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English language teacher socialisation during the practicum

Abstract
Language teacher preparation in many countries consists of course work on a university campus followed by some student teaching (the practicum) in a variety of settings. Teaching practice has come to be recognised as one of the most important parts of the teacher education program. During the practicum, the beginning teacher is socialised into all aspects of the teaching profession both inside and outside the classroom. However, in English language teaching (ELT) there is a paucity of data on what exactly takes place during field experiences. The purpose of this exploratory study is, in part, to address this gap. This paper outlines a case study of one trainee teacher during his teaching practicum. Results indicate that the teacher encountered some problems, including unclear lines of communication and a weak support structure for trainee teachers at the school during this socialisation process. Recommendations include more quality collaboration between the triad of the supervisor (the teacher-training institution), the cooperating teacher (the school) and the trainee teacher, whereby each participant has a more clearly defined role to play.

Introduction
Teaching practice has come to be recognised as one of the most important aspects of the teacher education program (Funk and Hoffman 1982). As Clark (1988: 1) points out: ‘If the literature and folklore of teacher education agree on one point, it is that the student teaching experience or practicum is important.’ The process of teacher socialisation really only begins during the period of the practicum. However, as Richards and Crookes (1988: 22) point out, little is known about ‘[what] exactly takes place during field experiences’ in English language teaching (ELT). This study was designed to provide information about the process of socialisation based on a case study of the experiences of one trainee teacher because, as Richards and Crookes (1988: 22) note, ‘such information is essential in determining the contribution of field experiences to the student’s professional development’.

For the purposes of this paper, socialisation means the process of becoming a member of a specific group, the teaching profession. This socialisation process includes learning how to teach and all the demands associated with teaching, such as coping with school rules inside and outside the classroom,
following the school rules for lesson planning, following or developing curricula, learning the routines of the classroom, and learning how to interact with school authorities and colleagues. This paper reports on the influences of field-based experiences (the practicum) on the socialisation process of one teacher of English language in Singapore. I begin by reviewing the research literature on the influences of the practicum on teacher socialisation.

**Teacher socialisation and the practicum**

Bliss and Reck define teacher socialisation as ‘the process by which an individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers’ (1991: 6). They go on to argue that teacher socialisation is a ‘learning process which requires developmental growth on the part of the novice teacher’ (1991: 6). Zeichner and Grant (1981) outline three major components in preservice teacher education programs which can influence teacher socialisation. These are:

- Course work in general education and academic specialisations;
- Methods and foundation courses within education units; and
- Field-based experiences in the schools.

Schlechty (1990) links teacher socialisation with teacher induction and suggests that preservice teacher education, especially teaching practice, is an important feature of the induction process. Schlechty continues, ‘If preservice teacher education is to be conceptually and theoretically linked to the socialisation of teachers, the only means of making this linkage is by conceiving of preservice education as part of the induction process’ (1990: 29).

One of the biggest influences within the preservice teacher education course is the field-based experiences beginning teachers encounter in real teaching situations. According to Huling, field-based experiences offer teacher candidates a place to ‘observe and work with real students, teachers, and curriculum in natural settings’ (1997: 1). Different types of field experiences identified in the practicum have been classified as direct, or indirect (Cruickshank and Armaline 1986). Direct experiences include supervised and unsupervised teaching experiences, while indirect experiences involve observing teaching.

The practicum can be held in a campus-based language institute or in local school districts. However, campus-based practicum experiences are very different from working in schools off campus (Richards and Crookes 1988). Richards and Crookes (1988: 12) point out that campus-based programs may be so well supported with well-trained staff and superior support systems that they ‘do not offer realistic teaching experiences’. Nonetheless, Richards and Crookes, in their survey of MA programs in the USA, found that most of the field experiences during the practicum occurred in an ESL program on the university campus, even though such experiences provide a ‘limited exposure to the real world of TESOL’ (1988: 22).
This is why Zeichner and Grant (1981) have argued that it is important to distinguish between the socialisation role of campus-based and field-based elements of preservice teacher education programs. They argue this because each component represents different and sometimes competing notions of the process of learning to teach. Regarding the practicum, it seems that circumstances in individual schools influence the socialisation process of preservice teachers. For example, Calderhead (1988) found that the impressions preservice teachers acquired during field experiences affected the nature of their learning experience — for some, confirming the impressions they had about the nature of teaching prior to the teacher education course, for others, changing them. For instance, in one setting the school policy may be to follow a textbook as part of a prescribed curriculum, while in another setting teachers may have the freedom to construct their own curriculum. Some settings may have high levels of collegiality, while others do not. Consequently, it seems that circumstances in different settings in which student teachers are placed may have different effects on their experiences as they learn to teach (Calderhead 1988).

Richards and Crookes (1988), in a major survey of MA TESOL programs on the objectives of the practicum, found that a diverse and vague range of skills were identified as being important for preservice teachers to learn. Richards and Crookes argue that these include ‘classroom management skills, lesson planning, awareness of teaching style, and ability to interact with students’ (1988:11).

Another important (and controversial) issue concerning the practicum is the placement of the trainee teacher with a competent cooperating teacher (sometimes called a mentor teacher). Slick’s (1995) study pointed out the tendency for many cooperating teachers not to be trained in how to work with trainee teachers because of lack of time and resources. Richards and Crookes also noted that the role of the cooperating teacher has been poorly defined, and that ‘classroom teachers are usually not well prepared for the task of supervising a student teacher’ (1988: 23).

Brinton and Holten’s (1989) case study of 20 novice ESL teachers during their ten-week supervised practicum outlined how these teachers used dialogue journals to construct and revise their understandings of themselves as teachers. They found that these trainee teachers were concerned with understanding their own classrooms, learning from their mentor teacher, and mastering the art of language teaching in general. However, they pointed out that a major limitation of their study was that they used quantitative methods exclusively to tabulate the frequency of entries and comments. Brinton and Holten (1989: 349) continued: ‘No attempt was made to assess the comments qualitatively’.

The study reported in this paper is an attempt to assess qualitatively the comments of one trainee teacher during his practicum period. Qualitative rather than quantitative methodologies were used in order to emphasise the importance of the context-specific nature of the process of socialisation and
the contributions of the individual teacher to his/her process of becoming a teacher. Quantitative studies in teacher socialisation tend to focus on the socialisation of groups, which ignores how individual teachers vary as they are socialised into specific contexts. As Kuzmic has observed:

Quantitative research designs have tended to focus on groups of teachers, which has two harmful consequences for understanding the socialisation process: (1) perspectives of individual beginning teachers have not been explored as they formed, developed and changed in the process. (2) With a focus on groups, individuals have come to be viewed as powerless to resist the biographical or institutional forces which shape their views of teaching so as to conform with traditional norms and values which operate within schools. (1993: 16)

Context and background

This study took place in Singapore. Singapore has a heterogeneous multi-ethnic population of more than three million people made up of 77 per cent Chinese, 14 per cent Malays, 7.6 per cent Indians and 1.4 per cent persons of other ethnic groups (Singapore Department of Statistics 1999). The Singaporean school system is divided into six years of primary, and four years of secondary, education. These schools are divided into government-funded neighborhood schools and privately funded schools. The context of this study was within a neighbourhood secondary school. English is the medium of instruction in all schools in Singapore.

In Singapore, the English language has a special place: it is the language of government administration and it is the medium of instruction in all schools. As observed by Ho: ‘it has to be understood that one of the aims of the education system of the country is for all students to learn two languages, English and the mother tongue’ (Ho 1998: 19). For example, the mother tongue of a Singaporean-Chinese would be Mandarin Chinese, of a Singaporean-Malay, it would be Malay, and that of a Singaporean-Tamil, would be Tamil (Gupta 1998). Gupta continues: ‘The first language is the main medium of education (which is now always English) while the second language is the other language studied (usually the official mother tongue)’. (1998: 117). However, it is not easy to classify the type of English used in the school system because there are many in Singapore who use English as a first, second and foreign language, and a few (usually from the older generation) who do not do not know any English (Gupta 1998). Although second and/or foreign English language teaching methodologies have been used in the past when teaching English in Singapore, Foley has observed that recently this is slowly changing to using ‘methodologies of English as the dominant language of education — using a first-language approach to teaching’ (1998: 248).

The student teacher in this case study was studying for a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore. Each trainee teacher enters the PGDE program with a Bachelor of Arts degree obtained from another university. The students in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) program take a 10-month program
in which they are exposed to teaching practice and theory classes. Typically, each PGDE (secondary) student undergoes coursework at the institution followed by teaching practice in a secondary school outside the institution. The NIE is the sole teacher training institution in Singapore and is responsible for the supervision of the teaching practice component of all Singaporean trainee teachers.

Teaching practice usually occurs towards the end of the PDGE program where the teachers are placed in schools for nine weeks of practice teaching. The school to which this student teacher was assigned was a neighbourhood school with students mainly from middle to lower middle class socio-economic groups. While I (the researcher) was his supervisor for Teaching Practice (TP), I observed him teach three times, twice for English and once for mathematics (his ‘second’ subject), as was required by the system. The researcher (the author) has been a teacher educator at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore for the past three years. The trainee teacher was my student for a reading module during his PGDE course. I was later appointed his supervisor for teaching practice. I asked the trainee teacher for permission to study how he was socialised into the school and the profession during the practicum along with my formal observations of his teaching. He agreed to allow me access to this information.

**Methodology**

Qualitative research procedures were used in the collection and analysis of the data (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Glesne and Peshkin 1992). The full period of data collection was the nine weeks of the practicum period. Data were collected by means of electronic mail ‘discussions’, telephone calls, classroom observations, and two in-depth interviews, one before, and one directly following, the practicum. Mishler (1986) and Spradely (1979) have pointed out the benefits of in-depth interviews in gauging research participants’ attitudes and points of view. Additionally, I kept a reflective journal to record informal encounters with the teacher as a daily log of research activity and as a form of personal reflection (Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Within this qualitative approach, the emphasis during the collection and analysis of data was on understanding and interpretation. During data analysis, the interview sessions were transcribed for accurate interpretation of emergent patterns and themes. The data were placed in categories through analytic induction (Goetz and LeCompte 1984). This technique involved scanning the data for categories of phenomena, and for relationships among these categories. The categories that emerged were compared to the categories derived through the analysis of the interviews, classroom observations and the field notes. To help start data analysis, I used Pennington and Urmston’s (1998) general categories as an initial a priori heuristic for analysis of the data generated by the interviews, the emails, telephone calls and classroom observations. These categories were instructional planning, teaching approaches, professional relationships and responsibilities, and the teacher’s perceptions.
and values. However, I was not restricted to these, and remained open to further categories as they emerged in the data.

Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) say that ‘member checks’, or the participant’s reading of the data for comments and interpretations, are crucial for establishing credibility in a qualitative study. The trainee teacher read, suggested some amendments, and then authenticated the final draft of this paper. Consequently, his comments helped shape this final written product.

Findings

The practicum

I report on the teacher’s socialisation (rather than his teaching performance on the teaching practice [TP] as this remains confidential) while he was on teaching practice. I started the post interview by asking for a general comment about his experiences on teaching practice, with special emphasis on his socialisation as a teacher of English language. The teacher said that it was very important for him to plan his lessons during his teaching practice. In the three classes I observed during the practicum, he always had a detailed lesson plan. This was probably because he was required (by the school and the teacher training institution) to have a teaching folder with detailed lesson plans for each of the classes he had to teach. However, nobody from the school looked at this folder. I, as his supervisor, was required to check that he had, in fact, fulfilled this requirement. He said that the syllabus played a big role in his planning, as his cooperating teachers had informed him that they were sticking close to the formal syllabus. He reported that he was controlled to a certain extent by the examination system that was already in place because he had to follow what the cooperating teacher (CT) was going to do in the classes he took over. It appears, therefore, this trainee teacher was pragmatic and realistic about the demands of the situation as he wanted to conform to the requests and suggestions made by the CTs in both subject areas.

As the interview progressed, I could see he was focusing on two main and related topics from the school culture that were influential for his socialisation into the system: support and communication. In relation to support from the school and colleagues, the teacher said that he (and the other four trainee teachers) felt left out of the process completely from the first time they walked into the school. He revealed:

We [the trainee teachers] feel like strangers in this school because we have never been introduced to the staff or student population ... which explains why some teachers don’t even notice our existence, especially since we are chucked in the Resource Room. Some students even thought we were salesmen trying to promote books initially! Consequently, we had to put in more effort to establish our credibility in front of our students.

When I visited the school as his supervisor I had great difficulty in finding him as he was placed in a small, dimly lit room, the 'Resource Room', which was located behind the staff room, the other side of a room with a number
of photocopying machines. There were no desks — only one big table for all
the five trainee teachers to share. The trainee teacher did not meet any of the
staff at this school except for the heads of department (HOD) of English and
mathematics and his cooperating teachers (CT) for each subject. However,
he said that he did not have much support from his HODs or from his CTs
in either subject area. He also said that he noticed that there did not seem to
be much collaboration between the regular teachers. He reflected:

The teachers do not work as a team and lots of politicking. Consequently,
teachers become wary of one another and do not share resources nor expe-
rience freely. It’s like if one teacher asks a question like: ‘Do you have any
resources for teaching [a particular subject]? The other replies: ‘Not sure.
I just teach them.’

With respect to communication, the teacher said that neither he nor the
other four trainees on teaching practice were officially informed when dif-
ferent events were to take place. However, if, as a result, they failed to turn
up, they were chastised by either the HOD (if it was a departmental meeting)
or the principal (if it was a school event). For example, the teacher said that
he was never informed about the principal’s regular meetings with the teachers:

Every week, the principal is supposed to have a dialogue session with all
the teachers, which is known as ‘contact time’. But we [trainee teachers]
ever know whether contact time is on or cancelled because there are no
notices nor announcements. The only way we know whether there is contact
time is by word of mouth … there is no official notice posted! And what if
we didn’t hear about it? Well, nobody seems to care but some teachers will
gossip about you if you had not shown up. The same applies to Department
Meetings. We [trainee teachers] missed one at the beginning because nobody
seemed to know about it … until we actually missed it!

He also noticed conflicting messages within the school when he did
receive communications. One such example was when the principal said one
thing about information technology (IT), and the HOD gave a conflicting
interpretation.

On one hand, the principal would like teachers to harness IT in teaching but
the HOD of the IT Department ‘gives hell’ to people who would like to make
use of the computer lab. The reason the HOD of IT gives is ‘the students will
spoil the equipment!’ So what are we to do?

He summed up the general atmosphere of the school when he com-
mented on the relationship between the principal and the teachers:

Whenever the principal enters the canteen, teachers having their lunch will
try to finish their meals as soon as possible and then leave. Those who are
‘caught’ behind will maintain their silence and not talk unless one is being
talked to. The school has been run so badly that even ‘old boy’ teachers have
asked for ‘transfer out’ by the end of this semester.

The result was that he was less than enthusiastic about his teaching career
after his practicum experience. He said that he could not teach (full-time) in
that school because of the culture of the school; he stated: ‘I personally feel
that I am unable to fit into the school.’ He was not happy about the future prospect of teaching in the school, and hoped that he would be posted (as he was) to a different school for his first year as a teacher.

**Discussion**

During the period of the practicum, this trainee teacher had a tendency to focus on himself and on his own teaching behaviours, rather than on his students’ learning. According to Kagan (1992), this is a natural progression of development for trainee teachers, whose initial focus on self as teacher may be a very important part of the socialisation process during the practicum. Kagan remarks that a mentor or supervisor should not try to hurry the novice teacher through this stage, as this will not benefit the beginning teacher: ‘Attempts by supervisors to shorten or abort a student teacher’s period of inward focus may be counterproductive.’ (1992: 155). As his supervisor, I was non-directive, and had intended to intervene only if requested by the teacher. However, this trainee teacher, despite experiencing certain frustrations during his practicum period, never asked me to intervene at any time.

The trainee teacher was realistic about the situation of his teaching in the neighbourhood school where he was placed for his practicum. Pennington and Urmston (1998) found similar responses from the graduating student teachers from a TESOL teacher education program in Hong Kong. Additionally, the trainee teacher in this study said that he was greatly influenced by his supervisor and not the cooperating teacher and/or the principal during the period of his practicum. Again, Pennington and Urmston’s (1998) study in Hong Kong made a similar discovery about how influential teacher-training supervisors were during the practicum. Furthermore, Borg’s (1998) study also indicated that the teacher featured in the case study was greatly influenced by his supervisor and the training course itself. However, the trainee teacher in this study was most unsure about professional relationships within the school. This may have been because of the trainee’s perceived lack of support from his senior colleagues, and his (and the other trainee teachers’) sense of confusion concerning communication within the school.

How does one evaluate the socialisation process of this teacher trainee during his practicum? Huling (1997) has noted that the place of the practicum in preservice teacher education is complex to evaluate. For example, the questions of how and what trainee teachers learn from these early field experiences are not easy to answer. Nevertheless, two issues were important in shaping the socialisation of the trainee teacher in this study: (the lack of) support, and communication.

In this trainee teacher’s case, support was lacking from the school authorities: the principal, the HOD and the CT. The trainee said that during the period of his practicum, his teacher-training supervisor was most influential and helpful in guiding him through the process. He also rated his fellow trainee teachers as being helpful during his practicum period, followed by students who were willing to provide useful feedback. The trainee said that
the more experienced teachers were somewhat influential, but the senior teachers and the principal were not very influential during the period of his practicum. Support from the school that the trainee teacher is placed in is crucial for the smooth socialisation of a novice teacher. During teaching practice, apart from the supervisor, the most influential person for the trainee is the cooperating teacher (Guyton and McIntyre 1990). It is, therefore, imperative that a trainee teacher on the practicum be placed with a competent cooperating teacher. However, it seems that many cooperating teachers may be untrained for working with trainee teachers because of lack of time and resources (Slick 1995; Richards and Crookes 1988). While cooperating teachers and supervisors share the goal of preparing effective teachers, they differ in their perspectives on the importance of theory and practice: supervisors generally emphasise theory, while cooperating teachers stress practical experience. With these differences in perspectives and emphasis, it is evident that collaboration between the supervisor and the CT becomes necessary.

During the practicum period (nine weeks), the cooperating teacher in this study never contacted me (the supervisor), and apart from a few comments made in passing when I visited the school that the teacher was ‘doing fine’, no other collaboration was initiated. The cooperating teacher who was assigned to the trainee teacher in this study was only made aware of his position the day before the trainee teacher arrived in the school. Additionally, this CT was not trained in mentoring trainee teachers. The trainee teacher, for the most part, had to teach in unsupervised classes as the CT saw the NIE trainee as someone who would take over his class. As the trainee stated in the interview, both the HOD and the CT were overextended during that term and could not devote time to mentoring the trainee teacher. It was therefore not surprising that they did not have time to discuss the trainee with the supervisor.

One conclusion from these observations would seem to be that, before cooperating teachers are appointed to mentor a trainee teacher, they should be fully trained in the mentoring role. This training could and should be done by the teacher training institution that the trainee comes from. In that way, closer ties can be fostered between the triad of supervisor, cooperating teacher (and thus the school), and the trainee. It is beyond the scope of this paper to suggest what should be included in such a training program. Nevertheless, previous studies have suggested that mentors (and thus cooperating teachers) act as sources of advice, critical friends, and instructional models and guide the professional development of the trainee teachers (Elliott and Calderhead 1993). Additionally, the school should consider reducing the workload of the appointed cooperating teachers so that they can devote sufficient time to the mentoring process. What happens in many schools at present (at least in Singapore) is that the cooperating teachers already hold a position of responsibility, and an additional position of responsibility as cooperating teacher only adds to the workload, thus putting the whole process of mentoring under a strain.
Teacher education institutions may need to be more involved in the selection and training of cooperating teachers in order to maximise the likelihood that the trainee teachers have a rewarding experience during their practicum. Additionally, the cooperating teachers, once selected and trained, must be remunerated for the increased responsibilities of supervising trainee teachers and recognised within their own school by having a reduced workload. In this way, a posting as a cooperating teacher will not be seen as a burden.

Jordell (1987) has suggested that the single most influential issue on teacher socialisation for beginning teachers is the relationships they form with their colleagues during their first years as teachers. If this is true, then more attention should be paid to helping CTs, their colleagues, and trainee teachers in ways of developing collegial relationships to ensure that student teachers on teaching practice have as much support as possible from the school. The trainee teacher in this study had little or no communication with any of the full-time teachers in the school during his practicum. The trainee felt that they took the attitude that he would only be in the school for nine weeks, and as such they did not consider him to be full-time. This brings up the question of who should accept responsibility for the trainee teacher during the period of the practicum.

During the practicum, a trainee teacher may be in a vulnerable position because of the question of who controls his or her development. For example, should the school or the teacher training institution (the supervisor) be responsible? Where English teachers undergo their teaching practice in campus-based English language programs, this question is more easily answered because the campus-based programs are usually attached to the training program, and, thus, are more tightly controlled by the teacher training institution.

However, when teaching practice takes place in off-campus programs, such as in school districts, the lines of responsibility become less clear. Recently, and in order to address the issue of who should take responsibility for the trainees during the practicum, the NIE in Singapore instituted a new model for the supervision of PGDE students. This new system is called ‘The Partnership Model’ and may go some way toward addressing more clearly the problem of who takes responsibility for trainee teachers during the practicum. Chellappah, Chiew and Gopinathan (1999) note that the Partnership Model involves more collaboration between the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the schools such that the schools will take more responsibility than before for developing the teachers. Originally, and in the case of the trainee teacher during this study, the NIE supervisor conducted three classroom observations and this accounted for about 80 per cent of the trainee’s grade. In the new system, the supervisor conducts one classroom observation and this accounts for less than 50 per cent of the grade. The partnership model works as follows: the school principal is in overall charge of the trainee teachers in the school. The principal then appoints a school coordinating
mentor (SCM) from the school, who takes care of the NIE trainees in the school during their practicum. The SCM will appoint cooperating teachers (CT) to guide each NIE trainee. The SCM also works closely with the NIE supervision coordinator (NSC). The NSC supervises all the trainee teachers in the school, regardless of subject area, and acts as overall coordinator of the practicum. At the end of the practicum period, a practicum panel meets to decide the grades of the trainee teachers. This panel is chaired by the school principal and is composed of the SCM and NSC.

Along with the school, and the teacher training institution, the trainee teacher himself or herself also carries some of the responsibility to ensure that his or her socialisation process goes as smoothly as possible. Just as teachers prepare and plan lessons, so too must they prepare for their practicum posting. For example, trainee teachers may draw up a list of questions about the school and requirements for trainee teachers on their practicum. These questions may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **School**: What is the organisation of the school? Do I have a copy of the staff handbook, school rules, and any other school brochure? Who are the non-teaching staff (clerical, computer and science technicians, librarians and photocopy helpers) that I can ask for assistance?
- **Organisation**: Whom do I report to directly? Does the school have an induction program for trainee teachers on their teaching practicum? How often should I meet my mentor (CT)? What are my duties during recess, lunch, and after school. Do I have extra-curricular activities? Do I have to teach remedial classes? What is my timetable? Where are my classrooms?
- **Subject**: What classes will I be teaching and is there a written syllabus? What are the required textbooks? What are the schemes of work I need to follow? How do I do assessment and record keeping?
- **Pupils**: What level are the pupils and what English language skills have they attained? Who taught them last year and can I talk to that person? How should I counsel and/or discipline my pupils?

**Conclusion**

In the study outlined in this paper the teacher experienced a short (nine-week) placement in a school he had never been in before. It seems that the school regarded taking on this role as a burden, and the cooperating teachers seemed to see their mentoring role as a burden too. Indeed, I have heard that the cooperating teachers complain that they have to re-teach the classes the new teacher conducted while on his or her practicum. However, the teaching practicum is very important for the socialisation process of a beginning teacher. The way a school responds to the arrival of trainee teachers on their practicum and the support they give these neophyte teachers often determines their attitude to the teaching profession. The support and guidance
of a competent and trained cooperating teacher can help build positively on the trainee’s success in the initial teacher education course. What is called for is more collaboration between the triad of the supervisor (the teacher training institution), the cooperating teacher (including the principal and HODs), and the trainee teacher. It remains to be seen whether the Partnership Model recently instituted in Singapore will be successful in promoting this collaboration.

Learning to teach, as Doyle suggests, involves ‘learning the texture of the classroom and the sets of behaviours congruent with the environmental demands of that setting’ (1977: 31). Teachers can really only experience this type of learning during practice teaching. However, when interpreting findings from research such as that discussed above, it is important to remember that each country has its own unique context with different traditions of schools and schooling, teaching, and teacher education. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalise from the study reported here unless researchers also take into account the particular situations and traditions of the context in which the teachers are training. For example, the student teaching model or practicum has a very different meaning in Australia from in the United States. In the former, preservice teachers experience several short practicums in different settings during their teacher education courses, while in the latter, students spend a full university semester in a school. Nevertheless, the role of any particular socialising aspect of these experiences, such as the selection and role of the cooperating teachers, has many similar consequences in all these systems. Further research on how trainee English language teachers are socialised during the practicum should be carried out in specific contexts, such as off-campus school districts and language schools, in order to build up a profile of beginning English language teacher socialisation in diverse contexts. Case studies on such topics could help teacher trainees on language teacher education programs to have more realistic expectations of what awaits them during teaching practice.

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