Assessing and Evaluating English Language Teacher Education, Teaching and Learning

Selected papers from the Second International Conference of English Language Teacher Educators held in Hyderabad, India
3 - 5 March 2012

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Introduction

This volume is an anthology of twelve selected presentations on the theme of *Assessing and Evaluating English Language Teacher Education, Teaching and Learning.* This was the focus of the International Conference of English Language Teacher Educators held in Hyderabad, India from 3 to 5 March 2012.

The central focus of the Conference was on the importance of assessing and evaluating ideas and practices in the training classroom as well as the efficacy of teacher education programmes and models. Against this backdrop, the Conference focused on five themes – all of which are represented in this selection of papers:

- **Programme Evaluation**: Padmini Shankar provides an insider perspective on a postgraduate teacher training course she has been offering; Cholpon Musaeva focuses on the qualitative differences between a teacher- and a trainer-training programme; Naushaad Kabir makes a case for including materials evaluation as a necessary component of teacher orientation programmes; and Raashid Nehal shares the findings of a study of a large-scale teacher training programme in a rural setting.

- **Assessing Language Capability**: Geetha Durairajan posits that teacher education programmes which value teacher reflection should include enabling evaluation practices such as open book examinations; Deepesh Chandrasekharan analyses the results of a study of the critical language awareness of English teachers in schools and its implications for learner empowerment; Padmini Boruah shares a strategy that encourages ELT postgraduate students to develop self-assessment tools; and Ravinarayan Chakrakodi presents a research study that attempts to develop indigenous criteria for assessing writing portfolios in a teacher education programme.

- **Assessing and Evaluating Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**: In the context of using technology for CPD, Nivedita Bedadur offers mobile phone texting as a viable tool for promoting professional development in rural areas where opportunities for direct engagement with teachers of English are minimal.

- **Evaluating Teacher Performance**: Rod Bolitho examines the tensions and dilemmas surrounding the assessment of practice teaching for both observers and observees; and Bose Vasudevan looks at the possibilities of using a task-based approach to peer observation.

- **Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)**: Against the background of current attempts to implement and institutionalise CCE in India, Jacob

Tharu positions it on the continuum of general examination reforms in the country and then highlights its potential for enriching pedagogy.

This collection of papers will give the reader a flavour of the spread of topics explored at the Conference, and offer an overview of ideas that continue to influence contemporary research in teacher assessment and programme evaluation. We hope this publication will encourage teachers of English and language teacher educators to contribute to the development of reliable monitoring and evaluation systems and thereby influence quality and accountability.

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Dilemmas in Observing, Supervising and Assessing Teachers

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Readers who are in any way concerned with the observation, supervision and assessment of teachers and teaching will recognise that these processes involve a complex web of issues and dilemmas for both observers and observees. This paper looks at some of these issues, largely from an observer/supervisor/assessor perspective, under four main headings and also includes some recommendations for improvements in our practices in this important area of our profession. A fair amount has been written on supervision cycles (Gaies and Bowers 1990, Randall with Thornton 2001), and on models of the supervision process (Freeman 1982, Gebhard 1990), stressing the need to differentiate between degrees of directiveness in feedback, but there is relatively little on attitudes, affect and on the psychological factors at play in the observation encounter. This article sets out to redress that balance.

Introduction

Very few teachers can put hand on heart and say that they enjoy being observed. But why is this? There may be several reasons, but one of the most likely ones is that it is perceived by an observee as an extremely high stakes event. The decision to become a teacher is an existentially significant one, and the thought that one's professional judgement and skills are under scrutiny by an 'outsider' to the class community one has striven to mould and develop is usually seen as scary, perhaps even more so because a single observation can never be more than just a 'snapshot' of the longer term endeavours which are crucial in teaching and learning. The potential for misunderstandings seems, in the mind of the observee, to be immense. Yet it is the observer who is the 'senior partner' in this process and I will now look at ways in which observers can be more self-aware and better prepared for the task they are charged with, whether they are observing for assessment, for training, for research or for professional development (cf. Maingay 1988). I see four main categories of dilemma, each of which needs to be explored and understood at a deeper level.

Dilemma 1: Observer 'Baggage'

When we go into a classroom to observe a teacher we are very seldom able to do this in a completely non-judgemental way. Let's look at what we take in with us:

- i Our own view of what constitutes good teaching. Most observers are experienced teachers with their own ideas about how to teach and how to behave as a teacher;

ii Our own view of what a classroom should look like, and of the 'proper' relationship between teachers and learners. These assumptions are often culturally rooted and they are of particular importance in cross-cultural observation encounters, for example, when a British teacher educator observes a class in a developing world context;

iii i & ii above mean that we are in constant danger of thinking, "I wouldn't do it like that" or something similar;

iv In many contexts, the observer may know the teacher, the class or both, with the result that he/she takes preconceptions into the classroom. "I know she isn't up to teaching at advanced level"; "I don't expect to see a brilliant lesson from X" etc; and

v We may go into an observation stressed by our last private or professional encounters, with our mind on other priorities, maybe feeling unwell or tired, or just in a bad mood after a terrible journey to work or a disagreement with a family member or colleague.

None of this 'baggage' is easy to deal with, but awareness of it is half the battle. Here are some of the things I tell myself before any and every observation:

- "I am going in to observe this teacher and her class on her terms and not on mine. I need to clear my head of my own preferences and practices and try to see what this teacher is trying to do and why. What I would do in her situation is simply not relevant."
- "In order to be fair to this teacher, I have to understand what she is aiming to do before I go in. I need to have a chat with her and allow her to tell me all about the class from her point of view. Any advice I give, directly or indirectly, needs to be based on this understanding."
- "I need to go into this class with an open and curious mind, and learn from what I see and hear. I need to remember that there are many ways of being a good teacher."
- "I need to clear my head of all the preconditioned noise it contains before I enter the classroom so that I can be fully 'present' and attentive during the lesson."

Dilemma 2: The Perception Gap

Any detective investigating a crime will tell you that there are usually as many versions of events as there are witnesses, and that these all have to be sifted and sorted in order to arrive at the common ground that is needed to move the investigation forward. So it is with classroom observation. A teacher, managing the class and engaging with his/her learners through spoken interaction and eye contact, often from a standing position and from the front of the classroom, is likely to perceive classroom incidents differently from an observer sitting at the back or the side of the classroom, remaining passive and avoiding eye contact with learners. The teacher will notice things that the observer fails to see, and vice versa. And there is a third perspective which in certain situations will also need to be taken into account: that of the learners themselves. Left unexplored and unarticulated, these differences in perception may lead to misunderstanding and resentment. Properly broached, for example, through questions in a post-lesson feedback session, they become learning opportunities and also a chance for the teacher to explain the rationale of a particular course of action. An experienced observer or assessor will be aware of the potential for learning and understanding if the perception gap becomes the focus of dialogue between him/her and the observee. Productive exchanges such as these may then ensue:

> *Observer:* "I noticed that most of your questions were directed at stronger learners, and that some of the others seemed bored."
> *Teacher:* "Was I really doing that? It definitely wasn't deliberate."
>
> *Observer:* "Did you know that some of the kids at the back were texting on their mobile phones?"
> *Teacher:* "To be honest, I didn't. It's quite difficult for me to see what the pupils at the back are doing in such a crowded classroom."
> *Observer:* "Any ideas on how to deal with that in your next class?"
> *Teacher:* "Not at the moment, but I'll give it some thought."
>
> *Teacher:* "I was a bit concerned that I was too hard on students when they made mistakes. I think I jump in too quickly with corrections."
> *Observer:* "I thought you handled the mistakes pretty effectively when they were giving their summaries. Sometimes you need to intervene briefly and supportively, and I thought you got that about right, to be honest."
> *Teacher:* "Thanks. Maybe I'll also ask them how they felt about that when I see them next time. I don't want to discourage them."
> *Observer:* "Good idea!"

Focussing selectively, from different perspectives, on three or four incidents in a lesson can lead to concrete action and improvement in a teacher. We need to remember that this is often more helpful to a teacher than to be confronted with 'big picture' comments on the lesson as a whole, which may leave her wondering where to start when planning the next lesson. It also encourages dialogue on an equal footing between teacher and observer, and in the context of an assessed lesson, may help the observer-assessor to understand the reasons behind a teaching decision and find out if the teacher has acted in a principled way – or not.

One consequence of the existence of the 'perception gap' as a potentially fruitful area to explore through dialogue is that observers may need training in supervision procedures and may need to be observed giving feedback in order to become more aware of the value and impact of the different options available to both parties in the post-lesson discussion (cf Freeman 1982, Gebhard 1990).

Dilemma 3: The Impact of an Observer's Presence

Whatever their purpose, an observer is, at best, an invited guest and, at worst, an intimidating presence in a classroom. A teacher has to find a way of explaining the appearance of the observer to his/her students and this may be a delicate matter, especially if the lesson is to be assessed. No observed lesson is ever completely normal, and the visible presence of a 'foreign body' is all too often a distraction for both teacher and learners. As an invited observer, but also as an assessor, I have frequently realised that I was witnessing a 'staged', one-off lesson, sometimes even pre-rehearsed, that bore little or no resemblance to what happens between teacher and class on a day-to-day basis.

In some training and professional development contexts, a code of practice has been established to provide a basis for classroom observation, supervision and assessment. This might include the following guidelines, for example:

- The observer should keep a low profile, sitting where she can get a good view of the lesson with the least possible distraction to teacher and learners;
- The observer may be introduced to the class as a guest who is interested in the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. (*These first two guidelines will help the learners' curiosity to be satisfied and may also lead to a quicker resumption of 'normal' classroom behaviour*.);
- The observer should let the teacher know if she wishes to take notes, stressing that the teacher should not jump to any conclusions when she notices the observer writing – this is merely a way of capturing data which may be helpful to the teacher in the feedback session;
- The teacher should make the lesson as 'normal' as possible, and explain to the observer where it fits into a longer sequence of teaching; and
- The observer should not play any active part, or intervene in any way, in a lesson unless invited to do so by the teacher. (In one observation in an Eastern European country, I was accompanied by a head of department whose patience snapped half way through the lesson, resulting in her standing up and taking the class over from the poor teacher, causing what I can only imagine was a painful blow to her self-esteem.)

In a procedure based on good practice in person-centred counselling, Quirke (1996) suggests that it is sometimes better for an 'observer' not to be present during a lesson but to give feedback based on a teacher's account of the event. Though this at least deals with the whole issue of the impact of an observer's presence, it is more likely to be effective in an atmosphere of trust within an institution, possibly between peers working together on a reciprocal basis, rather than in a more power-based relationship such as between a teacher and a manager or a trainee and a supervisor-assessor.

Dilemma 4: The Delicate Matter of Assessment

The difficulty in attaining even a modest level of objectivity in assessing teachers was alluded to in the discussion of the first dilemma above. This is compounded by the stresses and strains involved for all parties when a teacher is assessed. For a pre-service trainee it can be a 'make or break', life-changing moment; for an experienced teacher self-esteem and self-worth are at stake. Here are just some of the conundrums an assessor faces:

- On pre-service training courses, observers are often saddled with the dual role of trainer and assessor. After a series of developmental observations followed by formative feedback sessions, they are suddenly required to carry out a summative assessment which may ultimately decide whether a trainee is a suitable entrant to the teaching profession. It can be difficult to reconcile these two roles;

- Is it better to use a checklist and to look for discrete points of competence in a lesson or should assessment be conducted on a more holistic basis, encompassing a view of a lesson as a complete event?

- Are the criteria the assessor will use clear and transparent to the teacher being assessed? Are the criteria 'global' in nature or do they take account of the teacher's individual characteristics and the context in which he/she operates? In short, does the teacher know what the assessor is looking for?

- How can an assessor know that his/her assessment practices are in line with those of others charged with the same responsibility?

- Is the teacher capable of self-assessment? If so, to what extent can an 'external' assessor take account of this when coming to a verdict on a lesson?

The question of fairness and principled objectivity in assessing teachers and teaching comes up again and again and is the cause of upset and grievances when the views of the assessor and the assessed teachers cannot be reconciled. Here are some examples of good practice in this vexed area of assessment:

- Criteria need to be clear, accessible and transparent. No teacher should be surprised by the criteria used in their assessment;

- Box-ticking on a checklist of competences can distract an assessor from the 'big picture' of a lesson. Checklists can be useful to refer to as evidence for a grade allocated initially on the basis of a holistic impression, but attempts to use them as criteria during an observation can result in a skewed focus on micro-issues at the expense of a more complete view of the lesson; and
- Assessors need regular training and updating, using video-recorded lessons for benchmarking. These often involve useful discussions about the meaning of criteria and the balance of factors contributing to a decision about a grade. Exercises like this help assessors to be more aware of their own preconceived ideas about 'good teaching'.

Conclusion

In recent years there has been a welcome increase in attention to the training of teacher trainers and educators. The practicum in pre-service training and developmental observation for serving teachers are acknowledged as crucial planks in maintaining and improving standards of teaching, and yet the trainer's or educator's role as an observer, supervisor or assessor remains largely underexplored, susceptible to subjectivity in its practices and cloaked in silence and handed-down traditions rather than opened up in public debate. In this article I have tried to open up some of the issues that need to be talked about and resolved if this situation is to be improved.

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Peer Observation and Feedback in ELT teacher training programmes: A Constructive Model

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The main objective of peer observation is to give feedback to the trainee on how well she/he has performed in teaching a particular lesson in a given class. Very often this main objective is not achieved as the peer group is not guided well about how and what they have to observe. This paper looks into the possibilities of using a task-based structured format which offers specific objectives, specified areas of observation which includes teacher motivation, classroom management, teacher's language proficiency and pedagogical competence which includes implementation of a particular method /approach/technique, interaction patterns, appropriate use of teaching aids and materials, and strategies for dealing with the errors.

Background

Peer observation and feedback has been a part of the B.Ed English programme (a two semester ELT teacher training programme at the Institute of Language Teaching, Jamnagar). Initially it was carried out without any prior guidance. The trainees were divided into groups and each group had to teach a segment of lesson (micro teaching) while another group observed them. The peer group was unaware of what to observe and upon what to reflect. The outcome of such observations was often counterproductive as most of the observers came out with negative comments on their friends' performance. There were even heated arguments over the negative comments made by some of the peers on others' performance. Some even demanded observation and feedback by the trainer only. Let us look into samples of unstructured feedback given by the peer group which observed the other group.

Phase I Unstructured Observation and Feedback

Positive feedback *Good/ average/ very good/ excellent/ well done/ good effort/ good command over language/ good personality/good English/ lesson taught as per plan/ everything fine/ great/fairly confident etc...*

Negative feedback *Not so good/below average/poor English/feeble voice/chalkboard use not appealing/spelling errors on chalkboard/no movement in the class/no teaching aids used/ everything went wrong/ no confidence/no eye-contact at all etc.....*

It was evident from the above "feedback" that the observers tend to concentrate on elements of personal interest and was not so helpful to the trainees in developing their professional skills in teaching language. The feedback given here was vague and over-emphasised the negative aspects of the teacher observed. The "positive feedback" given was often partial. Ultimately the result of such an unstructured observation and feedback caused much confusion and chaos among the trainees and the training climate often became less than encouraging.

Phase II Structured Observation and Feedback

An alternative scheme was designed to overcome the limitations of the unstructured observation and feedback by the peers, which was more quantitative in approach. A sample observation schedule is presented below:

Sr. No.	**Parameters**	**Scope for improvement**	**Average**	**Effective**	**Very effective**
	Presentation	1	2	3	4
a.	Details on class board, lesson title, learning outcomes, key words are prominently displayed				
b.	Uses relevant vocabulary				
c.	Exhibits fluency of language				
d.	Uses suitable tone of speech				
e.	Oral and written instructions are clear				
f.	Teaching aids and learning materials are appropriate, well-organised, resourceful and stimulating				

The outcome of this type of observation was more acceptable than the first one. However, it was found that often the observers were preoccupied with the completion of the schedule and in some cases this proved to be less beneficial for the person observing. In other words, it benefited mainly the teacher who is observed. Hence the need arose to design a structured task-based observation scheme which would benefit both the observer and the observed in a language teaching context.

Phase III Structured Task-based Observation and Feedback: Objectives
In B.Ed English the trainees have to teach six types of lessons, all focusing on developing language skills. Each type of lesson is divided into four stages, typically introduction, presentation, practice/response, and communicative practice/activity. Each trainee has to take one segment of the lesson and two or three peers have to observe the lesson. Observation tasks are designed to help the trainees observe a few aspects of classroom teaching at a time which include specific objectives, teacher motivation, classroom management, teacher's meta-language, teacher's language proficiency, pedagogical competence (which includes implementation of a particular method /approach/technique), interaction patterns, appropriate use of teaching aids and materials, and strategies of dealing with the errors. These data are later analysed under the supervision of the trainer and both the observer and the observed benefit from the discussion. Using an observation task provides a convenient means of collecting data that frees the observer from forming an opinion or making an on-the-spot evaluation during the lesson (Wajnryb 1992).

Tryout
The tasks designed were tried out with B.Ed English trainees in their teaching programme. Two or three peers were guided to observe one teacher-trainee at a time and their seating arrangement was decided in advance to ensure they would observe independently without sharing their findings with others at the time of observation. The outcome of the experimentation of this model shows that the confidence of the observed and the observers increased as they were able to identify the benefits of sharing and mutually helping to develop specific professional skills related to language teaching and learning. The language used in solving tasks was original and reflected their critical thinking skills. A few sample tasks which were designed for observation are presented here:

Sample Tasks:

Task 1.

What are the specific objectives of the Presentation stage? a. b. c.

Task 2

a. How does the teacher arrange the class before the session? b. How does the teacher motivate the class?

Task 3

What are the different classroom interaction patterns that the teacher has achieved? a. b. c. d.

Task 4

Grammar	
What new language item does the teacher present?	What techniques does the teacher use to present the new language item? What types of tasks does the teacher give the class to use the new language item?

Task 5

What types of errors does the class make?	How does the teacher deal with the errors?

Task 6 Teaching and learning roles

Lesson Stage	Teacher's role	Learner's role	Comments
a. b. c.			

Task 7. The teacher's meta-language

What does the teacher say?	What is the communicative purpose?	What is the immediate context?	How might this be said to a native speaker?
"Look at the picture. Can you see the boys sitting under the tree?	*Giving instructions* *Directing*	*The teacher is setting up a task with a visual aid (pictures/charts)*	*Can you see where the boys are sitting (in the picture)?*

Adapted from: Ruth Wajnryb (1992)

Feedback
Observation tasks for each segment of a lesson could be designed so that the observers would be able to give constructive feedback to the teacher trainee. An observation task guides what the trainee has to observe so that there is no confusion and minimal tension. The feedback given based on this scheme is constructive and supportive, focused on what the teacher achieved in a given segment. Observations of different segments of a lesson help to contribute to a more holistic overall picture of a lesson, and brought under the guidance of the experienced trainer so that all observers and observees can sit together and discuss their findings to benefit each other.

Implementation
A briefing is necessary before assigning the tasks to the observers as these tasks are more qualitative than quantitative and thereby they get a variety of options, based partly on their understanding of teaching-learning theories, and the model demonstrations given by the trainers. A completed sample task (see task 7) could be discussed at the initial stage and later the trainees themselves could carry on the observation and compare their scripts with those of other peers'. The observers can at a later stage design their own observation tasks under the supervision of the trainer. These tasks should be used systematically at least in the initial stage of the training programme. Inclusion of such a supportive and constructive peer observation and feedback component in ELT teacher training programmes will certainly help teacher-trainees improve their teaching style and classroom practice.

Conclusion
In a teacher training programme it is necessary to introduce a task-based peer observation scheme as the teacher-trainees are inexperienced in observing and making inferences. It also decreases the psychological pressure which they might have when they are asked to observe a lesson without any guidance. A task-

based observation and feedback scheme will help provide a conducive climate in which both the givers and receivers of feedback can deepen their understanding of effective language teaching practices that promote quality learning.

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How to Integrate the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of Trainer Training Courses

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There is a considerable difference between a teacher and a teacher trainer. Consequently, aims, design, materials, methodology and evaluation of teacher training and trainer training programmes should be approached methodically based on profound understanding of the nature and scope of each. Failure in visualising, operationalising and distinguishing between the two can lead to ineffective outcomes. This paper examines a one-month trainer training course, arguing that its purpose (as a trainer training programme) is compromised due to its resemblance to a teacher training programme. It provides suggestions for remedying this situation. First, it sets the scene. Then, it lists the programme's gaps, and provides ways of bridging them.

Introduction

A teacher trainer (teacher educator) has considerable responsibilities in training the next generation of teachers. It is a demanding role. The trainer's job is multidimensional, involving the mastering of aspects of the subject matter, methodology and materials development and understanding how this adds to the knowledge, skills and practices of a good teacher educator. But this is not sufficient in itself.

A teacher trainer also has to be able to motivate, guide and facilitate participants' learning; observe classes and give constructive feedback to enable participants to grow by reflecting upon themselves and their classrooms – in other words, the trainer needs to understand the human dimension of their work and deal with trainees' affective factors and belief systems to enable them to find their own unique ways of teaching.

Teacher educators should also possess theoretical knowledge of different teaching and learning principles, concepts and processes; as well as training models; and be familiar with the academic literature that underpins their work. This linking of theory and practice is essential to producing well-prepared trainee teachers and informing their thought and practice about teaching.

This paper examines the trainer training programme for teachers from Central Asian and South Asian countries jointly sponsored by The EFLU and The RELO, and run in India. It argues that the course lacks the features of a true trainer training programme due to a number of gaps identified through a qualitative investigation into the programme. The study provides suggestions on what the course components and processes should be; and how trainer training course organisers, designers, material producers, implementers and evaluators should collaborate to run appropriate trainer training courses.

Course Outline

The course is divided into three phases:

- The first phase consists of sessions on effective teaching and introduction to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); skills and sub-skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; grammar; vocabulary; classroom management, educational technology and assessment. The sessions are conducted daily from 10 am to 5 pm. After the sessions, participants work in groups (each group consisting of four or five participants) and plan and prepare lessons for peer/team teaching with the help of a supervisor.

- The second phase is peer teaching, where trainees teach sections of their prepared lessons to their fellow students who act as students. The lessons are observed by a trainer or guest observer; and are followed by a feedback session.

- The third phase is 'real teaching' where participants teach a lesson with a group of proficiency course learners, and the lessons are observed by a trainer and followed by a feedback session.

Participants

In the case of the course under examination, twenty-four participants from South and Central Asian countries attended a one-month trainer training course run in India. The participants came from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan.

The participants were unaware of most of the current trends in English Language Teaching (ELT), and were heterogeneous in terms of their teaching experience. A few of them had participated in in-service teacher training courses in their countries, and knew quite a few classroom activities, but they were largely unaware of more advanced concepts and principles of teaching and learning methodology, materials development, course design, lesson/course planning, and monitoring and evaluation principles for example. The participants had varying levels of competency in English, due in part to levels of regular exposure to English other than in a formal learning environment. The majority had experienced (and learned through) grammar translation methods of teaching.

Match and Mismatch

The course components listed above suggest that it was a short-term awareness-raising in-service teacher training programme which was suitable for majority of this group. The content of the course was appropriate in that sense, since probably about 80 per cent of the course participants required teacher training, whereas only 20 per cent- were ready for a trainer training course (at the beginning of the course).

This methodology course was clearly an effective *teacher training* exercise where the participants carried out a variety of tasks as students, then discussed them as teachers analysing different frameworks for teaching skills and sub-skills, lesson planning, classroom management techniques and forms of assessment for learning and teaching. However, there seemed to be a mismatch between the title of the course and its content, which leads me to suggest that it should not be called a *trainer training* programme for the following reasons:

- In terms of *competence*:
    - It did not mention the importance of awareness and levels of competence (Luft & Ingram 1969, Underhill, 1992). As Knezedvic (2001:10) has pointed out, “We cannot develop unless we are aware who we are and what we do”. According to him developing awareness is a process of “reducing discrepancy” between what we do and what we think we do (cited in Bailey 2006: 39). I believe this knowledge is necessary for a trainer who deals with change and development.
    - Its focus was on teaching knowledge and skills, with only a few attempts to help participants reflect by asking, ‘What can you take with you to your classroom?’
    - Participants’ beliefs were not examined explicitly nor, was the importance of beliefs and assumptions in training highlighted and discussed in detail. This is essential in order to enable new trainer trainers to plan, teach and evaluate their lessons or courses independently based on prudent consideration when they go back to their classrooms.
    - The importance of ‘reflection’ in a teacher’s or trainer’s growth required much more interrogation, to enable them to work autonomously through conscious and deliberate thought, search, action, and reflection using different reflective strategies/ practices. One of the goals of a training programme is change in some aspect or other (assumptions, knowledge, skills or practices) and profound change can only happen through reflection.

- Based on *professional development*:
    - o The 'human side' of the training process also needs to be addressed. Managerial and psychological knowledge and skills in motivating, guiding and facilitating learning; observing classes and giving constructive feedback; managing group dynamics and conflict; interpersonal skills (the ability to communicate, listen, see, and read non-verbal signals) are all essential skills that the teacher trainer requires to guide new teachers and enable them to facilitate learning effectively.
    - o An appropriate focus for a trainer training programme would be to distinguish clearly between the theoretical concepts of teaching and learning processes that apply to teaching and to training, and also where they overlap. This needs to be underpinned by a thorough examination of educational theories; basic models of supervision, counselling, coaching and mentoring, and the principles of adult learning. This could include the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978); Bloom's taxonomy (1956 in Anderson & Krathwohl 2001); and principles of experiential and reflective learning.
    - o A focus on instructional design models and principles would also have been appropriate so that participants would have some insight into planning and delivering programmes of professional development for new or inexperienced teachers in their home situation. This would require them to develop knowledge and skill in materials development and the construction of tasks; the nature and effect of various types of inputs; the purposes of tasks at different stages of a training course, and so on.

Including all of these above in a short course would be neither realistic nor feasible. However, I would argue they form the fundamental knowledge base to function effectively as a teacher educator and as such they are subtly different from the content of a teacher training course. Therefore, awareness of these areas will help stakeholders to collaborate to plan, run and evaluate the trainer training courses.

Factors to take into consideration in trainer training courses

Based on the experience of observing the training course in question, the following would seem to be important considerations to factor into the planning and design of future training courses.

- Eligibility criteria for entering 'trainer training' programme should be established, including:

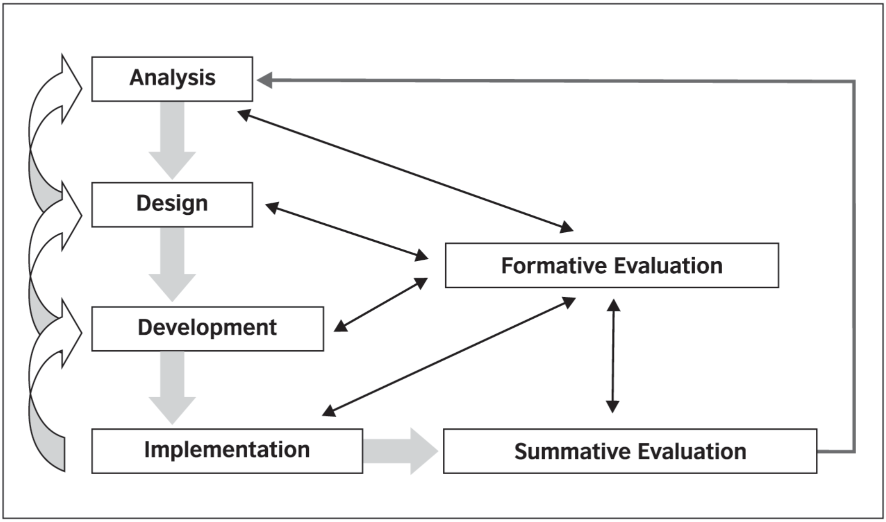
    - teaching experience of not less than 4-5 years
    - previous participation in awareness-raising in-service teacher training courses

- The design of teacher educator programmes should be cognizant of the experience of the trainees and build on it in the following way by factoring in:
    - *Proficiency building components* to raise awareness and encourage reflection on the participants' knowledge and experience. This would enable important discussions to take place: on the differences between teacher training and trainer training; how good training techniques can be modeled in the way the sessions are delivered; how to design tasks to stimulate reflection and discussion of teaching and learning issues; as well as how best to address issues in the teaching of vocabulary or grammar, for example.
    - *Professional competence/development components* dealing with training the trainer, the human or affective elements of the educator's role; understanding and utilizing learning and teaching theory; how to use frameworks such as the ADDIE instructional design model (see below and Figure 1); and analyzing elements of both the training and teaching practicum, amongst other topics.

Analysing the effectiveness of a training programme using the ADDIE instructional model (**A**nalysis of the target group's needs, **D**esign/blueprint of the course, **D**evelopment of course materials, **I**mplementation/delivery of the course, and **E**valuation (both formative and summative) of the programme) enables us to appreciate the areas that might require attention to sharpen the focus of future courses including management issues and a lack of collaboration in the design and delivery of each phase, and enhanced formative and summative evaluation of the course.

Ways to Bridge The Gaps between Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

- In cases when a course is run in a third country, all the stakeholders responsible for selection of participants from different countries need to cooperate before, during, and after the course is over. This will help to assess whether the course has been effective or not. Such collaboration can be achieved by using the ADDIE model as the basis for shared planning and understanding going forward. It means that needs analysts, designers, materials developers, trainers and evaluators (trainers and country representatives) work together in order to run an effective trainer training programme.



ADDIE Model (diagram adapted from Steven J. McGriff, Instructional Systems, College of Education, Penn State University)

The ADDIE model's focus on formative evaluation of the course will help to build in immediate remedies during the course. However, to understand the longer-term actual impact of the training, Kirkpatrick's model for evaluating training (which consists of 4 levels: 1. React, 2. Learn, 3. Change, and 4. Impact) can be adapted. It implies that the concerned stakeholders and the course participants should continue to work together after the course is over. One could argue, using Kirkpatrick's model, that any given training course can be assessed for effectiveness by examining the extent to which all four of the levels are present and well-integrated in the design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of the training

Conclusion

Understanding the nature of teacher- and trainer- training is crucial for designing cost-effective programmes which address the target groups' needs. Establishing a clear understanding of the role of the trainer and how they deploy the skills of facilitation of learning is not straightforward. It needs to build on the basics of teacher training methodology but at the same time go a stage further so that the experienced teacher wishing to become a trainer reflects on their own teaching experience and practices to make sense of what is required to train a new cohort of teachers. In the trainer training room, the teacher has to put him/herself once again in the position of student to understand how to model concepts and practices of trainer training, reflect on what they think they already know, appreciate and anticipate the kinds of problems that new teachers face and put in front of trainees a range of possible solutions to experiment with.

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Ripeness is all: a trainer's narrative of lessons learnt

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"That's the best part of teaching – the learning."
(An experienced teacher serving as a Peace Corps volunteer I Kiribati)

This paper narrates the story of a teacher trainer. The data are drawn from a teacher training course titled Training for Language Teaching offered to semester III students of the M.A. TESL Programme at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. The discussion spans the peer teaching and practice teaching phases of supervision from three perspectives: a) the student teacher's b) the peer observer's and c) the supervisor's. The intention is to delineate vignettes that provoke reflection and subsequent action regarding issues such as the role of feedback in language teacher supervision; factors affecting supervisory discourse; macro-analyses of post-observation conference, and supervisor's non-verbal behaviour during post-observation conference.

Aim and background

The aim of this paper is to share lessons learnt **from** and **about** language teacher supervision. A 5 credit core course, titled *Training for Language Teaching,* has been offered to semester III M.A. TESL students for the past four years and the experiences of the trainer are documented in this paper. The participants are mostly pre-service teachers. The course spans a period of four months. In the first two months theoretical inputs are offered and in the next two months the practicum is organised, consisting of peer and practice teaching.

Theoretical support

This narrative is based on the following theoretical propositions:

- A practicum aims to help trainees to enter the real world of the classroom; however, this can sometimes be "an uneasy transition" laden with pressing concerns and frustrations (Bailey 2006:239)
- Teacher educators in the practicum setting can empower trainees by enabling them to understand and explore their teaching. Such understanding helps trainees to "adapt their teaching to the specific settings they work in, as well as be able to continuously construct and reconstruct their teaching and teacher identities" (Gebhard, 2009:255).
- "Trainer development" is a vital aspect of language teacher education because of teacher educator's central role in defining and disseminating ideas about pedagogy. The term captures the developmental process

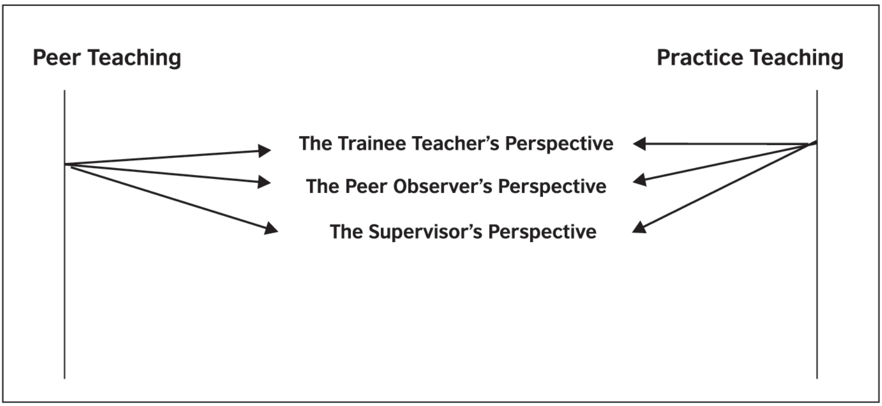
of constantly "becoming" a language teacher educator. Learning to become a teacher educator is as multifaceted as the role itself, and a pedagogy of trainer development will reflect this reality (Wright 2009:102,109).

- A trainer is not only a researcher but also a learner – someone interested in learning about process from their own and other people's practice, from trainee initiatives and reactions, and from reading and thinking. The practising trainer is experiencing two complements to their role: as both learner and researcher (Woodward 1991: 231).

The sources (of the narrative)
The data are gathered from:

- Trainee teachers' profiles filled in at the beginning of the course
- Supervisor's notes and reflective journal maintained throughout the course
- Trainee teachers' feedback forms collected at the end of the course (after grades were declared so they did not have to say things to please the supervisor).

The structure (of the narrative)
This narrative presents the perspectives of the trainee teachers, the peer observers and the supervisor on the experience of the practicum (both peer teaching as well as practice teaching).



The substance (of the narrative): peer and practice teaching
This narrative consists of the perspectives of the trainees, the peer observers and the supervisor on the practicum (peer and practice teaching) and the lessons

that the trainer learnt, which are discussed in the later part of the paper. The three perspectives are presented below.

The trainee teachers' perspective

Individual trainee's perceptions on the practicum have been collated and a representative selection is outlined below:

- *I was not very comfortable with teaching my own classmates as though they were children. But the process helped me in the classroom teaching session.*
- *The idea of collaborative teaching is good if all team-mates gel well; it provides a platform for interaction and learning from more experienced peers; however, there is the risk of unequal distribution of work.*
- *Peer teaching was very helpful, although a bit artificial sometimes.*
- *I realised working in a team is tough but the end results are always good. I also learned to respect and appreciate other people.*
- *I cannot say that we became best friends, but we were supporting each other where we could.*
- *Peer teaching taught me how to work and coordinate in a group; it helped me improve not only teaching but taught me to be a 'team-player'.*

The peer observers' perspective

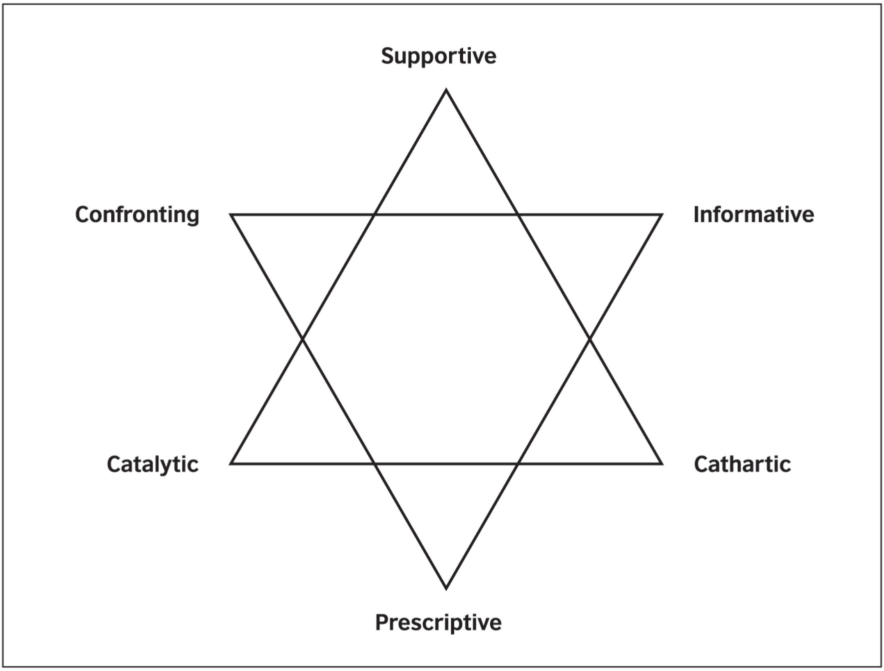
Individual trainee's perceptions on the practicum have been collated and a representative selection is outlined below:

- *We learnt how useful a tool lesson observation is "to become more self-aware", apart from being an aid to learn to teach and learn to observe.*
- *We could understand and rationalise 'the planning and interactive' decisions teachers made.*
- *Peer observation included comments on issues such as organisation of the lesson, teacher's time management, students' performance on tasks, teacher's explanations, teacher's action zone, classroom interaction etc and none of these topics requires the observer "to evaluate the teacher's lesson".*
- *Being observed by others is always a threatening experience because the teacher is "on show."*
- *Peer observation helped us become more aware of the issues we confront in the classroom and how these can be resolved; it helped narrow the gap between our imagined view of teaching and what actually occurred in the classroom.*

The supervisor's perspective

Throughout the course, I was trying to juggle the twin demands of counsellor (advising, nurturing, encouraging, guiding, supporting) and critic (analysing, assessing, pointing out inadequacies). I was trying to be supportive, informative, prescriptive, confronting, catalytic and cathartic, and the inspiration for these roles was drawn from Heron's (1990) framework:

Figure 1: Heron's six categories of intervention



Heron (1990, cited in Randall and Thornton 2001:78-79) uses these terms descriptively rather than prescriptively. All the categories are value-free and are primarily supportive of the value of the individual. They aim to enhance the client's ability for self-direction.

So, what was my aim as the supervisor/trainer? My goal was to seek out "additional opportunities to learn and develop" and these are the lessons that I learnt.

Lessons learnt

The lessons that I learnt are discussed in terms of the following vignettes:

Vignette 1: Trainee teacher's views about teaching

- *I want to be able to teach in such a way that they learn that learning is fun, interesting, helpful and life-changing, and I want to make my own bit of life-changing for them.*
- *Teaching is fun, pleasure.*
- *Teaching is constant 'learning' to be able to teach better.*
- *Teaching is encouraging students to find out the best in themselves and grow to their maximum potential.*

What have I learnt?

It is important to explore trainees' views about teaching because what we teach and how we teach is greatly influenced by what we perceive teaching to be. Further, the responses reveal two important things about the trainees: their readiness and willingness to learn and, more importantly, the aspects of teaching in which they wished to be trained.

Vignette 2: Trainee teachers' goals and expectations

- *I want to be a good teacher when I return to my country.*
- *I'm hopeful that this course will help me become a better teacher as well as provide me with the essential skills for a successful teacher trainer.*
- *I want to do MA TESL and this is a core course and hence it is important for me.*
- *I think this course will give me a concrete guideline for being a teacher and the practical sessions will be a platform for me before I go to teach my students.*
- *I hope this course will give me the confidence to handle teaching children.*
- *I would like hands-on experience on how to do classroom teaching.*
- *I have recently started working and that is when I've realised that it is not easy to be a teacher and hence I wanted to get the benefit of the training.*
- *I think this course will be informative, practical and we will learn by doing things; lots of analysis and discussion will take place.*
- *I wish to learn to pitch my knowledge at appropriate levels, to be interactive in the true sense of the term, select suitable materials.*

- *To get a basic idea of the methods of classroom teaching – planning, implementation, and evaluation.*
- *I expect to learn how to teach and how to elicit or handle positive criticism/feedback.*
- *I heard that the trainer is friendly, supportive and strict at the same time and presents her subject very well.*

What have I learnt?
Learners almost always do have a range of expectations – very general to very specific – about a training course. It is as important to be aware of these as it is a challenge to fulfill all of them.

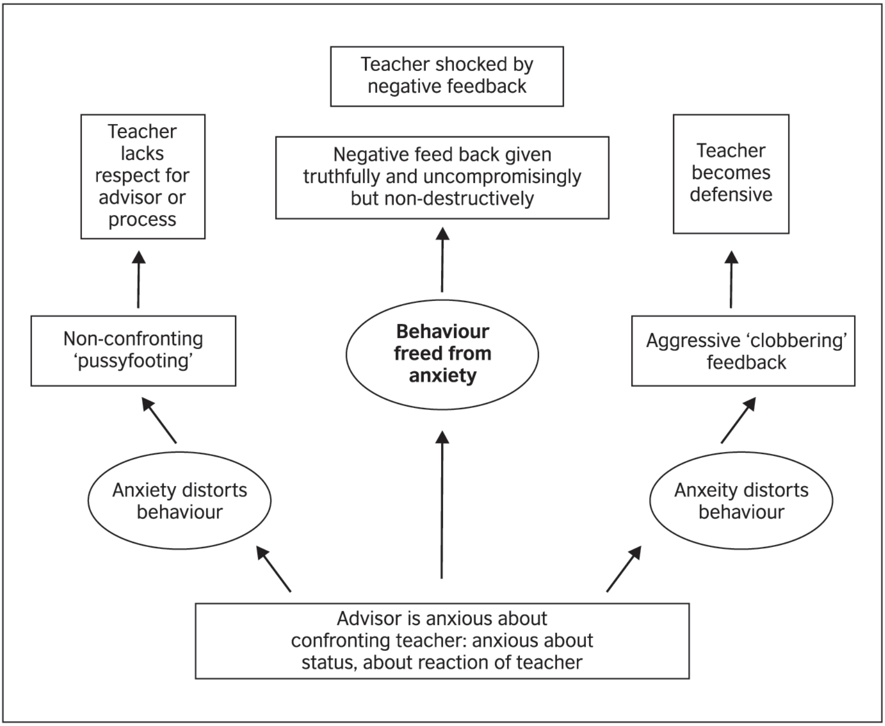
Vignette 3: Role of peer/ tutor feedback in learning to teach

- *Post-observation conferences were very detailed and useful; peers were friendly while giving comments.*
- *Peer feedback was helpful, but sometimes, peers were a bit harsh with selection of words.*
- *Most of the peers were honest with their views and voiced what they thought.*
- *Peer feedback was accurate and constructive.*
- *Peer feedback was detailed and spirited.*
- *I really didn't see how important it was when we were doing it because I thought it was a simulated situation but I saw how important it was when I actually taught at the school because that definitely helped me a lot.*
- *Tutor feedback was insightful; there was enough individual attention.*
- *The tutor needs to be more authoritative in some situations.*
- *The tutor was supportive but sounded too critical at times.*
- *Tutor feedback was rational and helped to limit future mistakes.*
- *Even if there were kicks the tutor made them such that no one got hurt.*
- *Expert opinion is good and helpful.*

Vignette 4: Macro-analyses of post-observation conference
As the essence of providing help is to create a climate of trust, the challenge for the supervisor is to sustain a supportive and valuing atmosphere whilst raising uncomfortable and critical comments about the lesson. Sometimes both the trainee and the supervisor will experience raised levels of anxiety the effects of

which are summarised in the following diagram (Randall and Thornton 2001:84, adapted from Heron 1990: 46):

Figure 2: Effect of supervisor's and trainee's anxiety in the post-observation conference



The supervisor/advisor's anxiety about offering negative feedback results in two possible scenarios: 'pussyfooting', wherein negative comments are either evaded or sugar-coated to avoid confrontation thereby rendering the post-observation feedback session ineffective; and 'clobbering', wherein the advisor and the teacher are locked in battle, the teacher behind defensive walls and the advisor 'clobbering' with even more aggressive comment leading to a further cycle of defensive reactions from the teacher without the central issue being openly and calmly addressed.

What have I learnt?

The tutor should be honest and truthful in giving feedback, but this feedback should be phrased and conveyed in such a way that trainees understand that it is not the teacher who is being examined but the way that the lesson was taught. A 'problem' in the lesson is not to be considered a 'fault' in the teacher and trainees should be encouraged to develop such a view of their own and others' teaching, and how one achieves this is a million dollar question.

Vignette 5: What have my trainees learnt?
The trainees were asked to respond to the following prompt: "after doing this course, teaching for you is – " and their responses are reported below:

Teaching for me is…

- *Not as easy as I thought it to be, but can be made easy with practice.*
- *A lot of planning! Didn't know that planning should be done so much in detail, but I also see the advantage of it.*
- *All about developing my personality and my English proficiency.*
- *Something that needs to be well planned and prepared.*
- *A never-ending process of exploration and growth.*
- *Very easy and enjoyable.*
- *A responsibility that should not be taken lightly.*
- *I now believe that I can do it and I will do it.*
- *I realised I love and enjoy teaching.*

What have I learnt from what they say they have learnt?
That training, like teaching, is a huge responsibility.

And, a successful trainer is someone who ignites and sustains a passion for teaching in the trainees while all along playing the role of a signpost directing but not dominating, suggesting but not imposing, assessing but not judging. And the list goes on!!

Over the years I have learnt several things. I have unlearnt numerous things. I have re-learnt innumerable things. And …the journey towards *ripeness* continues!

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Open-book examinations: The Need of the Hour in Teacher Education

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Most teacher education programmes use only closed book, memory based examinations for their summative (certification oriented) evaluation. Such a choice is probably governed largely by practical constraints rather than theoretical justifications. In real life all teaching practitioners have reference material available. But case study based evaluations/problem solving questions (which ought to be the norm) are still the exception. Teacher education programmes that aim to help the teacher to think, grow and reflect need to be accompanied by enabling evaluative practices such as open book examinations. In this paper a theoretical justification and sample tasks will be presented.

Nature of Teacher Education in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, education ought to be inclusive and accessible to all sectors of society. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) makes a clear distinction between knowledge that is fluid and that which is reproduced. The former can never be a given and must be constructed by the child. For this to happen, learning can no longer be the memorisation and transmission of facts; the purpose of teaching is to enhance children's desire to learn, help them express themselves and engage with society (NCF, 2005). Evaluation, as part of inclusive education also has to play a different role; it cannot be perceived either as a disciplinary tool (Foucault, 1975 [trans 1995]) or as one that eliminates/selects. There is a need to shift the focus from the assessment *of* learning to the assessment *for* learning; evaluation will then become an integral part of the teaching-learning loop.

In order to cater to these demands of inclusive education and evaluation, the nature of teacher education has to change; it has to help teachers acknowledge diversity of learning spaces and curriculum styles and also help them build the capacity in the child to construct knowledge. Teacher education programmes must, therefore, include reflective practice for unless the teacher is able to reflect and become critical, he/she cannot enable such thinking in the mind of the child. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) clearly mandates that teacher education must be comprehensive, and evaluate conceptual and pedagogical aspects, along with attitudes, values and dispositions (NCFTE, 2009).

Evaluation practices in teacher education courses

Most teacher education programmes in India (pre- or in-service) use only closed-book memory- based examinations as part of summative assessment. These examinations are certification- oriented but lack predictive validity. The certificate is supposed to guarantee that its holder can teach well, can access knowledge using multiple resources either to answer student queries or update their own knowledge. But the examination questions are factual, demand reproduction or recall of facts and therefore provide training, (if it can be called that) in judicious cramming.

The need of the hour in teacher education is tests and examinations that

- evaluate higher order thinking skills;
- move from knowledge and comprehension to analysis, application and synthesis;
- distinguish between core and back up knowledge;
- trigger deep rather than surface learning;
- make teachers situate their knowledge in suitable contexts, and thereby
- enable reflective thinking.

Alternative assessment practices (assignments, term papers, projects) in teacher education courses do focus on these aspects and are excellent evaluation tools, but there is no guarantee that they will serve as true indicators of individual performance and by inference, capability. One cannot prevent students from discussing assignments and term papers with more experienced colleagues or more enabled peers. Scaffolding is not a necessary evil to be lived with and should be encouraged to enable learning to happen. However 'scaffolded performance' is not desirable where individuated certification is involved. In this context, open book examinations need to fulfil the requirements of summative evaluation and also ensure that knowledge is not merely reproduced but applied, synthesised and evaluated.

Definitions and Types of Open Book Examinations

An open book examination (OBE) is a valid method of testing how much a student has learnt and internalised from a course; it is an examination that does not test knowledge of theory but instead focuses on practical applications of theory, in new/authentic contexts. The questions/tasks are usually context specific and may also carry the possibility of open ended responses. It is an examination where students can have access to their prescribed textbooks and even other resource material. Since such referring is possible, meaningful and deep learning can be fostered.

There are many kinds of OBEs, ranging from allowing access to restricted resources, access to unrestricted resources, as well as open resource examinations where access to an entire library is permitted. In a restricted OBE printed documents such as logarithmic tables or dictionaries are permitted. A few primary sources may also be accessed, but only with the prior approval of the course instructor/examiner. An unrestricted OBE is one where lecture notes, worksheets, handouts and even books can be brought in. The choice of such material is left completely to the student. The open resource/open library OBE is like a take home examination; but in such contexts the questions/tasks set are likely to be individualised and the evaluation stringent to avoid mass copying or plagiarism.

Nature of Questions in Open Book Examinations

There are many kinds of questions (objective and subjective) that can be set in OBEs. With a little care even multiple choice questions can be asked (see Appendix, Set A). When needed, these can even be in the true false format, but are likely to demand a justification for the stance taken. Labelling and classification questions are of a similar nature (see Appendix, Sets B and C). Questions that demand a subjective response could either ask for short answers (see Appendix, Set D) or focused and specific responses (see Appendix, Set E) or even a free response (see Appendix, Set F). In some contexts it is also possible to visualise the creation of tasks/materials (see Appendix, Set G).

Such a shift, however, from questions that require reproduction of information (regurgitation of knowledge) to the processing or even creation of knowledge, is not without its disadvantages both for the paper setter and the test taker.

Disadvantages of Open Book Examinations

OBEs take a lot of time to create. A three hour paper may demand 10-12 hours by the paper setter to conceptualise the tasks and then fine tune them. The responses to Open Book tasks also demand a large amount of evaluation/correction time. At the end of the day such effort pays off, for the responses will provide glimpses into student minds, but the time required will have to be factored in.

OBEs demand a different orientation not only from the test creator but also from the test taker both in terms of preparation and in terms of planning for the actual examination. As one of my students succinctly put it: *"I spent most of my time when I took my first few open book examinations searching in books for answers rather than thinking."* Another added: "*I did not know how to make notes for an exam where I could carry my books inside or how to approach application based and evaluation type questions and use reasons/evidences/examples to substantiate my claim/opinion.*"

There is no scope for memorisation in OBEs. In contexts where such examinations are the exception rather than the rule this could be perceived as a big problem. But if OBEs become the norm, the advantages would outweigh the disadvantages.

Advantages of Open Book Examinations

OBE questions, particularly of the problem solving kind mirror real life tasks; in order to answer them the test taker has to access and use resources that are usually available in academic and professional contexts. The education system in India focuses on reproduction. As such, teachers are not always able to transfer the essence of a problem to a new area/context; the OBE enables and facilitates logical ways of thinking.

Such questions, therefore, influence the nature of learning. Students have to read and study across the entire semester to understand and apply concepts. The nature of 'studying' or preparation for an end of course/end semester examination also changes. These examinations are not memory based and no cramming is required. This actually reduces the cognitive (and also the emotional stress) load on the student. As one of my students put it, "*It hardly feels like an 'exam' in the conventional sense and does not carry the anxiety associated with routine exams*." He went on to add: "*It makes studying for an exam redundant, which is how I think exams should be; (I only need to revise my materials and flag what I may need).*" Another student reiterated this by affirming that in an open book examination he is creating and composing text rather than reproducing memorised knowledge/text.

The absence of so-called 'discipline' issues is another major advantage of the OBE. Students have no time to ask their friends for answers and copying is practically impossible. From a teacher educator's perspective, feedback on OBE responses can be individualised, constructive and therefore genuinely pedagogical in nature.

The advantages of OBEs outweigh the disadvantages, but they are not very popular in India, whether in general or teacher education.

Unpopularity of Open Book Examinations

A general lack of awareness of possibilities could be one major cause for this unpopularity. Another reason is that although the cognitive load on the student while taking the examination is low the demands made on both the test taker and the paper creator are high. The student needs to prepare differently and diligently and the teacher has to spend a lot of time thinking about problem areas and solutions. Question papers cannot be set overnight. However, OBEs are the need of the hour in teacher education programmes in India and elsewhere.

Why are Open Book Exams the need of the hour?

A major problem with Indian teacher education is that it has no incubation period. A teacher gets a degree and if he/she gets a job, then, without any hands-on training or experience he/she is expected to start teaching. This is in direct contrast to other professions like medicine, law, engineering or architecture where there is an induction period between the time someone enters the profession and begins working autonomously (Padwad, 2011).This implies that there is very little professional assistance available on the job. OPEs can stimulate this kind of 'apprenticeship' through its problem solving tasks. The conditions in which they can learn for themselves can be provided. If this happens, then every examination can become a learning experience, albeit in the context of testing maximum performance rather than typical workday conditions.

Appendix: Sample Tasks

Set A. (multiple choice)

1. English is Greg's native language. When he is four years old, his family moves to another country, where Spanish is spoken. He learns Spanish, becoming fluent. What phenomenon is Greg exhibiting?

a. simultaneous bilingualism

b. successive bilingualism

c. partial bilingualism

d. subtractive bilingualism

2. Bilingualism does not enhance the following metalinguistic ability:

a. early word-referent distinction

b. phoneme substitution

c. analysis of ungrammatical sentences.

d. counting of words in a sentence

Set B. (state whether true or false with justification)

P. Bilingualism as a phenomenon originates in individuals and is then reflected in society.

Q. Societal bilingualism implies that all members in that society are bilingual.

R. A strong system of bilingual education, in a society with horizontal bilingualism, will lead to additive bilingualism.

(Sets A and B were used in a course titled Bilingualism and Bilingual Education)

Set C. (labelling/classifying, with justification)

1. In the discussion of BICS and CALP, it has been stated that the difference between the two lies in the interaction between two characteristics – context reduced/context embedded and cognitively demanding/undemanding. Given below are three activities. Using these characteristics explain whether they fall into the category of BICS or CALP. Give reasons for your answer.

a. receive a telephone call and take down the message for someone.

b. write an instructional manual for an electronic equipment

c. phonetically transcribe commonly mispronounced words.

2. Given below are 3 statements. State whether each one belongs to the Hallidayan [H] or to the Chomskian [C] paradigm in linguistics; you may use the terms formal/functional if you prefer. Justify your classification in not more than 2 lines. Point form justifications are fine.

a. Language is a communicative tool that is reshaped by its users according to their needs.

b. An individual's actual language use may be error ridden, but this is never a reflection of his/her language incapability.

c. Speakers modify their language to suit the context and ability of their interlocutors.

(Set C was used in a course titled Linguistics for Language Education)

Set D. (Fill in the blanks and short answer questions)
(part of an open book quiz to check understanding)

Text Extract

Title: ***Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition***

Author: Heidi C. Dulay and Marina K. Burt

Reference: TESOL Quarterly, 8(2), 1974

Abstract: The study attempts to determine whether the syntactic errors children make while learning a second language are due to native language interference or to developmental cognitive strategies as has been found in L1 acquisition. 513 utterances containing errors were extracted from the natural speech of 179 children, 5-8 years old, learning English as a second language. Only those errors which could be classified without question as 'interference' or developmental' were included in the sample. The results indicate that first language interference accounts for only 4.7% of the children's errors, while developmental strategies account for 87% of the errors. These findings suggest that less explicit teaching of ESL syntax to children may produce better learning.

On the basis of your reading the study '*Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition*' by Dulay and Burt (1974) answer the following questions.

[I have reproduced only the abstract so question 3 may not be answerable based on the information given above]

1. Which area of language acquisition does this study look at?
2. List the names of errors that the study looks at.
3. Who had coined the term 'creative construction'? According to the study what does this concept mean? Why is the concept referred to in the present study?

(Set D was used in a course titled: Applied Linguistics for Language Learning)

Set E. (Focused, specific written response)

Write out the necessary instructions (that a student of language would need) to complete the items given below. Use the cue given in brackets to help decide what the task focus should be.

1. (spelling)

a. The men were seen on the parc bench. (. . . . .)

b. We all went picnicing yesterday. (. . . . .)

c. Hawe you sent the letter yet. (. . . . .)

d. These children are very inpolite. (. . . . .)

2. (right or wrong)

Venkat, Sundar and Savitri had planned to go for a movie on Saturday. They met at Sundar's house. But just as they were leaving for the cinema hall, Sundar's uncle came to visit him. Venkat and Savitri were disappointed, but decided to go and see the movie together.

a. the three of them saw the movie. (   )

b. Venkat and Sundar saw the movie. (   )

c. Savitri and Venkat saw the movie. (   )

d. Sundar did not see the movie. (   )

B. (extract modified from the TKT sample Paper)
For questions 1-5, match the underlined mistakes in the learner's composition with the types of mistakes listed. Then create an exercise each for any 3 of these errors that will help the student overcome his/her 'errors'.

[1] Last summer we went on a lovely holiday. <u>All family went</u>

[2] together to a house by the sea. My <u>family is horribly enormous.</u>

[3] There were twenty of us so we rented <u>a really big house that was having</u>

[4] enough room <u>for all of us, There were</u> my brothers and sisters,

[5] my parents my <u>cosins and their parents.</u> It was great!

Type of Mistake

A. wrong vocabulary

B. wrong tense

C. wrong word order

D. wrong spelling.

E. wrong punctuation

F. word missing

Set F. (Free Response Tasks: Need to Apply and Synthesise Information)

Given below are descriptions of 3 tests that have been perceived as problematic by the students who took them. Read the descriptions carefully and decide whether the problem is one of validity or reliability or both. State this, and then, write down what can be done to make each test as valid and reliable as possible. You need not answer in complete sentences; point form will do.

P. This is an ELT course (teaching methods, maybe?) and there are students who have taken ELT courses earlier; others have not. For some students therefore, this course is the first orientation to ELT. The course does not explicitly state that the students have some familiarity with ELT concepts, but the questions in the final examination paper assume that such knowledge is available.

Q. Interviews are being conducted for a job as a marketing manager in a national company. Each candidate is asked 8-10 out of a fixed set of 20 questions. A total of 15 candidates are interviewed; all of them are asked to sit in an ante room, and asked to go back and wait in that room until all interviews are completed, for the interviewing is to be followed up with a group discussion.

R. A village school conducts all its examinations, under a banyan tree, which is where all classes are also held. Some parents feel that there has been some discrepancy and protest to the public education ministry.

(Part A of Set E, and Set F were used in a basic Language Testing Course)

Set G. (Task/Materials Creation)

Along with questions on methodology, (closed book) candidates are asked to pick a paper from a set of slips on the table (which has level and nature of lesson stated), use the library for an hour to collect resources, and then create a complete lesson plan along with texts, tasks etc. The resources used must be cited, but need not be reproduced. *(Adapted from a teacher training examination in Poland)*

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Evolving a process for Continuing Professional Development of Teachers in Remote areas through SMS

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This study engages with the question of how the SMS feature of mobile phones can be used for continuous professional development in English language where the context does not provide opportunities of engagement. Mobile phones are a popular medium of communication and language is primarily communication and engagement. We are trying to understand the process of using a viable alternative tool/ process for engaging with English as a Second language for teachers who have no source of exposure to English. The study explores the hypothesis that an everyday contextual task-based exposure to language will trigger the motivation and confidence of the teacher and create conditions for moving towards communicative engagement with the language in learning networks. SMS is a tool promoting group culture and cooperative learning as it can be easily forwarded and shared. How can this be explored as a learning tool? We look at it as a process of continuous learning. What is the social, personal, communicative and cognitive process by which the engagement with English Language learning is activated in rural remote areas with teachers? How can teachers form learning groups while engaging in texting in English? What is the process by which they do so? These are the questions that we will explore through this paper to arrive at a model of m-learning (i.e. learning with handheld devices 9(mobile phones) using the SMS feature of mobile phones.

Why M-Learning?

The knowledge commission report on English states: 'The nearly four million school teachers all over the country, regardless of their subject expertise, especially teachers at the primary level, should be trained to improve their proficiency in English.... Most teacher training programs are not based on a real assessment of needs of teachers.... Language learning opportunities should also be created outside the classroom. (Knowledge Commission Report 2006: 8).

This objective is far from being achieved today, six years after the publication of the report. It is a well-known fact that regional medium school teachers and rural private school teachers lack proficiency in English, even today. Sixty percent of the teachers mentioned in the knowledge commission report are working in State government, regional medium schools which are geographically dispersed, socially disadvantaged and mainly in rural areas. To these teachers mobile phones are the only accessible and affordable window to the outside urbanised world of knowledge and skill building: opportunities and advantages.

Additionally, more than one-third of the world's adult population – most living in the developing world – has no access to printed knowledge, new skills, and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives (Dhanarajan 2009: 46). Inequalities in access to education continue to pose major barriers in the developing world, and the delivery of cost-effective and quality education remains a persistent problem.

All over the world research in mobile learning has generated an interest amongst scholars and researchers towards the concept, pedagogy and practice of mobile learning. This paper makes a case for maximising the potential of m-learning for teacher capacity development by developing a model for m learning based on the authors small experiments conducted in rural and remote areas.

Why M-Learning? — my context

I work with 30 state board school teachers in the areas of Narayanpur, Kembhavi and Surpur in the Surpur district of Karnataka for their English language capacity development. These are disadvantaged districts in the context of education. The occupations of the people are mainly agriculture and small business. Many of the students and teachers are first generation learners. The schools are situated in remote rural areas in the midst of farms and fields. There is no evidence of written material in the form of pamphlets, sign boards, hoardings, advertisements in the areas where the schools are situated, no hoardings, no newspapers, no access to informal acquisition of literacy in the school language and none in English. The thirty teachers I work with are interested in learning English but have no access to the language beyond the classroom. Their school life is ridden with problems. This creates a vacuum in the teacher's life due to lack of appreciation and motivation for self-development. The teacher is an adult learner who is afraid of exposing herself to ridicule in face to face learning situations. She hesitates to come forward and take advantage of the workshops conducted.

Language learning needs continuous engagement and face to face modes of learning have to be supplemented. Moreover, dependence on face to face learning and lack of awareness regarding continuous development avenues creates a situation of unequal access and teachers need to be weaned from top down engagement. Faced with the problems outlined above I discovered that the teachers I work with had only one means of daily engagement with the language and that was a mobile phone. This led to the thought of using SMS for daily language support with the dream of creating language learning networks.

My experiment with mobile learning

The experiment with mobile learning was conducted with ten teachers randomly selected from the thirty teachers I was working with. These experiments have been described in detail in a paper published in a book brought out by British Council titled 'Continuous Professional Development- Lessons from India'.

The experiment went through three phases which began with using SMS for English language learning. In the next phase small networks were formed and teachers began to experiment with pedagogy. As this was a mobile device I believed that it could be used to create communities of learners. I tested the concept through a (first) pilot project conducted with 10 teachers of two schools for children of migrant labourers run by Azim Premji Foundation in Bangalore. The second pilot on SMS-based interventions was conducted with a group of teachers from State Board Schools. I decided to send an SMS every day to 10 participants who were randomly selected for the second pilot. The objective of this pilot was to test whether the engagement level of the teachers from these remote and rural areas could be sustained if the project was run by one teacher pushing the content to other teachers (Bedadur 2012: 88,91).

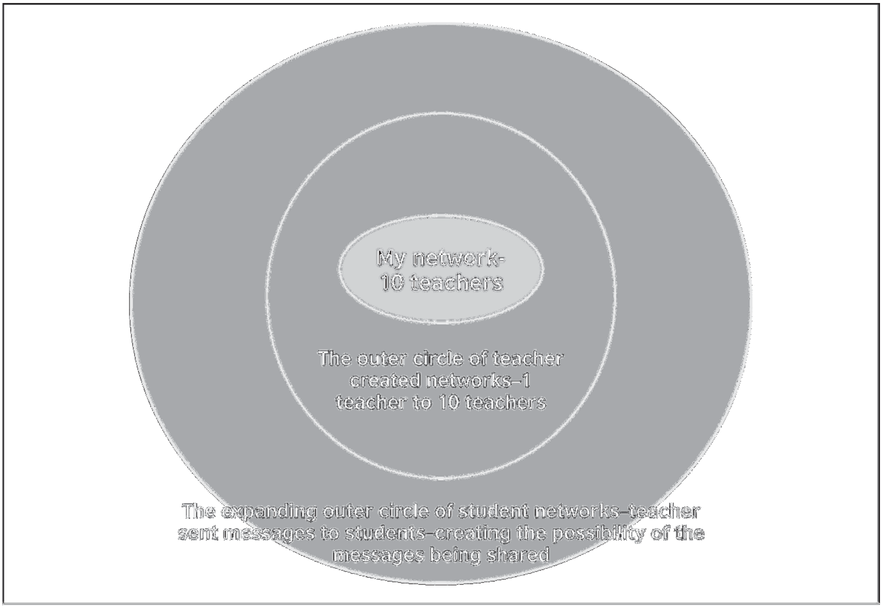
Towards conceptualising a model of m-learning

This paper outlines the process of m-learning that was observed during these experiments. We then conceptualise a model of learning through mobile phones in rural areas in India as a result of the above mentioned experiments. In my experiments of learning through SMS, teachers did not sustain their interest in answering the SMS messages every day. However, after one month they formed networks of SMS senders and one teacher took up the responsibility of sending messages to other teachers. This formed small networks. The same teacher began an SMS programme with his students. He started sending messages to his students and the students replied. This became a practice which he shared with other teachers. Other teachers showed keen interest. Soon they became a learning community. They explored other means of using a mobile and sharing learning.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy / content	Pedagogy	How did it support learning?	How did it support creation of learning networks	Ease and Frequency of use
I sent a message containing an input introducing a vocabulary item with a question which required response every day for one month	Vocabulary inputs	They learnt new vocabulary in context	They learnt together and exchanged news and views regarding their learning. They consulted each other for answers.	Needs time to explore and creates interest but does not sustain engagement
One of the participants began to send a message every day to their colleagues for one month	Vocabulary inputs	They learnt vocabulary chosen by their colleagues which was more relevant to their context	They learnt by forming a group and learnt through sending as well as responding	Self-driven and therefore creates longer engagement
The participant began sending messages to his students	Vocabulary inputs of student level	Creating a message – reading a message – responding to student queries and messages	They learnt through sharing and collaboration as responding to the message was a challenge	Creates lots of excitement and sharing among young learners
The participants of the networks began experimenting with other mobile devices like the mobile phone camera, digital camera	Shared classroom videos	Teachers learnt best/ new practices from each other	Teachers shared innovations and innovative ideas	Spontaneous use

Figure 1 below is a model of creating learning networks through SMS messaging or m-learning:



My network of ten teachers led to an outer circle of ten more teachers and when one of the teachers started sending SMS messages to his students they developed the potential of an expanding outer circle of students and student networks.

As the teachers started sharing SMS messages new ideas emerged and teachers started experimenting with technology and learning. A network of learning community was in the making.

Conceptualising a process for M-Learning in rural areas: Key elements and expanding horizons

Given below is a model of m-learning that emerged through the process that my learners went through. In this model SMS acted as a trigger to create interest in learning. This interest was not sustained for long in the group. When teachers created their own network the interest was reborn. Teachers shared their learning in the process of sharing a message. This sharing created the awareness that they could also drive their own learning and create their own network. Teachers dared to experiment with new ideas using SMS to try it for students' learning. Recognition and sharing of this practice led to expanding networks and innovative ideas being explored.

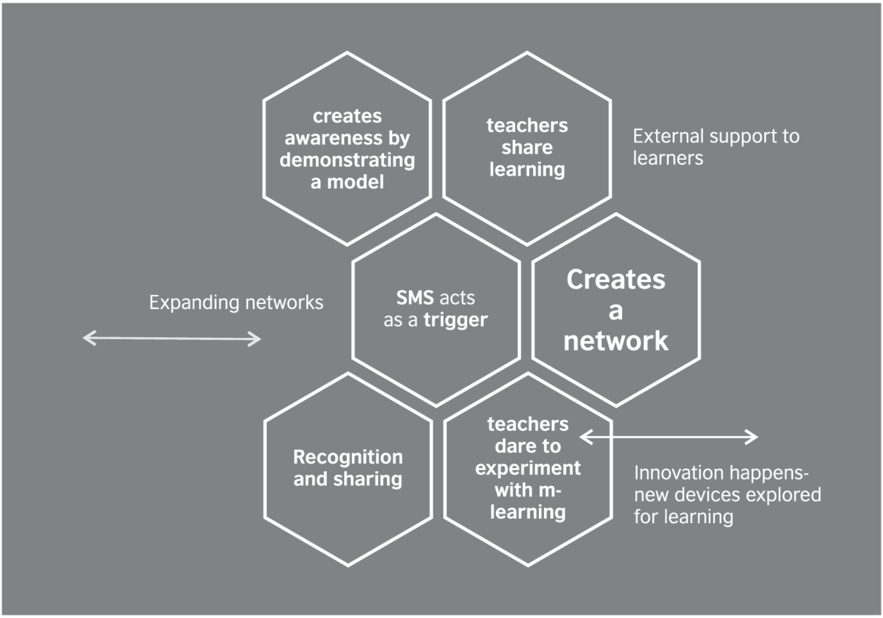


Figure 2

Reflection

Learning through mobile devices happens when expert directed synchronous learning becomes learner directed asynchronous learning. M-learning has the potential to create learning networks as it is by itself a networking tool and lends itself easily to sharing and forwarding. Researches in this area substantiate these findings as quoted below.

Given that social interaction is central to effective learning, as indicated by theories of new learning, mobile phones should also impact educational outcomes by facilitating communication. Mobiles permit collaborative learning and continued conversation despite a lack of physical proximity and thus advance the process of coming to know, which occurs through conversations across contexts and among various people. Via mobile technology, learners engage in conversation whereby they resolve differences, understand the experiences of others, and create common interpretations and shared understanding of the world (Nyiri 2002; Sharples et al. 2007: 225-26 as quoted in Valk, Rashid and Elder 2010).

Pedagogical Model of Mobile learning with SMS for continuing professional development

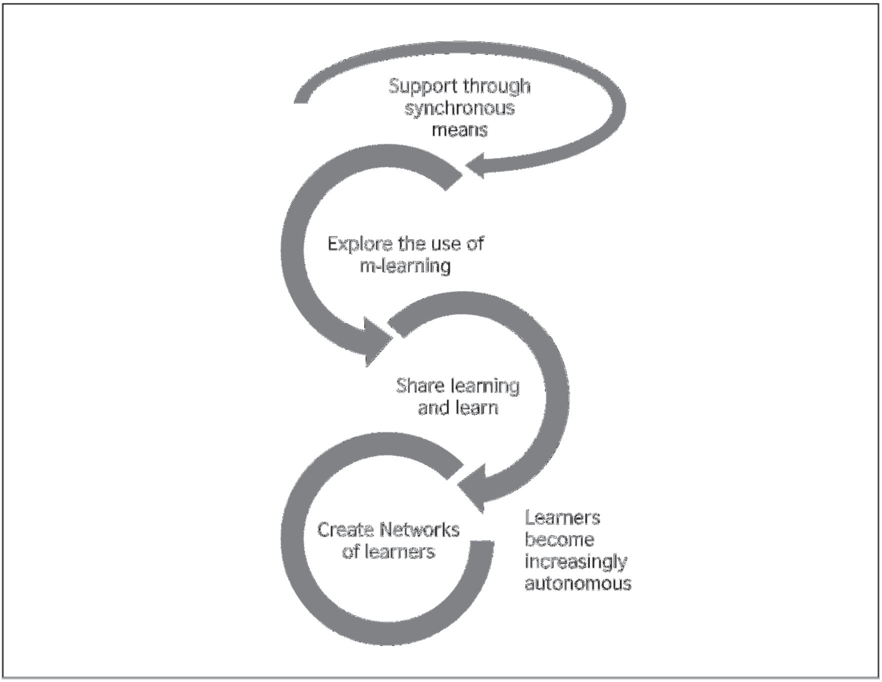


Figure 3 above illustrates pedagogical model of m-learning using SMS involves a demonstration which would act as a trigger. The 'teacher' would then step back and allow for ownership to emerge through exploration. This would lead to acceptance of the model leading to new experiments in learning through networking and sharing.

Reflection and Concerns

My experiments with m-learning have led to designing a model of learning where the learner moves through a top down teacher managed programme to creation of learning networks leading to an autonomous self-created learning environment which will lead to continuous engagement with learning. It is, however, yet to be seen whether m-learning networks sustain their engagement over long periods and the learners become autonomous or whether they lose interest in learning. It is also a matter of concern that the content may come from sources which may not be authentic when learners create their own mobile networks as they direct how they learn as well as what they learn. We cannot monitor the variety of English the teachers are learning if they are learning on their own. It is also difficult to record whether learning is happening or not, and to assess learning - language learning is related as much to culture and social usage in such a context. This creates limitations for learning through mobiles.

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Using classroom presentations as a tool for self-assessment

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In our MA ELT programme, learners are encouraged to develop self- and peer-assessment tools for Powerpoint presentations on syllabus components. The assessment criteria, created by the students themselves, are based on three aspects: content, slide show and language of presentation. Collated grading and constructive feedback follow. This strategy has many benefits: learners develop self-confidence; the visual presentation makes learning points easy to remember; and learners are empowered to take responsibility for their own assessment. Such strategies help in making teaching and testing converge in a shared space, and demonstrate learner autonomy in assessment practices.

The background issues: traditional models of assessment

In many university contexts such as the one I work in, post-graduate programmes follow traditional modes of assessment, the criteria for which are set by the university, with little room for improvisation. In 2001, our university moved from the annual to the semester system of study, which introduced the concept of ongoing assessment through an 'internal' component in the testing system. In 2010, the university introduced Choice Based Credit and Grading, which replaced the traditional system of assigning individual marks to students with relative grading across a batch. These modifications were based on the belief that judging learners' abilities on the basis of one summative, 'external', end of term examination is both an unhealthy and impractical practice, because it does not reflect students' learning development over the academic term.

Even with these new policies, however, our assessment system has not been able to get away from a top down model, one in which decisions about what and how to assess are taken centrally. The tools of assessment include the end of term summative 'external' examination that carries 60 to 80 per cent weight, and the 'internal' component comprising sessional examinations, class tests, home assignments, class attendance and participation in class discussion that makes up the rest of the grade. It is assumed that these tools suitably gauge learners' understanding of content knowledge and their ability to express this in a written mode. In all these traditional models, the assessment criteria are set with little or no learner involvement. Consequently, the expectation that these modifications in the assessment system will lessen or remove exam fear, and reduce the accompanying psychological burden on exam takers, remains a distant dream.

In this system of testing, the only area that seems to have some space for experimentation is that component loosely termed 'participation in class discussion'. In the past few years, I have tried to bring in learner participation into the assessment system by experimenting with an alternate mode of testing in this component, in the third semester of the M.A ELT programme. Since teaching in a six month semester is always a tight schedule, I linked this experiment to a syllabus component, and used the model to develop criteria for self and peer assessment. The structure of the M.A. programme, detailed below, has allowed this kind of experimentation within the internal assessment component, contributing significantly to learner autonomy in both learning and evaluation.

Course structure

The M.A. ELT course of Gauhati University is part of a unique post-graduate programme. Named M.A. (LELT), this is an integrated four semester programme incorporating elements of Linguistics and English Language Teaching, and is offered jointly by the Departments of Linguistics and ELT of Gauhati University. The programme is open to graduates of all disciplines, and admission is based on a compulsory English proficiency test. There is no undergraduate ELT or Linguistics programme in colleges affiliated to Gauhati University, or any other university in the region, so students aspiring to study these subjects at the post graduate level do not usually have any background disciplinary knowledge. To help them make a more informed choice, students are admitted into the joint M.A. (LELT) programme, in which they study basic aspects of English linguistics in the first two semesters. The programme then bifurcates, and based on their area of interest, students can decide whether they want to work towards the M.A. (Linguistics) degree or the M.A. (English Language and ELT) degree in the next two semesters. Students opting for the M.A. in English Language and ELT have to take courses on foundational aspects of language acquisition and language teaching such as methodology of teaching English, materials design, testing and evaluation, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) lesson planning, projects in ELT and practice teaching, all of which are assessed through the end of term 'external' exam and the ongoing 'internal' exam.

Modes & tools of assessment in the M.A. LELT programme

In the M.A. ELT course under the M.A. LELT programme, the main mode of testing is the summative, end of term, written 'external' examination. Like any other university exam, this kind of evaluation involves strict anonymity at all levels, from paper setting to assessment, ostensibly to avoid subjective marking, undue favours to select students and unfair assessment. There is no scope to provide learners with feedback on their exam performance, since the answer scripts constitute university property and are taken through a series of rigorous processes – marking, scrutiny, calculation of grading formulae, tabulation – before the marks / grades are printed on report cards. In addition to the theoretical components that are tested through a written exam, the M.A. programme includes a practical paper called Practice Teaching, but this is also graded by an 'external' examiner.

The 'internal' evaluation procedure, which is meant to be part of formative assessment, comprises sessional tests, home assignments, class tasks, discussions and learners' classroom behaviour. The first three are tested through written exams; these are graded by teachers who also provide feedback on learners' performance. Classroom behaviour and participation in discussions are difficult to quantify, so the marking is subjective, based on the extent to which the teacher is satisfied with learners' responses in the class. For all of these, the criteria for grading are set by the individual teacher.

The 'other' perspective: an experiment on assessment as a self-learning tool

In a restrictive evaluation system like this, with pre-determined grading criteria, there is little scope to make learners accountable for their own learning development, or to help them map their learning progress. Within the 'internal' examination component of the M.A. ELT programme, however, I realised that classroom discussions on a syllabus topic might present opportunities a little experimentation.

For several years, I had been giving students a presentation assignment, to be done individually or in pairs, on the different approaches and methods in language teaching as described in Richards & Rodgers (2001). For my experiment, I decided to ask students to make the presentation on Powerpoint. Presentations, especially those given through Powerpoint (ppt), give learners practice in both oral and written mediums of communication, and offer a space for immediate feedback. Since I wanted student presentations to serve as self- and peer-assessment tools, and yet taken seriously by learners, I announced that the grades they gave to their peers would be included in the internal assessment for Third Semester.

I explained that this would serve as a good learning experience, as it would help learners study the content carefully, become familiar with multimedia presentations, and help develop oral proficiency. They would learn seminar skills, such as asking for and responding to clarifications, giving feedback, and other discussion skills, all of which would help them develop self-confidence. I announced that we would develop the criteria for assessment together, so that they could take it as an exercise in self- and peer-assessment. My aim was to find out the efficacy of assessment as a self-learning tool used *by* students, rather than *on* students. The response of the students was encouraging; they were enthusiastic about the challenge of making Powerpoint presentations (for most of them this would be the first time), and about being consulted in the assessment process.

Since this was the first time students were doing an assignment like this, we decided they would prepare for it and present it in pairs. We also decided to have just one presentation a day - a thirty minute presentation followed by thirty minutes of discussion in a one hour class period. Taking feedback from peers and teacher is integral to the learning process, so we decided to spread the preparation over a couple of months, as this would give the class enough time to prepare for the assignment thoroughly. Self-learning was encouraged, and I asked them to use the internet to surf for learning tips on both the content and style of the presentation. We set up the criteria for assessment *before* the presentations began, so that the students could use these as guiding principles.

The criteria were based on three aspects: the content, the visual impact of the slides and the oral support (verbal presentation), with ten marks for each criterion. The assessment would include peer grading and then collation of grades with the tutor's. Another ground rule was that each student would have to read up the topic of the presentation to be made by their peers, so that the feedback would be constructive, and could be used to modify the presenter's slides. This was important, as I felt students who did not do too well could have an option of presenting again, and the feedback they received could be incorporated for the next (optional) round. I wanted the students to take this experiment as a learning experience that could help improve both their content knowledge and presentation skills.

Learner feedback on engaging with assessment

This experiment has been working successfully for the last three years, and the learners have claimed that the experience has helped them develop both their language proficiency and understanding of the content. As their tutor, it has helped me step back and let learners take responsibility for their own learning development. The experience has also helped students in subsequent academic activities – facing a group of listeners has made them more confident in their practice teaching classes in a local school for their fourth semester course requirement. Alumni who have made seminar presentations in national and international conferences have received encouraging feedback from senior faculty from other universities, and current students who attended these conferences later reported how motivated they were to see their seniors receive such positive comments.

Here are some of the comments made by students in video-recorded discussion sessions on their experience of Powerpoint presentations:

- *"We remember the contents better because we see them on the slides"*
- *"We learn not to crowd our slides with too much text"*
- *"We learn to ask questions…and also answer them"*

- *"We become more confident"*
- *"We enjoy the presentations"*
- *"We think it is better than taking an exam..."*

Impact of self and peer assessment on learners and learning

The experience of making visual presentations on a curricular component has made a positive difference in learners' attitude to assessment. Since the criteria for assessment were set in consultation with them, and the test was administered democratically in a non- threatening atmosphere, learners reacted positively to the experiment. This participatory approach to learning accountability had added benefits: the learners knew their performance would reflect in semester grades, hence they took it seriously. Several learning points emerged from the experience, such as the value of visual impact, which made learning points easy to understand and remember; students learnt both presentation and critiquing skills, and Powerpoint 'smart tips' in context. More importantly, learners were empowered to take responsibility for own learning as well as that of their peers. With their newly acquired skills, they could now also replicate it for other assignments.

Self and peer assessment as a learning tool/strategy

When considered from the 'other' perspective – from the point of view of learners - assessment can prove to be a valuable learning strategy. Self- and peer-assessment are reflective activities that nurture language and content development. In a teacher education course like ours, this also demonstrates effectively the benefits of formative assessment based on constructive pedagogy and experiential learning. If the criteria for evaluation are formulated by and agreed upon by students, they are likely to be based on students' perceived needs, and what they feel is important for them to learn. Such a procedure follows a bottom-up approach: it allows the important questions of *why*, *how* and *what* to assess to converge meaningfully, while assigning priority to how the process will feed into learners' learning graphs. It also brings in a sense of fairness and transparency, being grounded in principles of inclusive pedagogy. As a result, evaluation becomes for learners an enjoyable rather than an overwhelming experience.

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Assessing the Critical Language Awareness of ESL School Teachers

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Schools aim to help learners make sense of the complexities in society and prepare them for life's challenges. Language is both a tool to grasp the world and a site of social conflict. In plurilingual India, where language is a complex identity-marker and politics complicates all language issues, and where English is perceived either as a threat or as a passport to success, raising learners' Critical Language Awareness (CLA) can be empowering. Language teachers' CLA is then crucial, but do they have a critical understanding of the issues at hand?

The languages situation in India

Language is not a politically neutral, merely communicative tool. Even in largely monolingual contexts, speakers use different varieties of language and questions of power and identity arise. These questions become more important in elite multilingual countries like Canada. The questions of language, power and identity are so complexly enmeshed in grassroots multilingual societies like India, that it is impossible to ignore them in any language education programme.

The language scene in India is complicated by several individual, societal and policy-based realities. Language has been an important marker of identity since the end of the 19th century (Mitchell, 2009) Languages are given an exalted status (Telugu deified as 'talli' or mother-goddess) and several individuals have even committed suicide on issues concerning language (Potti Sriramulu's fast-unto-death for the formation of a Telugu-speaking state).

At the societal level, India has seen grassroots multilingualism and people use different languages to perform different functions in society. So, it is quite common, for example, to find an individual in Hyderabad speaking Marwari at home, Telugu or Urdu with vendors in the market and English in the school or at the office. Languages share a complementary relationship in a fluid, non-competing way.

At the policy level, the constitution's VIII schedule is a list of the languages considered "official" by the Government of India. Though several deliberations have happened over the issue, no language is called the 'national language' in India. Though the constitution provided for Hindi to become the official language of India in 1965 (15 years after the constitution was adopted), anti-Hindi agitations led to the continuation of English being considered the 'associate official' language and presently, all languages in the VIII schedule (presently 22 languages) enjoy official status, state support and ample resources for the promotion of language use, maintenance and propagation. The Census of India is the richest source of language data for the country. The 2001 census had 6661 “raw returns of mother tongues”, “rationalised” into 1635 mother tongues using “thorough linguistic scrutiny, edit and rationalisation” and grouped together as 122 ‘languages’, using “the usual linguistic methods for rational grouping based on available linguistic information” (Census of India 2001). The arbitrariness of the terms ‘mother tongue’, ‘language’ and ‘scheduled language’ in the census and the VIII Schedule is amply clear from the fact that Maithili was only a ‘mother tongue’ grouped under the ‘language’ Hindi up to the 1991 census and became a ‘language’ by itself in the 2001 census, after it was included in the VIII schedule of the constitution through an amendment in 2003. Sanskrit spoken by 14,135 speakers is included in the VIII schedule but Bhili with 9.58 million speakers and seven other languages with more than a million speakers are not (Constitution of India 2007: 330).

To further complicate the landscape, there is the question of the status of English in school education in India. English is the ‘associate official language’ of India but is not listed in the VIII Schedule. The knowledge of English is increasingly perceived as a passport to success and the idea that direct instruction in English from the earliest years of schooling is best has gained currency, even in states like West Bengal and Gujarat which have had governments politically opposed to the early introduction of English-medium instruction in schools.

Even the question of which language variety to use in the classroom is a significant one. On the question of ‘Standard English’, several scholars have pointed out that the notion of a standard is often more ideological than real, and that teachers’ insistence on standards, which is based on their bias against certain varieties, can negatively affect the chances of minority language speakers to succeed in educational settings (Lippi-Green, 1997). Some point out that adherence to standards is even used to assess people’s intelligence and moral worth (Clark & Ivanic, The Politics of Writing, 1997, p. 189) and ask for a critical scrutiny of standardisation tendencies and non-conformation to the dominant conventions (Clark & Ivanic, The Politics of Writing, 1997, p. 191).

The Study

Is the grassroots teacher of English aware of this complicated reality?

This study is an attempt to capture English teachers’ critical understanding of the issues concerning language, power and attitudes towards the statuses of the different languages found in the school’s immediate context. It focussed on the notions of mother tongue, national language, multilingualism, Standard English and medium of instruction in schools. It was conducted at a privatelyrun secondary school which uses the curriculum recommended by the Andhra Pradesh state government. Twenty-two teachers teaching English at the primary, middle or secondary school level took part in the study by responding to a questionnaire which had several open-ended questions.

Teachers' Responses

A close look at the teachers' responses gives us a clear understanding that they have a very simplistic view of the languages situation in India and are unable to grasp the complexities involved. A sample of the kinds of responses given by the teachers follows.

The teachers give esoteric definitions of a mother tongue like the language "heard in the mother's womb" (R-13) or as dependent on the "tradition" (R-19) they were born into. One teacher calls a language her mother tongue, because it teaches her to do well in life (R-2).

On the question of a National Language, teachers expressed some inconsistency when those who called for Hindi or English to be the National Language gave similar reasons for their choice: widespread reach and easiness to learn. They often exhibited recourse to emotion. For example, one teacher referred to Hindi as *rashtrabhasha* ('national language', R-10) and another justified the use of English as National Language because "the world is running behind (sic) it" (R-9). Some teachers called Hindi a National Language elsewhere, whereas official policy documents refer to Hindi only as official language.

A few teachers actually saw multilingualism as a disadvantage by asserting that knowledge of English is enough or by blaming multilingual education policies for some learners' inability to be proficient enough in English. They thought that time that could be used for other school subjects is wasted because learners have to concentrate on many languages.

When asked which languages are important for children in their area, the teachers ranked English, Hindi and Telugu in that order as most important. They chose economic, religious and emotional reasons (and not linguistic, historical or political reasons) as most important factors determining the importance of the languages. Those who ranked English as most important did it because it is a 'global' language. One teacher wrote that to learn other languages is "useless in the future" (R-15).

Seventeen of the twenty-two teachers recommended English as the medium of instruction in schools and said this is because English is the "world's most important language" (R-19). One teacher highlighted the perception that English is the language of higher tastes and culture when she justified English-medium education by saying that there is need to "culture the upcoming generation" (R-

9). Some of the teachers also mentioned the fact that we live in a “computerised world”(R-13) and that “parents are impressed” (R-12) if the school is an English-medium one. Most such teachers wanted English as a medium of instruction to begin either at kindergarten or class one level.

When asked how important it is for school students to use ‘Standard English’, most teachers felt it is very important. Some of the reasons they gave were that the use of Standard English “can secure a good future” (R-14), lead to a “good status”(R-14) in life, help learners do well “in competitive exams”(R-7, R-10) and to “make parents proud” (R-22) of their children.

Analysis

Why is it that the teachers, for whom the complex languages situation in India is a reality that they live and not a community they imagine, seem incapable of understanding the complexities involved?

Teachers treat each language as a separate compartment, as a system of rules different from other systems of rules or merely as a politically neutral tool of communication. This is not because they are incapable of thinking about the complexities of language, power and identity found around them, but because teacher education fails to look at the political aspects of actual language use. There is a gap between what is taught in the teacher education programmes and the reality found in Indian society.

Critical Language Awareness as the solution

The solution readily available to bridge this gap is Critical Language Awareness (CLA). CLA is a critical understanding of the ways in which language represents the world, and reflects and constructs power relations (Clark & Ivanic, 1999). Such an understanding, developed and given shape in the formal setting of the classroom, can help learners gain fresh perspectives on the issues, and not be blindly prejudiced or impulsively judgmental.

Even at the micro-level of language use, language is hardly neutral and the use of particular expressions creates particular shades of meaning. CLA helps language users become sensitive to the variety of ways of expressing meaning that are available and to choose expressions, being fully aware of the political load of meanings they carry and to also take responsibility for the choices they make. A simple example is the use of “he or she” or “she or he” instead of “he” (or him and his) as a generic pronoun for all humans.

For this sensitivity to be raised among learners of languages, it is obvious that teachers need to have a higher level of awareness of the complexities of the languages situation in India apart from having a deeper sensitivity to the hidden meanings that the use of certain language expressions generates. Since the discourse in the classroom is also largely regulated or controlled by the teacher, what the teacher thinks and believes is extremely important.

Teacher practice is shaped by their theoretical understanding of the notions of language, culture, teaching and learning. This understanding is shaped and informed both by ‘official’ theoretical input from pre-service teacher education, professional development activities etc and also from their own experiential knowledge, both as teachers of language and also as language learners themselves. Teachers do have the power to do their bit in raising awareness among learners even with curricula which don’t take such activities into consideration. As Suresh Canagarajah argues, “at the micro-social level of the classroom… teachers and students enjoy some agency to question, negotiate, and resist power…” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 211).

In the light of the teachers’ responses to the issues raised in the questionnaire, we can conclude that there is need for a greater critical understanding of the language issues. Teachers of English need to have a higher critical awareness of the issues in order to look at them dispassionately and critically and also to help learners develop a critical understanding of them. It is also imperative that the teachers empathise with the situation of the speakers from minority languages and non-standard varieties in order to help them involve in the learning processes more fully and with confidence.

Recommendation

There is a strong case for the inclusion of CLA components in teacher education programmes in order to help prospective teachers develop an informed understanding of the politics of language use in society. This is imperative in a country like India, where in addition to the complexities mentioned above, minority groups are made to feel marginalised adding to their existing anxieties. However, there is a need for caution. In the enthusiasm to introduce CLA, teacher educators must ensure that the teachers’ opinions are not imposed on the learners in an uncritical top-down approach. Instead, as in all programmes including CLA elements, teachers need to create room for thorough discussions that look at issues from many well-researched perspectives and allow the learners to arrive at their own conclusions after much thought and consideration.

It is only when such awareness is developed among learners that true democracy can be achieved in the languages arena and individual students from all linguistic groups can be truly empowered.

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Evaluation of the Class X Course Books by Classroom Teachers in Bangladesh

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The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) introduced CLT in teaching English at the secondary level in Bangladesh in 1996. The impact of such an educational innovation was implemented through teacher training, materials development, and testing practices. However, the introduction of CLT and the absence of explicit grammar teaching were criticised by lay people including many stakeholders of education. Hence, NCTB introduced a new book for teaching grammar though the earlier book was retained. The two books of the same set of course materials followed two different approaches—communicative and structural. This modification continues to create inconveniences, misinterpretations and scope for improper implementation of the curriculum to the teachers and the learners. This paper attempts to analyse and evaluate the set of course books to find out how far it offers 'support' and 'constraint' for practising teachers. Data were collected from 9 rural English teachers of Bangladesh who responded to specific questions and used a checklist for evaluating the course books. Most of them were found to have appreciated the book on grammar. The paper discusses the implications of such findings and suggests more in-depth training for teachers to enhance reflective and professional practices such as evaluation of course books under development. Hence, more practically oriented activities in the teacher training programmes are recommended, though with some caution.

Introduction

As per the recommendations of the Curriculum Report (NCTB 1995), CLT (communicative language teaching) replaced GTM and the Structural Approach at the secondary level in class VI in 1996. To implement the innovation, *English for Today* (a new set of course books for learners from class IV to X, hereafter Book I) was designed based on CLT principles and attempts were made to test learners' communicative competence in both the formative and summative tests. However, people criticised the absence of explicit grammar teaching and testing forcing NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) to offer *English Grammar and Composition* (a new grammar book, henceforth Book II), later used as a reference book for the second part of the English course and the examination. The composition, teaching and testing of Book II were based on structural approaches. To justify the sudden innovation in the course book, the 2009 NCTB syllabus was modified. Thus the two course books for class X learners followed two different principles.

Construct of CLT

An attempt will be made here to show how the construct of CLT has been ambiguously presented in various educational documents:

The curriculum delineates the target level of the terminal competencies to be attained by the class X learners in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Specifications on the skill-wise target terminal competencies are detailed in terms of sub-skills appropriate to each of the skills. For example, while providing specifications on reading, it is stated that students should be able to understand different written texts; read extensively with appropriate speed; skim and scan; infer meanings from contexts; distinguish facts from opinions; draw appropriate conclusions; recognise the significance of cohesive devices; and recognise the functions of different punctuation and graphological devices (Kabir 2011: 33).

Besides these, the curriculum emphasises using 'culture specific texts', dialogues, poetry and drama with integration of structures, topics/themes, functions, situations, and vocabulary in communicative contexts. The explicit teaching of grammar is discouraged. Topics are chosen based on context-suitability, age-specificity, and learner-familiarity. Learner-centredness is emphasised. As for vocabulary, high frequency words are chosen. While teaching them, connotation is prioritised over denotation and presenting an L1 equivalent is discouraged.

While providing instructions for testing, suggestions are made to integrate grammar and vocabulary with reading and writing in the summative test where listening and speaking are not included. However, continuous assessment of all skills including grammar and vocabulary is recommended. Scope for rote learning and testing of explicit knowledge of grammar and vocabulary are discouraged. Assessment should focus on the use of grammar within meaningful contexts.

The analysis of the question paper of the SSC examination, 2009 (Kabir, op. cit.: 35) reveals that the question papers (particularly for Book II) closely conform to the modified syllabus (NCTB 2009) and the new grammar book.

Mismatches in documents and practices

The above discussion substantiates the view that the construct of CLT is ill-defined because:

- the holistic perception and presentation of language learning in developing the construct of CLT in the curriculum is not reflected in the examination-oriented presentation of the learning items in the modified syllabus; and

- the juxtaposition of the two course books following different principles without any proper pedagogical or educational rationale creates confusion in teachers' perceptions of CLT.

Data Description, Analysis and Interpretation

In the light of such background, the author conducted a survey using specific questions and analysed the course books using a checklist with 9 randomly chosen semi-urban teachers of English from Bangladesh. Since all the teachers did not respond to all the questions all the time, the number of the participants who actually responded to specific questions is given in parentheses. The data collected through them are presented in the following section.

Description and analysis of questionnaire

Question 1 (Q1) on training background and expectations

While asked about their in-service training experience, it was found that three teachers (out of 8) had not received any in-service training, four teachers had in-service training of 5-15 days and only one teacher had had a 6-week long in-service training experience. One of them received training from the USA. When asked about their expectations from the next training programme, everyone wanted training on English language, on CLT and on continuous professional development strategies. Even the teacher trained in the USA for 6 weeks wanted training on teaching English communicatively. Data clearly show that the training experiences the teachers had, were not adequate for effective teaching.

Q2 on perception of the communicative curriculum

We found 50% of the teachers (out of 8) were not familiar with the curriculum objectives (COs). Those who read the COs could mention some of them, for example, enabling learner to communicate in different situations, motivating them to participate in various language activities, etc. However, one teacher found the English first paper unsuitable for the learners though it was completely based on CLT principles.

Q3 on finding and bridging the gaps between the curriculum and the course materials

The teachers reading the COs were asked to find relevant gaps between the curriculum and the textbooks. One teacher said, "Translations should be included in the curriculum" while another teacher said that changes in the curriculum happened because of changes in politics.

A supplementary question was asked to find out how to bridge the gaps. Some of the relevant suggestions offered are presented below:

"Though speaking is one of the most important skills, it is not included for the academic exams. So translations as well as speaking should be included in the public exams."

"The gaps can be bridged by introducing more grammatical terms and grammatical explanation with the text books *[sic]*."

Q4 on suitability, strength and weakness of the course materials

When asked about the suitability of the course books for the learners, almost all the teachers found them suitable as they were well designed, well printed, nicely written, user friendly, and offered different types of texts. For two teachers, the course books were loaded with too many lessons and units to teach within the available time.

When asked about the suitability of the course books for the teachers, most of them, except two teachers, replied positively stating they were suitable only for well-trained teachers. Of the two, one teacher mentioned that learner's beliefs about rote-learning constituted a major obstacle against the successful implementation of such materials. Another teacher said, "Most of the teachers are in traditional teaching method and have no clear conception about the textbook. So it is not suitable for the teachers."

While talking about the strengths of the textbook, all of the nine teachers appreciated it for creating scope for practice of all skills, selection of topic, clarity of print, presentation of real life pictures and incidents though one teacher said, "More structural exercise should be increased *[sic]*."

All of them spoke highly about Book II because it has rules and exercises. They even commented that rules of grammar make the lesson easy, enjoyable, and pleasant. They found the rules suitable for the learners. One teacher remarked, "The book selected for the students is not self-sufficient for teaching grammar. I would like to say that more rules should be included in it."

About the weaknesses, all of them criticised the excessive number of lessons, fewer grammatical and structural exercises, unclear pictures. Some of them referred to lessons that are irrelevant for learners and unsuitable for their age. One teacher said, "Most of the lessons are teachers- or reference book-dependent. The reference books are not available in our country. It is very difficult to present the lessons using aids as it is costly and teacher's salary does not support the fact".

Q5 on teachers' choice on teaching method and their rationale

The following options related to the teaching of prepositions were given to the teachers to understand which option they tended to follow:

A. Describe the rules of prepositions and then make the learners practice.

B. Show the learners different pictures having different relationships between the objects and ask them to explain them orally. Invite others' feedback on one's answer. Ask them to talk about different objects of the classroom. Finally, ask them to guess the rules and give feedback.

C. A mixture of both: how and why?

D. Others, and why?

We found two teachers out of eight opted for A (25%); two for D (25%); and three for C (38%). Option B was not chosen though it completely reflected communicative principles. One teacher (12%) did not reply. Interestingly, when some of the responses for C and D were analysed, it was found they actually fall under option A, as follows:

Responses for option C:

> *"First I describe the rules and then say that the rules are put into the note book. After completing note, they memorise and practice [sic]."*
>
> *"Preposition always is very important parts of speech and without preposition the meaning of the sentence is not possible clear to express the sentence. So the conception of the rules of preposition should give grossly to the students [sic]."*

Responses for option D:

> "*At first it has to be acknowledged that the group of preposition is very important so the students should be taught about the phrasal preposition, verbal preposition, appropriate preposition [sic]".*

It is evident that teachers' choice towards teaching prepositions is expressed in terms of structural approaches and memory-based learning. They were also asked what they thought their learners would learn from this. Their responses are as follows:

> "*A learner would learn from this exercise that more and more practice... they (need to) memorise it ...[sic]"*
>
> *"Yes. The learners would learn easily because they have known the details discussion [sic]."*
>
> *"Yes I think they will learn because I follow the communicative approaches"*
>
> *"Learners should practise this exercise through which they would be able to learn much."*

> *"Lecture, practice, and taking feedback make a learner clearly understood regarding the topic."*
>
> *"Practice makes a man prefect. So after learning some rules, Ss start to practise."*

Checklist
To get hands-on knowledge about the clarity of the pictures used in Book I (pages from 100 to 126, the central part), the author asked the teachers to use the checklist to identify people belonging to learners' age, people from urban and rural areas, their sex, religion, and class. The data are presented below:

	Maximum number identified	**Minimum number identified**
Men	45	10
Women	88	23
Urban	102	10
Rural	34	1
People belonging to learners' age	56	11
Religion	Islam	
Social class	Lower and middle class	

None of the teachers could come up with the same response for any of the items except the issue of religion. Their counting for each of the other items differed. This suggests that the pictures are not clear for proper perception though their responses to the questionnaire give the opposite picture. However, religious bias was found.

Eight important aspects related to the course book were presented to them and they were individually asked to sequence them according to their own priority. When the responses were statistically collated, it was found that reading and explaining the textbook ranked first; writing, second; actual use of English, third; speaking, fourth; grammatical rules and translation, fifth; and finally listening, sixth. Their cumulative preferences reflect their practices. Since reading and writing are given more emphasis and speaking and listening are given less emphasis in the textbook, teachers tend to prioritise reading and writing.

Interpretation
When the teachers were asked direct questions on their perception of the

communicative curriculum, their responses somehow matched with the COs (see Q2) but when they were asked to find gaps and suggest measures to bridge the gaps, their suggestions showed their preferences for grammar and translation (see Q3). Furthermore, their appraisal or criticism of the materials is found to be based on their structural approach orientation (see Q4). Their choice of the teaching method clearly shows their preference, comfort or familiarity with the structural approach (see Q5).

Through the checklist evaluation, we found that the poor printing quality definitely fails to provide the teachers and the learners with visual stimulus, often required for teaching a language communicatively. Their grading of some of the aspects of the course books evidently shows their bias towards structural aspects, though arbitrarily. It was more evident when they highly appreciated Book II and suggested including more grammatical rules.

However, a critical reading, deeper understanding and triangulation of data with other responses reveal what is happening in the practical field of English language teaching.

Conclusion and Implications

The above discussion shows there is a random mixture of CLT and GTM and the structural approach at the level of theories and practices in Bangladesh. The situation is worsening due to the ill-planned presentation of CLT in the policy documents along with the superficial conceptual orientations of the teachers.

The data were anonymously shown to the teachers in the post survey session. They agreed that there is more to know about such innovation. They do not know the rationale for such innovation. Some of them expressed positive views towards GTM. Recalling their training experiences, they said that training sessions were full of theoretical discussions and practical activities related to those theories only. They unanimously agreed that they needed more in-depth extensive training that would cater to the mismatches and misunderstanding happening in reality. Another teacher said that the course materials sometimes helped them and sometimes confused them.

Undoubtedly, materials, in this context, work more as a constraint than a support. Prabhu (1988) once argued, how materials can offer ‘’support’ to teachers and work as ‘constraint’ for them in their teaching practices, depending on teaching contexts. One teacher proposed that they needed to engage in professional activities such as evaluating course books, discussing academic issues for professional development, etc. the way they did here. However, the only precaution could be to avoid any situation where a blind man touches one part of an elephant, and describes it to another blind man who disagrees with the description of the elephant because he touches another part.

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Training Needs Assessment of Secondary School English Teachers in Aligarh

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The paper reports on perceptions of training needs of English teachers as part of the study conducted under UGC Major Research Project (2010-12) on 'Training Needs Analysis of Secondary School English Teachers at IX and X level in Aligarh: Implications for English Language Teacher Education'. The data collected were based on a literature survey, schedules and interviews with teachers in a focus group meeting in a teacher training programme. Ninety-nine teachers and 90 principals from 56 government secondary schools of Aligarh district blocks, affiliated to state Board of Uttar Pradesh, participated. The primary data generated identify training needs against the backdrop of lack of teacher training opportunities in rural areas.

Objectives

Little research appears to have been carried out in rural areas and resource-poor contexts concerning complex issues related to teachers' perceptions and their concern with 'quality curriculum' and effective teaching-learning methodology'(NFG,1996). Keeping in view the mismatch that often exists between the teaching contexts and the curriculum (NCF, 2005), the questions this paper focuses on are:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers about their training needs?
2. How do local contexts and the administrative structure influence teachers' perceptions about their training needs?
3. What are the issues related to teachers' assessment of restructured curriculum and materials design in rural settings?

Methodology

Sample

Aligarh is in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The city is located about 90 miles (140 km) southeast of New Delhi inhabited by a population of half a million Urdu and Hindi speakers.

The sample shown in Table 1 belong to different blocks of Aligarh i.e.Lodha, Bijauli, Iglaas, Gonda, Akrabad, Tappal, Gangiri, jawa,Khair and Chandausi.

Table 1

Teacher Respondents	Principal Respondents	No. of schools surveyed	Blocks
99	90	56	10

Different sets of schedules were administered separately with teachers and principals. The teachers' schedule was divided into the following sections.

- background Information;
- teacher's workload;
- teaching language skills;
- domain-specific language use;
- language proficiency of the teachers;
- difficulty in evaluation of language skills, grammar and pronunciation;
- pedagogical and administrative challenges faced by the respondents;
- attitude towards the teaching profession, and
- teacher training and support.

The principals' schedule examined the following areas;

- teacher attendance/ accountability;
- training sessions;
- types and duration of training programmes;
- special provision for SC/ST, minorities and the physically challenged;;
- resources required for teacher education; and
- infrastructural facilities.

Interviews were conducted with 99 teacher respondents in focus group meetings as part of the teacher training workshop organised as part of the 'Professional Development of Secondary School English Teachers in Aligarh' in association with DIOS, Aligarh on 7-8 July, 2011 (UGC Project op.cit.).

Literacy-related problems

Only 10-12 per cent of students in a class are functionally literate to pass their board exams under UP Secondary Education Council. Some teachers report that 50 per cent of students participate in reading but only when the text is of interest. Only 10-15 per cent of teachers report that their students are good at writing. Some teachers report that only half of the class can write by copying from the blackboard but they cannot read English textbooks. Teachers also report that at the secondary level students need attention because they lack basic reading, writing and logical skills. The issue of learning gaps is critical to the connection between the primary and secondary level.

English Teaching in Rural areas

Teachers report the serious lack of an English environment in rural areas due to a huge shortage of staff and resources. Teachers have low levels of language proficiency and motivation to teach. Ganguli (2011:2) reports that 'there are districts in UP where only 2 to 5 per cent of teachers can actually teach English'.

Students in rural area schools are below average in basic English language skills. Some teachers report that they have to admit all the students without assessing their eligibility test. Students in rural areas are often 'charmed' by the government policy of providing a mid-day meal and many parents visit the school only to collect the scholarship cheques. Teachers are assigned duties related to scholarship disbursement, fee collection, population and animal surveys, in addition to helping to administer election and other non-teaching duties.

Some teachers report that the students' attendance rate in the classrooms drops from 75-80 per cent to 25-30 per cent during the harvest season. Teacher absenteeism, high drop out levels and student attendance issues all contribute to making a dysfunctional context, and yet there are popular aspirations for learning English. Teachers report that they are under pressure from the authorities to pass all the students. Girls, compared to boys, are more conscientious about their studies and attend school more regularly.

Use of English/Hindi in Classroom

Table 2

	high	**moderate**	**low**
Use of English in Classroom	21%	47%	9%
Use of Hindi in classroom	42%	15%	10%

In the area in question students do not have the advantage of an English environment at both primary and secondary school level which can facilitate their learning of the language. Consequently, their exposure to English is minimal. Teachers generally use Hindi as a medium of instruction to teach English language. Table 2 shows that 42 per cent respondents use Hindi and this figure correlates with 47 per cent use of English in moderate degree. There is a general perception among teachers that if they use only English in the classroom, students may not understand anything. A majority of students lack the motivation and confidence to speak in English. This further affects their participation in classroom activities. Teachers feel that students are not learning the fundamentals of English language, manifested by very low levels of competency in basic English structures and vocabulary. Teachers reported that more than 70 per cent students are weak in listening skills. Almost 80-90 per cent students do not speak in English. Table 1 shows the use of English in classroom is 21 per cent which directly correlates with 42 per cent use of Hindi in English classroom. The examination system is entirely based on written exercises, which creates a negative effect on classroom practice, opportunities for communicative practice, and the motivation of students to develop their spoken English.

Teaching methodology

Many teachers tend to enter their classroom without any lesson plan. Teachers regularly complain that 45 minutes is too short to explain a topic to the whole class, especially when the time has to be shared with checking students' comprehension based on written work. Most of the students studying in class IX can hardly read or write. Teachers also report that some of their students are below average in grammar.

Teachers rely heavily on the textbook as the principal teaching aid and source in the classroom, and lessons tend to be very teacher-centred as a result of this. Many teachers report that they are unaware of alternative language teaching approaches and expressed their desire for training to develop their awareness and skill. However, there is little incentive in the system to experiment with teaching approaches as the inspection process in schools is focused on coverage of the syllabus rather than teaching methodology.

Institutional and Job-related Challenges faced by the respondents

Table 3

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
	Extremely Challenging	Challenging	Not Challenging at all
in covering the course on time	32%	40%	28%
in scheduling administrative responsibilitiesso as to meet the desired learning outcomes	22%	51%	27%

in making commitment to see the desired learning outcomes	34%	42%	24%
in making commitment to the job as per the institutional requirements	25%	47%	28%

Table 4

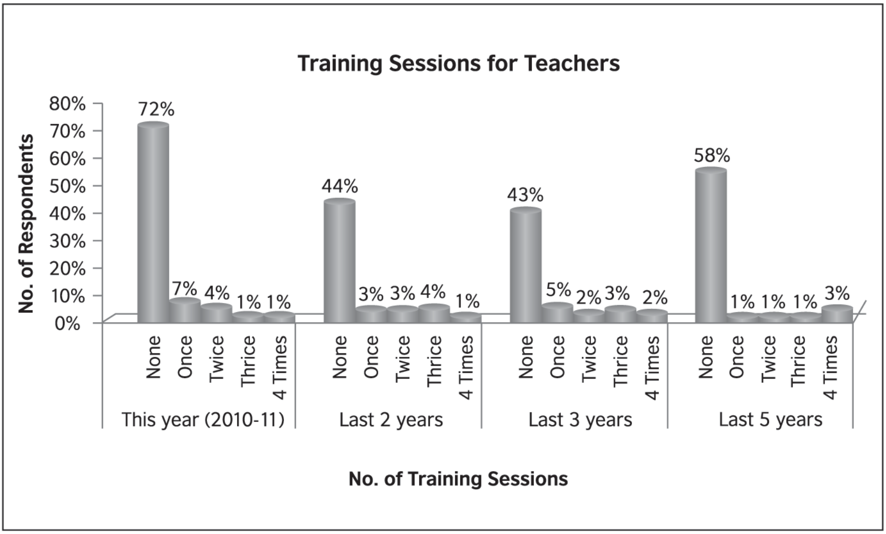
Challenges in evaluation of Language Skills	Serious difficulties	Moderate difficulties	Slight difficulty
Listening	3%	46%	51%
Speaking	29%	39%	32%
Reading	6%	53%	41%
Writing	10%	43%	47%
Grammar	20%	46%	34%

Challenges in evaluation of Language Skills

The issue of what training is required for these teachers is a direct corollary of what challenges they face as illustrated in Tables 3 and 4. The merged figures of column 1 and 2 in Table 2 indicate that the main challenges dominating are course coverage and scheduling administrative responsibilities so as to meet the desired learning outcomes. In Table 3, the challenges in evaluation of language skills are high with nearly half of the respondents indicating particular difficulties with respect to listening skills, speaking skills and grammar, followed by reading skills and writing skills.

Principals' Data

Figure 1: Number of Training Sessions and Types of Training Programmes Attended.

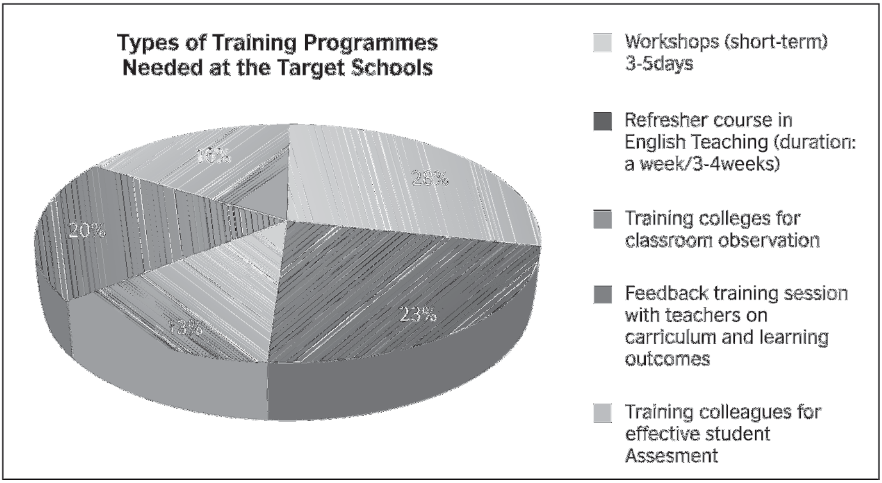


Need for attending various training programmes

As evident in Figure 1 more than half of all teachers have not attended training in the last five years. Only a very small proportion of those interviewed have attended more than one training course in any one year over the five years under examination. Chart 1 reports the need for regular, short-term training programmes (as indicated by principals) in the following areas:

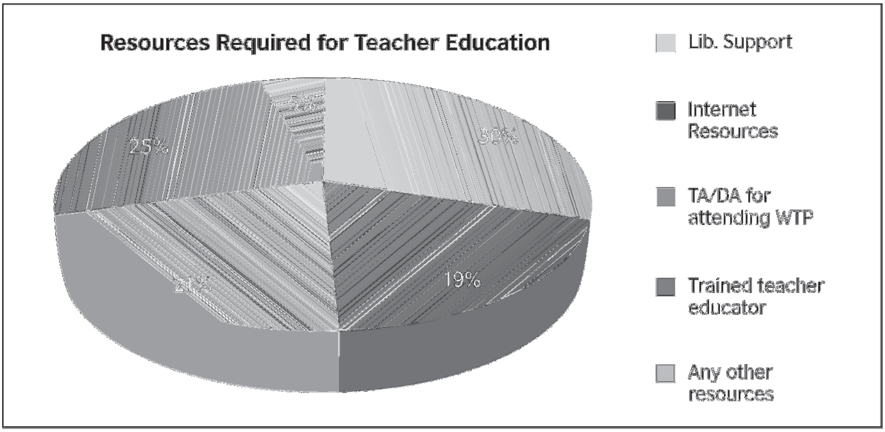
- refresher courses in English teaching;
- classroom observation and feedback training;
- curriculum and learning outcomes; and
- effective student assessment.

Chart 1:



However, 98 per cent of principals report that there is no budget for teacher training programmes. Chart 2 outlines the main resources required as indicated by the same group of principals.

Chart 2:



Key areas of Training Needs
In addition to the type and duration of training programmes required for teachers as specified by the principals, other key areas of training needs were identified by the teachers surveyed for this study:

- how to access training facilities and opportunities for training and teacher development programmes;
- dealing with drop-out and student absenteeism;
- adapting appropriate materials for classroom teaching;
- teaching low-ability and weak /mixed ability learners;
    - teaching large often multi-level classes;
    - how to manage the transition from primary to secondary school level;
- learner-centred teaching methodology;
- maximising classroom time for spoken English;
- bilingual modes of teaching to facilitate learning.

Conclusion

Policy Intervention
English language is seen as the language of opportunities and instruction and yet opportunities for teacher training to develop this important skill in this part of India are minimal. Teachers report that teaching is well paid for government job holders But for those who are employed as private teachers, salaries are low and workloads are heavy. There is no financial or job security.

These are areas where teachers themselves need help (Azavedo, 2011), particularly when delivery of the content is the norm rather than the exception. In reality, English and Hindi go together in the English classroom; teachers need training to understand how best to exploit the use of both languages to aid understanding and facilitate learning.

The State Government of UP has initiated some steps to make English compulsory in primary education (The Times of India, 2010) and to maintain adequate numbers of trained teachers. However, the recruitment of trained and qualified teachers, together with investment in human resources in the school system has to be addressed, and this means enhanced and regular opportunities for the kind of training outlined above. Kumar (2010:8) states that behind this shortage (of qualified teachers) lies ‘a long history of neglect of teacher training and the poor social status of the elementary school teacher’.

More than offsite training there is an urgent need to conduct training needs assessment at onsite locations. In resource-poor environments pooling training opportunities in clusters of schools with similar profiles and needs can be an effective way of raising standards and supporting the on-going professional development of teachers in the fundamental aspects of teaching English identified in this paper. But this needs to be based on a clear examination of needs so that scant recourses are not wasted or misdirected.

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Portfolio Assessment: Do Teachers and Experts Speak the Same Language?

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This research study was carried out to develop indigenous criteria for assessing writing portfolios in a teacher education context. The study looks at (i) teacher trainees' views on the criteria to be used for the assessment of portfolios, and (ii) the criteria used by expert raters to assess portfolios. The research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, questionnaires were administered to 19 teacher trainees seeking their views on how the portfolios should be assessed. In the second phase, four expert raters were asked to assess an authentic portfolio using their own criteria. The data gathered from the teacher trainees revealed that while assessing portfolios, the drafts as well as the completed products should be taken into account. Also, some criteria appeared to be more important than the others to teacher trainees as well as expert raters in assessing portfolios. However, it was not clear whether to score the individual pieces in the portfolio and then add up the individual scores or to score the portfolio as a whole. The study will help in developing a new scale that will be used to assess portfolios in the specific teacher training context.

Introduction

A portfolio may be broadly defined as 'a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits to the student (and/or others) the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s)' (Northwest Evaluation Association, 1991: 4 cited in Weigle, 2002: 198). The assessment of the portfolio that consists of samples of work produced by students over a period of time may be called portfolio assessment.

As many research studies indicate, portfolios have several advantages. However, the assessment of portfolios still seems to be a fuzzy area. There seems to be some confusion among teachers and teacher educators as to how to assess portfolios (Burroughs, 2001; Tillema and Smith, 2007). Also, as Burns (1999) and Tillema and Smith (2007: 443) report, there are few research studies carried out on the appraisal of portfolios and the judgemental processes involved on part of the portfolio raters.

This research study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the teacher trainees' views on how portfolios should be assessed?
2. What criteria are applied by expert raters to assess portfolios?

Background to the study

The context for the study was an in-service teacher training programme. The teachers involved in the study belonged to one cohort (67 in number) and they assembled portfolios in their writing classes during a two-month primary-level in-service teacher development programme at the Regional Institute of English South India, Bangalore. The writing programme was based on the portfolio theory and the pedagogical practice related to this theory.

In teaching writing, the process-oriented approach was followed. Each week, one writing task was administered to the teachers. The task was completed using various stages such as free writing, prompted discussion, brainstorming, peer assessment, revising, editing, etc. Teachers produced the final piece using process strategies. The process data such as initial drafts, comments from the peers and feedback from the trainers were kept in individual portfolios along with the final products. Teachers carried out self-assessment regularly using the self-assessment checklists provided to them. After the completion of all the tasks, teachers recorded reflections on the processes of writing they followed and on their own development in writing over a period of time.

Goals and contents of portfolios

The purposes of the portfolio in the in-service teacher training programme were manifold as listed below:

- to develop the writing abilities of the teachers;
- to train teachers in the pedagogical aspects of portfolio assessment;
- to use portfolios for assessment and certification purposes.

Hence, the portfolio was used as a tool for both teacher development and teacher assessment.

The portfolio consisted of four core elements:

- writing tasks with multiple drafts of each task;
- comments from peers;
- feedback from trainers, and
- self-assessment and reflection.

The portfolio covered a wide range of tasks. The curriculum was built around these tasks. Some tasks had an element of choice within them whereas others were common to the whole class.

The portfolio included texts in a variety of forms or genres, written for a variety of audiences and for a variety of different purposes. The variety and the range of texts included in the portfolio would make it difficult to identify consistent features of writing at different levels. This is pointed out by Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000: 54) as well as Weir (2005: 165). They indicate that if portfolios varied widely in what they contained, as well as in the quality of the work, it would add a degree of difficulty to readers. Also, where a selection of topics is provided, it is very difficult to compare performances. Hence, it was decided to have two sections in each portfolio: an optional and a compulsory section. The optional section consisted of the following tasks:

- A diary entry/ a curriculum vitae;
- A review of a book/movie;
- An essay on a given topic: descriptive/argumentative/narrative, and
- Designing activities to teach vocabulary/grammatical structures.

On the other hand, the tasks included in the compulsory section were as follows:

- A brief biography;
- A report on an event;
- Writing a message, and
- A letter to the editor of a newspaper.

For the final assessment, the four compulsory tasks and the reflective responses were taken into account. The selection of four tasks would make it easier to compare the portfolios as there would be greater resemblance from one teacher to the next. Also, it would be easier for readers/assessors to agree about scores and grades.

However, the portfolios were not graded for summative assessment because of two reasons: firstly, it was for the first time portfolios had been introduced into the training programme and secondly, there were no established criteria for assessing the portfolios. In order to use portfolios for high-stakes purposes, it is essential to develop a set of assessment criteria.

In this study, I made an attempt to involve teacher trainees and expert raters to establish a set of criteria for assessing portfolios. The section that follows presents and describes the methodology adopted and the instrument used for the purpose.

Teacher trainees' views on assessing portfolios

A questionnaire was used to gather teacher trainees' views on how portfolios should be assessed. The questionnaire had different parts which functioned in different ways. There were questions that elicited background data from the teacher trainees such as the years of teaching experience, the knowledge of portfolios, etc. The other parts in the questionnaire elicited teacher trainees' views on how portfolios should be assessed (see Appendix 1 for details). There were three sections: Section A, Section B and Section C. The questions in Section A and Section B required Likert scale answers and the questions in Section C required rank-ordering of items.

Altogether, 67 teacher trainees attended the training programme and assembled the portfolios. However, for the study I selected a smaller group of 30 teacher trainees. I gained responses from 19 teachers from among whom 4 teachers had teaching experience ranging from 1-5 years, 5 had teaching experiences of 5-10 years, 3 had 10-15 years of teaching experiences and 7 of them had more than 15 years' experience in teaching. This subgroup/sample is representative of the larger population.

I will first present the teacher trainees' responses to the questions in Section A of the questionnaire. The majority of teachers, 89.4% (17 of 19) strongly agreed or agreed that A3 (the development of the topic from first draft to final draft) should be considered while assessing portfolios. A similarly large proportion of respondents, 84.2% (16 of 19), strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that only the best pieces of work should be looked at (A7). However, they were divided in their opinions about the overall approach to assessing portfolios; they were not sure whether the individual pieces in the portfolio should be rated, and then individual scores should be added up (A1), or whether the rater should make a single judgment of the portfolio as a whole (A2).

Let us now look at Section B in the questionnaire. The majority of the teachers strongly agreed or agreed with all the statements. None of them expressed strong disagreement with any of the statements. All the dimensions seemed to be important for them in assessing portfolios: the dimensions of writing ability, as well as those related to the features of the portfolio.

Finally, in Section C, teachers were asked to rank order the dimensions according to the degree of importance they attached to each dimension. Each of the teachers ranked the dimensions in different orders. Some of them, however, did not rank all the dimensions. For example, Teacher 6 did not rank B8, B9 and B10 and Teacher 19 did not rank any of the dimensions.

The statistics clearly suggest that some dimensions were ranked as highly important by the teacher trainees, some were ranked as being of medium importance and one dimension, in particular, was ranked as of very little importance.

Dimensions such as 'adequacy and relevance of content', 'reflective thinking', 'organisation of ideas' and 'growth, development and engagement as a writer' were ranked as highly important by the teacher trainees. Other dimensions such as 'accuracy and appropriacy of syntax and lexis'; 'ability to write for different audiences and purposes'; and 'ability to use processes and appropriate strategies for different pieces' were ranked as being of medium importance.

Discussion and Conclusion

Teachers seemed to suggest that the following dimensions were important in assessing portfolios:

- adequacy and relevance of content;
- growth, development and engagement as a writer;
- reflective thinking;
- control of grammar and mechanics / accuracy and appropriacy of syntax and lexis; and
- coherence and cohesion/ organisation of ideas.

Of the five dimensions listed above, some are related to features of writing and some to the features of portfolio. However, the presentation of the portfolio itself did not appear as an important dimension for most of the teachers. This is a useful data because in some contexts where studies on portfolios have been carried out, presentation of portfolio work - labelling the drafts, stapling the final draft on top of the others, etc. – has been of greater importance in their evaluation.

Teachers also seem to suggest that rather than focusing on the final drafts, we should take the processes and strategies used to arrive at the final products into account when assessing portfolios. This goes against the idea of grading only papers designated as final drafts in summative assessment. Teachers' views do not support the argument of several researchers such as Ford and Larkin (1978 cited in Sommers, 2003: 380), Burnham (1986 cited in Sommers, 2003: 380), and Elbow and Belanoff (1986 cited in Sommers, 2003: 380) for whom a portfolio is 'a sampling of finished products selected by the student for evaluation'. Furthermore, the idea of having two portfolios, one containing a sample of 'best work' for summative assessment purposes, and another containing broad and various samples of work for formative purposes, as is done in some contexts, does not appear to be attractive to teachers. However, this needs further investigation, as the sample is too small to generalise the findings.

Expert raters' criteria

The main aim of this section is to examine the different criteria used by the expert raters.

Method

Four expert raters were involved in this study. An authentic portfolio was given to them for assessment. Each of the raters was requested to (i) come up with a set of criteria for assessing the given portfolio; and (ii) provide a score out of 50 to the portfolio, indicating how the 50 marks would be distributed among the different criteria. Four expert raters who had postgraduate ESL qualifications with experience ranging in length from 12 years to more than 20 years were selected for this study. All of them were experienced in assessing ESL writing either at the university level or in teacher education contexts. All the expert raters were non-native speakers of English. They had detailed knowledge of the training programme where the study was conducted and had knowledge about the background of teachers who assembled the portfolios. The curriculum and expectations for performance at the training institute were familiar to them.

Results

All the four expert raters came up with their own criteria for assessing the portfolio and scored the portfolio out of 50 marks. The criteria for assessing the portfolio varied from expert to expert as shown in Appendix 2. On the whole, 13 criteria/dimensions were pooled out from the four expert raters as follows:

- overall scope and form / organisation of the text;
- relevance, adequacy, audience awareness of content;
- control over clause level grammar and vocabulary / accuracy of language, vocabulary and tone;
- cohesion / organisation;
- format and style;
- quality of the final product;
- response to feedback and improvement across revisions;
- teacher's own comments on her growth / depth of reflections;
- development of the teacher;
- learner effort;
- presentation and organisation of portfolio;
- range of writing tasks given; and
- trainer's evaluation and comments.

All the expert raters used analytic scales. Only one of them (Rater 1) used distinct levels in the scale. Three of the expert raters assessed the portfolio as a whole whereas one of them scored individual texts in the portfolio and added up the scores to arrive at an aggregated score. As shown in Appendix 1, Expert Rater 1 awarded score to each of the criteria by examining individual tasks in the portfolio. On the other hand, Expert Rater 2 awarded scores to each criterion by examining the portfolio as a whole. Furthermore, the weight given to each criterion varied from rater to rater but the aggregated scores produced by the raters were sufficiently consistent.

Discussion

It appeared, from the criteria used by the four expert raters, that the following attributes were important to all of them:

- relevance and adequacy of content;
- organisation of ideas;
- accuracy of language; and
- improvement across writing.

However, a close examination of the individual rater's criteria revealed that they were valuing different aspects of writing. For example, Raters 1 and 2 seemed to focus mainly on the features of writing (e. g. 'cohesion', 'relevance, adequacy and audience awareness of content') at the expense of the features of the portfolio such as reflective thinking.

Further, Rater 3 seemed to take the position of an external examiner and therefore she appeared to examine the portfolio from an outsider's perspective. For Rater 3, it was not only the features of writing (e.g. 'Accuracy of language, vocabulary and tone') and features of the portfolio (e.g. 'Trainee's own comments on her growth') that were important but the trainer's ability to design tasks ('Range of writing tasks given') and give critical feedback ('Teacher's evaluation and comments') was equally important. Perhaps, Rater 3 was not clear about the purpose of the assessment. She carried out a programme evaluation of portfolios instead of using the portfolio for summative assessment.

Above all, the scales used by the raters did not show clear distinction between the levels in the performance. This may be explained by the fact that they have had the opportunity to examine only a single portfolio. Additionally, an informal talk with some raters revealed that much of their focus during the assessment was on the quality of the final draft. Furthermore, there still seemed to be some confusion regarding the overall approach to assessing the portfolio: whether to score the individual samples and add up the individual scores or to evaluate the portfolio as a single entity. This is clear from the two contrasting approaches Rater 1 and Rater 2 adopted.

As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers were also not certain about the overall approach to assessing the portfolio. The questionnaire responses of teachers in the first phase of the study indicated that they were not sure whether to score the individual pieces in the portfolio and then add up the individual scores or to score the portfolio as a whole.

Overall discussion and conclusions

On the whole, it seems that there is a need to construct a common scale to rate portfolios taking into account the data gathered by the teachers, the expert raters' and the criteria used in other contexts where studies on portfolios are conducted.

The data gathered will, thus, help in developing a draft common scale in the next phase. Interviews will be conducted with the expert raters to seek their views on the draft common scale. The draft common scale will be used to train raters and to examine the validity and reliability measures in future. The new scale will finally be used to assess portfolios in the specific teacher training context.

The advantages of adopting a procedure such as this, where teachers and expert raters are involved in the assessment process, are many. The data gathered will help the faculty members to develop indigenous criteria for assessing teacher trainees' portfolios. In addition, the involvement of teacher trainees in the study will enable them to gain knowledge and expertise in the development of assessment criteria. It will also help them to develop criteria when they assess their students' portfolios.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is about assessing the writing portfolios of in-service teacher trainees. The trainees, who attend two-month primary-level in-service teacher development programmes at the Regional Institute of English South India, Bangalore, assemble portfolios in their writing classes. This research study attempts to examine the trainees' views on assessing such writing portfolios. Hence, your views on the criteria to be applied for portfolio assessment are important for this study. Please provide the information as required.

Name (optional):

Years of teaching experience: Nil/1-5/ 5-10/10-15/more than 15 years

How do you rate your knowledge of portfolios? adequate/ limited/ inadequate

Have you assessed teacher portfolios before participating in this project? Yes/No

A. If I were to assess a portfolio, I would... (underline one of the following):

A1. look at individual pieces, rate them and add up the individual scores

Strongly Agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

A2. make a single judgment of the portfolio as a whole

Strongly Agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

A3. consider the development of topic from first draft to final draft

Strongly Agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

A4. mainly focus on the final drafts

Strongly Agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

A5. take into account the processes and strategies used for writing

Strongly Agree   Agree   Not sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

A6. look at drafts as well as completed products

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

A7. look at only the best pieces of work

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

A8. Any other (please specify)

B. If I had to assess a portfolio, I would use the following dimensions for assessment:

B1. Adequacy and relevance of content

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B2. Accuracy and appropriacy of syntax and lexis

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B3. Control of grammar and mechanics

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B4. Organisation of ideas

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B5. Coherence and cohesion

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B6. Ability to write for different audiences and purposes

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B7. Ability to use processes and appropriate strategies for different pieces of writing

Strongly agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B8. Growth, development and engagement as a writer

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B9. Reflective thinking

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B10. Presentation of portfolio work

Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

B11. Any other (please specify)

C. Which of the above dimensions are most important in assessing a portfolio? Rank them in order of importance and distribute 50 points among these dimensions.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 2: expert raters' criteria

Expert Rater 1

Criteria	Weight	Task 1 Marks allotted	Task 2 Marks allotted	Task 3 Marks allotted	Task 4 Marks allotted
Content (clarity, purpose achieved)	10	6.5	6	5.5	7
Organisation (sequencing of ideas, use of cohesive devices, introduction, development and conclusion)	10	6.5	7.5	7	7
Accuracy (sentence structure, syntax, spelling and punctuation)	10	5	6	6	5
Format and style (originality, creativity, strategies used to capture reader's attention)	10	6	6.5	6.5	6
Learner effort	10	6.5	5.5	6	5
Total	50	30.5	31.5	31	30

Average score – 30.5 + 31.5 +31 + 30 = 123/4 = 30.75

PORTFOLIO SCORE: 31

Expert Rater 2

Dimensions of writing (written text) considered:

Overall scope and form/organisation of the text

Relevance, adequacy, audience awareness of content

Control over clause level grammar and vocabulary

Cohesion

Response to feedback and improvement across revisions

Scale for each dimension

A A+	:	41 - 50	points
B B+	:	31 - 40	
C C+	:	21 - 30	
D	:	11- 20	
E	:	1 - 10	

Summary Award

Dimension	Grade /	Points
1)	B+	37
2)	B	35
3)	C	30
4)	B	31
5)	A	40

173 / 5 = 34.6

This may be taken as equivalent to 35 marks out of 50, with the caveat that 30 (60%) is not considered to represent 'First Class'.

Expert Rater 3

Criteria	Weight	Marks
Range of writing tasks given	10	8
Trainee's own comments on her growth	10	8
Accuracy of language, vocabulary and tone	10	5
Trainer's evaluation and comments	10	4
Development of the Trainee	10	6
Total	**50**	**31**

Expert Rater 4

Sl No.	Criteria	Components	Weighting	Marks
1	Content	Inclusion of the required entries, Purpose of the text	30	11/15
2	Efforts of the learner	The strategies adopted to improvise	20	8/10
3	Quality of the final product	Vocabulary, style, Accuracy and Organisation	30	10/15
4	Depth of reflections		12	4/6
5	Presentation and organisation of portfolio	Lay out, Design, Format and Paragraphing	8	3/4
	Total		**100**	**36/50**

Locating Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation in a Pedagogic Frame

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One of the most common terms featuring in discussions relating to the educational process today is Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). The opinions of students, parents, and teachers are often quoted in newspapers and magazine articles. A number of papers presented at the TEC 2012 Conference included CCE in the title, and others had it as a sub-theme. There is considerable activity implementing and institutionalising CCE in directorates of education, boards of studies, and so on. Presentations relating to assessment made by the states at various fora in 2012 often mentioned the trialling, piloting and preparations for up-scaling. There is much evidence of various interpretations of the basic notion and a range of practices on the ground (trial or final versions) in the school systems of the nation. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) took the initiative to work with the states (beginning with a national seminar in October 2012) to evolve a coherent and workable scheme. While a plurality of means and processes in the curriculum is undoubtedly welcome, it is important that the essential and worthy educational purposes of CCE are well served. Developing a pedagogically workable scheme for CCE with a high level of clarity relating to core operations at the school and classroom level is a matter of considerable urgency now. The landmark Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 makes specific mention of CCE as the approved mode of pupil assessment for the major phase of school education.

It is with these current and heightened concerns relating to new approaches to the assessment of students' progress that this paper attempts to clarify the key concept(s) and educational goals that ground the notion of CCE (treating it as a goal) hoping to discover what makes it so appealing in current discourse. There is no effort to develop a supposedly improved practical model. On the contrary, the focus is on what educational purposes are served and what values promoted through this approach, without dealing directly with the details of implementation. The discussion will consider CCE in two different frames: first as a further phase or continuation of general examination reform measures, then as a potential resource for enriching pedagogy. The latter theme will take up the greater part of this paper.

Examination reform: a quick historical survey

A concern for the reform of examinations has been present from the very early decades of modern public education in the 19th century. The necessity and desirability of ‘examinations to monitor students’ progress’ has never been denied. But various negative effects on the educational process have surfaced and persisted and driven successive reform agendas. Curiously, it is difficult to find any pattern of increasing scope or complexity in the practical measures suggested over this long period. It is surely a surprise to find in the report of the Hunter Commission (1882) the observation that “...it is beyond doubt that the greatest evil from which the system of Indian university education suffers is that teaching is subordinated to examination and not examination to teaching.” This distortion that examinations can cause cannot thus be attributed too casually to pressures arising from mass education introduced in the post-Independence era. Formal examinations by their very nature seem to generate collateral damage, and any serious analytical discussion of vision, values, structure of formal education has to address this issue.

Virtually all discussion of ‘examinations’ has been marked by a reform stance, following the lead in the Higher Education (Radhakrishnan) Commission Report (1949) which famously declared that if a ‘single most important’ recommendation had to be identified, it would be examination reform’. At the school level active concern about flaws in examinations and efforts to spell out concrete measures towards improvement are found from the early post-Independence years. The Secondary Education (Mudaliar) Commission (1952-53) made thoughtful recommendations for improving the quality and educational value of examinations such as reducing the number of external examinations; minimizing subjectivity by introducing objective testing; assessing the pupil’s all-round progress through a proper system of school records, and so on.

Over the next half-century, commissions and task forces have identified several measures that could improve the validity, reliability, practicality of ‘home’ examinations and the more formidable external/public examinations, and a fair number have been implemented in various locations. A detailed list of these changes is not relevant here, but a few are mentioned to capture the thrust of practical steps considered necessary. The *quality* of the syllabus-governed ‘question paper’ has received the most attention—through precisely stated learning outcomes (with Bloom’s Taxonomy serving as a major guide after the mid 1950’s), the use of a range of item types (importantly to reduce the dominance of the essay question), blueprints to provide balanced coverage of objectives, clear wording of questions, and scoring guidelines to reduce inter-rater variations. At the tertiary stage, such changes and certain others were considered and taken up somewhat haphazardly following the UGC’s (1973) initiative ‘Examination Reform - A Plan of Action’. Notable among these are: the introduction of the semester system, the use of grades rather than marks, granting weight to (college level) internal evaluation, institutionalizing the facility of make-up (supplementary) examinations, and the development and use of question banks to upgrade the quality of question paper setting. Higher education does not have any parallel of the regular class tests and unit tests that punctuate curriculum transaction at the school stage. The well-established pattern of instruction in the colleges was and largely is the phase of lectures followed by a phase of study leave which serves as preparation for a totally external examination. The focus of reform in higher education thus remains on this (single) examination.

It is in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 that the notion of CCE first appears as a proposed mode of evaluation relevant to the school stage. The Programme of Action (POA 1986/92) based on the Policy statement includes clauses such as:

> *Along with external examinations, continuous institutional evaluation of scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education will be introduced, and separate certificates issued; and*
>
> *Integration of evaluation with the process of teaching and learning.*

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2000, the next major statement of policy, reiterates that:

> *Evaluation needs to be integrated with the process of teaching and learning. The greater the integration the better the outcomes of learning, and*
>
> *Evaluation can be a powerful means of influencing the quality of teaching and learning, and for the development of both cognitive and non-cognitive capacities.*

From such statements it can be seen that the authoritative discussion of CCE is more the signalling of *policy direction* than the identification of specific practices at the level of classroom level. No coherent measurement model or pedagogic strategy is invoked. Institutional evaluation that is wide in scope, spread over time, and potentially in the hands of the teacher is the central theme. There is not much clarity about what is supposed to happen in classrooms as teaching 'with built-in assessment' proceeds. Yet the idea of CCE is certainly appealing since it endorses long-standing concerns about the dominance of the single final examination, and to broaden the scope of what should be assessed in the name of students' development. It is worth noting that the phrase CCE does not feature as a specific term in the register of educational evaluation outside India.

More concrete guidance for the teacher becomes available from 2000. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced a scheme for School Based Assessment in 2005, linked to an Achievement Record card reflecting attainments in scholastic and co-scholastic domains. Declaring pass/fail on the basis of a single year end examination was discouraged. NCERT prepared the *Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation - Teachers Handbook* for the Primary Stage in 2003. It built on the idea of school based assessment, and listed various elements under the major co-scholastic components, the psychomotor and the affective domains. The means to assess these include conventional tests, observation schedules, checklists, anecdotal records, peer assessment, self-assessment. A set of elaborate tables and forms that would make up the individual pupil's multi-dimensional (and multi-page) record along with indications of appropriate periodicity for recording 'data' under these different heads was prepared. The CBSE specifications for CCE (2009 with some modifications in 2011) is probably the most complete scheme developed with more components in the co-scholastic category and detailed indicators of levels/progress and the criteria for awarding grades. The schemes developed or being developed in the states echo the models of NCERT and CBSE.

This use of these recording and reporting formats is the visible indication of the implementation of CCE in our schools today. There is ample evidence from teachers on the frontline that they find it cumbersome and unrealistic. Students have expressed confusion and anxiety. There is a need for debate and a commitment to *learn* from experience and slowly bring about meaningful and appropriate improvements of CCE. Activities under CCE, like all orders to be implemented in our top-down system, are subject to inspection for compliance and the space for dialogue has to be created. This issue is taken up in the concluding section.

How far have we moved on the examination reform path?

The analysis of progress is based on a distinction between the competent implementation of concrete measures contained in the *recommendations for action* in examination reform discourse on the one hand, and signs of mitigation of the negative impact of the evaluation system on the wider educational process on the other. The latter is in fact the driver of efforts towards examination reform. Prof. Krishna Kumar (former Director of NCERT and acknowledged guiding force behind the National Curriculum Framework 2005) in a piece titled 'The Long Road to Examination Reform' (The Hindu, 21 November 2009) highlights the power of the final Board examination in an echo of the Hunter Commission of 1882:

> *"Children begin to feel its power as soon as they enter Class I in the primary school or even earlier, in the nursery. By the time they come to the higher secondary level, the students themselves become convinced that marks, and marks alone, matter. Colleges and universities do not consider it necessary to apply their mind to assess the student's potential. They go by the student's Board marks."*

Over decades, starting with the Radhakrishnan Commission, the role of examinations in promoting *memorization and rote learning* has been a focal point of criticism. Reiterating the need for reform, the position paper on Examination Reform (NCF 2005) declares yet again that "question papers are of low quality...[and] usually call for rote learning and fail to test higher order skills like reasoning and analysis." Even technical improvements have been minimal. A third and perhaps most widely deplored aspect of the system of evaluation is the tension and pressure it brings to bear on students.

Understanding the stability of the existing system

If the impact of numerous practical measures to reform the system is so low, an attempt to understand what the reason(s) are should come before acting on a valiant resolve to try yet again. For this the history of education framed by examinations in India needs to be revisited, and features bearing on this resistance to change identified. The system has certain unique characteristics:

Firstly, the model for the evaluation of pupils' learning is founded on the principle of external control: secondary education boards control evaluation in schools, and the university likewise controls evaluation in affiliated colleges. A critical factor is that the pattern of all local 'home' tests strictly follows that of the public. An objective and credible verification of the progress made by students towards declared and accepted learning objectives is a positive thing: a resource for the individual and for society. However, public examinations in India have always played another powerful — non-educational — role: that of selection. Post-secondary education in India was developed primarily to prepare a (small) body of individuals who would comprise the manpower handling the lower administrative levels of the colonial government. A government job then was (as it remains now) a sought-after prize. Secondary education started with a narrow academic bias and naturally served as a filter that limited the numbers proceeding further. The key to understanding the stability of the system lies in this filtering function.

External examinations can spur students' efforts to do well. There is no basis for arguing that students should not strive to excel in examinations. However, just below the surface of the apparently healthy challenge they represent, lies the canker of competition: only the best in rank order actually succeed. The relentless spread and increased virulence of the competitive 'disease' is closely linked to the expansion of the educational system.

Competing with others in teams and as individuals is a normal and undoubtedly healthy aspect of social life in nearly all societies. However, there is a potentially problematic factor lurking in our system. For example, in high-stakes competitions the competition is intense and the potential gains or losses are enormous. This scarcity of sought-after 'seats' is a fact of life. Individuals who aspire to gain access to them have to find ways of coping with the stress and tension of competition. It is matter of choice on their part and not an imposition of society. At the same time society does have an important responsibility, which is the protection of equal rights. In a legalistic frame this means *equal treatment*: everyone must be examined in the same standardized manner, with no variation that can be interpreted as unfair. However, there is a serious aberration in the Indian system. The distinction between the formally declared competitive examination and the routine achievement test to monitor individuals' progress has been lost. *All tests are seen in a competitive frame*. This brings to light the fundamental problem with evaluation as we experience it. There is the demand that ALL assessment be subject to this law of uniform treatment to ensure fairness for all. Rightly or wrongly, this pressure comes forcefully from students and parents who are the primary stakeholders of school education. Their voice in large measure controls the discourse around assessment – perceptions, purposes, values.

It is this culture of use dominated by the inter-individual competition principle that reform measures have run into. Changing the nature of tests is not a relevant way of addressing this issue. It generates a strong pressure to keep patterns familiar and stable to minimize real or imagined impediments to *high* scores. Specific steps to improve the technical qualities of tests as measurement tools have been absorbed and domesticated. Rigorous examination reform should deal with such issues, not incremental technical improvements.

A glimmer of hope: the promise of a rediscovered CCE

Two themes representing far-reaching changes in the larger system have appeared in the discussions revisited above. One is *internal assessment,* which in our context means giving the power to handle pupil assessment to the teacher and the school. The second is *formative evaluation,* using the information generated by assessment to enhance learning. It is important to note that that these aspects linked to agency and purposes in the cultural sphere are totally independent of test structure. Any type of assessment can be handed internally or externally; likewise the output (information) from any type of assessment can be used for formative or summative purposes. CCE rests on both these conceptual foundations. However, the whole discourse rather naively assumes that these elements are realized in the actual system (and infuse its culture) simply because their desirability is asserted. The teacher remains little more than the administrator-supervisor of pre-constructed tests sent to her/him. This is a familiar means of quality control, but far from a form of internal assessment. This limits the teacher's agency; the role is similar to that of a field assistant employed to collect data using standardized tools for a research project.

When 'syllabus' effectively means fixed portions of knowledge to cover in a fixed time frame, there is *no room* for the teacher to treat learning requirements in a flexible manner with a degree of collaboration and negotiation. The syllabus has to be covered in the way the textbook and test models indicate, and endorsed by training inputs by all teachers. But what CCE envisages and calls for is exactly this flexible and dynamic learner-centred and collaborative transaction of the curriculum. The necessary pre-condition for CCE to make sense – a new perspective on knowledge – is only just emerging and spreading.

A sign of hope lies in the discourse now epitomized by the label *NCF 2005*. This vision of education, stresses teaching-learning that goes beyond textbook-centred narrowness partly by relating school knowledge to students' life outside school. Students are recognized as proactive participants in learning who *contribute to* the construction of the knowledge they gain. Thus what is learnt (and indeed *is to be learnt*) is personal in a significant sense. There is also a commitment to *accepting and valuing* diversity among learners on many dimensions which makes different styles, rates, and paths of learning being perfectly natural and valid, and makes the *single correct answer 'according to the book'* virtually irrelevant.

Even a vague sense of this new approach is enough to show that the practices represented by CCE are called for and not something different that has to be accommodated. The new pedagogy views knowledge as emerging though an open-ended process of extending and transforming the base given in the textbook. This process needs to be monitored – internally – to try and keep progress along intended lines to a reasonable degree. Such monitoring to generate feedback has to be a dynamic 'real time' process, and the response to feedback also needs to be timely and ongoing. This is exactly what continuous assessment means – monitoring activity by the teacher which is integrated with teaching, not tests given only after instruction has been completed. The commitment to diversity in education, means recognising the many qualities of children that can develop through participation in the curriculum in its richest sense and this needs comprehensive monitoring for formative support.

The essential argument at the core of this entire discussion is that effective pedagogy in keeping with the still emerging curricular framework needs formative support in the form of continuous and comprehensive assessment, and only the classroom teacher can handle this.

Supporting the teacher to manage CCE

The presence of CCE at the level of the school/classroom is represented by the large report card that needs to be completed, some entries based on repeated rounds of raw data collection. The massive challenge for the teacher from CCE lies in the need to build observation of many aspects of students' progress into lessons and to capture its various strands in meaningful descriptions. They need to be helped to gain understanding, practical knowledge, and appreciation with regard to these new elements of day-to-day practice.

A serious study of what adequate teacher support would involve has sobering lessons for all of us located outside the class who wear the mantle of service providers. The basic fact is that virtually all that is significant in CCE lies in the hands of the teacher in his/her unique setting – often multi-grade and diverse in unpredictable ways. Consequently, all that is provided from the outside can only be guidelines to follow and other resources to draw on *as needed*. Tightly packed training modules of 5 or 10 days can at best be priming devices. Ongoing support in a dialogic-collaborative mode has to be provided over a long period. Both training inputs and ongoing support presuppose the availability of relevant 'expertise'. It is hard to support the proposition that expertise in paper setting (the keystone of external summative evaluation) readily extends to the strikingly different sub-area of evaluation now opening up.

We can do better. And that is to *learn*, importantly by being present as genuine observers (and perhaps as low-key collaborators) in classrooms. This would allow the gradual articulation of a meta-knowledge relating to the practical knowledge and skill applied when assessment-merged-with-teaching plays out in real time. Such meta-knowledge emerging from practice is the critical base on which training material can be developed. Existing theory about learning, pedagogy and assessment goes into general training. Some ideas from this knowledge base serving as a supplement to CCE-focused discussion might be useful. The collaborative mode through which training and support material is developed could serve as a safeguard to prevent teacher training and support for CCE lapsing into the well-established tradition of talking down to teachers.

To sum up, two central themes in the discussion need to be restated. Firstly, CCE is better treated as a constitutive component of the new pedagogy associated with NCF 2005 than as an extension of examination reform grounded in an earlier curricular model. Secondly, the challenge of the new pedagogy includes developing appropriate resources for teacher training and support. The newness of the field requires learning; and this provides an opportunity for teacher educators to enhance their professional expertise.

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