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Education

TEACHER EDUCATORS!

YOUR VOICE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING REFORMS?



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An overview

- Contemporary Vietnam's EL education
- Challenges
- Recommendations

Vietnam Education Administration



English Language Teaching (ELT) reforms

- For higher quantity:
 - No restriction on English classes at secondary and tertiary levels
 - Expansion of ELT to Primary education since 1996 ([Table 1](#))
- For better quality:
 - Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) since 1995
 - Curriculum reform 2002-2008: new text books since 2002, learner-centered curriculum since 2006, and task-based curriculum since 2012
 - Project 2008-2020: assignment of expected language proficiencies for students and teachers at every education level ([Table 2](#))

(Hoang, Nguyen, & Hoang, 2006; Nguyen, 2011; Canh & Barnard, 2009; Barnard & Nguyen, 2010)

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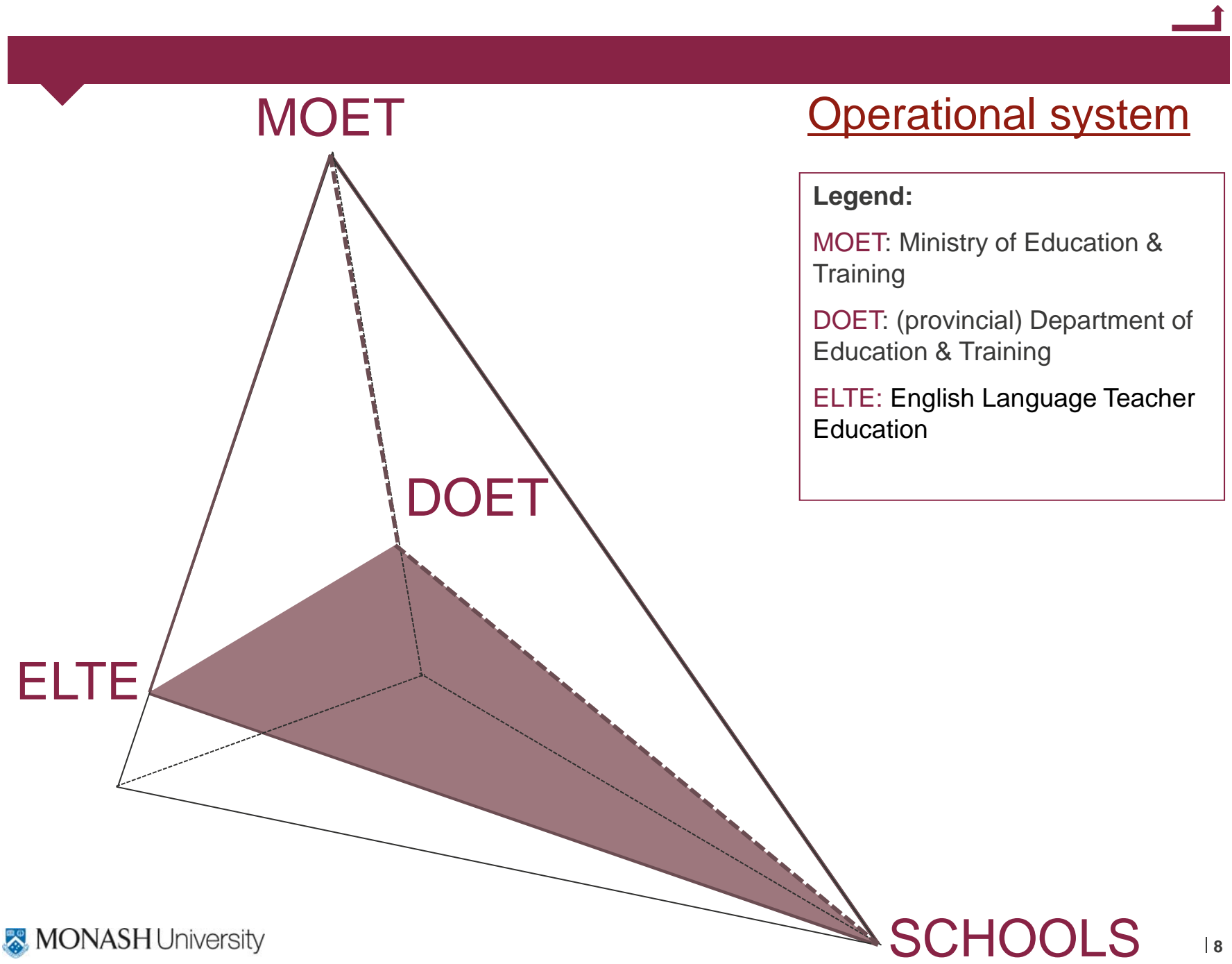
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Implementation of reform policies

- Top-down approach ([see Operational system](#))
- Teachers of Russian retrained to be teachers of English at secondary and tertiary levels (*Denham, 1992; Hoang, Nguyen, & Hoang, 2006*)
- A majority of lower-secondary teachers transferred to primary schools when English was expanded to this level (*Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007*)
- Boosting in-service training system to improve school teaching quality
- Low level co-operation between pre-service and in-service training. [\(VN edu administration\)](#)



Challenges facing MOET

Lacks a mechanism to monitor the implementation of their policies at deeper levels:

- “There is no clear awareness [in teachers] of the aims, means, and outcomes of teaching English for primary pupils” (Moon, 2005, p54).
- “Management system of higher education mainly top-down directed, bottom-up submission; there are no mechanisms forcing the leaders to listen to the grassroots at essential level” (Report No: 760 /BC-BGDĐT MOET, 2009, p.13).
- MOET can only administer 54 of the 376 universities and colleges nationwide.

Challenges facing MOET (cont.)

Lacks a mechanism to evaluate the implementation of their policies at deeper levels (Canh & Barnard, 2009):

- No formal evaluation of the top-down workshops in secondary and primary EL curriculum reform
- No direct communication between classroom teachers and the curriculum developers

Vietnam metropolis to stop teaching Cambridge IGCSE program

TUOI TRE NEWS

UPDATED : 06/22/2014 13:09 GMT + 7



Fourth-grade students study English at Nguyen Binh Khiem Elementary School in District 1, Ho Chi Minh City.

TUOI TRE

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From the academic year of 2014 – 2015, elementary and middle schools in Ho Chi Minh City will stop their enrollment for the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). Do Minh Hoang, Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training's chief of staff, has announced.

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Education/Youth

Ho Chi Minh City education officials dodge questions about Cambridge pull-out

Thanh Nien News

June 25, 2014 14:23

Email Print

Ho Chi Minh City's Education and Training Department failed to directly respond to questions submitted by the local press on June 23 about a new English-language program recently introduced to local schools after a similar four-year pilot was improperly pulled.

At a one-hour press conference organized by the city's Department of Education and Training on Monday, many questions were raised about the "real reason" that the Cambridge International Examinations' Program (CIE) was pulled after being implemented for four years at a select group of Ho Chi Minh City schools.

Questions about the quality of the new program received no concrete replies and the conference concluded with the department director asking reporters to wait and see how the new curriculum turns out.

With the department's approval, the EMG Education Company has taught the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) curriculum at the participating schools during the last four

RELATED NEWS

Cambridge spirit goes missing in Vietnam

Challenges facing in-service EL teachers

- Low proficiency: 93% failed proficiency tests in 2011
(*The Guardian*, 2011; *Vietnamnet*, 2013)
- Low pay + hard work
- Lack of graduates from primary EL education
- Lack of uniform curriculum and textbooks to accompany the prescribed curriculum in primary education

Challenges facing EL teacher educators

- Project 2008-2020 introduces higher requirements for graduate language competence: demand for higher training quality
- Demand to develop and implement a new curriculum for primary EL teacher education
- Demand to shift to the credit-based training system: renew “lecture style” teaching practice (Hamano, 2008, p406); restructure curriculum to suit tighter time budget; self-training of learner-centered and learning-centered pedagogical approaches

Challenges facing EL teacher educators (cont.)

- Low level of cooperation between pre-service (ELTE) and in-service training programs (DOET/MOET)
 - ➔ Little access to primary or secondary teaching reality
 - ➔ Lack an insight into the practical aspects of EL reforms
 - ➔ training programs are usually theory-oriented and fail to address the work-related issues (Hamano, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Nguyen, 2011).

Challenges facing pre-service EL teachers

- The credit-based program requires a shift from passive learning habits to active learning strategies (Hong, 2011)
- English to reach the target B2 / C1 (table 2) from their entrance level A1 or A2.
- Obtaining B1 for another foreign language upon graduation

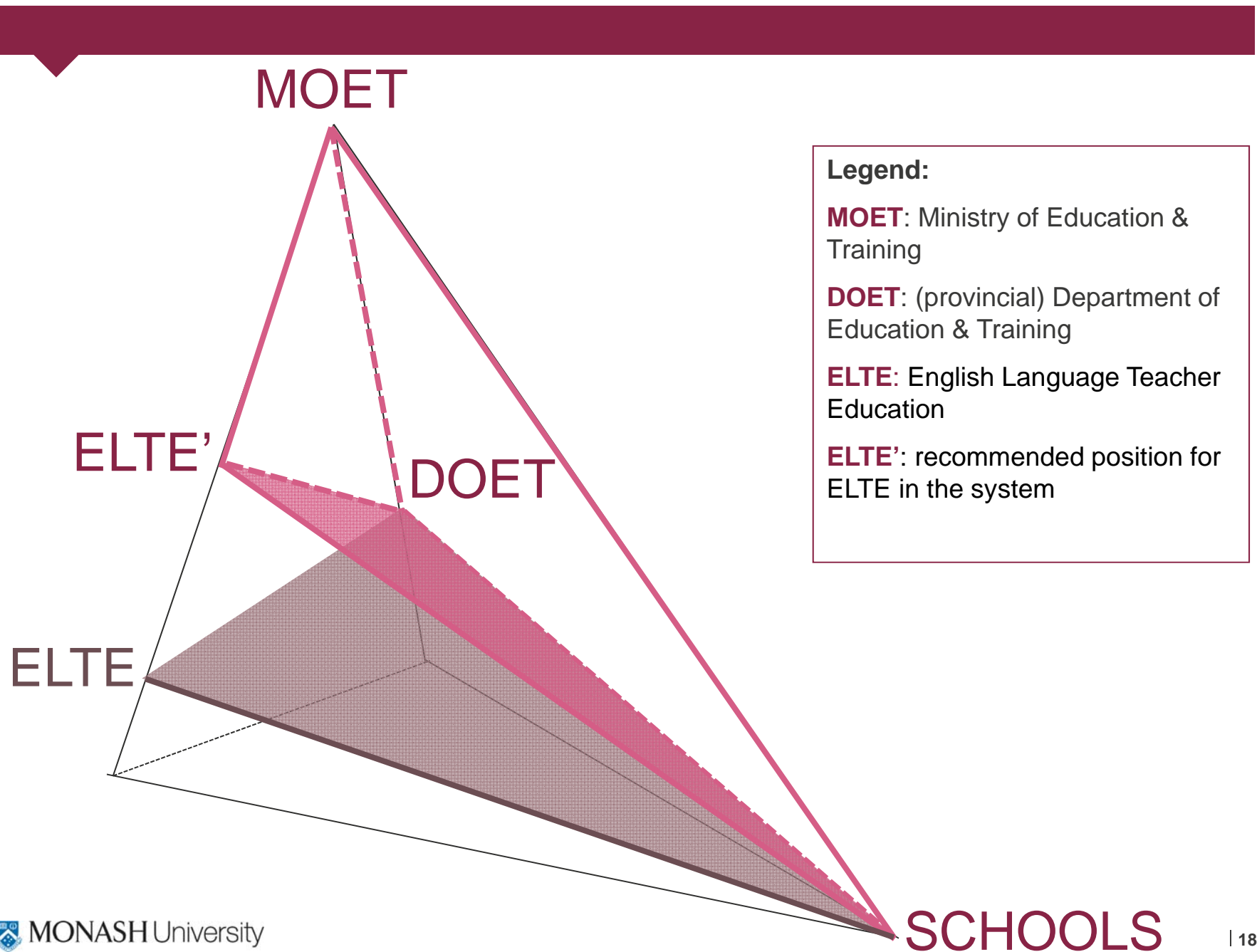
Challenges facing pre-service EL teachers

- Little teaching practice throughout the course: six real class lessons in a six-week practicum
- Primary pre-service teachers learn about primary language education in a pilot program designed by secondary and tertiary trained educators
- Primary pre-service teachers have their practice teaching evaluated by adult-oriented teachers whose previous teaching experience was in lower-secondary schools.

Recommendations

ELT teacher education can be viewed as the key to the mechanism problem in ELT:

- In literature: teacher trainers can be both ‘teachers’ and ‘researchers’, ‘transmitter of information’ about theories and policies, ‘mentor’ for both pre-service and in-service teachers, and ‘awareness-raiser’ (Ellis, 2010)
- In Vietnam ELT context: teacher trainers are from top graduates, committing themselves to doing research in and about their teaching practice.
- With more access to school teaching practice and closer collaboration with in-service training, teacher educators can develop insights into issues both in their pre-service teaching and the school teaching practice



Actions!

- Screen and categorize EL teacher educators: English non-major vs. English-major.
- Train EL teacher educators.
- Involve English-major teacher educators in ELT reforms at different levels: designing curriculum, choosing / designing textbooks, workshops, classroom observation, classroom demonstration, etc.
- Strengthen collaboration between ELTE and DOET, between ELTE and schools.

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Thank you!

Table 1: English Language Teaching (ELT) reforms

Year	Policy	Target group	Time allocation	Scale	Requirements
1975-early 1990s		<i>Secondary</i>	<i>45' x 3 or 4/week</i>	<i>nationwide</i>	<i>Compulsory subject for national final exam since 1986</i>
1996	Guidance on FL teaching in primary schools	Primary (Sem2 Year 3- Year 5)	40' x 2 / week	piloted in big cities	Optional
2003	Optional EL program at primary level	Primary (Y3-5)	40' x 2 / week	nationwide	Optional; National curriculum: S, L & prescribed vocab
2010	English course outline for primary schools	Primary (Y3-5)	40' x 4 / week	nationwide	Compulsory; CEFR equivalence: A1.1 - A1.3
		Primary (Y1-5)	40' x 8 / week	piloted in big cities	Optional

Table 2: CEFR-equivalent language proficiencies for students and teachers



Education level	Students' proficiency	Teachers' proficiency
Higher education (English-major)	C1	C1
Higher education (non-major)	B1	C1
Junior college (English-major)	B2	C1
Junior college (non-major)	B1	C1
Secondary technical and vocational education	B1	C1
Upper secondary	B1	C1
Vocational training	A2	B2
Lower secondary	A2	B2
Primary	A1	B1/B2