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978-0-521-76012-6 - The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education

Edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards

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CONTENTS

Preface			vii
Introduction			1
<i>Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards</i>			
Section 1	The Landscape of Second Language Teacher Education		9
Chapter 1	The Scope of Second Language Teacher Education <i>Donald Freeman</i>		11
Chapter 2	Trends in Second Language Teacher Education <i>Karen E. Johnson</i>		20
Chapter 3	Critical Language Teacher Education <i>Margaret Hawkins and Bonny Norton</i>		30
Chapter 4	Social and Cultural Perspectives <i>Charlotte Franson and Adrian Holliday</i>		40
Section 2	Professionalism and the Language Teaching Profession		47
Chapter 5	Second Language Teacher Professionalism <i>Constant Leung</i>		49
Chapter 6	Certification and Professional Qualifications <i>Susan Barduhn and Jenny Johnson</i>		59
Chapter 7	Standards and Second Language Teacher Education <i>Anne Katz and Marguerite Ann Snow</i>		66
Chapter 8	Assessment in Second Language Teacher Education <i>Donald Freeman, Melinda McBee Orzulak, and Gwynne Morrissey</i>		77
Chapter 9	Teacher Preparation and Nonnative English-Speaking Educators <i>Lia D. Kamhi-Stein</i>		91
Chapter 10	“Trainer Development”: Professional Development for Language Teacher Educators <i>Tony Wright</i>		102
Section 3	Pedagogical Knowledge in Second Language Teacher Education		113
Chapter 11	The Curriculum of Second Language Teacher Education <i>Kathleen Graves</i>		115

Chapter	12	Knowledge About Language <i>Nat Bartels</i>	125
Chapter	13	SLA and Teacher Education <i>Rod Ellis</i>	135
Chapter	14	Acquiring Knowledge of Discourse Conventions in Teacher Education <i>John S. Hedgcock</i>	144
Section 4		Identity, Cognition, and Experience in Teacher Learning	153
Chapter	15	Personal Practical Knowledge in L2 Teacher Education <i>Paula Golombek</i>	155
Chapter	16	Language Teacher Cognition <i>Simon Borg</i>	163
Chapter	17	Teacher Identity <i>Jennifer Miller</i>	172
Chapter	18	The Novice Teacher Experience <i>Thomas S. C. Farrell</i>	182
Chapter	19	Teaching Expertise: Approaches, Perspectives, and Characterizations <i>Amy B. M. Tsui</i>	190
Section 5		Contexts for Second Language Teacher Education	199
Chapter	20	Teaching and Learning in the Course Room <i>Gurmit Singh and Jack C. Richards</i>	201
Chapter	21	School-Based Experience <i>Michael K. Legutke and Marita Schocker-v. Ditzfurth</i>	209
Chapter	22	Language Teacher Education by Distance <i>David R. Hall and John S. Knox</i>	218
Chapter	23	Technology and Second Language Teacher Education <i>Hayo Reinders</i>	230
Section 6		Second Language Teacher Education Through Collaboration	239
Chapter	24	Collaborative Teacher Development <i>Bill Johnston</i>	241
Chapter	25	The Practicum <i>Jerry G. Gebhard</i>	250
Chapter	26	Mentoring <i>Angi Malderez</i>	259
Chapter	27	Language Teacher Supervision <i>Kathleen M. Bailey</i>	269

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76012-6 - The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education
Edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Section 7	Second Language Teacher Development Through Research and Practice	279
Chapter 28	Second Language Classroom Research <i>Sandra Lee McKay</i>	281
Chapter 29	Action Research in Second Language Teacher Education <i>Anne Burns</i>	289
Chapter 30	Reflective Practice <i>Jill Burton</i>	298
Author Index		309
Subject Index		317
Acknowledgments		325

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Edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

The impetus for this book arose from a course we taught jointly in 2006 as part of a professional doctorate program in applied linguistics from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, to a group of Mexican doctoral students meeting at the designated teaching location in the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico. In organizing the course content around a selection of key readings on second language teacher education (SLTE), we realized that there were few volumes available that presented a collection offering a broad and contemporary overview of current debates in this field. It became apparent that a volume of the present kind would provide a valuable introduction for those who are both specialist readers and new practitioners interested in developments in the field of SLTE. It would build on an early collection of work in this area (Richards and Nunan 1990) in that it would provide a state-of-the-art survey of current issues, debates, and approaches in contemporary SLTE. We are grateful to our Mexican students for warmly supporting this idea when we first broached it with them, for their enthusiasm in discussing their own concerns and interests in SLTE, and for their anticipation of the publication of this collection.

The field of SLTE has now become well established within applied linguistics and TESOL. Many undergraduate degrees now offer one or more courses in SLTE, and there are also masters and other postgraduate courses with SLTE as a primary focus.

We anticipate that the readership for the volume will be those with a broad interest in SLTE issues – preservice and in-service teachers, including those completing undergraduate and postgraduate programs, teacher trainers and educators, professional development coordinators and administrators, and researchers and academics interested in knowing more about current approaches, theories, and practices.

In putting together the volume, we envisaged it as a companion to the *Cambridge Guide to TESOL* (Nunan and Carter 2001), which similarly offers a survey of current debates. The *Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education* comprises 30 original chapters by key writers working and researching in the field of SLTE. The chapters are grouped into seven thematic sections. As we deliberated on the structure, we also found that this field is complex with overlapping trends, issues, and perspectives, such that readers will find echoes of other chapters in many of the contributions. Nevertheless, the compilation of the contributions into the various sections offers readers a way of focusing from discussion of the broader scope and trends in SLTE to the more specific areas that constitute the different dimensions of theory, research, and practice. Each section is prefaced by an overview that summarizes the key issues raised by the chapter authors. In order to provide a synthesis of themes currently occupying the SLTE field, our introductory chapter draws out the trends noted across the whole volume and points to the specific chapter contributions that take the initial discussion points further.

We hope that this volume will be seen as a valuable contribution to the applied linguistics and English language teaching field, synthesizing current practices, theoretical

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

insights, and future directions for research endeavors in the developing field of second language teacher education and professionalism in general.

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