

## Executive Summary

**“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”**

These are the words of John Dewey, famous American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer.

The question that naturally arises when we read these words is, “What is the situation in Sri Lanka?” “Do teaching approaches in Sri Lankan schools and colleges embrace international best practice or is it a case of teaching today’s students as we taught yesterday’s?”

While pre-service teacher education in Sri Lanka covers the concepts of interactive and learner-centred teaching, a recently completed review of the Teacher Education for English (TEE) program indicated that these concepts are often presented through lectures rather than by modelling the techniques directly.

*The theoretical facts are being given to us inside the classroom. This is how you should do, and this is how you should manage. It is more or less like a lecture. But when it comes to [the TEE trainer’s] session, the theoretical facts are being put into practice (Peradeniya NCoE trainee).*

TEE trainees reported that experiencing activity-based and learner-centred teaching for themselves as part of TEE convinced them that this was the better approach and encouraged them to use the approach in their teaching practice blocks.

*At first we didn’t know how to teach the students...we got only the lecturing parts...only the theory part...[the TEE trainer] gave us a lot of things...she taught us how to teach the students in an attractive way and, not only that, she did it to us and we all enjoyed and we all learnt so many things and without her, I think I couldn’t do any teaching. Because of her, I have improved a lot of things. Now I can go in front of a classroom and teach to any student (Pasdunrata NCoE trainee).*

The participation of TEE trainers in the supervision of Teaching Practice provided the final element of support and ensured that trainees had the confidence to implement the new approaches despite the many challenges faced in the typical Sri Lankan classroom.

*Actually I had one block teaching experience with [the TEE trainer] with second years....she joined with me in observing lessons. There I saw that she was explaining to the students about more effective and novel ways that they could plan their lessons. She gave a lot of ideas regarding planning group activities. As I felt it was a novel experience for the students and that they could get a lot of things from her...warm-up activities and that sort of thing. The students were really impressed (Pasdunrata NCoE lecturer).*

The aim of the iTESL programme was to build the skills of pre-service Teacher Educators to enable them to provide a learning environment for their trainees that would confer the same benefits experienced by TEE trainees. The elements of the training provided under iTESL included lesson planning; training delivery and role modelling to provide trainees with an effective model in the expectation that they will teach in the way that they themselves were taught; and observation and feedback to build the quality of teaching supervision during teaching practice block and the critical final ‘internship’ year of pre-service education.

iTESL also targeted existing English teachers in secondary schools and the In-Service Advisors (ISAs) who mentor them since it was apparent, even during the review of TEE, that young trainees were likely to encounter negative role models as well as positive ones once they entered schools.

*Actually [internship] is the hub of training, no? But still there are in-service teachers outside. Now, if they were not subject to this kind of thinking ...different thinking and capacity about changing....they will influence our students and say, "No, no just finish the syllabus." That will also change because ISA is the trainer for this iTESL and they are capturing them also so it will take a little time but there will be a big impact (Mahaweli NCoE Lecturer).*

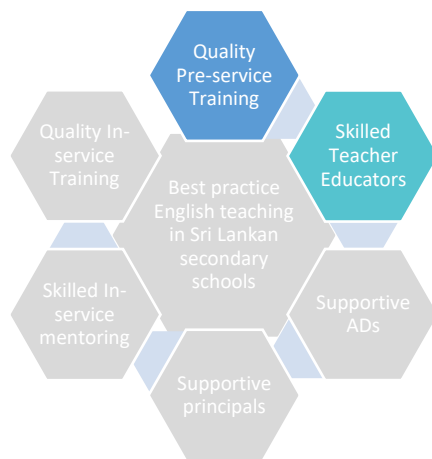
Finally, the programme included awareness raising sessions for Additional Directors (ADs) and school principals to empower them to support these important actors within the teacher training ecosystem.



iTESL is a strand of the TRANSFORM programme. TRANSFORM aims to provide young people with access to learning opportunities, provided by a fit for purpose and relevant education system, allowing them to achieve their potential and contribute to economic and social development of Sri Lanka.

This report looks at the impact of the iTESL programme on Teacher Educators, In-Service Advisors, and English teachers in secondary schools. A separate report reviews the leadership training provided for school principals.

## What did we find?



Building the training competencies of Teacher Educators was a complex program which involved drawing Master Trainers from National Colleges of Education and zonal offices and building their skills so that they could work with iTESL consultants to co-facilitate a programme of extended training for Teacher Educators known as TEC (Teacher Educator Course). English TEC training reached 88% of its intended target audience. Both Master Trainers and TEC participants were monitored throughout by iTESL consultants.

Analysis of the evidence derived from this process unequivocally affirmed that the training positively impacted the training competencies of the participants. Differences in ratings given by iTESL consultants observing participants as they conducted micro-training during the course and again after participants had returned to their own institutions (TEC), or continued on to co-facilitate workshops (MT Training), were statistically significant indicating that the noted improvement was not simply due to chance variations in the data. Many participants were able to demonstrate mastery of individual competencies – particularly in the areas of Planning and Delivery although there are pockets of residual weakness. Self-assessment ratings at course commencement and end-of-course also indicated a substantial and statistically significant increase in participant confidence.

However, the evidence consistently pointed to weaknesses in the areas of Observation and Feedback – skills critical to Teaching Practice and Internship supervision. While competencies in this area tended to be those most highly impacted by the training, the same competencies were those in which TEC participants tended to demonstrate low skill levels on entry. This may indicate that although all teacher educators are involved in the supervision of trainees in schools, they have not received specific professional training in mentoring. Since support at this stage of the trainee professional development journey was found in the analysis of TEE to be critical to developing trainee confidence to use activity-based and learner-centred approaches in schools, the noted improvement in this area was encouraging.

The iTESL programme required TEC participants to embark on a Certificate of Practice contract after their 20-day training program where they observed other trainers and were themselves observed in their own classrooms. Observations conducted at this stage indicated that trained teacher educators were able to effectively apply the new methods and tools in their own institutional context. Thus, this study supports the achievement of Outputs 1 and 2 in the iTESL Program Logic (Fig. 1).

**Output 1:** A cadre of MTs with strong skills in planning, ELT and mentoring available to mentor and deliver TEC and core skills training to pre-service training institute staff (English, Maths, Science & IT)

**Output 2:** English TEs have strong skills in planning, ELT and mentoring

However, no evidence has been collected against Intermediate Outcome 1.

**Intermediate Outcome 1:** English TEs use ELT TEC content and methodology skills in regular training institute curricula and teacher training.

It is a recommendation of this study that observations be undertaken in teacher training institutions to establish whether this critical intermediate outcome has been achieved and whether the Community of Practice set up to support its achievement is functioning well.

The initial intent of the programme had been to also provide TEC training to 120 maths, science and IT teacher educators with training co-facilitated by a team of 20 maths, science and IT master trainers. In the end, the Subject TEC training was delivered to only 21 teacher educators (17.5% of target) with the assistance of the original 18 English master trainers. However, analysis of data from the observation of micro-training at baseline and end-of-course indicates that the training improved competencies in all areas – Planning, Delivery, Observation & Feedback and Role Modelling & Reflection. Differences in ratings of participant competencies by iTESL consultant observers were statistically significant in all cases with equal or higher effect sizes<sup>1</sup> to that observed in English TEC training. Participants in the course acknowledged that they had received little previous training for their roles. This and their observed enthusiasm for the new ideas and techniques they were exposed to in the training, explains both the initially low observation ratings and the substantial impact the course was observed to have on both their competency level and their confidence. This study supports the achievement of Output 3 of the Program Logic (Fig. 1) albeit with a reduced target.

**Output 3:** Maths, Science and IT TEs have strong skills in planning, training and mentoring

Unfortunately, little data is available about the performance of Subject TEC participants on their return to their institutions so no conclusions can be reached about the extent to which they were able to apply their new-found skills in their own institutional context. Moreover, no evidence has been collected against Intermediate Outcome 3.



**Intermediate Outcome 3:** Maths, Science and IT TEs use TEC content and methodology skills in regular training institute curriculum and teacher training.

Having contributed to the quality of pre-service teacher training through the TEC training, iTESL targeted the improvement of the in-service English teaching environment by directly training English teachers in secondary schools and the In-Service

Advisors (ISA) who supervise and mentor them.

Training for ISAs was initially intended to focus only on their mentoring role. The ISA Mentoring course brought about a modest improvement in knowledge of mentoring practice reflecting a high level of awareness prior to course commencement. However, there was an appreciable change in attitude towards a more collaborative approach to mentoring with participants more likely to see themselves as a support and guide helping teachers to achieve their own goals.

On the recommendation of iTESL consultants, an extra component of ELT Methodology was added in a follow-up training course. This latter course targeted both the 173 ISAs who had already completed the ISA Mentoring course together with 126 senior teachers. Offering the course to

<sup>1</sup> In statistics, an **effect size** is a quantitative measure of the magnitude of a phenomenon.

senior teachers was a direct response to the need to increase the cohort of trainers available to train English teachers in schools. This, in turn, necessitated the training of a cohort of ISA Master Trainers who could work with iTESL consultants in facilitating the expanded ELT Methodology training.

A 10-day Master Trainer workshop was offered to 27 ISA Master Trainer candidates. Over the course of the workshop, the skills of the ISA Master Trainer candidates saw a moderate but statistically significant improvement. Their skills were later substantially enhanced as the result of their co-facilitation of the ELT Methodology course. This was especially noted with Planning skills reflecting the heavy emphasis in Block A of the ELT Methodology course on lesson planning.

ISAs and senior teachers participating in the subsequent ELT Methodology course demonstrated a substantial and statistically significant improvement in their understanding of interactive and learner-centred teaching approaches as well as classroom management techniques. This was reflected in a consistent increase in confidence across all training competencies especially for the cohort of senior teachers. On this basis, it can be concluded that the programme was successful in achieving Output 4.

***Output 4: A cadre of ISAs and senior teachers skilled in mentoring and ELT available in each province and capable of training secondary English teachers.***

However, since observations have not been made directly in schools, no conclusion can be drawn in relation to Intermediate Outcome 4.

***Intermediate Outcome 4: ISAs use mentoring skills in regular support of English, Maths, Science & IT teachers in schools in their Education zones.***

Having co-facilitated the ELT Methodology workshops, the ISA master trainers were challenged to train ISAs who had participated in their ELT Methodology courses to deliver the Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Teachers (CPLDT) training. In designing the CPLDT course, iTESL consultants collaborated with serving English teachers and ISA Master Trainers to select the most relevant components of the TEC training. The three-day 18-hour CPLDT training was delivered to almost 50% of its original target of 10,000 secondary English teachers.

To assess achievement at Kirkpatrick Level 2: Learning, participating teachers answered a quiz both before the course and on the final day. Teachers were also observed by ISAs back in their schools providing data at Kirkpatrick Level 3: Behaviour. Teachers who had not participated in CPLDT training were observed in addition to those who had, in order to provide a counterfactual for the evaluation.

Given challenging time constraints to roll out and evaluate the training, an innovative approach was adopted whereby teachers took the quiz on their phones and ISAs also entered observation ratings through their devices.

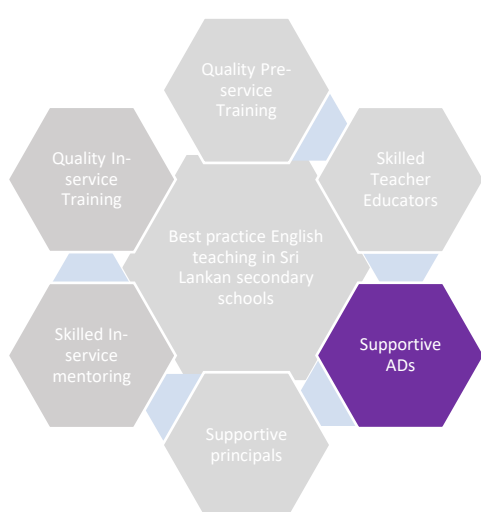
At the completion of the training, teachers 81% of teacher participants strongly agreed that they understood the course content while 76% strongly agreed that they understood how to increase pupil participation in their classes. Their confidence was substantiated by their results on the pre and post course quiz. The average score on the pre-course quiz was 54% while the average score at the end of the course was 71%.

An important and disappointing finding was the continuing lack of emphasis that teachers placed on spoken English even after they returned from the training. This finding underlines the importance of the speaking and listening assessment soon-to-be-introduced into school-based assessment.

Overall, the findings from this iTESL component show that trained ISAs are capable of effectively mentoring and monitoring secondary English teachers. Trained teachers also demonstrated their capacity to teach reading and grammar effectively. However, no evidence is yet available to link this enhanced capacity to the End-of-Project outcome for iTESL.

**EoP Outcome:** *Teachers in secondary schools use inclusive, activity-based, learner-centred methodology to deliver content and core skills for English, Maths, Science and IT.*

This evidence would logically be collected by ISAs over time and monitored by the Ministry of Education. Ideally, now that ISAs have demonstrated their ability to use mobile phone Apps, supervision reports would be computerised and stored online so that ISAs can effectively mentor teachers on their progress since their previous visit. Ready access to online data would also provide the Ministry with ease of access to the situation of teaching practice in schools.



In zonal offices, ISAs work directly with Assistant Directors of English (ADEs). To ensure mutual understanding and support between these two key roles, iTESL consultants were asked to conduct awareness raising workshops for ADEs. The initial focus of the course was on best language teaching and training practices, with peripheral sessions on mentoring and leadership. After discussions with those attending the first workshops, the course was adapted to focus on action planning to support future iTESL activities. The training was attended by 57 ADEs - approximately 60% of the island-wide cadre.

While ADE participants were not formally assessed, they were given a short quiz at the beginning and end of the course. Their results on this quiz showed that they benefitted from improved ELT knowledge reflecting a wide range of knowledge of English language systems and methodology within the group.

The analytical framework employed in this evaluation is the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model. Due to the absence of evidence related to sustained change once participants return to their institutions, this report comments only on impact at Kirkpatrick Level 2: Learning and Level 3: Behaviour.

In terms of the Program Logic for iTESL, this means that no strong conclusions can be reached about progress towards the Intermediate Outcomes and the End-of-Project Outcome. Recommendations are made throughout the report for follow-up monitoring to address these limitations. An analysis of the extent to which ratings on the Trainer Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire used in TEC training correlated with observed mastery of the 16 competencies measured using the Training Competency Observation Tool strongly suggests that any follow-up evaluation strategy should rely on direct observation rather than participant self-assessment.

## END OF PROJECT OUTCOME

Teachers in secondary schools use inclusive, activity-based, learner-centred methodology to deliver content and core skills for English, Maths, Science and IT

### INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1

English TEs use ELT TEC content and methodology skills in regular training institute curricula and teacher training

### INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 3

Maths, Science and IT TEs use TEC content and methodology skills in regular training institute curricula and teacher training

### INT. OUTCOME 2

Community of Practice (CoP) functions to maintain momentum of iTESL training.

### INT. OUTCOME 5

ADEs support ISAs to train and mentor teachers

### INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 4

ISAs use mentoring skills in regular support of English, Maths, Science & IT teachers in schools in their Education Zones

### OUTPUT 2

English TEs have strong skills in planning, ELT and mentoring

### OUTPUT 3

Maths, Science and IT TEs have strong skills in planning, training and mentoring

### OUTPUT 1

A cadre of MTs with strong skills in planning, ELT and mentoring available to mentor and deliver TEC and core skills training to pre-service training institute staff (English, Maths, Science & IT)

### OUTPUT 6

Secondary school English teachers capable of teaching reading and grammar communicatively and using activities to maximise participation

### OUTPUT 5

Assistant Directors of English familiar with content of training provided to ISAs and school leaders

### OUTPUT 4

A cadre of ISAs and STs skilled in mentoring and ELT available in each province and capable of training secondary English teachers