



Title of Report: *Teacher Development Interactive*

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Organization: [Pearson](#)¹ – New York, NY, USA

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1. Identify and describe the Professional Development Opportunity (PDO).

The PDO described in the case report is *Teacher Development Interactive* (TDI), an online professional development program offering international certification for English teachers. TDI was published in the US in 2009.

TDI currently includes six individual courses or modules: Fundamentals of English Language Teaching, Fundamentals of Teaching Young Learners, Teaching Speaking, Teaching Listening, Teaching Reading, and Preparation for the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT Prep). This last module is an internationally recognized Cambridge ESOL exam that tests teaching knowledge needed by teachers of primary, secondary, or adult learners of English. When candidates complete any four of the six modules of TDI with a score of 75% or above on the final test for each module, they receive a First TEFL Certificate from the English Language Teaching Institute at Hunter College, City University of New York.

There are two online study options, the self-study version and the teacher-led option. The self-study version is designed for teachers who intend to study independently. They follow the course at their own pace and in their own time. The teacher-led version is intended for institutions wishing to administer the course to a group of teachers. In this version, the online course facilitator monitors the course and tracks the progress of the students. The online facilitator grades written assignments and moderates an asynchronous forum on issues related to the topics in the online course. Institutions who have adopted TDI may supply the facilitator or Pearson may be contracted to furnish a professional to serve this role.

A third option is a blended learning option that supplements the online course with face-to-face classroom sessions. The facilitator of the face-to-face sessions is equipped with a detailed curriculum, participant handouts, and PowerPoint slides, all carefully designed to foster deep learning, peer teaching, and application of concepts. Learners completing the program are eligible for an Edexcel accredited certificate. Edexcel is the UK's largest awarding organization, offering academic and vocational qualifications and testing to schools, colleges, employers, and other places of learning in the U.K. and internationally.

TDI has a technical product support team committed to help with any questions or technical issues that students or instructors might have.

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2. Describe the target audience for the PDO.

TDI is targeted towards teachers who may not have an advanced degree in language education. In terms of teaching experience, the audience varies widely depending on whether or not the experience has been in teaching English or teaching other subjects. The majority of teachers are generally over eighteen years of age. TDI is sold to universities, private institutions, Ministries of Educations, and other government entities.

TDI can be accessed from anywhere in the world as long as there is a computer and an Internet connection. To use TDI, participants' computers must meet the system requirements listed below:

For PC-Compatible Computers:

Operating System: Windows® 2000, XP, or Vista

Web Browser: Internet Explorer®6.0 or higher OR Firefox® 2.0 or higher

Plug-ins: Adobe® Reader 7 or higher, Adobe® Flash Player 8 or higher, and Java™ 1.4.2 or higher

For Macintosh Computers:

Operating System: OS X 10.3.9 or higher

Web Browser: Safari® 2.0 or higher OR Firefox® 2.0 or higher

Plug-ins: Adobe® Reader 7 or higher, Adobe® Flash Player 8 or higher, and Java™ 1.4.2 or higher

For All Computers:

Hardware: Headphone or speakers, built-in or external; Microphone, built-in or external

Internet Connection: DSL, Cable/Broadband, T1, or other high-speed connection

Memory: 256 MB RAM or higher

Monitor Resolution: 1024 x 768 or higher

TDI students have been located in countries throughout Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe, particularly Poland.

Customers choose TDI because it offers a solid foundation in current ELT teaching methodology, quality professional development at an affordable price, instruction from experts in the field, and ongoing professional development without interruption to their jobs or other responsibilities. Although TDI is targeted primarily at English language teachers, the program has been used by teachers who teach languages other than English and these teachers have found the skills and knowledge presented very valuable.

3. Describe how you recruit students for your PDO.



Throughout the world, Pearson has local sales teams who visit potential customers. TDI is marketed to Pearson's institutional customers, schools and institutions, and not to individual teachers. The local sales teams are supported by a central marketing unit, which provides brochures, presentations, case studies, and customer service support, both academic and technical. TDI also has a website that includes course demos, a video tour, author biographies, course outlines, etc.

4. Describe curriculum choices made.

Online delivery of this course was chosen for three reasons. First, our main aim was to provide maximum international access to high quality teacher training materials that could be available at anytime and at any place. In order to achieve this goal, the only possible alternative was to create an online PDO. . Second, choosing online delivery allowed the course to present material through a variety of learning modalities as well as interactive activities. Finally, by delivering material online, we expose users of the course to the kind of technology they may be expected to use in their teaching careers.

The syllabus and the content for all modules were overseen by internationally recognized experts in the field of language teaching. Dr. H.D. Brown, Professor Emeritus at San Francisco State University, developed the Fundamentals of ELT; Allen Ascher, an experienced language teacher, teacher trainer, and materials writer, wrote the Teaching Speaking module; Dr. Jack Richards was responsible for the syllabus of Teaching Listening; Jeremy Harmer, noted teacher-trainer and author, wrote the syllabus for Teaching Reading; Diane Pinkley, former head of the TESOL program at Teacher's College, Columbia University, in consultation with Dr. David Nunan, noted author, researcher, and teacher trainer, developed the syllabus for Fundamentals of Teaching Young Learners; and finally, teacher-trainers Susan Hillyard and María Victoria Saumell collaborated on the syllabus for TKT Prep. The final tests for each module were written by Penney Cameron, who specializes in writing test items for the International English Language Testing System.

The need for an online English teacher-training program was repeatedly relayed to us from various markets around the world. The increasingly globally integrated economy has made English education more important. Therefore, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) teachers at all levels need to improve their English language teaching knowledge and techniques to meet their countries' goals and changing educational imperatives.

TDI is an original PDO, designed specifically for online and blended learning delivery. It is not simply reformatted print material. When delivered online with the support of an online facilitator, Pearson recommends an online class size of 25 students per class. The 1:25 facilitator to student ratio is largely determined by market and customer needs.

5. Describe the PDO's over-arching goals and specific objectives.



The over-arching goal of TDI is to prepare participants to be successful, knowledgeable teachers of English. The specific aims vary according to the module. Below is a list of specific goals for each module.

For the Fundamentals of ELT module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand:

- (1) the different schools of thought on second language acquisition (SLA) and how those theories influence pedagogy;
- (2) how psychological factors (diverse learning styles, personality, motivation) and sociological factors (culture, discourse, and pragmatics) can affect language learning;
- (3) the difference among the most common approaches to instruction, such as communicative and form-focused;
- (4) what is behind learner errors and how to deliver appropriate feedback on those errors; and
- (5) the purpose and path of ongoing professional development.

For the Teaching Speaking module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand how to:

- (1) identify all of the sub-skills involved in speaking and communicative competence;
- (2) recognize the benefits of an interactive classroom that promotes both fluency and accuracy;
- (3) identify and address pronunciation errors that interfere with comprehension;
- (4) develop strategies for maximizing speaking practice throughout the lesson;
- (5) plan lessons and for those lessons, design both controlled and free communication activities; and
- (6) develop both formal and informal student assessment measures.

For the Teaching Listening module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand:

- (1) the basics of the listening process, including the role of background knowledge, of cognitive load, and of different ways information is processed;
- (2) the difference between listening skills and listening strategies and recognize the importance of both;
- (3) the four different listening styles and how to use appropriate classroom techniques for each;
- (4) the use of different media to cultivate listening skills;
- (5) how to identify listening problems and develop techniques to help participants overcome them; and
- (6) how to design tasks for formative and summative assessment of listening ability.

For the Teaching Reading module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand:

- (1) what is involved in the process of reading in a second language and what learners bring to the process;
- (2) the role of discourse awareness and its importance in reading comprehension;
- (3) different purposes for reading, six reading strategies, and how to link each purpose to text types and reading strategies;
- (4) the importance of extensive reading and how to develop extensive reading projects;
- (5) how to select appropriate reading material, design tasks, and prepare a reading lesson; and
- (6) how to develop formal and informal student assessments including alternative types.

For the Fundamentals of Teaching Young Learners module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand:

- (1) the language learning process in children through study of important theories on childhood development, SLA, and different learning modalities;
- (2) the elements of lesson preparation, such as how to formulate appropriate lesson objectives, design materials that reflect the objectives, and how to anticipate and respond to potential problems;
- (3) how to select and develop materials for children, including textbooks and supplementary materials;
- (4) how to create reusable supplementary materials and identify opportunities for their use;
- (5) classroom dynamics and how to manage the teaching and learning process in the classroom; and
- (6) important concepts of assessment such as validity and reliability, and how to select and design traditional and performance-based assessments.

For the TKT Prep module, the specific goals are to help the participants understand:

- (1) concepts and terms associated with the four main language skills and their sub-skills and classify those skills as receptive or productive;
- (2) important factors that affect the language learning process, such as motivation and learner needs and characteristics;
- (3) different teaching approaches and compare their effectiveness for different teaching situations;
- (4) how to identify and prioritize lesson objectives in order to plan effective lessons;
- (5) different types of assessment and the purpose of each type; and
- (6) the basics of interacting with students and managing the learning environment.

6. Describe the teaching and learning activities used in the PDO and what online applications are used to support these activities.

TDI achieves the above goals by providing instruction through a variety of media in order to get the most out of the online format. Lessons feature well known experts in English language



teaching and teacher training, who present material through video lectures and slide presentations. Written texts and graphics help explain the key concepts and these are followed by concept checks and practice tasks that provide immediate feedback on whether or not participants have grasped the key concepts. There are videos of actual classroom lessons taught in the US, Argentina, and Asia that demonstrate the concepts in action. Transcripts of the classroom videos are available for extra support.

Additionally, brief lectures and podcasts of expert interviews give important additional information in audio format. Important terminology is included in a glossary that learners can refer to at any time.

Each lesson ends with a writing assignment designed to help students reflect critically on what they have learned and to relate their learning to their own experiences. These assignments can be done individually or in pairs or groups and provide opportunities for reflection, materials design, and classroom research. Finally, assessment is provided through concept checks and quizzes in each lesson and a final module test.

The feedback in TDI activities is a teaching tool. For each activity, participants are supplied with feedback on every item they answered. If their answers are correct, they receive a simple green check mark. However, for each incorrect answer, they are notified that the answer is wrong and are then given an explanation as to why the answer was wrong. Then they have the opportunity to try the item again. If they should choose another incorrect answer for the same item, then the screen reveals all of the correct answers.

For those participants who are using a teacher-led version of the course, there is also a link to an asynchronous discussion board where teachers and learners can communicate on course topics through threaded discussions. The platform also contains an announcement feature to alert users of new discussions or updates.

7. Describe how the PDO helps students understand the local context in which they are studying so that they can work together with other students in the global context of your online PDO.

Participants may take the course from any location with internet access. The global context is introduced by means of the curriculum and understanding the local contexts is encouraged by means of the reflective writing tasks. With the guidance of an online facilitator, participants are encouraged to share their experiences and beliefs in the platform's forums. These forum interchanges provide a rich opportunity for participants to learn about other contexts and put their own local context in perspective. The interactions promote intercultural communication and help participants avoid cultural bias.

8. Describe how the PDO helps prepare students for the local contexts in which they will work.



This online course emphasizes the need for reflection. Written assignments offer a variety of meaningful opportunities for the students to reflect on their own teaching context and experiences. They are often asked to analyze their own local context against the general, global context introduced through the texts. Tasks such as reflecting, analyzing, designing, and self and peer observation allow participants to think deeply about their local contexts and realities. These written reflections, enriched by facilitator feedback, promote the development of professionals who are aware of the global context as well as their local contexts. Through these activities, participants acquire the knowledge and flexibility to adapt to different contexts and cultures.

9. Explain the characteristics of the teacher educator(s) working in the PDO.

It is recommended that TDI facilitators have some online teaching and learning experiences as well as an advanced level of English language proficiency. Before assuming the role of an online facilitator, individuals must complete the modules themselves as well as complete the facilitator training program (two to four hours) provided at no cost by Pearson.

The facilitator is responsible for the initial course setup, course scheduling, the communication of roles and responsibilities, and the overall curriculum. Facilitators manage the pacing of the program using the platform's Study Plan functionality by showing and/or hiding relevant lessons. To keep the students on track and motivated, the facilitator can post short notes on the homepage and on each lesson homepage. In addition, the facilitator reviews, grades, and offers feedback on written assignments. The facilitator also posts forum questions and monitors the group discussions to keep the online discussions challenging, meaningful, and connected to the knowledge and skills presented online. The purpose of the forum in TDI is not simply to allow a social media space for community building or chatting; it is to provide a space for discussions that foster critical thinking and reflection. The facilitator also responds to student questions and concerns and posts friendly reminders on deadlines. Finally, the facilitator monitors the students' progress by checking the grade books frequently and carefully resolving any academic issues that may surface.

10. Describe the non-teaching support staff in the PDO.

TDI is supported by a Pearson appointed staff person who is part of the central Professional Development unit. This staff member either resolves or channels any technical or academic issues to the appropriate support person. In addition to support from Pearson's central team, each local market has an assigned client services staff member who is responsible for the success of the adoption and provides any and all support as needed.

11. Explain the learning assessments used in the PDO.

Each module of TDI is divided into five lessons. Each lesson includes the following formative assessment opportunities:

- (1) **Concept checks** help verify whether or not the student has understood the concept introduced. Automatic, computer-generated feedback is provided.

- (2) **Practice tasks** provide fun, interactive learning of new ideas, strategies, and techniques. Students receive instant feedback on their responses. They can do the activities multiple times, which provides a rich, personalized experience. .
- (3) **Writing assignments** require participants to choose one of three options from five possible assignment types: reflect, design, discover, peer or self-observation, or classroom research. Each lesson has one writing assignment. These assignments aim to provide opportunities for integrating knowledge and linking it to participants' local and personal contexts.

Summative assessments include:

- (1) **A final quiz** at the end of each lesson. It consists of 20 objective questions in the form of true/false, multiple choice, drag and drop, drop boxes, matching, and type in the blanks. Feedback is received after submission. It cannot be retaken once it is submitted.
- (2) **A final test** at the end of the module consists of 40 objective questions, either multiple choice or using drop-down menus. Feedback is received after submission. It cannot be retaken once it is submitted.

Scores on the practice activities, final quizzes, written assignments, and end of module final tests are all recorded in the platform's grade books available for viewing by the students and the facilitators.

12. Explain the mechanism used to evaluate the PDO

TDI has been evaluated and accredited by Edexcel, the UK's largest Awarding Organization. The accreditation provides an independent benchmark of TDI as an accredited PDO. The Edexcel accreditation service recognises and endorses high-quality third party programs that are designed, delivered, and assessed in-house. Edexcel provides an independent, internationally applied quality benchmark, which is based on five key quality indicators: learner support, resources and environment, quality management system, administrative arrangements, and assessment and verification. .

These quality indicators are designed to ensure that:

- centers offer fair access to learning and assessment opportunities and are responsive to the needs of their learners;
- centers ensure that all programs are delivered in a safe and healthy environment and that physical and staff resources are matched to the needs of the programs;
- centers ensure that all programs are delivered within the scope of a mature quality management system;
- administrative arrangements are clearly defined for programs within the scope of the accreditation service; and
- centers will ensure that all assessment and verification activities lead to valid and reliable decisions.



13. Discuss the challenges involved in offering this PDO online.

In some parts of the world, internet access is still limited. Therefore, teachers in some institutions in these areas do struggle at times with slow bandwidth. The course delivery platform is easy to navigate and includes comprehensive and clear facilitator and student guides. Because there are no synchronous activities, participants taking the course anywhere in the world have no problems. All mandatory resources are included in the course, including a list of related bibliographic resources and links for participants who wish to explore topics more thoroughly.

14. Describe the successes of the PDO and explain how they are documented.

At the end of the course, students log into a survey website to fill out a feedback form evaluating the content of the course, the online platform, technical aspects of the platform, and their experience. All the results are shared with the institutions and local sales offices.

TDI has been used successfully in over 30 countries throughout the world with thousands of teachers. Over 90% of respondents have reported a high level of satisfaction with TDI. Pearson has collected a database of annotated comments as well, all indicating a high level of satisfaction.

Dr. Carol A. Chapelle, Dr. Elena Cotos, and Karina Silva, from Iowa State University conducted an efficacy study on TDI called “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Teacher Development Interactive.” This study provided some evidence of the course’s ability to facilitate learning for all teachers. The results indicated that the modules were relevant, easy-to-use, and practical. The material could be applied in various contexts. The module design and content is well suited for teachers and favorably perceived. The study concluded that TDI was an effective learning tool for teachers with a wide range of experience.

In 2009, TDI was given the “BESSIE Award” for Best Educational Software from *ComputED Gazette*.

The review from the award announcement is presented below (note that the award was based on the Listening and Speaking modules):

*Pearson Longman's **Teacher Development Interactive** (for English Language Teachers – ELT, although better known as ESL) is such a valuable resource, we found ourselves wondering why more teacher development courseware and programs aren't available which are affordable, convenient and well designed. Created in conjunction with Hunter University and utilizing the talents of renowned specialist, Dr. Jack C. Richards, **Teacher Development Interactive** covers every aspect of ELT in two distinct modules, Listening and Speaking. Using state-of-the-art videos of lectures, explanations, lesson design, exercises – in fact, all of the five domains of learning – it helps teachers master the art of teaching speaking, listening, reading, writing, fluency, and more to their ESL students. This course is so good, it could replace certification*



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courses at colleges and universities – and maybe it should. Winner of a 2009 BESSIE ELT Teacher Development Website award, congratulations to Pearson Longman!