

ELITE: Striving for Excellence in Literacy Teacher Education in Europe

www.felaliteracy.org

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Context of the Proposal

- Interest in the issue among FEELA Members
- Preparation of reading teacher educators not emphasised in current international studies that include reading literacy (PIRLs, PISA)
- Eurydice Studies of Teacher Education (2007) and Teaching Reading Literacy (ongoing)
- Lifelong Learning Programme 2008-2010 Strategic Priorities – include literacy, teacher training

Context (contd.)

- **Lisbon Goals** – Improving the Quality of Teacher Education. . . Reducing the Percentage of Students with Low Literacy Levels at age 15
- **Bologne Accords** – Comparability of Qualifications across countries
- **Comenius** – specific reference to reading literacy in call for proposals
- **Lack of international research** – Study by IRA Reading Teacher Education Task Force – 3 of 298 published studies were non-US

“Do we know how to teach teachers of reading?”

- No (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000) . . . But research is promising
- As long as the outcomes can be specified and the context controlled, training serves our needs. . . . But the reality of teaching is one of constantly changing conditions with fairly abstract and even ambiguous learning outcomes
- We need reflective, discursive, and dialogical strategies

But are teachers important?

Research on teacher effectiveness has concluded that

- teachers are the single most important factor that determines students' level of achievement (e.g., Berliner, 1994; Knapp, 1995)
- highly effective teachers share similar characteristics (International Reading Association, 2000; Ruddell, 1997).
- teacher quality and expertise consistently and accurately predict achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000)

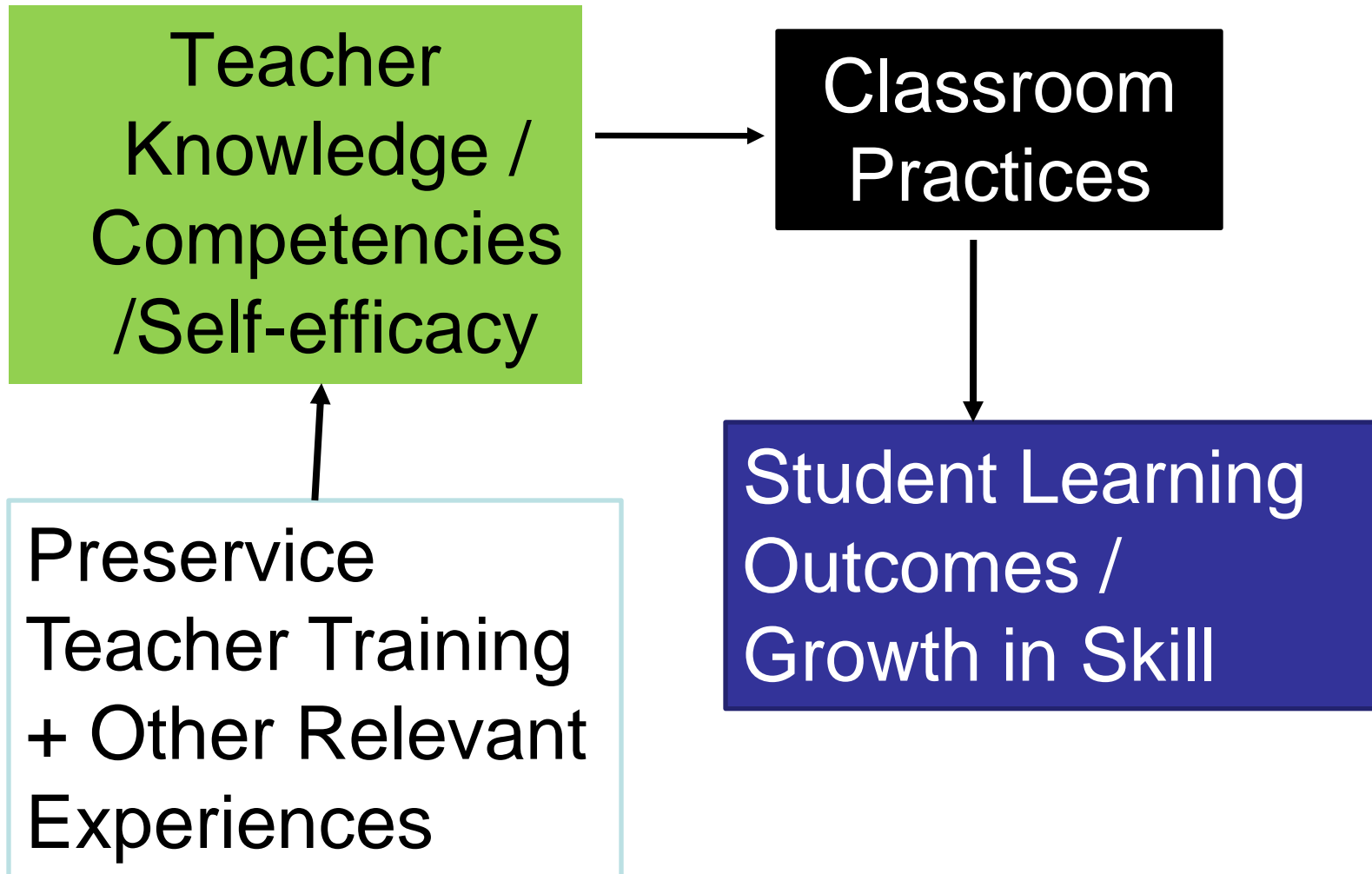
A Critical Analysis of Research on Reading Teacher Education

- Analysis of 82 studies from a pool of 298
- Reading teacher preparation programmes have been successful in changing prospective teachers' knowledge and beliefs
- Some evidence that pedagogical knowledge influenced teacher practices

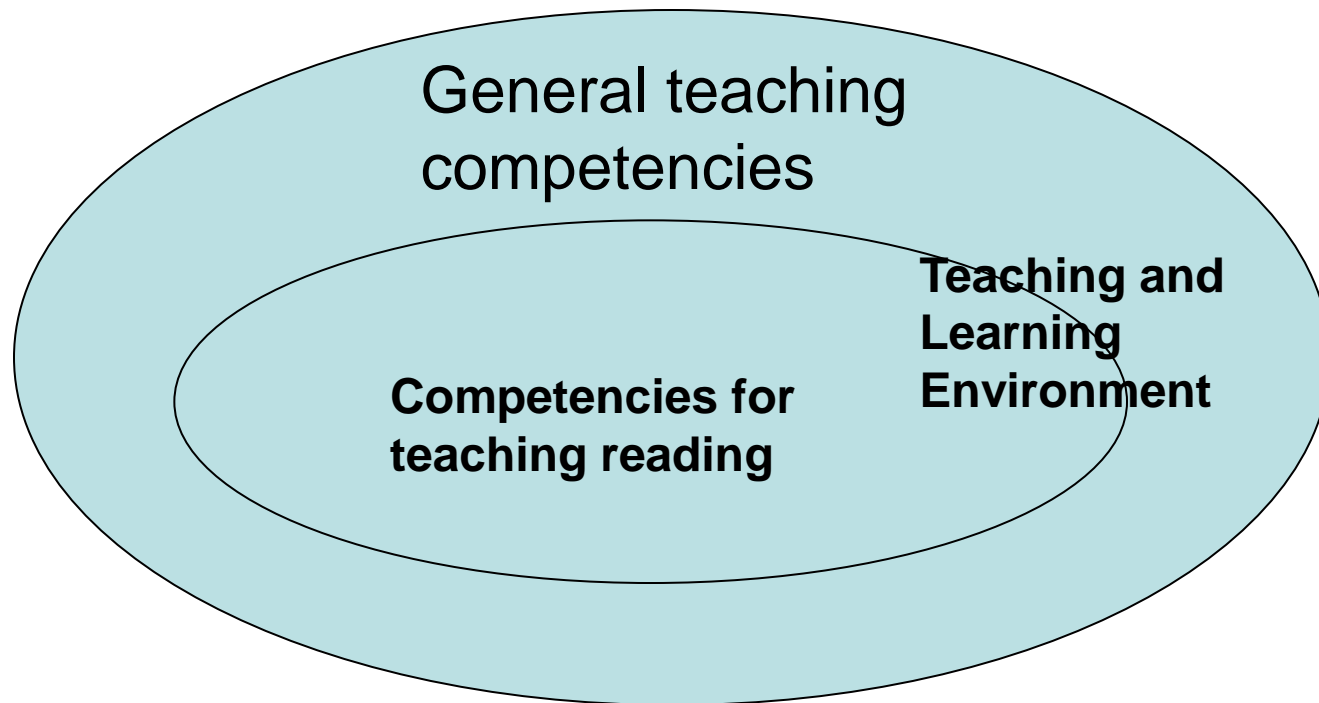
Risko et al. (2008) contd.

- Review suggests that university courses practices that benefits pedagogical knowledge include:
 - explicit explanation and examples
 - demonstration of practices
 - application of practice in practicum settings with pupils
- Is intensity of programmes adequate?
- Limited quality of many studies

Hypothesizing How It Works



General teaching competencies vs. Reading teacher competencies



UKLA – Literacy Content Knowledge

- ***the social context of literacy learning***, the different patterns of literacy and different expectations of literacy learning in different social groups;
- ***the nature of the orthography involved***, since, for example, the complexity of English precludes a simple phonic entry to written language;
- ***reading on screen***, both manipulation of text and also the changing relation of verbal text to images, both still and moving;
- ***children's conceptions of themselves as readers***, since this materially influences how they approach the task and how effective they become as readers;
- ***reading substantial whole texts***, including attention to the structure of texts of different genres, differences between written and spoken language;
- ***critical literacy***, since all those involved in literacy teaching should aim to help children towards becoming much more than consumers of written text.

Which Competencies Are Important for Reading Teacher Education?

- Be knowledgeable in key aspects of reading literacy (content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge)
- Understand characteristics of effective classroom environments and materials
- A coherent, differentiated programme (sensitivity to individual differences)
- Promote student self-regulation (metacognition)
- Provide skills teaching within a context
- Emphasise formative assessment procedures

IRA Professional Development Standards



Potential Research Questions

- What are the most important competencies for reading teachers, and how do these vary across grade levels (kindergarten, lower-primary, upper-primary), languages, and countries?
- What is the content of reading curricula in schools and how was this content decided on? What research informs us on how well this is taught?
- What is the content of teacher education courses and how is this decided? (e.g., government requirements)

Potential Questions (contd.)

- What is the relationship between coursework and fieldwork in reading teacher education?
- How is preservice reading teacher education linked to induction and in-career development in participating countries? (Lifelong learning dimension)
- How closely do governmental agencies specify the content and pedagogy of school literacy teaching?
- How are teacher educations of literacy teachers trained for their jobs? Do they specialise in teaching reading or other areas (literature, language, writing)

Potential Questions

- Do courses in teacher education have to meet detailed requirements from governmental agencies? (Autonomy, ownership)
- How is the content and pedagogical knowledge of preservice reading teachers evaluated?
- How do the experiences of schools inform the preparation of teachers of reading?

Project Adore – Lessons Learned

- Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers – A Comparative Study of Good Practice in European Countries (Christine Garbe)
- Children's Rights Perspective \ Legal entitlement to appropriate instruction . .
- Some emphasis on affect (motivation /engagement)
- Project Administrator & External Advisor

Teacher Development Study– Four-Level Model

- 1. National Education Systems as They Relate to Preparation of Reading**
- 2. Institutionally Intended Curricula and Competencies for Literacy Teachers**
 - ✓ *Learning goals and content*
 - ✓ *Literacy content knowledge*
 - ✓ *Pedagogical content knowledge for literacy teaching*
 - ✓ *General pedagogical knowledge*

Teacher Development Study– Four-Level Model

- 3. Teacher Educators' Concepts and Beliefs about Key Aspects of Literacy Education and their Self-Efficacy**
- 4. Perspectives of Schools on Reading Teacher Development**

Potential Data Sources

National Systems	Curricula and Competencies	Teacher Educators' Concepts and Beliefs	Perspectives of Schools
Document Analysis	Case Studies	Questionnaire for Teacher Educators	Interviews with School-based Personnel who support new teachers to teach literacy
Standardised Questionnaire for 'National Experts'	Interviews/Focus Groups w/ Teachers	Interviews/ Focus groups	Case Studies

Outputs

- Comparative Analysis of Curricula and Programmes for Preparing Teachers of Literacy
- Guidelines for Development of Pre-service Courses for Literacy Teacher Courses
- Competencies for Teaching Aspects of Literacy (reading, writing, language, literature)
- Case studies on selected topics – e.g. Innovative practices; Developing literacy skills across disciplines
- Modules on selected topics – e.g. European research on teaching literacy

Logistics

- Deadline: Feb 26, 2010
- Option: Comenius Multilateral Project vs. Comenius Multilateral Network
- Minimum number of countries = 3 (Project) or 6 (Network)
- Duration: Three years
- Maximum per year €150,000 but max of €300,000 (75% contribution)
- Role of FELA? (Can't be co-ordinating organisation)
- Possibility for participation of some non-Lifelong Learning Programme countries ('partner' countries)

Logistics (contd)

- Co-ordinating organisation/institution?
- Participating organisations? (combination of research institutes, universities engaged in teacher preparation in literacy, and national and international literacy associations with a focus on teacher development)
- Possibility of including schools that have a defined role in teacher preparation.

Comenius Multi-lateral Network

- A forum for reflection and co-operation in identifying and promoting innovation and best practice in the thematic area concerned
- Engage in activities to promote reflection and best practice in the thematic area concerned, including comparative analysis, case studies, organise seminars, working groups and conferences
- Organise an annual meeting of Comenius projects working in the thematic area of the network (e.g., open seminar or conference).

Thank You for Listening. . .