An Investigation on the Effectiveness of English Teachers Training Programs in Morocco: English Teaching Internship Initiative as a Case Study

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Abstract
Once they graduate, many students seek job opportunities in other domains such as engineering, medicine, management, etc. On the other hand, students with an interest in the field of teaching look for different training programs to develop their skills and knowledge. In Morocco, teachers undergo various sets of training before actually becoming teachers. Some of this training occurs in governmental institutions like Centre Régionales des Métiers de l’Education et de la Formation, whereas others opt for partnership programs like the English Teaching Internship Initiative. The English Teaching Internship Initiative (ETII) is an educational program that aims to provide potential teachers with a practical teaching opportunity. In this program, the involved participants receive real-world teaching experience and pedagogical training provided by experienced educators. As a result, trainees enhance their classroom management, lesson planning, assessment skills, and techniques. The beneficiaries, then are supposed to be immersed voluntarily in their local communities to gain valuable skills and experiences, enhance their resumes, and make a positive influence on their professional development and the student's learning outcomes. The aim of this article was to examine and evaluate the impact of the English Training Internship Initiative program on English Foreign Language teachers in Morocco.

Keywords: Internship, Initiative, Moroccan EFL Teachers, professional development, Training program

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Introduction

Education has always been a potent force in society and a crucial tool for bringing about positive change in the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of individuals. Numerous significant agents, including the teacher, influence the entire process. It is widely acknowledged that teaching occupies a crucial position in education. Since teaching is perceived as a challenging and important profession. It contributes greatly to the advancement of society in various fields. Thus, preparing instructors for the teaching profession has a vital role worldwide. Education, then is a significant factor in creating strong, developed societies, and teachers are among the key players in making that happen. For this reason, training and professional development programs for teachers must be offered, mentored, and regularly reviewed.

Being aware of the fundamental role that education plays in every community, teachers are expected not only to be proficient in their subject areas but also to be professionally developed. As a result, to achieve the high requirements and standards of quality education, they must have a wealth of knowledge and abilities concerning teaching and assessment procedures.

The main aim of this study was to explore the role and effect of the English Teaching Internship Initiative program on Moroccan English Foreign Language teachers. Another aim was to examine whether the English Teaching Internship Initiative program helped future teachers gain insights into teaching pedagogies and strategies. An additional aim was to elicit teachers' attitudes toward the program. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What is the English Teaching Internship Initiative, and what it aims for?
- To what extent do English Teaching Internship Initiatives affect the professional growth of an educator?
- How can this initiative be further developed to meet the evolving needs of English language education in Morocco?

By using a mixed-method approach, the current research examined the role of internship initiatives among English teachers and investigated their impact on their professional development.

Literature Review

The Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs

Teachers today participate in a variety of teaching training programs to enhance their pedagogical methods and skills. Therefore, the professional growth of teachers is closely linked to the training they receive and their ability to effectively apply the knowledge acquired in their classrooms. In this sense, teachers’ professional development can be enhanced through various teaching training that focuses on equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to start their teaching careers.

The impact of these programs extends beyond the individual teacher. It positively influences student learning outcomes and overall educational quality (Dange et al., 2020). By recognizing the components of effective training programs and addressing challenges in their implementation, educators and policymakers can promote continuous growth among teachers and foster a culture of excellence in the education system.

Recent research has focused on the significance of these teaching training programs and their potential to greatly influencing the effectiveness of teaching techniques and the outcomes of student learning (Bernard, 2022 & Ahmed, 2021). However, in the Moroccan context, only a few studies were conducted on teachers’ training programs and their role in enhancing their
professional growth (Tamani et al., 2021). Internships within the Moroccan context, such as the English Training Internship Initiative (ETII) program, were not referenced in the literature review.

The Impact of Teacher Training Programs on the Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills of Teachers
According to the research in the literature review, properly designed teaching training programs play a substantial role in the advancement of teachers' professional development and have positive effects on the teaching and learning process. In a comprehensive study conducted by (Tonya et al, 2021) on how teachers should be prepared effectively using different training programs, they insist on having programs that give teachers opportunities to make changes in school reforms as well as providing teaching training programs that deal with teaching as a team effort and include a range of techniques to train future teachers planning and problem-solving. In other words, novice teachers must work together and support each other in designing their lessons and implementing the curriculum, which will help them evaluate their teaching practices. As a result, such methods and preparations greatly help teachers develop their teaching skills and capacities.

Teachers do not only need support to develop their capacities and skills, but they also need the proper training that helps them evaluate and improve their teaching practices. Teaching training programs that affect positively the teacher’s pedagogical practices and equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to adopt evidence-based instructional practices. (Guskey, 2002) Johnson and Johnson (2019) argued that teachers who take part in cooperative learning training demonstrate more excellent classroom management skills and better student involvement.

For professional development to occur, teachers are introduced to teaching pedagogies and understand the substantial influence they exert on their instructional methods during training programs. In order to effectively link students with educational material, teachers must have an understanding of pedagogy that requires a diverse set of methods to engage learners proficiently and the ability to adjust and switch approaches based on students' needs (Ball and Cohen, 1999).

A Successful teaching training program should have mutual components that enhance its effectiveness. One of the most essential elements to include is an assessment to identify specific areas for teacher development (Feldman & Joseph, 2021). Training materials should be created with these needs in mind to enable focused professional development. Also, continuing assistance and coaching should facilitate using the acquired knowledge from the training sessions in classroom practices (Moran & Richard, 2004).

The Influence of Training Programs on Teachers' Confidence and Motivation
Teaching training programs are crucial in giving educators a chance to learn about the latest educational theories, instructional methods, and classroom management strategies. During such programs, teachers acquire new knowledge and skills that help them improve their understanding of effective teaching practices, enabling them to implement innovative approaches. When teachers acquire the necessary techniques and skills, they develop self-assurance to meet student needs and interests, and they also tend to feel more motivated to enhance student outcomes through their efforts. Therefore, teachers participating in these professional development programs gained confidence in their capacity to actively involve students, apply creative teaching methods, and handle classroom dynamics proficiently (Pountney, 2019).

Interestingly, teacher training programs do not only boost educators’ self-confidence but also contribute to leveling up their motivation in order to develop their teaching practices inside the
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classroom and outside continually. Tonya et al. (2021) pointed out that a well-designed training initiative inculcates a great sense of efficacy and self-assurance, which in turn empowers teachers' intrinsic motivation. New pedagogical approaches and the acquisition of updated content knowledge reignite teachers' passion for teaching (Muir & Geiger, 2019). As teachers witness the positive outcomes of implementing new strategies in their classrooms, their motivation to continue seeking professional growth is highly reinforced (Day et al., 2019).

Teachers, when they feel the power of the required skills and knowledge during the training, their confidence and motivation become reignited. When teachers are more confident and motivated to start their teaching journey with positive attitudes towards teaching that take into consideration students’ learning outcomes.

**Teacher Training and Student Learning Outcomes**

Programs for teacher training consider student learning outcomes as a priority, which are essential to the success of any educational reforms. Teacher training programs improve educators' abilities, expertise, and teaching methods that have a significant influence on student accomplishment. “There is a close relation between the teacher’s training, teaching methods and student's academic achievements. A trained teacher can apply multiple teaching methods and techniques in a better way” (Hafeez, 2021, p.5). Training initiatives provide a chance for teachers to build their sense of responsibility toward their teaching practices and toward students' learning outcomes.

Teacher training programs continuously foster teachers’ professional development by engaging teachers in an ongoing learning process. Beneficiaries get introduced to the latest teaching methodologies, educational research, and technological advancements. Consequently, this training impacts positively not only teachers but also student learning outcomes (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Therefore, teachers participating in training programs are more likely to adapt their practices to align with emerging students’ needs and teaching practices and ensure that students receive a high-quality education.

Black and Wiliam (1998) linked teacher training programs' effectiveness to assessment as it is considered a critical aspect of education that facilitates evaluating student progress and achievement. Teacher training programs that emphasize the use of formative assessment, as well as, the summative one to measure student understanding teachers trained in assessment techniques are better equipped to identify gaps in learning and provide timely interventions.

Moreover, teachers receive training to incorporate the introduced teaching strategies into their classrooms to help their students effectively benefit from more dynamic and interactive learning experiences, which in turn enhance their understanding and retention of subject matter (Abodeeb et al., 2016) and lead to improving student mastery of content and higher academic achievement.

**Teacher Training**

Teachers’ training is recognized as an essential strategy today and preparing educators is a crucial component in reaching a successful educational goal. Hence, societies work to provide high-quality educational opportunities for their citizens. In other words, the development of pedagogical abilities, the improvement of classroom management strategies, and the promotion of a profound awareness of the needs of varied learners are all parts of teacher preparation that go beyond transmitting subject information. This introductory overview delves into how teacher
training shaped the educational environment, its historical progression, and the contemporary principles that form its foundation, and so forth.

Teacher training is an essential strategy that empowers not only teachers but also students with the necessary skills. According to Thwala and Makoelle (2022):

Teacher training is a process through which policies, procedures, and processes are put in place to equip prospective and current teachers with skills, knowledge, and attitudes that could facilitate the process of knowledge acquisition in others. (p: 101)

Essentially, teacher training is a planned, ongoing process used to equip educators with the necessary skills to support students learning throughout their educational journey. Accordingly, training should include theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and the proper mindset and attitudes required for effective teaching.

Another primary definition of teacher training by Richards & Farrell (2005), who argued that “Training involves understanding basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom” (p. 3). That is to say, when teachers get the training, they can apply the learned strategies. Teacher training programs are fundamental in educational systems. They enable educators to generate meaningful and lasting learning experiences, support professional development, and ultimately help students develop holistically. Teacher training contains different kinds of educational activities that enhance teachers’ knowledge, including their teaching skills, and all the professional skills (Khine, 2022).

Types of Teacher Training

In Morocco, teaching training programs in the educational systems are provided by public and private institutions to help graduated students enhance their knowledge and improve their skills. This remains an essential step for those interested in teaching to look for programs that will help them promote positive educational outcomes.

Governmental Training Programs

A governmental teacher training program is an organization created and administered by the government to offer structured programs designed to prepare people to become competent educators, which refer to governmental institutions for teacher training. These institutions often offer comprehensive teacher training programs that encompass academic coursework, practical teaching experiences, and pedagogical guidance. Besides, they use standardized curricula that align with local or national educational standards. Additionally, they might provide many levels of teacher training, from initial certification programs for prospective teachers to professional development opportunities for seasoned educators looking to advance their abilities.

In Morocco, graduate students who want to be future teachers pass a written and oral test in order to benefit from one-year training and get a professional license. After that, they apply to the Centre Régional des Métiers de l’Education et de la Formation (CRMEF): CRMEFs are regional centers for education and training professions. These centers provide various teacher training programs and workshops for pre-service and in-service teachers (Motoe Takahashi, 2010). In other words, these centers, on the one hand, help teachers enrolled in teaching programs and are currently undergoing their official teacher training but have not yet begun their teaching careers. On the
other hand, educators working in the teaching profession can also benefit and get the chance to improve their knowledge and teaching skills.

**Internship Training Programs: ETII as an Example**

According to Fletcher & Fletcher (2011) “an internship is any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession” (p. 46). That is to say, teachers can gain valuable and in-depth experience in the classroom through an internship in teacher preparation, which is an essential part of educator preparation. Moreover, internships allow aspiring teachers to apply their knowledge of pedagogy, hone their classroom management abilities, and interact with students directly.

English Teaching Internship Initiative is an internship. The ETII is a nonprofit teacher training program supported by the American Cultural Association and American Language Centers for graduates of the English programs at the Moroccan Public University as the picture illustrates:

![Figure 1. ETII annual poster (English Teaching Internship Initiative, 2018).](image)

It was launched in 2015 in Rabat, Casablanca, Kenitra, Fez, El Jadida, Oujda, Meknes, Agadir, and Tangier to help graduates ease their understanding of the Teaching profession and put their theory into practice. This training takes place in the American Language Center (ALC), where students get over 60 hours of classroom instruction and learn all about teaching languages. Additionally, they can take advantage of 12 hours of well-monitored microteaching activities and benefit from teachers there because they cooperate closely with seasoned ALC instructors and qualified English teacher trainers. All of these make trainees well-nourished and informed about teaching practices.

**Method**

A mixed-method approach was used to achieve the study’s goals. The study employed a quantitative method to gather and analyze numerical data in order to investigate how the ETII program contributes to improving the teaching skills of participants. On the other hand, the qualitative approach paves the way to provide a more in-depth explanation of the effectiveness of
the ETII initiative in the post-training period. Combining the two methods improved the data's validity and dependability and the results' quality.

**Participants**

In this study, the targeted population is reached using a non-random sampling technique. Fifty-nine participants are students enrolled in English Teaching Internship Initiative 2022 programs in various Moroccan cities aged between 20 to 35 years old. The program is launched nowadays in nine multiple cities. The study was able to reach other participants from different regions, as Table One below illustrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fez</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meknes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangier</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casablanca</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oujda</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to data, a large portion of participants are from ETII Fez with a percentage of 30%. 20% are from ETII Meknes, 18% from ETII Tangier, 17% From ETII Casablanca, and 15% from ETII Oujda. The main reason behind this choice is to collect representative data from different cities.

Regarding the level of education, the vast majority of participants are MA holders, with a percentage of 40.68%. For BA holders, they represent 38.96%. At the same time, Ph.D. students represent only 20.34%. This population is chosen to examine and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the ETII initiative on the professional development of EFL teachers in Morocco.

**Research Instruments**

The research instruments used in this study are questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires help gather data from many participants despite the geographical distance and not necessarily face-to-face interaction. Besides, the study should use semi-structured interviews to delve deeply into the participant's experiences and perspectives on the topic. Both instruments meet the research objectives and provide a comprehensive understanding of the study.

**Research Procedures**

The primary data collection used in this paper is the questionnaire. This instrument facilitates collecting data efficiently and effectively from many numbers of respondents. The questionnaire contains two sections. The first section is about the general background information of the participants. The second section is devoted to eliciting responses related to the role and impact of the ETII training program. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are a qualitative instrument that enhances the collected data. This process helps the researcher obtain comprehensive information about the subject and gives respondents the space and time to express their views about the topic.
Results

Reasons behind Choosing the ETII Program

When asked why they chose to become ETII trainees, participants were allowed a chance to select the answer that best reflect them and express any added information under the section other. Table Two below shows a summary of the results.

Table 2. Reasons behind choosing the ETII program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because it is a free training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To benefit from qualified trainers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get more knowledge in the field of teaching</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help me get a job</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help develop teaching skills</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To start a teaching career with more confidence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the findings, 23.7% of respondents chose to start their teaching career with more confidence. The results demonstrate that the respondents are seeking a teaching program that not only provides them with the knowledge and skills they need but also boosts their confidence, offers high-quality training, and supports their further professional development as educators. These motives align with the more general objectives of the teaching profession's professional development. To begin your teaching career with more confidence means that respondents think the program would give them the skills and knowledge they need to start their teaching careers with a higher sense of confidence. People who may be new to teaching and wish to feel prepared before joining the classroom would probably find this appealing.

About 20.3% of the participants specifically expressed interest in the teaching internship program as a way to get a job. The study highlights the practicality of the respondents’ decision to be part of the training and illustrates the attractiveness of the program's connection to potential employment opportunities. Some respondents mentioned, “This program allowed some of our friends to get a teaching job either in the public or private sector.” Most likely, the respondents see this program as a link between their academic interests and the practical requirements of the labor market. They want to receive valuable practical experience that will improve their teaching abilities and pave the way for them to land in the teaching field.

A percentage of 18.6% of the participants, chosen from the group who had been surveyed, showed a significant preference for the teaching internship project as a way to get more knowledge in the field of teaching. This response demonstrates their proactive attitude to developing their skills through practical application. Participating in a teaching internship allows these people to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, enabling them to hone their teaching skills, classroom management approaches, and student engagement strategies. The focus on skill development indicates that being effective teachers is not just about having theoretical pedagogical knowledge, but also having the practical skills necessary to provide engaging learning environments.

As for the 4th choice, 15.3% of respondents selected to get more knowledge in teaching. This selection shows respondents' goals to learn more and develop their teaching abilities. Many people are aware that teaching is a field that is continuously changing and that continuing education is essential to be practical and current with new educational techniques. Moreover, 13.6% chose the
program that provides quality-based training. This selection shows respondents' goals to learn more and develop their teaching abilities. Being aware that teaching is a field that is continuously changing is essential to be effective and current with new educational techniques. There is a significant portion of students, 8.5%, apply for internship training to become teachers, partly because the program is free of cost. For those who might otherwise encounter financial obstacles, becoming educators is made more accessible thanks to this economic accessibility, which substantially influences their decision-making process. Individuals driven to pursue a teaching career but concerned about the financial consequences of more education and training find great appeal in a program that offers free internships.

**Attitudes towards the Enhancement and Development of the Teaching Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills**

The next question in the questionnaire is about whether the ETII helps enhance and develop their teaching pedagogical knowledge and skills. 74.6% demonstrates the overwhelming agreement among students on the profound influence of teaching training internships on the expansion of their knowledge and abilities. This significant level of approval attests to the program's success in providing worthwhile opportunities for experiential learning. The results show that the immersive setting of the internship, in which students interact with actual teaching situations, promotes a dynamic learning process that goes beyond theoretical notions. On the other hand, 22.0% of students reported that the teacher training internship somehow influenced their knowledge and skills. Highlighting a more nuanced view of the program's success. Although this number may be lower than in the preceding case, it reveals a sizeable portion of students who acknowledge the importance of the internship to their academic development. The responses from this subset indicate a degree of hesitancy or a lack of solid confidence regarding how much the internship has helped them further their studies. Finally, a small percentage of participants acknowledged that the training program has not impacted their knowledge and skills, 3.4%. As illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attitudes towards the Post-training Period**

Participants’ attitudes towards the post-training program are considered to be the primary concern of trainees in the whole in-training phase.
Table 4. Attitudes towards the post-training period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-stated results reveal that 84.4% of the respondents have positive attitudes towards the after-training period, which is previously mentioned data related to the development of the teaching skills, and pedagogical knowledge of the trainees. 15.6% preferred to stay neutral as there might be some trainees who want to experience and use what they have been introduced to to be able to reflect on the program’s effectiveness and aspirations. At the same time, none of the participants reported having a negative attitude toward the post-training period. As an interviewee stated when asked to elaborate more on how they describe the training now after they have benefited from it. For example, respondent four said: “We cannot deny the importance of the training and how it paved the way for us to get more knowledge in teaching. Yet, when you get involved in real situations, everything seems very challenging.”

Moreover, a vast majority of respondents representing 84.7%, support having more initiatives like the one they are part of in the future. Respondent Five claimed that “the initiative was a great opportunity for me to learn a lot of things. I wish there were more provided chances for in-service teachers for continuous training.”

Based on the study findings and the previously mentioned studies in the literature review (Tonya et al., 2021; Day et al., 2004; Muir & Geiger, 2019). Training programs for teachers have a significant influence on improving and enhancing educators’ teaching skills, practices, pedagogical strategies, and self-confidence. Respondents in this study have confirmed the positive influence the ETII training program has on them as the majority of participants, whether in the questionnaire or the interviews, have shown that such initiatives are essential in providing priceless insights to Moroccan EFL teachers and how they foster their professional development and innovation concerning teaching.

**Discussion**

The study’s findings reveal that the English Teaching Internship Initiative is a program that gives teachers practical experience in the subject of teaching English. Its goal is to provide theoretical information and practical training for teacher trainees. This effort intends to give teachers a set of efficient teaching techniques, improve their capacity for student engagement, and foster adaptability in order to meet the requirements of individual students, as it was elaborated in different studies mentioned in the literature review (Guskey, 2002; Johnson &Johnson 2019; Tonya et al, 2021). Moreover, the study proves that ETII has a profound impact on both teachers’ trainees and in-service teachers who have benefited from the training. They hold positive attitudes towards the training as it helped them develop specific teaching skills and enhanced their pedagogical knowledge. A big portion of respondents highlighted the importance of the movement and its effectiveness as it facilitates the way they approach teaching. It is believed that more initiatives like the one they are enrolled in should be created and encouraged. The industry also played a significant role in shaping the educational experiences for both students and teachers. It implies that it played a crucial part in determining what students learned and how teachers taught.
in the classroom. Although, as many respondents argued, real classroom situations are still challenging and can only be dealt with when you have gained enough experience in the field. Interestingly, the current study's outcomes are consistent with what has been observed or reported in similar research previously.

The study also demonstrates that some trainees opt for the program because they assumed that it’s an excellent opportunity for them to get free training and to help them get a job. Thus, it is crucial it is to highlight how these initiatives offer high-quality training. This involves experienced trainers imparting knowledge and skills to equip trainees with the confidence to apply for teaching positions effectively. As evidence, Smith, A. et al. (2018) stated:

> Just as a seed thrives when nurtured by skillful hands, so do the minds of learners flourish under the guidance of well-trained educators. Previous studies have demonstrated that effective teacher training not only enhances the quality of education but also cultivates an environment where the seeds of knowledge grow into forests of understanding." (p. 211)

This reinforces the effectiveness of teacher training not only on teachers’ development and knowledge but also on learners' outcomes and aspirations as it was previously confirmed by different studies.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the study proves that the English Teaching Internship Initiative program contributed effectively to enhancing teachers' teaching, pedagogical knowledge, skills, and practices within and outside the classroom. Moreover, the program was an opportunity that provided critical hands-on essential experiences for establishing effective teaching techniques and narrowing the gap between theoretical knowledge and real classroom dynamics.

The training has paved the way for future teachers to develop a profound awareness of pedagogical methodologies, student relationships, and classroom management strategies by being part of real teaching contexts. Along with boosting confidence and motivation. This immersive learning experience sharpens adaptability and problem-solving skills, qualities for teachers to succeed in the challenging and constantly evolving teaching methods and techniques.

The English Teaching Internship Initiative had a transforming effect because it equips people with the skills and knowledge necessary to design meaningful and engaging learning experiences, enabling them to become more than just instructors but also influential figures in the lives of their students.

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