-makers in language teaching?
- Adopt what works globally to suit local contexts (and vice-versa?)
- Countries are moving away from UK/US English. In a globalized world, who speaks the correct English? Which English is used? Who owns English? What culture gets taught with English?
- Who will be a leaders of global inclusion? EU, Canada, Scandinavia?
- Does the increase of refugees mean a need for more English; is English really a priority?
- How can we prepare people for a future we do not know?
- What is the target in learning English? Proficiency or enabling?

Research concerns

- Create stronger bonds between researchers and practitioners (get them on the same page) before policy makers; include families and communities
- Teach professionalism in teacher education programs; "the challenge is teacher education"
- More research needed to see if digital teacher education is effective; can it build qualifications
- Enquiry is a luxury to those who have time to do and/or read
- Can we get better at collecting anecdotal evidence and documenting its strength?
- Ministry officials & teacher trainers to meet with researcher during the proposal writing process
- Should we be investing more in action research (a great way to get teachers involved)? Can we use a video approach?

- How do we inform the public about the work being done in TESOL? How to support and define the actions of TESOL?

Technology concerns

- Agreed that technology is a mega-trend, but it can pose a threat of manipulation of identity
- Needs to be used for the right reasons, i.e. learning; doesn't automatically make better teaching
- Used for better communications btw teachers and students and reach curriculum goals; community building; meet students where they are; understand cultural influences btw teacher & student; generation gaps
- Should use technology to fill the trust & communication gaps btw stakeholders
- Teachers need skills to filter out (and teach others how to filter out) the Social Media noise; be careful of social media bubbles; need to teach critical thinking skills
- Need more infrastructure (also political)
- Creating a bigger divide btw haves and have nots (also political); teachers need PD in technology
- Can teach critical thinking skills; lesson is seeking the truth in posts
- Create a platform for international exchange; establishing teacher communities for support and decentralization
- Fears of dehumanizing teaching; students put themselves thru digital modules; teachers make the difference *in* the class
- Skeptical of technology solving issues; without the right equipment, you're locked out. Old fashion media can still work (i.e. radio).
- How can TESOL take advantage of data available on social media?
- Will teachers become facilitators and thinkers and robot the teachers? (Policy-makers to consider)

Political concerns

- Education suffers with economic woes; language teachers bottom of finance food-chain;
- Political conflicts influence education trends and can shut down schools
- Bureaucracy in educational system creates inefficiencies and misinformation; it's challenging for governments to understand what goes on in the classroom
- Protectionism: need for advocacy, alliances, exchanges, strength of teachers (training needed)
- Seeing a move away from native-English policies; qualified teachers takes precedent
- Finding a transition in strength from the private to the public sector
- Governments set goals without thinking thru logistics and implementation
- Understand the past and present in order to look to the future
- International organization can influence policy if they have a unified message
- Language policy makers rarely speak the languages they are creating policy for
- Accountability in education via accreditors/accreditation (careful of personal/financial interests)
- Create ways to centralize education: both positives and negatives; prioritize community needs
- Recognize issues that concern young people; give young people a stronger voice
- If creating talking points, make sure they are in language politicians understand
- Is English challenging? Imperialist? Prestigious? A life-skill? An economic opportunity?
- Mandatory? Respected?
- Certification vs skills: what counts as professional knowledge? Consider lifelong PL needs
- What do you do when the public has had enough of "experts" and just want to go with the gut?
- Isn't the elephant in the room testing, certificates, manpower, and instruction?

- Trend towards EIM, CLIL, TEYL: Does this lead to unethical practice? Because it may disenfranchise the poor with less access to English? Because it may restrict the domains of use of the L1 e.g., science? Because teachers may not have content and language skills?

School concerns

- Teachers need to be language planners to convey attitudes; teacher personality is still key
- Pressure for teachers to use more online teaching
- Foster multilingualism by allowing the use of L1 in the classroom
- High drop-out rates in under resourced areas; take education levels into consideration
- Teachers being asked to be immigration expert, social workers, etc. Training should be free
- May need more use for volunteers to be advocates
- Teaching focus in on language, not acquisition
- If English was taught properly, there would be no need for private language schools
- Funding should be for all students, not just those with special needs and/or learning disabilities
- English can bring peoples who share common interests together
- it's easy for associations to support practice, sometimes reluctant to approach policy & research
- Should curriculum be decided in the classroom?
- All teachers need English skills... does this undermine the TESOL Professionalism?
- Where to get books/materials? Could there be more open access?

Contextual examples

- Indonesia has problems with access and equity to English; limited English vocational schools
- Canada: willing to invest in the greater good; liberal trend; pro-immigration
- EU: the profession has a responsibility to espouse value of diversity
- China: access to work/higher education/academia depends on level of English; is this ethical? Often limited to those of higher socio-economic level
- Vietnam: quality of education & teaching is very good; trouble with English only policies
- Korea: Parents have a huge voice in primary school teaching
- UAE: English is taught from grade 1; L1 literacy skills have decreased
- Taiwan: Using technology to reach university students on remote islands
- Turkey: English is needed for a good job, but not a part of the university entrance exam
- Cyprus & Rwanda: they are meetings with all stakeholders
- Iraq: little opportunity to work with native-speakers; trying to organize an association
- Oman: using social media to train teachers
- India: if the government takes money away from English, people lose interest; some people learn English in the absence of actual classroom teaching
- Hawaii: must keep heritage languages
- Brazil: English is seen as a colonized language that forms bad emotions about it
- Cyber cafes: not always safe for girls; inadequate facilities; has a cost
- Rural Communities: maximize alternative resources; technology may not be the answer