DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 127 786 FL 007 824

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TITLE The Role of the Methodology Component in the Training of Teachers of English as a Second or Foreign Language. ELT Documents (76/1).
INSTITUTION British Council, London (England). English-Teaching Information Centre.
PUB DATE Jan 76
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Course Content; Course Descriptions; Curriculum Guides; Education Courses; *English (Second Language); *Language Teachers; *Methods Courses; Preservice Education; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Educator Education; Teaching Experience; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The total teacher-training program must take into account the needs of the teacher as well as realistic expectations as to further training, school facilities, hours to be taught, etc. Within this context, the methodology course will illustrate and synthesize the general aims of the training, as well as providing specific training in technical skills appropriate to the subject to be taught. Teacher training must relate theory to specific situations. To do this the trainer must have experience with the institutions the trainee is being prepared for. In addition, it is desirable to involve the trainee in planning the training course. A suggested methodology scheme for EFL teachers in a secondary-school setting includes twenty major components (various language skills, testing, materials, etc.) against which seven possible areas of overlap are noted: history, sociology, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, statistics, and resources. The scheme includes an initial theoretical framework, followed by specific illustrations, and finally a number of general points by way of summary. The emphasis throughout the training should be on various forms of small-group activity, and cooperative student effort, with a minimum amount of lecturing on the part of the trainer. (AM)

THE ROLE OF THE METHODOLOGY COMPONENT IN THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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THIS PAPER consists of two parts: a general discussion of the relationship between the methodology component and the rest of the course, and a specific analysis of the ideas put forward, shown in a proposed course outline.

I

One of the problems which underlies all teacher education is that of the sheer number of teachers required in any educational system. Compared with - say - doctors or lawyers, the teacher has little scarcity power or status; yet the range of abilities needed by a teacher in a national educational system is greater than that required by members of other professions, and at certain levels the depth of knowledge has to be at least as great.

In most countries, society is geared to its children being confined in schools for most of the daylight hours for most of the year by guardians who are paid by the state. But, increasingly, the role of the teacher is being questioned. Probably the contradictions in the teaching professions merely reflect contradictions within the whole society, but whether this is so or not, teacher-training is faced with the problem of looking simultaneously backwards and forwards. It must help the teacher to work successfully in the system as he finds it and at the same time must help him to cope with new situations as they arise. If this is to be done systematically, the teacher-trainer must produce, out of this confused tradition, an explanatory model of the teacher situation. To understand his profession, the student will have to generalise about the role of the teacher. The process of generalisation, however, will only be valuable if it is related to a systematic account of what it is to be a teacher. By and large, this account seems to be lacking in most countries.

A course for the training of teachers must avoid the dangers of being over-general or over-specific, and the best way of doing this is to link the course to a general principle which is realisable all the time in specific situations. A useful principle of this kind, which I will state dogmatically, is the assertion that a teacher can only teach what he is - he teaches himself. The course can thus be considered as an exploration of what that self is in relation to the teaching role which is going to be adopted. The self is of course a compound of attitudes and opinions from various sources, but the 'subject-matter' of the teacher, whether he is dealing with skills or attitudes or information, will be meaningful only in relation to the whole personality.

Unfortunately a statement such as this can only be asserted; it is not susceptible of proof - but it is perhaps useful to remind ourselves that any discussion of educational principles is founded on value judgements. However thorough our empirical investigations, they can tell us only how things happen and have happened. They cannot alone answer the fundamental question of education: how things should happen.

We can suggest, then, that the first aim of a teacher-training course might be to encourage the student to be aware of this limitation of his activity: he cannot avoid teaching himself to pupils. To be most explicitly aware of this, he will need a view of society and a view of himself as part of that society, related to a view of the student as part of society also. Of course, all these relationships are very complex: the teacher must be aware of himself as a member of many groups, from the animal kingdom (a membership which he shares with his students) down to the specific subgroups to which he belongs distinctly from his colleagues and his pupils, and each of his pupils' specific subgroups.

This view, when systematised, might be called the explanatory framework within which the teaching must fit. It is tempting to ignore it altogether, or to take it for granted. But this temptation must be resisted, for if we do not resist it we are likely to become preoccupied with techniques, forgetting to consider the purpose for which they will be employed. Let me conclude this introduction, then, with a plea for an 'ideological' base for teacher education without making a statement for any particular interpretation of 'ideology'. The teacher must be aware that everything he does is an argument for or against a particular moral - and therefore political, economic, social etc - view of the world. Only within this explanatory framework will he be able to evaluate the role that society demands from the teacher, and only through such a framework will the discipline that he teaches make consistent sense.

The teacher in the classroom, then, will find himself subject to social influences as shown in Figure 1.

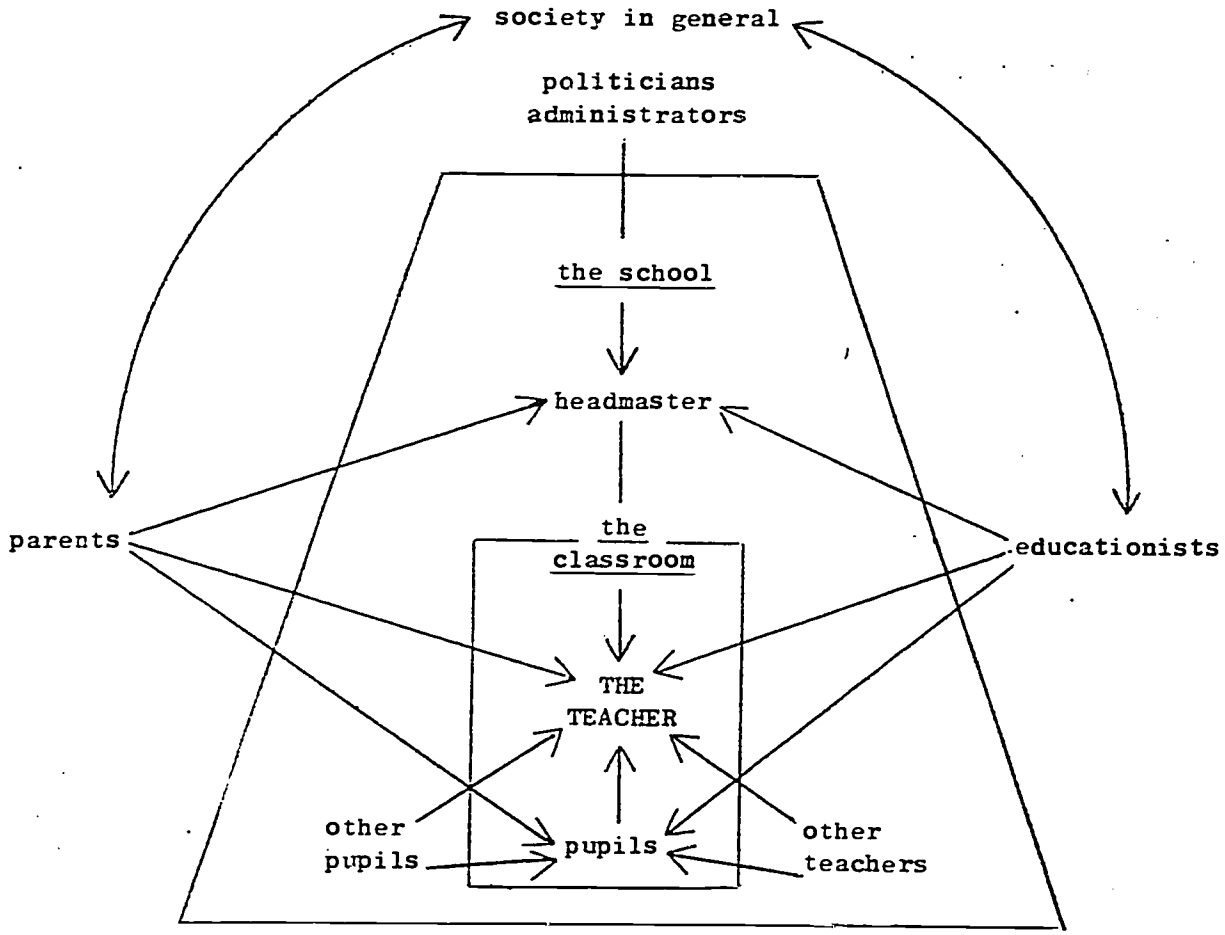

Figure 1. (Adapted from Morrison and McIntyre, 1969, p 76)

A diagram such as this of course simplifies all the relationships, especially in that it implies distinctions between the groups which do not exist in practice: a man may simultaneously be a teacher, a parent and an educator, and the classroom situation may produce a conflict between the roles. None the less this may be a useful framework to work with, both for the teacher and for the teacher trainer, for not only is the latter asking his students to put themselves in the position of the teacher, but he is also illustrating that situation himself. He is in the unique position of teaching his content and his methodology - he has no methodology which is not content, his knowledge is his performance. If, therefore, he is going to expect his students to be able to teach something which is coherent, it is essential for his own material to fit into a framework. And this means a common goal for all teachers in an institution, a common sense of direction.

When the course is designed, it needs to take into account a typical entrant, to offer him what he requires, with maximum adaptability to individual variations, in order to enable him to finish as close as possible to the goal - presumably that of being a perfect teacher. All this will of course be seen in the context of the tussle between resources and aims, for the training must be realistic in relation to such factors as the existence or non-existence of later in-service training, the materials and aids available in schools, the number of hours taught, etc. This is an obvious thing to say, but such factors are astonishingly often ignored. Only when we have thus

defined the context of the total teacher-training programme can we proceed to discuss the role of the methodology component.

The methodology course, then, will illustrate and exemplify the general aims of the training. At the same time it must provide training in a number of specific and technical skills appropriate to the subject being trained. A number of those skills are often taught independently of the methodology course, but as will be shown later the methodology component can link with these in a number of places. How this link is effected will depend on the overall course structure and raises an important methodological point. It is possible to construct a course in which the methodology classes are central: they synthesise the work done in the other courses. The desirability of doing this depends partly on the attitude taken to the division of the curriculum into subjects at all, and partly on what is known about teachers' conceptions of themselves. Does a physicist have more in common with a non-teaching physicist than with a French-teaching colleague? Do teachers see themselves primarily as teachers or as such-and-such-a-subject teachers? If we see our roles as subject-teachers, then the course may well centre on the subject-methodology with good effect - providing that this is felt to be a satisfactory educational situation. Certainly EFL is likely to be an independent subject-area for some time to come, so all teachers will require some training which links general educational theory to the demands of the subject-discipline.

If we accept that the methodology component of the course should provide a synthesis and a realisation of everything that the trainee teacher learns in his education course, the framework used will have to be at a fairly high level of generality. Many courses achieve a high level by teaching a great deal of theory on the assumption that students will then be able to apply it to a variety of situations. In some ways this is more dangerous than the over-practical 'tips for teachers' approach. Even the most specific 'tip' must relate to some theoretical position, and the basic problem for any teacher is that of relating his (explicit or implicit) theoretical position to the requirements of classroom practice. If the theory that is presented to him does not include a theory of the teaching situation, he is going to be left high and dry. I am using 'theory' here somewhat loosely, but perhaps a specific illustration will help. A possible theoretical shape for a methodology course in teaching English as a second language situation for secondary schools might look something like this:

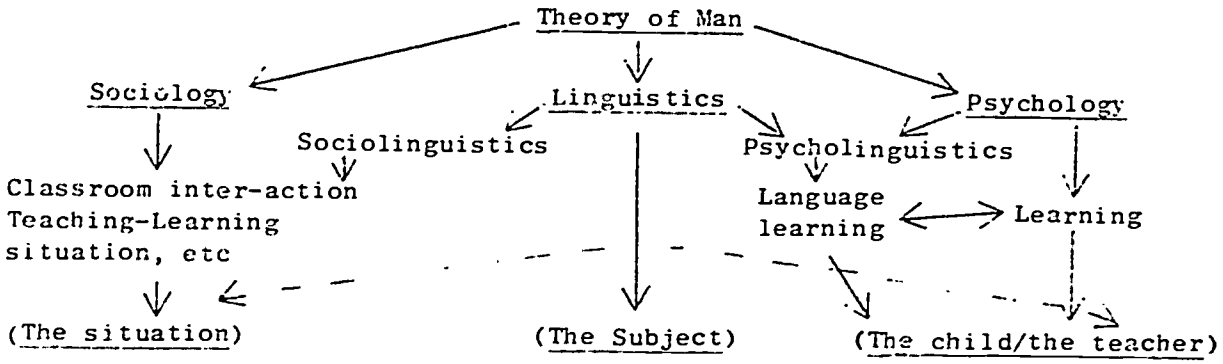

Figure 2

This diagram shows, in descending order of generality, the discipline with theoretical pretensions which will be influencing the shape of a methodology course. This means that everything provided in the course will be the practical and specific illustration of this general and theoretical framework. Of course, each of the three main categories - the psychological, situational and academic components - will need to be broken down into their own subcategories, and these will vary from institution to institution, for the methodology must relate to the sociology, psychology, philosophy etc that is being taught elsewhere on the course. It is from these separate parts that students will be expected to synthesise their own approach (and the approach will subsume a theory) to teaching. We shall only provoke confusion at best, and schizophrenia at worst, if we do not attempt, whatever our personal training or views, to relate our own work to the theoretical premisses of our colleagues. The total education courses must present a consistent picture.

It will not be possible, however, to present a consistent picture simply at the theoretical level, and leave the trainee student to work it out later in real terms. The reason for this is that in practice in school the exigencies of the local situation impose their own pattern, and only the most confident - or, possibly, inflexible - teacher is going to be able to force the work into his own mould. Even in a situation where students may be going to a wide variety of different environments it makes more sense to relate teaching methodology to one specific type of situation and to illustrate and refer to the generalisations from the standpoint of that situation. This has two implications, however. First, it does suggest that it is undesirable to have too heterogeneous a collection of students; there is little point in a discussion of 'general methods' in abstract terms for what can be said usefully will then be little more than teaching tips, and most of these will make more sense in relation to a real situation, ie applied to the teaching of a particular subject to a particular age-group in a particular area. It is unlikely, for example, that a joint class for the discussion of primary and secondary language-teaching methods can ever be as useful as two separate classes. To be specific is not to be unrigorous or unacademic; methodology includes the analysis of procedures, and these procedures have no meaning out of context. So many methodology courses strenuously advocate activity, work which fully engages pupils' attention, and so on, while never moving themselves beyond advocacy to activity. We are after all training certain skills, and these skills do not exist in the abstract: a perfect lesson in isolation (like so many demonstration lessons by college lecturers who hardly know the names of the class they are teaching) cannot be a perfect lesson, for its perfection cannot lie in an abstract shape but only in a living relationship with a specific class. But this living relationship is more than a matter of personal empathy and much past contact between teacher and taught: it proceeds in part from the vast network of more abstract assumptions and generalisations which underlie all our actions. And, as with any other field of activity, these assumptions are frequently based on received opinions of greater or lesser value. If these can be systematised, assessed and related to such accurately observed evidence as is available, there is a chance that this process will lead to more effective classroom activity. By practice in, and concentrated consideration of, the process of relating theory to practice in a situation, the student may acquire the skills necessary to deal with different individual situations. If he only receives, passively, the theoretical basis, he has had no experience during his training of the activity which takes up most of the teacher's working life.

If, then, we are to relate our course closely to a specific situation, what situation would it be? Obviously we need to have a great deal of information

about, and contact with, the kinds of schools or institutions for which we shall be training our students - and our knowledge of this will enable us to describe a typical situation. Beyond this, however, we can also exploit the situation in which the tutor and the student find themselves - their own institution.

It is often difficult to involve (not nominally but really) students in the organisation and planning of tertiary-level courses, but in an education course there are very strong reasons for this to be desirable, quite apart from any argument about a student's right to participate in course-planning. The extent and nature of student involvement will have to depend on local circumstances, but if it is at all possible it should be regarded as an integral part of the course for all students.

II

At this point it will probably clarify the argument to provide a suggested methodology scheme for the training of EFL teachers. Twenty major components are suggested in Figure 3, and against each is marked a number of possible overlaps with more general areas, which will probably be covered in other parts of the course. Although all these general topics do not appear on the scheme in Figure 2, the relationship of each of them to that theoretical framework should be obvious. The course outlined here is intended for a second-language English secondary-school situation, but the general principles which it illustrates would be applicable to any type of methodology training, at least at secondary level.

The crosses in Figure 3 simply illustrate the major areas on which cross-reference will be made during the sessions devoted to the numbered topic. The topics have been deliberately made fit for a specific situation and have not been timed. It is not assumed that each topic will take the same time as any other, but it is suggested that a scheme such as this, dealing with the general topics, approximately in this order, will make it possible for a satisfactory degree of specificity, together with maximum general applicability, to be achieved. The general shape is thus to provide at first a theoretical framework, and then to illustrate this with reference to specific situations and teaching levels. At the end some more general points are made, not as new items but rather as a way of continuing to investigate the same problems from a different angle. Thus the sections from 10 to 16 will provide specific illustrations of all the more general problems dealt with in the earlier period, and those from 17 to 20 will enable the strands to be pulled together by increasing the generality of the situation.

In order to clarify this scheme, it may be helpful if I give a brief indication of the kinds of topic which might appear under the seven general headings. These are not topics which would be dealt with explicitly as part of a lecture programme; they would instead be a checklist for the use of the tutor, who would make sure that at an appropriate place in the scheme of Sections 1 to 20 this area would be touched upon and the general theoretical and methodological problems of the area would be discussed and explored.

	History	Sociology	Philosophy	Linguistics	Psychology	Statistics	Resources
1. Introduction, setting the course in context	x	x	x				
2. Basic principles of L1 learning		x		x	x		
3. Basic principles of L2 learning		x		x	x		
4. Major components: hearing and speaking				x	x		
5. Major components: understanding (aural & visual)				x	x		
6. Major components: writing				x	x		
7. Major components: extensive reading & literature				x	x		
8. Testing language		x	x	x	x	x	
9. Testing literature		x	x	x	x	x	
10. Approach to Form I		x	x		x		x
11. Approach to Form II		x	x		x		x
12. Approach to Form III		x	x		x		x
13. Approach to Form IV		x	x		x		x
14. 'A' Level teaching		x	x		x		x
15. Literature teaching		x	x		x		x
16. Use of the library		x	x				x
17. Procedure and methodology: group work		x	x		x		
18. Procedure and methodology: aids, evaluation and writing of materials	x	x					x
19. Running an English department		x	x				
20. English in X: the current situation	x	x	x				

Teaching practice and follow-up sessions

Figure 3

The list of headings that follows is not exhaustive but should give some idea of what is intended.

History. How English-language teaching came to develop into the state it is in now - both in general, on a worldwide basis, and in the particular country, related to general educational development.

Sociology and psychology. Linguistic aspects of the sociology of the teaching/learning situation; sociological aspects of language-learning; attitudes to language; language policy; learning theory with special reference to language-learning; perceptual problems related to language; testing theory; language development in the child; language and thought (and, on a more trivial level, the distinction between L1, L2 and foreign-language learning); code, register, dialect, accent, language of literature.

Philosophy. Language and concept formation, the Whorfian hypothesis; what is meaning? Ethical implications of methodological decisions.

Linguistics. Description of English, with the basic principles of syntax, phonology and semantics according to the model normally taught in the institution. (This course assumes that the actual content used in the school is being taught independently in an English or linguistics department. Thus the whole of this linguistics section would be taught in an independent course. The methodology tutor should be familiar with all aspects of the course and establish the links as explicitly as possible. In an ideal situation, perhaps, he will assist in the teaching of linguistic studies, and if there is no independent course he will certainly have to incorporate a much fuller course than is outlined here into the methodology work.

Statistics. Basic statistics for testing purposes, scaling, the bell curve, standard deviation, etc. Possibly, if the climate in the schools justifies it, basic experimental design and some knowledge of statistical tests.

Resources. As are useful and necessary according to the condition of the schools and facilities offered. This heading will also cover the very wide field of assessment of materials and the construction of new teaching materials and aids which will lead into basic principles of syllabus design. These principles will be implicit throughout the course and should be made explicit more than once, certainly at the beginning and end, and also during Session 18.

What sort of procedural methodology is most appropriate for putting over these aims? A certain amount of the course is explanatory, particularly at the beginning, and the interrupted lecture may have to be used for short periods. Most of the work, however, can be successfully covered with various forms of small-group activity coupled with short assignments every week to provide the basis for the activity. In class, this may include group-discussion of previously prepared work, students teaching each other in groups, demonstration lessons, and students teaching themselves and school-children in groups - a somewhat rough and ready form of microteaching. The sessions from 10 to 16 in Figure 3 can be used very profitably for specific work related to the particular level of the class being discussed. For example before the work on Form I students may be asked to prepare structure drills (for remedial purposes only, where Skinnerian principles may have application) and be asked to use them with a class in collaboration with two or three other students. If a class is not conveniently available, a group of other students could stand in. They will then be asked to adapt

the drills as a result of their experience with them, again in collaboration with their fellows, or to discuss the principles involved in the use of the drills in relation to learning theory, which has been covered elsewhere in psychology classes. A similar approach may be made for preparing materials for composition work for one of the other forms, and on comprehension work, or a class project, or reading work in relation to the slots of other Forms in the scheme. Of course, it is not necessary for all students to be doing the same thing at the same time, but the general pedagogical principles suggested are those of emphasising cooperative effort by the students, and as little lecturing as possible contributed by the lecturer, whose role is better directed towards arranging the logistics of the various situations, giving lessons to demonstrate particular points and acting as a gentle signpost in discussions.

Model lessons should be avoided as far as possible; surely typical lessons are much more useful. One must try, in a sense, to be as routine as possible, without being unexciting, otherwise an impossible general model is being set. If time and the university or training college set-up permit it, he may be able to run some kind of small scale research project with his students, probably in the course of teaching practice sessions. But beyond this he, like any other teacher, is teaching himself, ie manifesting what he is.

The lecturer's self-consciousness in constructing his course should be made public so that students can generalise from their experience of the methodology course to the course that they themselves will be engaged in. Thus the dimensions of syllabus have a dual role: they act on the course itself and they are exemplified in the content of the course. Further, since the lecturer himself is more than usually part of his content as well, it will be necessary for him to be as fully engaged as possible in educational activity related to the schools or other institutions for which he is preparing students. He needs, as I said earlier, to teach in a school (in fact he should not be training students if he has not taught in a school of exactly the type for which he is preparing them for at least two or three years, but in practice it rarely works out like that), he needs to be engaged in curriculum development work for the schools, to take part in in-service courses, to conduct relevant research and to develop materials himself for school use. This point is emphasised because it is astonishingly often neglected. From all this proceeds the tutor's self-education, and from that the self he teaches to his students.

This may perhaps be regarded as painting an idealised picture. I make no apology, however. The final basis, as was said at the beginning, is an ethical one. In so far as one can generalise, I have tried to present a guide as to how a good methods course might be organised, proceeding from the tutor himself, to his general theoretical model, to a specific syllabus.

It has not been possible to treat all aspects of this adequately in a small space, but it is hoped that the major questions of principle in designing a methodology course have been at least touched upon.

REFERENCE

Morrison, A; McIntyre, D : Teachers and teaching. Penguin 1969.