

Pre-Primary English Teacher Education in Macau: Investigating a Teacher Educator's Beliefs and Practices

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores a language teacher educator's beliefs and practices regarding pre-primary English teacher education in Macau. The focal participant was an experienced English language teacher (20 years) and teacher educator who is a native speaker of American English. The data were collected over five years, and include written reflections, classroom observations, course syllabi, and interviews. The findings reveal that the teacher educator held six main beliefs regarding various aspects of language teacher education for the pre-primary level, namely, beliefs about (1) the purpose of pre-primary English teacher education, (2) being a teacher educator, (3) the nature of the teaching methodology course, (4) the students, (5) pre-school learners and learning, and (6) the development of the teaching methodology course. The educator's beliefs were largely reflected in practice, as revealed in the course design, material selection, teaching, and the design of student assignments and other forms of assessment. The educator adjusted his/her practice over time in response to students' needs, self-awareness, and the university policies. The teacher educator's beliefs and practices were shown to be mutually informing.

Keywords: beliefs; Macau; pre-primary; pre-service teachers; student teachers; teacher educator; teaching philosophy

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Introduction

Education stakeholders should place teachers' beliefs at the centre of education (Ha and Murray 2021; Pajares 1992). This requires teacher educators to set the formation and modification of pre-service teachers' beliefs as a vital goal for teacher education programmes (Merisi and Pillay 2020; Naruemon 2013; Richards, Gallo, and Renandya 2002). Teachers' actions in the classroom, including selecting and presenting learning materials, monitoring, and giving feedback on student learning, among other things, reflect what teachers know and believe (Borg 2009; Calderhead 1996; Debreli 2012; Ertmer 2005; Gilakjani and Sabouri 2017; Ha, Tran, and Tran 2021; Pajares 1992; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Skott 2015; Tran, Ha, and Tran 2021).

Some researchers (Peterson, Schreiber, and Moss 2011) claim that pre-service teachers will be able to make effective teaching decisions if they develop beliefs grounded in theories based on research evidence. However, teacher educators' beliefs may have more significant influences on the modification and formation of pre-service teachers' beliefs than simple exposure to theories or research findings (Shieh and Reynolds 2021). Undeniably, there exists an almost limitless supply of theories and research for pre-service teachers to potentially draw upon to formulate their beliefs about teaching. However, we argue that the most likely scenario is teacher educators draw upon theories and research outcomes that support their own beliefs and thus transmit those to pre-service teachers through modelling behaviours linking these theories and research findings to practice (European Commission 2013). Our assumption has been supported by some studies that show teacher educators' beliefs can be enacted through their teacher education courses and these interactions in teacher education play a significant role in forming pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching (Akbar et al. 2013; Cain 2012; Peterson, Schreiber, and Moss 2011; Shieh and Reynolds 2021; Tatto 2019). As teacher educators "have a very high degree of freedom when designing curricula" (Shieh and Reynolds 2021, 575), what they believe governs their curriculum design and teaching (Pajares 1992). This has great potential for influencing the next generation of teachers. Therefore, what teacher educators believe about pre-service teacher education and how they enact their beliefs in the process of teacher education course design deserve close attention and discussion.

"All teachers hold beliefs, however defined and labeled, about their work, their students, their subject matter, and their roles and responsibility" (Pajares 1992, 314). While a number of studies have examined teacher educators' beliefs (Akbar et al. 2013; Bai and Ertmer 2008; Barkhuizen 2021; Maaranen et al. 2019; Morrison 2016; Niyibizi 2021; Pape 2004; Yuan 2017), many of these studies focused on a single aspect of beliefs, such as beliefs about role modelling (Niyibizi 2021), beliefs about professional experiences and professional development (Morrison 2016; Nguyen, Ha, and Tran 2022), beliefs about caring (Pape 2004), beliefs about teaching (Akbar et al. 2013; Yuan 2017), and beliefs about pedagogy and technology use (Bai and Ertmer 2008). However, to gain a deeper understanding about teacher educator beliefs requires a broader

perspective, otherwise one risks neglecting beliefs about teacher education programmes, curriculum design, teaching, pre-service teachers, and learners.

Considering the continued importance being placed on English as a global lingua franca and the increasingly early age at which learners are being taught the English language (McDonald and Reynolds 2021; Reynolds and Teng 2019, 2021a), the beliefs of teacher educators who train pre-primary English teachers deserve close attention. Stakeholders must consider how very young learners' education may be indirectly negatively or positively affected by teacher education. While English language education for very young learners has received increasing research interest (Copland and Garton 2014; Reynolds et al. 2021; Reynolds et al. 2022; Reynolds and Teng 2021b), less is known about the beliefs held by the teacher educators providing training to pre-service pre-primary English teachers. Bearing in mind the importance of the English language (Cameron 2001), early years education (Liu et al. 2021; Pupíková et al. 2021) and that teacher educators have been shown to heavily influence the beliefs of teachers (Shieh and Reynolds 2021), examining teacher educators' beliefs about pre-primary English teacher education is necessary for understanding their influence on the next generation of teachers.

Literature Review

Teacher educators are “all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers” (European Commission 2013, 8). To be more specific, “teacher educators are those professionals who provide formal instruction and support for both teacher candidates and practicing teachers during pre-service and/or in-service teacher education/training programs” (Moradkhani et al. 2013, 124). In other words, teacher educators are mostly responsible for educating pre-service teachers (student teachers) within teacher education programmes. The nature of teachers' beliefs might be slightly different from one another due to their roles as pre-service teachers, schoolteachers, and teacher educators (Bouckaert and Kools 2018). However, there should be a commonality among them in terms of teaching, learning, and curriculum development (Bouckaert and Kools 2018; Farrell and Bennis 2013; Kane, Sandretto, and Heath 2002). This is because all teachers hold beliefs about “their work, their students, their subject matter, and their roles and responsibility” (Pajares 1992, 314).

The Importance of Teacher Educators' Beliefs

Exploring teacher educators' beliefs is vital for two major reasons. First, teacher educators' beliefs have a profound influence on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching (Akbar et al. 2013; Bouckaert and Kools 2018; Cain 2012; Peterson, Schreiber, and Moss 2011; Shieh and Reynolds 2021; Tatto 2019). What teacher educators believe governs their actions in curriculum design and course delivery (Pajares 1992), and in turn modifies and shapes pre-service teachers' beliefs while they are enrolled in teacher education programmes (Naruemon 2013; Richards, Gallo, and Renandya 2002; Shieh and Reynolds 2021). Pre-service teachers must go through this process in order to

become qualified professionals (Meeus, Cools, and Placklé 2018; Moradkhani et al. 2013). Therefore, teacher educators and pre-service teachers are two core elements in teacher education programmes (Barkhuizen 2021). One of the important goals of teacher education is to initiate changes in pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs (Naruemon 2013), because “changes in teachers' practice are the result of changes in teachers' beliefs” (Richards, Gallo, and Renandya 2002, 1). If teacher education is to result in good practice, beliefs that align with those good practices must be solidified. Invisible aspects of teacher educators—such as “their history, their beliefs, experiences, roles and practices, emotions and desires, and their moral stance” (Barkhuizen 2021, 3)—can influence pre-service teachers' beliefs; thus, there is a need for more investigations into the roles and beliefs of teacher educators (Barkhuizen 2021; European Commission 2013; Flores 2018; Kane, Sandretto, and Heath 2002). Because pre-service teachers will become formal teachers in the future and their teacher educators will affect their beliefs, experiences, desires and so on, it is important to look closely at how teacher educators are sculpting the beliefs of future teachers.

Aspects of Teacher Educators' Beliefs

Pajares (1992) argues that people have beliefs about everything. However, when looking at teacher educators' beliefs, we limit our discussion to the beliefs relevant to the focus of the current study, that is, the roles of instructors and curriculum developers played by teacher educators. Teacher educators play different roles such as instructors and curriculum developers, guides and consultants, and researchers (Bouckaert and Kools 2018; European Commission 2013). The European Commission (2013, 7) explains:

They teach teachers how to teach, and facilitate and encourage their learning, both explicitly, via lectures, seminars and tutorials, and implicitly, by modelling in their own teaching what it means to be a professional teacher. Importantly, it is teacher educators who teach (student) teachers how to link theory with practice and how to reflect on and evaluate their own practice in order to enhance their learning. They look after the well-being of student teachers, and offer guidance and counselling to serving teachers on professional issues. They play a key role in introducing innovation into schools. And they undertake the key research that develops our understanding of teaching and learning.

Like teacher educators in general, language teacher educators balance three major roles. Percy and Sharkey (2020, 106) note the roles consist of “scholar”, “practitioner”, and “researcher”. Barkhuizen (2021, 15–16) states that a scholar should “engage in the pursuit of knowledge relevant to language teaching and learning”, while a practitioner should have grasped the understanding of “language teaching pedagogy and know-how, with regard to both (student) teachers and the teacher educators themselves”. Barkhuizen (2021, 16) further defines the role of a researcher “as being active in research, to actively pursue current and relevant knowledge”.

Beliefs about the roles (i.e., scholar, practitioner, and researcher) of a teacher educator can be further broken down into microlevel beliefs. Many scholars have focused their investigations on different aspects of each of these roles. Variations in the results of many studies can be explained by the “interconnected, affective, conceptual, and evaluative perspectives that teachers develop about themselves, their students, student learning, methods of instruction, curriculum, and schools as social institutions” (Zembylas and Chubbuck 2018, 174). As an example, Brown (2002) identified teacher educator beliefs about assessment, curriculum, teaching, learning, and teacher efficacy. Looking specifically at the role of “practitioner”, Moradkhani et al. (2013) found English language teacher educators’ practitioner knowledge could be broken down into beliefs about knowledge of language and related disciplines, knowledge of English language teaching theories, skills, and techniques, knowledge of context and social relations, knowledge of class, time, and learning management, knowledge of research and professional development, knowledge of practicum, knowledge of teachers and their assessment, and knowledge of reflective and critical teaching. Maaranen et al. (2019) found Finnish teachers held beliefs about students, research and research-based education, community and collaboration, subject or specialisation, important work (teacher education), interaction (with students), enthusiasm (in teaching), and values.

As stated above, teacher educators’ beliefs can be categorised into three macro categories—beliefs about scholarship, beliefs about practice, and beliefs about research. The current study focuses on practice as it has direct impact on pre-service (student) teachers. This category aligns with a teacher educator’s role as a practitioner. Within the macro category of practice, the following micro categories rest:

- beliefs about teacher education (e.g., cultivate reflective professionals and be a model of a professional teacher);
- beliefs about learners (e.g., pre-service or in-service teachers in teacher education programmes);
- beliefs about curriculum development (e.g., subjects taught, goals/objectives, subject matter, content/materials selections, content organisation, teaching and assessment);
- beliefs about the learners the student teachers will teach in the future (e.g., pre-school students).

Enactment of Teacher Educators’ Beliefs

Teachers’ beliefs are sometimes disconnected from their practices. A number of studies on teacher educators’ beliefs and pre-/in-service teachers’ beliefs (e.g., Farrell and Bennis 2013; Ha 2021; Ha and Murray 2020; Safa and Tofighi 2022; Sah and Shah 2020), either quantitative (e.g., Akbar et al. 2013; Bai and Ertmer 2008; Morrison 2016) or qualitative orientated (e.g., Bruggeman et al. 2022; Gao and Zhou 2021; Nicholson and Lander 2020; Yang and Wyatt 2021; Yuan 2017; Yüksel, Soruç, and McKinley 2021), found inconsistencies between stated beliefs and classroom practice. As

teachers' decisions about happenings in their classrooms rely on both their hidden and explicit beliefs that "function in the complex context of classrooms, embedded in schools, embedded in communities, embedded in larger national, international, diverse cultures" (Gill and Fives 2015, 1), it is reasonable for the relationship between beliefs and classroom practices to not be explicit.

While researchers have shown teachers' beliefs govern their curriculum design and teaching actions (Pajares 1992), there has also been evidence that teachers' practices influence their beliefs (Shieh and Reynolds 2021). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices are not just reciprocal but are also complex. For example, engaging in specific practices could formulate or solidify particular beliefs. In other words, as teachers gain teaching experience, their beliefs will change as a result of these teaching experiences (Shieh and Reynolds 2021). In Buehl and Beck's (2015, 70) words, "teachers' beliefs are not related or are disconnected, misaligned, or inconsistent with classroom practices". Beliefs and practices affect one another, and "the strength of this relationship may vary across individuals and contexts as well as the type of beliefs and practices being assessed" (Buehl and Beck 2015, 70).

Buehl and Beck (2015) showed how internal and external factors have the potential to support or hinder the enactment of teachers' beliefs. Internal factors relate to the teacher-self, such as knowledge, self-awareness, and self-reflection, while external factors refer to contextual and sociocultural features. The degree of influence these factors have on the enactment of beliefs depended considerably on how teachers perceived obstacles (Buehl and Beck 2015). Even though a teacher's perception may not be accurate, the effect this perception has on a teacher's decision to enact beliefs in practice could be strong. In the field of curriculum, this issue is discussed in terms of fidelity and adaptation (Marsh and Willis 2007). Fidelity refers to classroom practice being 100% aligned with a plan while adaptation allows for contextual variables to be considered for the modification of a plan. Noting that teacher educators' beliefs do not align with their classroom practices without considering particular contextual and sociocultural constraints could lead to conclusions that are not fairly representative of the teacher educators (Nation and Macalister 2010).

In summary, teacher beliefs have received a considerable amount of research attention due to their important role in understanding teachers' classroom practices. However, less research has been conducted with teacher educators and still less in pre-primary educator contexts. In response to this research gap, the current case study explores the beliefs and practices of a language teacher educator in Macau providing pre-primary English teacher education. The following two research questions were formulated to guide this study:

- 1) What does a language teacher educator believe about the goals of pre-primary English teacher education and the development of course activities?

2) How does the language teacher educator enact beliefs in course design and teaching? What factors may affect whether and how the language teacher educator enacts beliefs in practice?

Methodology

The current research employed a case study approach (Yin 2009) to provide in-depth insights into a teacher educator's beliefs about pre-primary English teacher education in Macau and how they enacted their beliefs through the teacher education course design and execution. According to Burns (2000, 460), case studies are useful "to gain in-depth understanding replete with meaning for the subject, focusing on process rather than outcome, on discovery rather than confirmation". Written informed consent was obtained from the participant. The methodology was approved by the University of Macau ethics review board under number SSHRE19-APP072-FED.

Research Participant and Context

The Language Teacher Educator

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, only one participant was selected for this case study. The primary benefits of a single case study lie in "the detailed description and analysis to gain a better understanding of 'how' and 'why' things happen" (Ridder 2017, 282). A single case study can create opportunities for researchers to open a black box by exploring deeper causes of the phenomenon (Fiss 2009; Ridder 2017). Also, choosing a single participant allows us to adopt a longitudinal approach to explore the belief trajectory at multiple points in time (Ridder 2017; Yin 2009).

The language teacher educator (Shannon, a gender-neutral pseudonym) recruited for the current study had both English as a second language (ESL), where use of English is necessary for daily life within the society, and English as a foreign language (EFL), where use of English is mainly limited to the language classroom, teaching experiences totaling about 20 years. However, in terms of teaching language teacher education courses, he/she had only taught one course targeting in-service language teachers before offering the pre-primary English teacher education course—English Language Activities. Shannon's academic background (a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL] Master's degree and a Doctorate in Learning and Instruction) was related to the concerns of the study. The teacher educator is an English native speaker.

We selected this teacher educator as the case because Shannon was a new staff in the teacher education programme and needed to offer a course that was completely new to Shannon. Shannon did not have any experiences in teaching pre-service teachers to teach English to very young learners, nor practical experiences in relation to early childhood education. Under these circumstances, we felt it would be useful to explore how Shannon constructed beliefs about the pre-primary teacher education programme, the course, and the teaching of the course, before Shannon transmitted these beliefs to

modify or form pre-primary English teachers' beliefs. Considering most teacher educators do not receive training for teacher education (Lunenberg, Korthagen, and Swennen 2007), there might be a number of similar cases that encountered the same situation as the teacher educator recruited for the current study. Thus, the current study could serve as an example for teacher education institutions in the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) and similar contexts to consider how to support teacher educators in dealing with issues related to their beliefs. The participation was voluntary, and no compensation was provided; however, the participant was aware that the findings would be made available for use in making curriculum refinements.

The Pre-primary English Teacher Education Programme and the Course

The pre-primary teacher education programme is a four-year programme that aims at cultivating pre-primary teachers. The majority of the courses in the programme are taught in Chinese. English Language Activities, the course taught by the teacher educator, was the only compulsory course within the pre-primary teacher education programme that provided the pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills for teaching EFL. This 15-to-16-week semester course with three contact hours per week is taught in the third year of the programme. The teacher educator taught this course for the first time in the 2016–2017 academic year and then a second and third time in the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 academic years.

The Macau SAR and the Case University Context

The Macau Special Administrative Region of China is an integral part of the People's Republic of China. It borders on Guangdong Province, about 60 kilometres from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. Macau's present population is about 681,700 residents and it has a land area of 33 square kilometres. According to the 2016 census, most of the population are Chinese, and about 6% hold Portuguese and Filipino nationalities (Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR 2021a). Chinese and Portuguese are the official languages of the Macau SAR government with more than 80% of the population speaking Cantonese, one variety of the Chinese language (Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR 2021a).

The Macau SAR government is based on the Basic Law that follows the "One Country, Two Systems" principle that allows for "Macao people governing Macao" and "a high degree of autonomy" (Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR 2021b, 1). These concepts from the Basic Law have been broadly recognised in Macau and infused into its social and political culture. The Macau SAR economy operates using an open policy with a low tax and is considered a free port and a separate tariff zone (Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR 2021c).

The Macau SAR has 10 institutions of higher education, four of which are public. In the 2020/2021 academic year, 2,645 teaching staff and 39,093 students were working and

studying at these 10 institutions (Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR 2021d).

The language teacher educator was working at a public research university ranked in the 201–250 bracket of the 2022 Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE 2022). The university charter grants the university academic, disciplinary, administrative, financial, and property autonomy. The 10 teaching units, including the Faculty of Education where the language teacher educator was working, include 1,592 regular staff (586 academic staff) that provide education and support to 11,414 students. The academic staff are evaluated yearly in terms of their teaching, research, and service. An integral part of the teaching performance evaluation consists of teaching evaluations that are completed by students at the end of each term.

Data Collection

Pajares (1992, 314) proposes that “beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do”. In other words, if a study aims to understand teachers’ beliefs, it will be necessary to observe teachers stating their beliefs and potentially observing whether they follow through with these intentions. In line with Pajares’s (1992) suggestions, the authors conducted interviews with Shannon to motivate Shannon to speak about his/her beliefs. We also examined the course syllabus to gain a better understanding of Shannon’s intentions and observed the class to confirm classroom practice. Considering a teacher will need time to become competent and confident to teach a new course (Marsh and Willis 2007), we collected data related to the same course taught by the teacher educator over three consecutive years. Table 1 shows the types of data collected across the three years for this current study. Codes were assigned to the different types of data.

Table 1: Data collected organised by year

Year	Data types/sources		Code
2016	Course syllabus		CS2016
	Reading materials		RM2016
	Teacher's reflection notes		TR2016
2017	Course syllabus		CS2017
	Reading materials		RM2017
	PowerPoint presentation files (English)		PP 2017
	Classroom observation notes		CO2017
2018	Course syllabus		CS 2018
	Reading materials		RM2018
	PowerPoint presentation files (Chinese and English)		PP 2018
	Field notes about microteaching (6 students)		FN 2018
2020	Interview 1	How the teacher educator first designed the course and selected teaching materials	IN 09/11/2020m
	Interview 2	Changes and differences among three syllabi and teaching approaches for the three years	IN 09/11/2020a
	Interview 3	Beliefs about pre-primary teacher education, the course, teaching, pre-primary teacher education students, learning, preschool students, and beliefs construction surrounding the course	IN 07/12/2020

The documents that constituted the data collected from 2016 to 2018 are slightly different due to adjustments made by the teacher educator. In other words, the course syllabus, reading materials, and presentation files were updated in 2017 and 2018. In 2016, Shannon planned the course and wrote the syllabus for the first time, provided pre-service teachers with reading materials, and after each teaching session, wrote reflection notes that were also provided to the pre-service teachers. In 2017, Shannon took into consideration feedback from students that took the 2016 course and provided an updated course syllabus, updated reading materials, and English presentation files (a new addition). Classroom observation notes were also taken by the second author, who observed the course for an entire semester. In 2018, Shannon took on board the feedback from students that took the 2017 course and provided an updated syllabus, updated reading materials, and updated presentation files (Chinese was added to the English presentation slides) to the pre-service teachers. A research assistant's observation field notes were collected in class while the teacher educator provided oral feedback on the pre-service (student) teachers' microteaching.

In 2020, the second author interviewed Shannon three times regarding various issues related to the course (see Table 1); each interview lasted a bit over one hour. Before conducting interviews, the authors reviewed all three versions of the course syllabus,

the three sets of reading materials, and both sets of presentation files to gain an understanding of the course and to formulate semi-structured interview questions for use during the three interviews. Clarification questions were also constructed for the third interview to clarify some of the teacher's responses given to the first and second interview questions. The first and second interviews were completed within the same day—one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The third interview was completed a month after the first two. The interview questions related to (1) how Shannon designed the course, (2) the differences in the course over the three years, (3) beliefs Shannon had about pre-primary teacher education, the course, teaching, and students, and (4) how Shannon constructed beliefs about teaching the course.

Data Analysis

A teacher's beliefs cannot be directly measured (Pajares 1992, 314) and necessitate researchers to "interpret what is hidden deep within the text" (Kleinheksel et al. 2020, 129). We employed latent content analysis (Kleinheksel et al. 2020) to analyse all data collected. Kleinheksel et al. (2020) define two methods of content analysis: manifest content analysis and latent content analysis. Manifest content analysis "examines text for elements that exist on the surface of the text, the meaning of which is taken at face value" (Kleinheksel et al. 2020, 130), while latent content analysis aims to discover participants' implied meaning in the text within the context. In addition, it is considered a better fit if researchers have "theoretical frameworks or lenses" to apply (Kleinheksel et al. 2020, 131). For the current study, a six-step process was followed to perform the latent content analysis (Kleinheksel et al. 2020). (1) The researchers immersed themselves in and became familiar with the data through repeated reading of all the documents and interview transcripts, maintaining a reflective journal and using analytical memos written directly on the data source texts. (2) We defined our unit of meaning for coding of the data (see Table 2). For the interviews, the unit of meaning was defined as each response given by Shannon to each interview question or prompt. For the teacher's reflection notes and presentation files, the unit of meaning for coding was defined as each session of the course. For the syllabi, the unit of meaning for coding was defined as a section. For example, CO2016 contained five sections and thus five units of meaning: course description, objectives, course outline, scheme of work, and assessments. (3) We used a conceptually driven coding framework informed by the previous beliefs literature to code the data. Sample codes included "teaching philosophy", "reflective teachers", "student abilities", "student attitude", and "class management", among others, that came directly from the published literature (see Table 3). (4) We grouped similar codes under larger categories. For example, the codes "student ability" and "student attitude" were grouped together under the category "student characteristics". (5) Themes were generated by examining the similarities between the grouped codes. For example, the code "student characteristics" led to the theme "perception of students (expected and observed)" (see Table 3). (6) We interpreted the meaning of the themes, drew conclusions about the themes, and used these conclusions to write this article. The interview data was mainly used to answer the

first research question and all other data sources were mainly used to answer the second research question.

Table 2: Examples of defining units of meaning

Type of data	Unit of meaning	Example
Interview	Response to interview questions	<p>Interviewer: You did not teach this kind of course before. Why did you have the philosophy about teaching words in kindergartens?</p> <p>Interviewee: I never had this kind of training, so I just read a lot of books on how to teach in kindergartens before I needed to come to teach. Then I understood the previous research and what is important. (IN 09/11/2020a)</p>
Teacher's reflection notes and presentation files	Each session of the course	<p>Session 4 Important Points</p> <p>During the last session's lecture we covered a lot of ground regarding tasks, games, and songs for very young language learners. Firstly, a teacher must keep in mind that a child is very eager to please the teacher; therefore, the teacher ... (TR2016)</p>
Syllabi	Section	CO2016 contained five sections and thus five units of meaning: course description; objectives; course outline; scheme of work; and assessments. (CO2016)

Table 3: Examples of data analysis (coding process)

Example data	Codes	Categories	Theme and interpretation
<p>Interviewee: I don't think the load was high, but I think the students didn't expect to read anything. So, of course, anything I gave them would be considered high. However, at the time, I didn't know that, because I assumed they were mature students. And I was told English was the medium of instruction. And I was told students were used to reading materials in English. (IN 09/11/2020m)</p>	<p>Beliefs about teacher education: Teaching philosophy; reflective teachers</p> <p>Beliefs about pre-service teachers: Student background; student attitude: student ability; pre-school English learners</p> <p>Beliefs about curriculum development: Subjects taught; goals/objectives; subject matter; content/materials selections; content organisation; teaching activity; critical thinking; assessment; feedback; improvement</p> <p>Beliefs about the learners the student teachers will teach in the future: pre-school English learners</p> <p>Contextual influence: awareness; university factors; social factors</p>	<p>Student characteristics</p>	<p>Theme: Perception of students (expected and observed)</p> <p>Interpretation: The interviewee expected students to be mature and active learners; however, students seemed to be passive learners.</p>

<p>Syllabi—Final Exam The final exam will be an in-class, two-part exam in which students are asked to 1) reflect on their own teaching practice by writing a teaching philosophy statement concerning the teaching of English to very young language learners; and 2) watch a video of a lesson taught to very young ESL/EFL learners and then provide written constructive feedback (praise and criticism) of the lesson. Based on this video “observation”, students should provide suggestions for improvement while also highlighting merit in the teaching practice. (CS 2018)</p>	<p>Assessment; reflective teachers; teaching philosophy; critical thinking; feedback; improvement</p>	<p>Scope of assessment</p>	<p>Theme: Important focus of assessment</p> <p>Interpretation: The teacher educator added high value to teaching philosophy construction and learning to become critical and reflective; the teacher educator assessed these constructs with the final examination.</p>
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Findings and Discussion

The Language Teacher Educator’s Beliefs

Shannon held beliefs about (1) the purpose of pre-primary English teacher education, (2) being a teacher educator, (3) the nature of the English Language Activities course, (4) the students who took the course, (5) pre-school learners and their English learning, and (6) the development of the English Language Activities course.

Beliefs about the Purpose of Pre-primary English Teacher Education

Shannon believed that the main purpose of pre-primary English teacher education was to nourish reflective teachers:

In order to improve their teaching, the pre-service teachers needed to be able to think about what they did well and why they did it well. They needed to think about what they did. In other words, they needed to become reflective teachers. It is a very important initial step to get students in teacher education programmes to have this kind of habit at a young age. When they become formal teachers, they will carry on with this kind of practice. (IN 09/11/2020a)

In order for pre-service English teachers to become reflective teachers, Shannon believed developing a teaching philosophy is essential:

[A] teaching philosophy forces students to clarify their beliefs and to start the process of reflective practice. When pre-service teachers have no teaching experience, they must rely only on their previous experience to form beliefs. However, when they are trained by reading research literature, they will begin to critically evaluate that literature. Then they can clearly express their reasons for making certain decisions in the classroom by using the literature [to back up these reasons]. (IN 07/12/2020)

Beliefs about Being a Teacher Educator

Shannon believed that teacher educators should (1) introduce a variety of teaching approaches for pre-service teachers to evaluate and (2) cultivate the habit of reflective practice in pre-service teachers:

The overall goal was to [help] the pre-service teachers be[come] exposed to different ways, methods, or techniques for teaching. Then they should have selected some of those that they thought would work for them. Then they would be able to provide some reasons for what they planned to do in the classroom, what materials they would use, what activities they would use, and what content they would teach. (IN 09/11/2020a)

[A]n early years English teacher educator should provide materials for students to read that will help them develop [not only] knowledge about teaching English to young learners [but also] the skills to teach. (IN 09/11/2020m)

Beliefs about the Nature of the English Language Activities Course

Shannon believed the course offered knowledge about English education to the pre-service teachers that they could not receive elsewhere in the pre-primary education programme. Shannon believed the course could impact the pre-service teachers in a positive way, but, depending on the particular interests of the students, they might master some particular content better than other content:

The pre-primary education ... programme was a general curriculum-oriented programme because the purpose of the programme was to produce teachers that knew a little bit about everything. (IN 07/12/2020)

This course needed to be quite general because it was the only course [in the pre-primary education programme] on English teaching for very young learners. (IN 07/12/2020)

The one-semester course definitely made a difference to every student and [all the] students gained something. [However, they] may not have ... learned [all the content] very deeply because students usually don't equally focus on all the topics covered in a course. (IN 09/11/2020m)

Beliefs about the Students Who Took the Course

Shannon had beliefs about the students who took the course and about how the course could impact their learning. Shannon considered that the pre-service teachers should be mature and responsible for their own learning. Shannon said they had no difficulty with English, read materials in English, read materials at home, joined in on class discussions and completed in-class group work. Shannon also believed that students needed feedback, and those students who really wanted to know more would get in touch to ask further questions (IN 09/11/2020m; IN 09/11/2020a).

Beliefs about Pre-school Learners and Their English Learning

Shannon's beliefs about pre-school learners and their English learning were evident in both the interview transcripts and the teaching materials (IN 09/11/2020m; PP2017; PP2018). Shannon believed pre-school learners were enthusiastic and lively, and they would participate in an activity without knowing its significance. However, Shannon thought preschoolers could lose interest easily and could not use language to talk about language (i.e., use metalanguage). Also, Shannon considered that preschool learners could not make abstract deductions and may not have developed phonemic awareness (depending on their age and cognitive development).

Shannon believed that instructors should have a learner-centred perspective, and each class session requires the use of multiple but short activities (no more than 10 minutes for one activity) because children's attention spans are short. Shannon asserted that repetition and repeated exposure lead to learning, and new language should largely be introduced orally, understood orally and aurally, and practised and automatised orally. Shannon did not think kindergarten teachers should teach all words but instead teach only the most frequently used words in English. Shannon believed that pre-school language learners should encounter the language only through listening, and grammar should not be taught explicitly in kindergarten because students might not be cognitively ready to analyse grammar. Similarly, phonology and pronunciation should not be taught through direct instruction to very young language learners because they could develop native-like or intelligible accents with exposure to good language learning models (IN 09/11/2020m; PP2017; PP2018).

Beliefs about the Development of the English Language Activities Course

Shannon taught the English Language Activities course three times between 2016 and 2018. Shannon taught the course for the first time in 2016 without any previous experience with or knowledge about pre-primary English teaching (IN 09/11/2020m). The data analysis reveals that Shannon designed the course based on beliefs about the course's goal, content, and organisation (IN 09/11/2020m). Shannon believed the main goal of the course was to help students develop a teaching philosophy for teaching English to very young learners. Shannon stated the course content needed to be comprehensive, as this was the only course in the pre-primary education programme that dealt with the teaching of English. In terms of content selection, Shannon says:

I selected a comprehensive list of materials [as course readings] because I thought these students didn't have any teaching experience. ... I just tried to expose students to many choices for how to go about teaching young learners to encourage them [the pre-service teachers] to select among them [the choices] and give reasons for these selections. ... [T]hese materials were meant to enhance the students' teaching philosophies. (IN 09/11/2020m)

Shannon initially organised the course to be similar to a sample course syllabus designed by a previous instructor and provided to Shannon by the department. Shannon referenced several teaching resource books on how to teach very young language learners and then organised the course topics (IN 09/11/2020m).

Shannon's beliefs about pre-service English teacher education nourishing reflective English teaching were very much in line with research literature. For example, Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002, 183) emphasise that "reflection is considered to be a critical component of the development of teaching expertise at all levels". Furthermore, Nguyen (2019) acknowledges that reflective practice has a very important place in the field of teacher education because it promotes teaching and learning. In fact, Shannon had formed a belief about the importance of having a teaching philosophy while studying in a teacher education programme. This also supports the important impact of teacher education on the formation of pre-service teachers' beliefs (Merisi and Pillay 2020; Naruemon 2013; Pajares 1992; Richards et al. 2002). Shannon explains:

When I took a course as a pre-service teacher, we used the term "teaching philosophy". We needed to articulate our teaching philosophy about different aspects of teaching, such as technology use in the classroom, or our general teaching philosophy. For example, we would need to write about what kinds of methodologies and approaches we thought were appropriate for particular groups of learners. We were always given a lot of options, and we were expected to select from all of these options. (IN 07/12/2020)

Shannon's beliefs about the purpose of pre-primary English teacher education, being a teacher educator, the nature of the English Language Activities course, the students who took the course, and pre-school learners and their English learning all influenced the development of the English Language Activities course and were important for course design. The course development was supported by Tyler's (1949) curriculum development model that includes five elements: the learners (needs and wants), society (life in a community), subject matter (underlying structure), philosophy (sound thinking), and psychology (learners' levels of development and the nature of the learning process) (Henson 2010). Shannon did not report any beliefs that could be directly associated with society; however, Shannon could have held implicit beliefs about the society that were not the focus of the interview questions (Ajzen and Dasgupta 2015; Naruemon 2013). Because the Macau SAR society granted the university academic, disciplinary, administrative, financial, and property autonomy in accordance with the university charter, Shannon was not even aware of any potential societal influence and instead interpreted any influences as originating from the university. In

addition, Tyler's (1949) curriculum development model did not consider the potential learners who would be taught by the pre-service teachers after they graduate from teacher education programmes. We propose adding to Tyler's (1949) model these potential future learners. Therefore, when designing a new teacher education curriculum, six elements should be considered. We also found Shannon clearly stated in the course syllabus the methods of assessing the pre-service teachers (CS2016; CS2017; CS2018), even though these beliefs were not discussed in the interviews. Based on the reflections and beliefs about pre-service teacher "improvements", Shannon may have been less concerned with the product of learning and more concerned with the process (IN 09/11/2020a).

Unlike previous research that focused on uncovering beliefs held by teacher educators (e.g., Brown 2002; Maaranen et al. 2019; Pajares 1992; Zembylas and Chubbuck 2018), the current study found a relationship among Shannon's beliefs and course design. Figure 1 shows vertical and horizontal relationships among beliefs. The vertical relationships show that nourishing reflective teachers leads to beliefs about being a teacher educator, the nature of the course, the students who took the course, and pre-school learners and their English learning. These beliefs in turn lead to the beliefs about the development of the course.

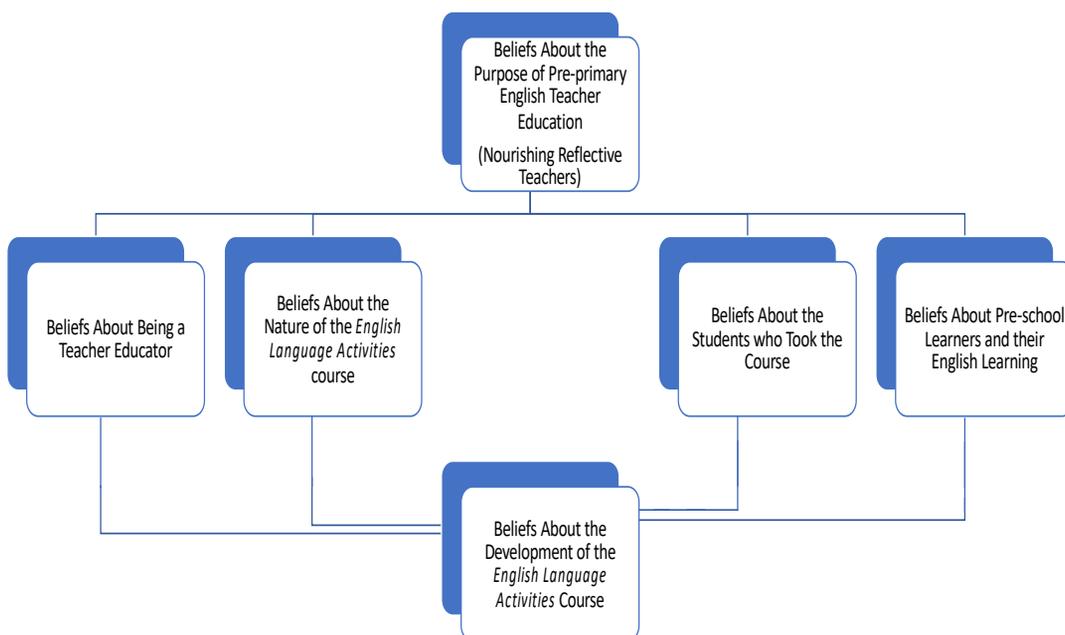


Figure 1: Relationship among beliefs and course design

The Enactment of the Teacher Educator's Beliefs

The Enactment of Beliefs about the Purpose of Pre-primary English Teacher Education

Shannon aimed for the pre-service teachers “to articulate a philosophy of teaching very young EFL language learners” (CS2016; CS2017; CS2018). Shannon provided exposure to different language learning activities and approaches to teaching EFL in the hopes that this exposure would “help students in developing their own teaching philosophies for teaching pre-primary pupils English as a foreign language” (CS2016; CS2017; CS2018). Shannon’s beliefs regarding the importance of developing a teaching philosophy and nourishing reflective teachers were shown in the revision of the course syllabus. After teaching the course for the first time, Shannon incorporated reflective practice into the first and eighth sessions and required the pre-service teachers to write a teaching philosophy in the final examination (CS2017). After teaching the course a second time, Shannon retained these additions and further added a session “preparing a teaching philosophy” (CS2018).

The teacher educator provided the pre-service teachers reading materials on teaching activities, approaches, and techniques. They were grouped under the following topics: “(1) Children Learning a Foreign Language; (2) A Creative Classroom for Very Young Language Learners and Creating Child-Centred Lessons; (3) Lesson Planning for Young Language Learners; (4) Children Learning Language through Tasks and Activities; (5) Young Learner Assessment; (6) Creating, Adapting, and Evaluating Activities for Young Language Learners; (7) Games and Songs for Young Language Learners; (8) Language Choice and Language Learning; (9) Children Learning Words; (10) Children Learning through Stories” (RM2017; CO2017; RM2018). These materials were provided to give students more choices from which to select. Shannon explains:

There were a lot of good choices available. The literature that students read exposed them to a variety of options for how to teach. In other words, they could understand what methods, techniques, or activities to use. It was up to them to make decisions. (IN 09/11/2020m)

Shannon enacted beliefs about the importance of developing a teaching philosophy in the teaching process by using questioning, discussing, and reflecting:

I asked the students to read, to question, to discuss in class. I asked them to critically evaluate. I also asked them to write reflections. Students needed to reflect on what they had learned in class by discussing it with their peers because they had to engage in microteaching. The approaches or techniques used in their microteaching should have been based on their teaching philosophy. (IN 09/11/2020m)

In order to help students form their teaching philosophies, Shannon included the session “What is a teaching philosophy statement and how can you state your teaching

philosophy?” (PP2017). Five components of a teaching philosophy (PP2017; CO2017) were introduced (See Figure 2).

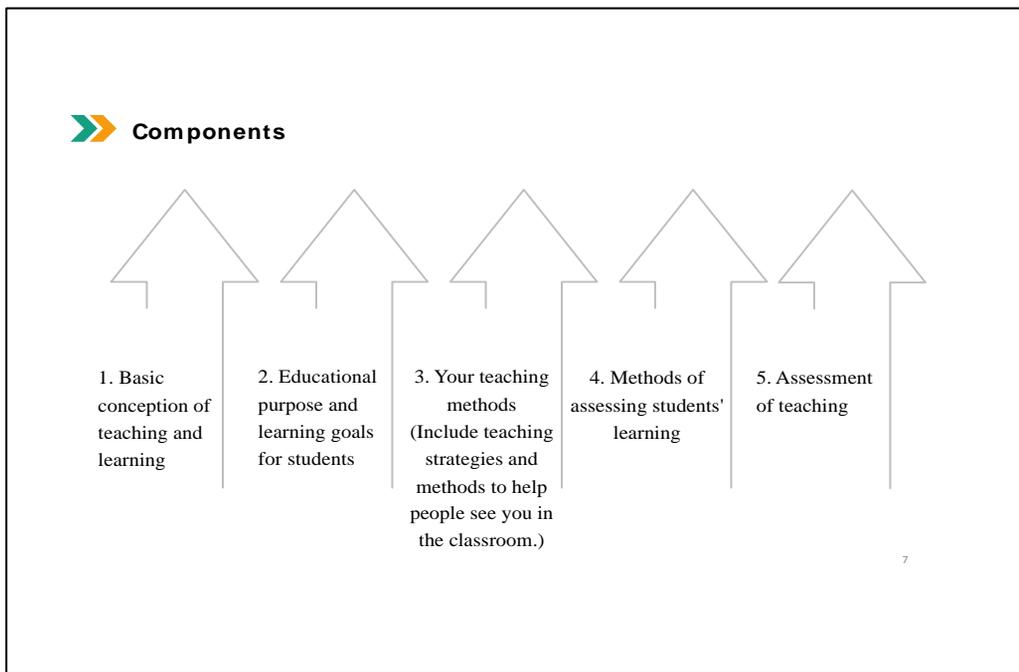


Figure 2: The components of a teaching philosophy

Shannon determinedly tried to enact the belief about nourishing reflective teachers through this practice. The desire to nourish reflective teachers seems to have governed most of Shannon’s choices in course design, materials selection, teaching approach, learning activity selection, assignment design, and assessment choices. What Shannon believed governed the curriculum design and teaching practice. This result supports the claim about the relationship between curriculum design, teaching, and beliefs put forth by Pajares (1992). Shannon went to great lengths to lead students in articulating their teaching philosophies. Shannon included one introduction section and had students practise writing their teaching philosophies three times.

Enactment of Beliefs about Being a Teacher Educator, the Nature of the English Language Activities Course, the Students Who Took the Course, and Pre-school Learners and Their English Learning

We found Shannon’s beliefs were enacted in practice. Table 4 shows the beliefs, their contexts of enactment, and data sources. Shannon put beliefs into practice in a very consistent manner. Moreover, Shannon stated that these beliefs had not changed after teaching the course three times. However, Shannon did “adapt to the society and the system [in Macau]” (IN 07/12/2020). The teacher educator adapted to the local context by reducing the course requirements. Shannon says:

It's not that my belief had changed, it's just I had to adapt to the society and to the system here. (IN 07/12/2020)

I still had the requirement, but I just reduced the amount of feedback that I provided to the students. However, this also reduced the amount of critical thinking required by them. (IN 09/11/2020a)

My belief did not change, it's just [that] I had no other choice. If I reduced the reading materials, there's more of a chance they would read the materials. (IN 07/12/2020)

Shannon further confirmed that these beliefs grew stronger after teaching the course three times, because adjustments to practice were necessary each time the course was moulded to fit the local context (IN 07/12/2020). While the purported benefits of pre-service teachers writing teaching philosophies was not empirically investigated, Shannon did provide anecdotal evidence that students graduating from the programme had made such claims. However, it should be noted that previous research has found the more reflective an EFL teacher is, the higher they achieve in their studies (e.g., Kheirzadeh and Sistani 2018). Shannon states:

I found that the teaching philosophy was even more important the third time I taught the course. Students needed to be able to articulate their reasons [for teaching the way they taught or planned to teach] and reflect on their teaching. I found requiring them to write a teaching philosophy was very important. This feeling increased each time I taught the course. (IN 07/12/2020)

Our analysis indicates that Shannon changed the practice, but the enactment still aligned with stated beliefs. The reasons for these changes included awareness of the need for change, students' attitudes, the university's policies regarding course evaluation completed by students, and restrictions on particular learning activities. Both internal (i.e., about oneself) and external (i.e., classroom, school) factors affected the enactment of Shannon's beliefs (Buehl and Beck 2015). Our analysis further indicates that the most influential factor on the practice was the students' feedback. In the sections that follow, we further discuss Shannon's beliefs, their enactment, and the factors that affected adjustments made to practice.

Table 4: Shannon's beliefs and their contexts of enactment

Beliefs	Contexts of enactment	Data sources
Beliefs about being a teacher educator	Selected course reading materials covering 10 topics related to teaching very young EFL learners	RM2016 RM2017 CO2017 RM2018 IN 07/12/2020
Beliefs about the nature of the English Language Activities course	Required pre-service teachers to read materials that covered topics about lesson planning, teaching methods, and assessment; Provided three opportunities for pre-service teachers to articulate their beliefs about teaching through reflective writing	RM2016 RM2017 CO2017 RM2018 IN 09/11/2020m
Beliefs about the students who took the course	Provided pre-service teachers access to all reading materials before each class session; Expected pre-service teachers to have read and written notes on all reading materials before each class session	RM2016 RM2017 CO2017 RM2018 IN 09/11/2020m IN 09/11/2020a
Beliefs about pre-school learners and their English learning	Used reading materials as course content that covered topics about how pre-school learners learned EFL; Provided pre-service teachers with presentation slides that contained key points of lectures about what and how to or how not to teach very young EFL learners	PP2017 CO2017 PP2018 IN 09/11/2020m
Beliefs about the development of the English Language Activities course	Wrote a syllabus for the course; Emphasised the importance of developing a teaching philosophy and reflective practice through different learning activities including asking the pre-service teachers to write reflections, engage in microteaching, and take notes	CS2016 CS2017 CS2018 PP2017 CO2017 PP2018 IN 09/11/2020m

Changes in Practice and Reasons for Change

Whether or Not to Use Reflection Notes to Promote Understanding

During the first time Shannon taught the course, students complained that they could not understand the content, so Shannon summarised the content and wrote session reflection notes that were provided to students to promote their understanding (TR2016). As Shannon found the students capable of using English to interact with one another, write teaching philosophies, and deliver microteaching lessons in English, the difficulties could have resulted from a course delivery method unfamiliar to the pre-service teachers. Shannon shares:

After starting to teach this course, I realised the students could not [actively engage in classroom discussion], so I tried to adjust my teaching. I started to do more lecturing at the beginning of the class to summarise the reading materials; then I began asking comprehension questions to check their understanding. After class I would write a summary of the content and my reflection about everything we discussed and covered in the class. I would then send this [summary] to the students. (IN 09/11/2020m)

However, following this, the students complained that they could not understand the notes and thought Shannon “wrote too much” and/or “summarised too much” (IN 09/11/2020a). Shannon therefore dropped this practice for the second and third times the course was taught, concluding that “the less I did, the fewer complaints I would receive from students” (IN 09/11/2020a). It seems that this specific belief Shannon held was affected by students’ negative responses.

Providing Opportunities for Students to Reflect

Articulating a teaching philosophy was one of the main goals of the English Language Activities course. Shannon found that the pre-service teachers did not tend to think about why they had particular teaching behaviours. Therefore, the students were given example situations and then asked questions to make them think about their actions. Shannon also offered questions to them about their own in-class microteaching practice:

Students taught the content in English. I would ask them if they would teach the same words in Chinese to the kids and they said no. I would then ask them if a child could not read those words in Chinese, why would they think the kids would be able to read them in English. (IN 09/11/2020m)

Whether or Not to Reduce the Reading Load and Provide PowerPoint Presentations

The amount of reading materials Shannon provided to students was based on previous learning experiences in which a hundred pages of reading(s) per class per week was the norm for a student (IN 07/12/2020). Therefore, the first time teaching the English Language Activities course, Shannon assigned two to three articles (about 100 pages) every week for students to read (IN 09/11/2020a). Teaching practice being affected by previous learning experiences is in line with previous studies in teacher cognition that

found prior learning experience is one of the most influential factors on teacher beliefs (Ha 2021; Ha and Murray 2021). However, when the students complained, Shannon reduced the reading materials to only one article per week:

The first time I taught the course, I had the students read two to three articles per week. I didn't provide PowerPoint presentations [the first time I taught the course]. Due to the students' complaints, I reduced the reading materials to only one article per week when I taught the course for the second time. I also created PowerPoint presentations for all of the lessons. This time the students complained that the course was taught in English instead of Chinese. So, when I taught the course for the third time, I asked a teaching assistant to translate all of the PowerPoint presentations. This way, students would have a Chinese translation to refer to. (IN 09/11/2020a)

Whether to Alter the Kind and Amount of Feedback

Despite the belief that “students need feedback” (IN 09/11/2020a), Shannon reduced the amount of feedback provided to students after perceiving that they did not like getting feedback. Shannon also perceived that more feedback resulted in negative reflections in teaching evaluations and an increase in negative student comments (IN 09/11/2020a). This finding reflects the resounding voice of educators in higher education institutions regarding the sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias that surrounds student evaluations of courses and teaching (Heffernan 2022). Unfortunately, these and other reflections give the impression that Shannon's teaching philosophy was partly sacrificed. Ironically, Shannon's feedback to the pre-service teachers, something shown in the literature highly correlated with learning (Chan and Luo 2022), was sacrificed due to feedback from students that Shannon had no option of rejecting:

I reduced the feedback I gave because I learned students didn't like feedback. Actually, I believe students needed the feedback, but if I actually gave them the thing that they needed, my teaching evaluations would suffer, and the evaluation scores would be lower. So, I realised I must do less. I reduced the amount of microteaching, reading materials, and feedback. (IN 09/11/2020a)

Whether to Assign In-class Individual or Out-of-class Group Microteaching

The first time Shannon taught the course, in-class microteaching assignments were given to the students; however, the second time Shannon taught the course, students were allowed to complete the microteaching out of class in groups. Shannon believed in-class individual microteaching was more effective than the out-of-class group microteaching. Therefore, Shannon changed the microteaching activity back to an individual activity when teaching the course for the third time. Unlike the change regarding feedback, this change appeared to be more related to the performance of the students. Shannon thought pair or group microteaching activities outside the classroom might result in better performance and learning outcomes; however, the opposite occurred. Thus, this change seemed to be less influenced by outside forces but instead as a drive towards a better learning outcome. Shannon says:

The third time I taught the class, I made sure I went back to my original microteaching requirement of asking students to individually teach because I found the group lesson plans were always quite poorly written. (IN 09/11/2020a)

University Restrictions Concerning Microteaching Activities

Shannon had originally planned to provide opportunities for students to do their microteaching with pre-school kids when teaching the course for the second time, but changed this plan by asking the pre-service teachers to complete their microteaching with peers out of class due to university restrictions. While the students lost the benefit of having first-hand teaching experiences with pre-school aged children prior to their practicums, they were still given the opportunity to try out teaching approaches and activities without having obtained full confidence in their use in a supportive classroom environment surrounded by peers:

I had originally wanted to provide an opportunity for the students to teach kids instead of their peers. Because of some restrictions, the university did not allow this. So, I allowed the students to do their microteaching out of class with peers and record it. (IN 09/11/2020a)

Beliefs and Practice

The current study found a reciprocal but complex relationship between Shannon's beliefs and practices. Buehl and Beck (2015) propose four relationship types among a teacher's beliefs and practice: (1) beliefs influence practice; (2) practice influences beliefs; (3) teachers' beliefs are disconnected from their practice; and (4) a reciprocal but complex relationship exists between teachers' beliefs and practice. To take an overall view, the current study showed that the relationship between Shannon's beliefs and practice falls into the "reciprocal, but complex" type. The current study found Shannon's beliefs strongly guided actions, exemplifying how beliefs influence practice. For example, Shannon claimed that the beliefs about developing a teaching philosophy never changed and instead grew stronger (IN 07/12/2020). However, the current study also found that Shannon's belief that "the more, the better" seemed to be affected by the students' attitude(s) and thus changed to "the less, the better" (IN 07/12/2020). The teacher reduced the amount of feedback, reading materials, and critical thinking activities (IN 09/11/2020a). This exemplified how practice influenced beliefs.

A number of studies that focused on teacher educators' beliefs (e.g., Gao and Zhou 2021; Yang and Wyatt 2021; Yuan 2017; Yüksel, Soruç, and McKinley 2021) found an inconsistency between beliefs and the enactment of beliefs in practice. However, the current study found Shannon made efforts to enact beliefs in practice, and perceived that these beliefs had not changed despite some changes in practice made in response to students' attitudes, Shannon's own awareness, and the university's policies and restrictions (IN 07/12/2020). Without having investigated the reasons for the changes, one might conclude that they represent an inconsistency between beliefs and practice; however, we found it to be more complex. Shannon felt beliefs were impeded by certain

external factors that influence practice; thus, it was other factors and not Shannon's beliefs that influenced practice. In the field of curriculum implementation, *fidelity* refers to curriculum implementation (i.e., practice) that should strictly follow the original plan. In other words, it should be 100% aligned with an ideal plan, while *adaptation* recognises that adaptation or modification of an ideal plan is necessary in order to take into consideration contextual variables (Marsh and Willis 2007). No planned curriculum can consider every context. Adapting or changing practice according to the contextual variables is a must and a necessity; this appears to be what happened to Shannon when teaching the English Language Activities course, although it potentially requires a "bending" of one's teaching philosophy.

Conclusion and Implications

The current qualitative case study explored a language teacher educator's beliefs and practices regarding pre-service English teacher education in Macau. An analysis of multiple sources of qualitative data collected over several years provided some interesting insights into the teacher educator's beliefs and the enactment of those beliefs in practice. The teacher educator held six major beliefs about pre-service English teacher education, namely, beliefs about (1) the purpose of pre-primary English teacher education, (2) being a teacher educator, (3) the nature of the English Language Activities course, (4) the students who took the course, (5) pre-school learners and their English learning, and (6) the development of the English Language Activities course. Among these beliefs, it appears that beliefs about pre-school learners and their English learning were an important driving force for the teacher educator's beliefs. The six beliefs seemed to have an inclusive, sequential, or primary relationship with one another. However, this kind of relationship has rarely been discussed in the literature, which warrants further research looking at teacher educators' beliefs.

Shannon's beliefs were generally well reflected in practice. Shannon enacted beliefs through course design, materials selection, designing and delivering assignments, assessment, and teaching. However, the belief that it is important to nourish reflective teachers to articulate their teaching philosophies appeared to be the core belief that influenced other beliefs. Shannon did adjust practice by adding reflection notes, English presentation slides, and Chinese presentation slides. Shannon also reduced the amount of feedback, reading materials, and critical thinking required of students. In addition, Shannon modified the microteaching activity type and location. The main factors causing these changes included students' attitudes, the teacher educator's self-awareness, and university policy. The relationship between Shannon's beliefs and practice fits Buehl and Beck's (2015, 70) model of "reciprocal, but complex, relationships between teachers' beliefs and practice". Shannon's beliefs and practices were mutually informing. Shannon's beliefs strongly influenced practice, but the practice (e.g., doing less) did not affect the teacher educator's original beliefs even if it did cause a "bend" in the teaching philosophy.

The findings from this case study have implications for future research, policymakers, and teacher educators. Firstly, while Shannon's beliefs influenced practice, contextual factors influenced practice but not beliefs. This dynamic and complex relationship between beliefs, practice, and contextual influence deserves further research. Using relevant theoretical perspectives such as chaos theory, ecological systems theory, or complex dynamic systems theory could aid in unravelling this complex relationship. Secondly, policymakers that have an understanding of how teachers' beliefs affect practice should consider supporting educators in achieving high-quality higher education standards. Placing students in a position of power with the use of course evaluations has the potential to unintentionally decrease the quality of the education provided to students. Policymakers should consider alternatives to course evaluations to reduce these potential negative outcomes. Lastly, teacher educators should regularly reflect on their own beliefs to raise their awareness of how their beliefs can potentially affect practice. Healthy communication between teacher educators and pre-service teachers can also aid pre-service teachers in understanding why particular choices have been made regarding how their teacher education has been structured.

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