

Ensuring Quality in English Language Teacher Education

Edited by George Pickering
and Professor Paul Gunashekar

Selected papers from the fifth
international Teacher Educator Conference
Hyderabad, India

27 February – 1 March 2015

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Foreword

Alan Gemmell OBE

Director India, British Council

In February 2015 the British Council played host to the Teacher Educator Conference (TEC) in partnership with the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad, India. The theme of this conference was ‘Ensuring quality in English language teacher education.’ As the fifth conference in the series this was a landmark event, pulling together the topics and discussions from the previous four editions of TEC. These covered continuing professional development (2011), assessment (2012), diverse environments (2013) and innovation (2014).

Our choice of quality as the central focus was aligned to a general shift towards this in the discourse of national and international education and development. As highlighted in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14 (p. i):

An education system is only as good as its teachers. Unlocking their potential is essential to enhancing the quality of learning. Evidence shows that education quality improves when teachers are supported – it deteriorates if they are not.

More recently, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) drawn up by the United Nations focuses on ‘ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promot[ing] lifelong learning’. Furthermore, the realisation of all 17 SDGs will be affected by the quality of education that children receive in schools and beyond, be they related to health, the environment, economic growth or any other area. A focus on the quality of education is therefore as crucial as ever, with teacher effectiveness a key component.

At the British Council in India the English Partnerships team have been privileged to work with a large number of enthusiastic and motivated stakeholders in 12 states across the country. We have consistently found that the highest quality and most impactful projects result from the active engagement of policymakers, state and district level officials, co-ordinators, teacher educators, teachers and parents, working together to effect change. Across the country, this has resulted in impressive developments in classroom practice since our programme began in 2007. It is not only the work that teachers are doing which makes a difference but also the willingness of state administrators and head teachers to reflect on what they are doing and how this might impact on the success, or not, of a programme.

Measuring the quality of teacher education programmes is not easy, given the myriad factors which may affect children’s learning. However, research has shown that a focus on improving teacher effectiveness does have a positive effect on learner outcomes. According to research in the UK by the Sutton Trust (2011: 2)¹:

The difference between a very effective teacher and a poorly performing teacher is very large. For example, during one year with a very effective maths and English teacher, pupils gain 40 per cent more in their learning than they would with a poorly performing teacher.

The same report also asserts that this gain is greater for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Careful measurement of teacher learning as a result of engaging in a teacher development programme can be undertaken, along with observations, to explore the impact on classroom practice. Learners' experiences within their English classes can also be measured, by formally assessing their language proficiency levels but also by exploring their attitudes towards learning and their enjoyment of their classes.

In India and around the world, the British Council works in partnership to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all, particularly in the subject of English. From our Plan Ceibal project in Uruguay where ICT enables remote teacher education and mentoring, to the establishment and support for Teacher Activity Groups in Maharashtra, we use a variety of models to help teachers find solutions to the challenges they are facing in the classroom. Events such as this conference give us an opportunity to learn from others, find out what is working and where gaps still remain and enable us and others to forge new relationships to help achieve our shared goals.

This volume includes many of the highlights of the conference, showcasing the excellent teacher education work that is being done in India, South Asia and beyond. The conference plenary speeches and many of the other presentations and workshops are also available to view online at British Council India's YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/2avGhCz>. These videos, just like this publication, constitute the vital afterlife of the successful conference. All our publications on English language policy, practice and research are freely available at www.britishcouncil.in/teach/resources/publications-research.

I'd like to thank all the contributors to the conference – speakers, participants, sponsors and partners, particularly the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad – for making TEC15 a truly high-quality event. I trust that your experience of the conference, whether in person or through these pages or the conference recordings, inspires further good practice in the training room or classroom, leading to improved learning outcomes for thousands of students.

¹ Sutton Trust (2011). *Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK – interim findings*. [Online] www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2teachers-impact-report-final.pdf [accessed 14 September 2015]

Introduction

George Pickering, education consultant and academic lead consultant for TEC15

The 2015 Teacher Educator Conference – ‘Ensuring quality in English language teacher education’ – was held in Hyderabad, India from 27 February to 1 March. The theme allowed a wide-ranging exploration of teacher education in India and beyond, with a focus on quality in both pre-service education and in-service training.

The conference topic chimed with the increasing emphasis placed on moving from quantity to quality in teacher education in global policy initiatives and debates. This is mirrored at national and state level in India. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education asserts that:

The academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals. (2009: 4)

The same document concludes:

The bottom line of teacher education is the quality of teacher performance in terms of its impact on the learner and indirectly on larger social transformation. (2009: 4)

If, as it has been argued, ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ how many people, policies and procedures and resources are involved in helping to create teaching that has an effective impact on student learning? The conference sought to explore many of the threads that individually and collectively contribute towards teachers receiving a quality teacher education at the beginning of and during their teaching careers. It was an opportunity for leading academics, teachers, students, managers, teacher educators, researchers and policymakers to discuss their views on ensuring quality in teacher education through different conference channels, including a keynote address, plenaries, featured talks, panel discussions, a debate, presentations, workshops, poster presentations and informal networking. Many of the conference sessions were broadcast to a global audience who added to conference discussions through social media posts. Across three days, over 913 participants from 21 countries critically engaged with the conference themes, and the conversations on the margins of the conference were as stimulating as the questions put to the 125 speakers and presenters during their sessions.

The central theme of ensuring quality in English language teacher education was divided into three sub-themes:

Sub-theme 1: Policy and quality initiatives

- developing standards and defining quality for teacher education
- incentives for implementation
- public, private and institutional initiatives
- global, national, regional and local best practices
- promoting access and inclusivity

Sub-theme 2: Monitoring and evaluating quality

- learning from experience and experimentation
- teacher education programme evaluation and methods of measurement
- the impact of teacher education on learner outcomes
- qualifications, certification and frameworks
- tracking non-formal or self-directed continuing professional development

Sub-theme 3: Enhancing the quality of curriculum, materials and methods in English language teacher education

- efficacy of differing pedagogies and methodologies
- teacher education through digital platforms
- action research to improve classroom practice
- curriculum and syllabus development for teacher education
- modelling inclusive practices.

The contributions to this publication have been divided into four parts.

The **Overview** section presents two plenary talks which address themes that cover more than one sub-theme and also help set the context within which other papers can be viewed. Subsequent sections cover the three sub-themes.

Paul Gunashekar's paper, based on his plenary talk at the conference, begins by referring to the three systemic concerns of teacher education highlighted in India's National Curriculum Framework (2005), before endorsing the call for an increase in the quality standards of teacher education programmes in India advocated in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009). His paper explores the possible ways to broaden the English curriculum in new pre-service teacher education programmes to ensure that student teachers engage in self-reflection. The author concludes by outlining a proposed curriculum for language teacher education that focuses on professional competence, language proficiency and training competence.

Rod Bolitho's paper, based on his keynote address at the conference, explores quality in teacher education from multiple perspectives that include:

- an internal, provider perspective, which involves processes such as self-evaluation, annual review or appraisal of staff, internal quality audits, etc.
- stakeholder perspectives, concerning the views of those with a direct or indirect interest in the quality of courses and programmes provided by educational institutions
- external perspectives, related to compliance and control, involving systems designed to ensure that standards in educational courses and programmes are comparable and high.

Rod's paper highlights some of the factors that facilitate or impede the achievement of quality. He argues that teacher education and continuing professional development are 'complementary fields of activity' and discusses the less quantifiable but essential factors of quality in the conception and delivery of programmes. The paper includes questions for teacher educators to reflect on as they consider these ingredients in relation to their own institutions and practices.

Sub-theme 1 covers policy and quality initiatives at the global, national and local levels.

Amol Padwad argues that teacher motivation is under-researched. He goes on to suggest that current models view teacher motivation as static and do not take into account how it might evolve during a teacher's career. Padwad draws upon the work of Pink (2009) and Maslow (1943) to postulate three dimensions: motivation to join, motivation to stay and motivation to grow in the profession. He argues that different types of factors may characterise each of these dimensions, and ends by advocating more research to investigate further these intriguing hypotheses.

David Hayes examines the needs analysis for in-service training at the primary level in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in India. He outlines how the needs analysis was carried out, its results and the difficulties in designing and implementing effective training programmes in these contexts. The challenges identified include: a serious shortage of teachers who have the necessary English language proficiency and the competence to use the activity-based, student-centred methods advocated in the National Curriculum Framework for English (NCERT 2005). The paper includes the recommendations that INSET programmes should have a direct focus on English language improvement together with a focus on the development of teaching skills. The paper also proposes a combination of face-to-face and digital training, with teachers ideally supported by a number of stakeholders, including teacher educators trained as mentors, head teachers and education officials.

Michael Scholey argues that students in India face the real possibility of psychological and socio-cultural damage by being forced into English-medium education at a young age. For Scholey, if English were introduced in the lower-primary school as a medium of communication rather than as a subject or medium of instruction, its impact on the curriculum would not be so harmful. The essential question he poses is: how can learners in the lower-primary school develop useful and meaningful English language knowledge and skills and at the same time not impair their mother tongue development? He argues that teaching English via a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach provides one possible solution.

Lina Mukhopadhyay proposes that in Indian schools, English language learners are trained to develop reading skills, including its several sub-skills, but most often comprehension is assessed in a way that requires only the piecemeal understanding of texts. Textbooks and exams mainly prepare learners to show an understanding of texts as isolated bits of information through multiple choice questions and/or short answers. She argues that checking for the integration of the whole text, or ‘text representation’, is an equally important skill that goes largely unchecked. In this paper, the author proposes a series of practical tasks through which teachers can aim to develop the text representation skills of learners in a structured and systematic manner. The tasks are designed with a gradual increase in cognitive and linguistic demands to enable learners to write summaries. The aims of the tasks, therefore, are to develop the higher-order understanding and problem-solving skills of learners.

Harisimran Sandhu argues that, while the demand to learn English in India is greater than ever, there is a dearth of teachers with the necessary language proficiency to teach them. After providing an overview of the current ELT context in India, he proposes a number of changes to pre-service training programmes, including only accepting applicants with a minimum English language proficiency level, revising the curriculum content to have a much sharper classroom focus and revamping the assessment framework, in order to achieve a positive backwash effect that would encourage best classroom practices.

Sub-theme 2 covers aspects of monitoring and evaluating quality.

Sobia Nusrat’s paper discusses the challenges involved in creating and implementing an effective monitoring and evaluation framework for a large-scale teacher training project in Pakistan. PEELI, the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative, aims to improve the competence of 180,000 Pakistani government school teachers to teach through the medium of English. The paper highlights PEELI’s approach towards monitoring and evaluation, how it measures progress and the impact of its activities, which include face-to-face and online training and self-access learning opportunities for teachers, teacher educators and education managers.

Richard Lunt and **Lesley Dick** report the findings of a formal evaluation of a distance self-access course for teachers built around the Teacher Knowledge Test (TKT), with portfolio tasks and mentor-led workshops, in 29 locations in Sri Lanka. The evaluation focused on teacher classroom behaviour assessed through a series of blind classroom observations, where the observer did not know whether the teacher being observed had taken the course or not or, if they had followed it, whether they had taken it recently or longer ago. The results indicated that the trained teachers' classes involved significantly higher levels of student participation.

Md. Ashraf Siddique and **Farhan Azim** outline aspects of a large-scale project, English in Action (EIA), carried out in Bangladesh, which reaches 25 million learners. The research focuses on exploring EIA primary school teachers' perceptions about classroom monitoring and how it might help them to improve their practice. Classroom observations and interviews were conducted to explore their perspectives on monitoring. Findings indicate that teachers viewed monitoring as an important ingredient in improving the quality of their teaching.

Santosh Kumar Mahapatra reports the findings of a case study in which the development of the language assessment literacy (LAL) of a group of ten English teachers was monitored after they had participated in a needs-based online professional development course on language assessment. The researcher used a variety of Web 2.0 tools to collect data and assist the teachers to report their progress in using assessment tasks and techniques appropriately. This paper also discusses an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process and a possible framework for future use.

Prithviraj Thakur reviews the refresher courses in India that are a mandatory requirement for college and university teachers for career advancement. This paper evaluates stakeholder perceptions of the refresher courses in English through the use of an online survey of college and university teachers of English as well as organisers, policymakers and administrators. A number of problems such as organisation, content and delivery are identified and suggestions are proposed to make these courses more effective and relevant for teachers, for example through the inclusion of topics such as applied knowledge of ELT (how to teach English effectively) and the involvement of external agencies.

Donald Sargeant outlines the philosophy behind the English in-service training carried out in training centres in the Sultanate of Oman. The paper articulates his belief that teachers teach in the manner in which they have been taught and trained themselves. Therefore, teachers need to be taught communicatively if they are expected to teach using communicative methodology in their own classrooms. The paper examines the general methodological approach adopted in the centres and several of the techniques used in the experiential training. It also reflects on how the effectiveness of the training has been evaluated in the past and on some plans for other types of evaluation in the future.

Digambar M. Ghodke investigates the negative impact of student anxiety on academic performance, confidence and interest in learning. Based on classroom research undertaken with undergraduate students studying English as one of their compulsory subjects in Savitribai Phule Pune University, India, the researcher shares his observations and findings and seeks to familiarise teacher educators with strategies for managing effectively the anxiety levels of teachers and students.

Helen Macilwaine outlines some of the issues involved in setting up Trinity College London Cert. TESOL courses in India, before conducting an audit of the course participants, comparing their pre-course backgrounds and qualifications with their course grades.

Sub-theme 3 covers enhancing the quality of curriculum, materials and methods in English language teacher education.

Meera Srinivas focuses on a distance teacher training course offered by EFL University, Hyderabad, for secondary-level teachers located in tribal and backward areas of India. She reports that the course curriculum is currently designed in a top-down manner and advocates restructuring the content and activities of the course to take into account the cultural specificities in the contexts of the teachers, and proposes involving teachers and teacher educators in this change process.

Elka Todeva proposes that the aims of language educators and teacher trainers have been traditionally framed in deficit terms as challenges to be overcome through better teaching and training. Her paper explores reframing models of teaching and language teacher education which depict learners as resources with valuable cultural and linguistic knowledge. The writer outlines the benefits of taking advantage of what all the stakeholders bring to learning activities.

Mike Chick argues that learner teachers are often taught teaching techniques and approaches without having to reflect on the justification behind such activities. His paper outlines findings from a research project that indicates that a dialogic pedagogy, including both dialogic teaching and exploratory talk, can promote development and reflective practice during second-language teacher education.

Ravinarayan Chakrakodi presents the findings of research into the effectiveness of the new curriculum introduced for the Diploma in Education in Karnataka, India. The paper also examines issues related to the second-language proficiency of learner teachers. The data for the study was gathered through questionnaires and interviews with teacher educators and learner teachers, and the paper analyses the factors that contributed to its successful implementation.

Krishna Chaitanya E. conducted research into the use of collaborative action research (CAR) by teachers teaching ESP courses in Hyderabad. The study examined whether providing a two-week training programme to teachers in CAR helped them to improve classroom research skills and self-reflective thinking and to renew teaching practices for their professional development. The findings from the research were based on teachers' and learners' questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

Shree Deepa's paper discusses a writing task that was conducted with 26 students as part of a general English class at the University of Hyderabad. The focus was on the results and pedagogic implications of teaching writing as a process while demonstrating to the students the benefits of revision and redrafting. The research involved participants engaging in revision-editing cycles, with maximum student participation in pairs and groups.

Lina Adinolfi's paper outlines the production of the video component of TESS-India, an Open University-led, Open Educational Resources-based teacher development programme in India. The programme included establishing intensive one-to-one coaching relationships between paired Indian teacher educators and teachers within four government schools. The coaching process involved a joint review of the teacher's developing classroom practice, recorded by the teacher educator on a tablet during regular lesson observations. The subsequent commentary-enhanced videos have been viewed and proven beneficial to many practitioners.

Susmita Pani presents the findings of an exploratory study based on the 'three-phase observation cycle', called 'clinical supervision', involving eight teachers teaching in the Access programme at KISS, Bhubaneswar. The study explores the effectiveness of the pre-observation stage and analyses its function in helping different types of teachers improve the quality of their teaching and assist in their development.

In 1996 Donald Freeman referred to teacher learning in teacher education as an 'unstudied problem'. He pointed out that:

although people have been learning to teach languages for a long time few in our field have paid much attention to understand how the processes of teacher learning actually unfold or the knowledge and experience that underlie those processes. Thus most conventional practices in language teacher education have operated like hand-me-down stories, folk wisdom shared as 'truths' of the profession with little other than habit and convention on which to base them. (1996: 351)

Twenty years on and each of the five TECs has sought to diminish in some small part this research deficit and contribute to the growing field of study of effective teacher education in India and in the wider world.

We hope that readers will find that the perspectives and voices encompassed in this fifth TEC publication will stimulate them to:

- reflect on their own contributions to the quality of teacher education
- conduct their own research in this area
- identify and pass on to others examples of good practices that they have encountered.

The editors would like to thank all of the contributors to this publication for sharing their insights and work so effectively and freely with others. We are delighted that so many of the authors have agreed to provide their email addresses so that individuals can follow up specific points with them.

The British Council and the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, welcome your responses to this publication in order to further the continuing discussions about how best to ensure the quality of teacher education at the local, national and global levels.

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Overview

**Ensuring quality in English
language teacher education**

Teacher education and quality assurance

Paul Gunashekar, Professor, Department of Materials Development, Testing and Evaluation, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

Abstract

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) foregrounded three systemic concerns of teacher education: in current teacher education practices, knowledge is treated as 'given' and there is no meaningful engagement with the curriculum; the language proficiency of the teacher is deplorably low and the centrality of language in the curriculum is ignored; and teacher education programmes provide little scope for student teachers to reflect on their experiences.

Based on this premise, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) strongly advocates the introduction of a reformed pre-service teacher education programme, the deployment of suitable strategies for CPD, the need for research on curriculum implementation, an orientation towards programme evaluation, an emphasis on professional ethics and the mobilisation of resources for teacher preparation. In essence, it argues for the infusion of quality into teacher education programmes in India.

My focus in this paper will be on exploring ways to broaden the English curriculum in the new pre-service teacher education programmes to include the concept of learning as an embodiment of knowledge generation evolving from a process of reflection and the benefits that will accrue in terms of quality assurance. An attempt will be made to examine teacher education curriculum transaction and evaluate the likely impact of renewed professional training on student teachers in a multilingual and multicultural context.

Introduction

The National Curriculum Framework (2005: 107) highlighted three systemic concerns of teacher education: first, in current teacher education practices, knowledge is treated as 'given', embedded in the curriculum and accepted without question; second, the language proficiency of the teacher needs to be significantly increased from its abysmally low levels, and the centrality of language in the curriculum ought to be acknowledged; and third, teacher education programmes do not offer any scope for student teachers to reflect on their classroom experiences, thereby failing to empower them as agents of change.

Based on this premise, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) (2009) strongly advocated the introduction of a reformed pre-service teacher education programme; the deployment of suitable strategies for CPD;

the need for research on curriculum implementation; an orientation towards programme evaluation; an emphasis on professional ethics; and the mobilisation of resources for teacher preparation. In essence, it argued for the infusion of quality into teacher education programmes in India.

Against this backdrop, in December 2014 the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) published the New Regulations and Norms and Standards in the *Gazette of India* in respect of 15 teacher education programmes, including the ubiquitous Bachelor of Education programme. Prior to the publication of these regulations, at the insistence of the Supreme Court of India, the Government of India appointed a Commission on Teacher Education under the chairmanship of Justice JS Verma in 2011 to rejuvenate the system of teacher education in the country. The Commission made several recommendations relating to the context and duration of teacher education programmes as well as the necessary qualifications and essential preparation of teacher educators employed in recognised teacher education institutions. The NCTE New Regulations and Norms and Standards have emerged from the salient recommendations of the Commission.

As a language teacher educator, my focus in this paper will be on exploring ways to broaden the English curriculum, particularly in the new pre-service teacher education programmes that are proposed to be introduced from 2015. My exploration will include the concept of learning as an embodiment of knowledge generation evolving from a process of reflection and the benefits that will accrue in terms of quality assurance. I will also attempt to examine teacher education curriculum transactions and evaluate the likely impact of renewed professional training on student teachers in a multilingual and multicultural context.

The Verma Commission recommendations

Let me begin by reviewing the more significant recommendations of the Verma Commission.

First, the Commission has urged the central government to increase its investment in the establishment of teacher education institutions and enhance the institutional capacity of teacher preparation, especially in deficit states. Around 90 per cent of pre-service teacher education institutions are in the non-government sector, and most of the states of the east and the north-east are facing an acute shortage of institutional capacity of teacher preparation vis-à-vis the demand.

Second, the Commission has advised the government to explore the possibility of instituting a transparent procedure for pre-entry testing of candidates for admission to pre-service teacher education programmes, keeping in view variations in local conditions.

Third, in a move that has far-reaching implications, the Commission has recommended that teacher education should be part of the higher education system, and that the duration of teacher education programmes should be

enhanced in keeping with the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1966. Accordingly, English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), for instance, is gearing up to introduce a two-year BEd (English) programme as well as a two-year MEd programme from the 2015 academic year.

Fourth, the Verma Commission has suggested that every pre-service teacher education institution should have a dedicated school attached to it as a laboratory where student teachers get opportunities to experiment with new ideas and hone their capacities and skills to become reflective practitioners.

And finally, the Commission has recommended that current teacher education programmes should be redesigned, keeping in view the suggestions made in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009-10. NCFTE (2009: 83) posits: 'Any system, in order to be forward looking, must be bold in encouraging experimentation and innovation and also be involved with constant review of the outcomes of such efforts. The field of teacher education should be no exception.'

NCFTE's vision of teacher education

English in India represents a wide range of use and ownership: from a foreign language to a second language and a first language. Consequently, the contexts in which English is taught reflect this range and diversity, and have implications for the teacher's linguistic proficiency and professional competence. NCFTE (2009) elaborates this national vision of teacher education by foregrounding five principles that should inform the enterprise:

- the integrative and eclectic nature of teacher education
- its liberal, humanistic and non-didactic underpinnings
- its multicultural and context-sensitive facets
- the necessity for it to be transacted in a diversity of learning spaces and curriculum sites apart from the classroom

and most importantly

- reflective practice to be its chief aim.

Curriculum renewal at EFLU

Like other universities that have a department of education, EFLU has embarked on a process of curriculum renewal with regard to its BEd (English) programme. The EFLU programme is one of only two NCTE-recognised BEd in English programmes in the country. I am now going to describe the route curriculum renewal is likely to take in the next few months in the EFLU department of education.

Our renewal will use the following two statements as working definitions of a curriculum: first, the Chris Candlin (1984) thesis that a curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation, and the role relationships of teachers and learners;

second, the crisp statement by David Nunan (1988) that a curriculum is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management and administration of education programmes. We will attempt to move away from a Tylerian model of curriculum development, which is regarded as a technical, objectives-driven, rational, 'product' approach. In summary, Ralph Tyler argued in 1949 that the curriculum planner must first decide what *educational purposes* the school should attain, and then determine what *educational experiences* can be provided that are most likely to attain these purposes. Third, the planner must find ways for these educational experiences to be *organised* effectively, and lastly determine whether the educational purposes are being *attained*.

We will try to adopt a non-linear approach such as Lawrence Stenhouse's 'process' approach to curriculum development. Stenhouse (1975) argued that good education is open-ended and experimental. An objectives or technical model (like Tyler's) is more appropriate to a curriculum that focuses on skills and information. A process model is more appropriate in areas of the curriculum that centre on knowledge and understanding. Stenhouse said that a curriculum is not designed on a pre-specification of behavioural objectives; it is founded on the idea that knowledge must be speculative and thus indeterminate as to student outcomes if it is to be worthwhile. In essence, a curriculum plan should be a recommendation, not a prescription.

Educational ideologies

Can we extend our choice of a process model of curriculum development to include an appropriate *value system* underlying educational traditions? Skilbeck (1982) developed a framework of three major educational traditions: Classical Humanism, Reconstructionism and Progressivism.

The focus of Classical Humanism is the transmission of valued content to an elite section of the next generation so that their intellectual abilities can be developed. The content-based curriculum relies heavily on the transfer of respected cultural heritage to the learner. As Clark (1987: 5) explains:

classical humanism is characterized above all by the desire to promote broad intellectual capacities, such as memorization and the ability to analyse, classify, and reconstruct elements of knowledge, so that these capacities can be brought to bear on the various challenges likely to be encountered in life ... The teacher is seen as someone who possesses knowledge and whose task is to pass it on to the learners ... Just as knowledge is to be passed on from generation to generation, so cultural values are to be transmitted through the hidden curriculum, and through the study of works of proven moral and aesthetic value, whose inherent merits are then celebrated.

Finney (2002) points out that Classical Humanism cannot be the basis for curriculum design because the model does not accommodate the wider purposes of education, and does not take into account the abilities or problems of the

individual learner or the complexities of the learning process itself. In an era of globalisation and in multicultural egalitarian India, the transmission of one particular culture to a chosen elite cannot be justified.

In the ELT context, Classical Humanism lies at the heart of the grammar-based curriculum, where the aim is to enable learners to master the grammar rules and vocabulary of English. The content or the syllabus emerges from a selection and gradation of discrete grammatical structures and lexical items. To use Finney's (2002: 71) words, 'the starting point for the grammar-based curriculum, then, is the target language as a relatively fixed concept and it largely ignores factors such as context, appropriacy of use, modes of discourse or individual learner needs.'

Skilbeck's second major ideological tradition is Reconstructionism.

Reconstructionism is regarded as an essentially optimistic ideology which suggests that people can improve themselves and their environment. The goal of this model is to bring about desired social change, and in order to reach this goal, learners should be provided with knowledge and skills that are useful for social life. It is seen as an instrument of redressing the injustices of birth and of working towards a better society in which equity and fairness reign supreme. The take-off for this model is no longer the content but the *objectives* of the teaching-learning programme. It mirrors the Tylerian objectives-driven model of curriculum development. According to Finney (2002), the attraction of Reconstructionism lies in its clarity of goals, which facilitates the selection of learning materials and activities; its ease of evaluation, where the success of the programme can be assessed to the extent that the objectives have been fulfilled; and its accountability, since it provides clear methods for needs identification, establishing learning purpose and providing measurable 'products' of the educational programme.

In the context of language teaching, Reconstructionism is at the heart of the function-based curriculum, which emerged from the Council of Europe Threshold Level project in the 1970s and which signalled the transition from a grammar-based approach to a communicative approach to language teaching. It also resulted in an emphasis on needs analysis, ESP and the awareness that learners can realise their communicative needs in a range of situations.

Skilbeck's third major value system is Progressivism. The basic purpose of education in Progressivism is to enable the individual to progress towards self-fulfilment. The model is concerned with the development of understanding, not just the passive reception of 'knowledge' or the acquisition of specific skills. The curriculum should therefore be flexible enough to foster the quality of growth that individual learners aspire for. Clark (1987: 51) suggests that Progressivism is concerned with the following:

- a) individual growth from within through interaction with a favourable learning environment
- b) learning through real experience

- c) a speculative (rather than a sure or static) view of knowledge
- d) natural (as opposed to contrived and imposed) learning processes and stages of development
- e) sensitivity to the interests, rhythms and styles of learning of individual learners
- f) the learner as a whole, thinking person
- g) the social (and psychological) nature of the learner and the development of (healthy) relationships with others in the classroom community
- h) the promotion of learner responsibility and of learning how to learn.

In essence, Progressivism has much in common with the Stenhouse process approach to curriculum development.

In the context of language teaching, it should be noted that in Progressivism the assumption that learning outcomes can be objectively and rationally planned for is not entertained. The aim rather is to create contexts of learning which will stimulate the potential for natural growth. The objectives themselves are not set out in terms of behaviour which learners are expected to master but in non-language terms, for example topics to be dealt with, tasks to be performed or problems to be solved.

Language, language teaching and reflection

Two significant issues still remain to be addressed in our attempt to develop a curriculum for pre-service education. The first issue is deciding what our stand on language and language teaching should be, and the second is assigning an important role to self-reflection on the programme.

To understand the issue of language and language teaching better, we could refer to the distinction that Rogers (1980) made in describing the Hawaii English Program between *atomistic* and *holistic* approaches to language skills development. At one extreme, the process of language skills development is regarded as atomistic. This is analogous to building a mosaic. In mosaic-building, each tile has to be colour-selected, shaped and then fitted to the existing tiles. While the finished mosaic can be appreciated as a whole, it is also describable as a set of minute discrete elements, each finely shaped and fitted to the others. Language is seen as a set of such discrete entities – morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences – all fitted into a composite. The shaping and assembly of the elements is rational and incremental. The whole is, in fact, the sum of the individual parts.

At the other extreme, the process of language development, Rogers says, might be compared to Michelangelo's view of stone-sculpting. Michelangelo claimed that finished figures were obvious to him as he gazed at uncut blocks in the quarries of Carrara. He looked at sculpting as releasing the figures from the marble, for others to see, by the process of discarding unwanted stone. Language can similarly be

seen as a universal and idealised form which lies beneath the surface features of a particular realisation called, say, English. Learning English then becomes a process of getting in touch with a new surface realisation of an already known underlying form. Those associated with this view of language development are committed to 'holistic learning', 'language rich environments' and 'learning by doing' – three concepts that tie in closely with our preference for a process model of curriculum development.

Let us look at the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. Tickoo (2009) reports that feedback often received from participants on a teacher education programme is that it does not necessarily help improve practice; the reasons attributed to this mismatch include the nature of training: its objectives, the time available, resources, modes of training, and trainer–trainee ratio. Perhaps a much larger aspect of teacher education is not foregrounded in training programmes: they do not oblige student teachers or trainee teachers to look critically at what they do. Tickoo (ibid.) suggests that the reflective model rests on two beliefs: one, that usable answers to central issues are best found in teachers' reflection on different aspects of their work, and, two, that constant self-reflection leads to a continuous process of professional self-development.

The reflective approach is therefore a valuable addition to our proposed curriculum for pre-service education.

It is also important to note that curricula are located in specific socio-cultural milieus. To be sure that our proposed curriculum is rooted in social reality, we need to draw lessons from national documents like the Constitution of India, the National Policy of Education (1986) and the National Curriculum Framework (2005). Among many Fundamental Duties, the Constitution lists the promotion of harmony and the spirit of brotherhood among all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic, regional or sectional diversities; the renunciation of practices derogatory to the dignity of women; the need to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture; the development of the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of enquiry and reform; and the compulsion to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

Professionalism and quality

What we have done so far is to highlight the elements that infuse curriculum renewal, namely, the approach underlying curriculum development, the ideological underpinning of the curriculum, the view of language and language teaching that has a bearing on the curriculum, the importance of reflection in the curriculum, and the overarching influence of relevant national documents.

What we now need to do is take a look at the notions of professional competence, professionalism and quality with regard to teacher education.

Wallace's (1991) explanation of professional competence is useful in this context. He uses the term 'professional competence' in two senses. In one sense it is the indication, in some formal way, that an individual has met certain minimum requirements for the exercise of his or her profession. Thus the evidence that one has the competence to teach lies in the certificate obtained at the end of a teacher education course. In this sense, professional competence is a fixed obstacle – once it has been successfully negotiated there is no going back on it. Wallace calls this professional adequacy 'initial competence'.

There is another sense of professional competence in which it is a moving target or a horizon, towards which professionals travel all their professional life but which is never finally reached. Competence here is vastly different from 'adequacy' or even 'proficiency': it has what Wallace (1991: 58) calls the stronger force of 'expertise'. Viewed from this perspective, he argues, professional certification is not a terminal point but a point of departure. If the second sense of professional competence, that is, 'expertise', is as valid and important as the first, then it is clear that equipping trainee teachers with the techniques to go on developing competence in that sense must be an important component of a teacher education programme.

In a paper presented at the first TEC in 2011, Padwad pointed to the emerging trend in India of viewing teaching as a profession analogous to medicine, law and engineering. He compared teaching with the other professions in terms of professional preparation and development, and argued that continuing professional development is crucial in teaching because the pre-service education programme and the induction training are woefully inadequate. He argued that professional development is essentially a personal journey and that teachers need to work out their personal meaning, agenda and action plan for a meaningful and sustainable professional development.

In parallel, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) takes the stand that teaching is a profession and teacher education is a process of professional preparation of teachers. It says that teaching is a profession 'characterized by a sufficiently long period of academic training, and organized body of knowledge on which the undertaking is based, an appropriate duration of formal and rigorous professional training in tandem with practical experience in the field, and a code of professional ethics that binds its members into a fraternity' (p. 15).

Conclusion

I began my paper by saying that we should work towards the design of an English language pre-service teacher education curriculum. Pared to the bone, the bald outline of the proposed curriculum might look like this:

A curriculum outline for language teacher education

Focus on the English teacher's:

1. professional competence
 - introducing current approaches (including the reflective approach)
 - honing classroom skills
 - deploying teaching materials
 - sharpening classroom English
 - using modes of professional development

2. language proficiency
 - oral skills
 - grammar
 - vocabulary
 - reading
 - writing
 - study skills

3. training competence
 - managerial skills
 - organisation skills
 - training strategies.

What this outline is not intended to do is to give potential curriculum and syllabus designers the feeling that the process of curriculum renewal can be easily short-circuited. What it should remind us is that going through the gamut of curriculum renewal is a worthwhile, fulfilling enterprise.

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The ingredients of quality in teacher education

Rod Bolitho, Freelance Educational Consultant

Abstract

This paper considers quality in teacher education from multiple perspectives. It focuses on factors that contribute to or detract from the achievement of quality. It makes the case for teacher education and continuing professional development as complementary fields of activity and discusses the less quantifiable but nonetheless essential ingredients of quality in the way programmes and courses are conceived and delivered.

The notion of quality

Quality in any field of activity is a difficult notion to pin down, and education is no exception to this. However, the notion of quality has become increasingly important in all branches of education, as evidenced by the amount of time and effort that is invested in quality assurance procedures both within educational institutions and across sectors. Rather than attempting to define the notion of quality, I will begin by considering how our understanding of it may be clarified by examining three different but complementary perspectives (Bills et al., 2008):

- An internal, provider perspective, which entails processes such as self-evaluation, annual review or appraisal of staff, internal quality audits, etc. This perspective is often reactive in nature, with procedures and practices put in place by institutions in response to externally imposed requirements. In higher education institutions, there is often a committee appointed to oversee quality issues such as the validation of courses, the regular updating of course content and accompanying documentation, and the establishment of systems for mentoring and peer observation of teaching.
- Stakeholder perspectives, referring to the views of all those with a direct or indirect interest in the quality of courses and programmes offered by an educational institution. Those concerned may include students, their parents, ministries and educational authorities and employers, each of whom may have slightly different quality concerns.
- External perspectives, concerned with compliance and control, involving systems put in place, usually at national level, to ensure that standards in educational courses and programmes are comparable and suitably high across sectors. Responsibility for the processes involved in external quality control is usually devolved to statutory bodies such as the UK's Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), or India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). Inspection schemes under bodies such as these generally involve judgements based on extensive

documentation furnished by institutions as evidence that evaluation criteria have been met.

Each of these perspectives includes a strong element of accountability, inevitably homing in on the provision in institutions offering educational programmes.

Quality in initial teacher education

The issue of quality in initial teacher education (ITE) is of great importance as it has consequences for the whole education system in any given context. Teaching is often regarded as a conservative profession, sticking to traditions and tried and trusted practices, and the same is true of teacher education, with an inevitable multiplier effect as each new generation of teachers graduates. Poor standards in ITE will inevitably result in less than satisfactory teaching at school and college level, and consequently inadequate outcomes for the next generation of learners. For this reason, it is worth taking a careful look at some of the essential ingredients of quality in ITE (with particular reference to the preparation of English language teachers) and some of the factors that underlie them.

The nature of the curriculum is central to quality in ITE. In many contexts, there is still a disproportionate emphasis on theory, both in the subject component of the course and in the pedagogical elements. Knowledge *about* language still takes precedence over the development of language *proficiency*, and methodology is still too often taught, lecture-style, as a theoretical discipline rather than as a practical class which would support trainee teachers in their school practice. There are many reasons for this, but chief among them is the location of ITE in the philology departments of universities, where traditions of lecturing and an orientation towards research have remained unchallenged and unchanged for decades. The result is that young teachers go into their first teaching posts unprepared, with only the models supplied by their own former language teachers to draw on. This perpetuates existing practices and militates against the widespread adoption of more modern and relevant approaches to the teaching of English. At school level, the result is a view among learners of English as just a school subject rather than as a means of communication which learners will need in the modern world. An ITE curriculum that is fit for purpose needs to be practically oriented and to include assessable outcomes which are clearly relevant to students' future career as teachers. It also needs to integrate theory with practice rather than treating them as discrete course components. Finally, the curriculum needs to sow the seeds of continuing professional development in trainee teachers as they embark on their career as teachers.

The quality of students' experience on an ITE programme depends in no small measure on the quality of teaching they receive. There is plenty of evidence available about the inefficiency of lecturing as a teaching method. Knowledge cannot simply be transferred in this way, and students sitting in a large auditorium with hundreds of others will have no chance of engaging critically with the content and concepts which a lecturer is trying to get across. Good practice in ITE

provides for smaller seminar-style groups, with access to a lecturer and dialogue about the issues that concern beginner teachers.

Quality may also be affected by the practices and attitudes relating to entry to, and exit from, ITE programmes. Sadly, teaching is still seen as a fallback career option rather than a first choice in many contexts around the world, and salary levels all too often reflect this. Inevitably, many of those entering ITE programmes are not positively motivated to become teachers. Entry-level requirements are frequently relaxed in order to ensure that teacher supply is maintained, which means that the profession does not always receive the best possible candidates for a teaching career, and this has a negative impact on the quality of shared experience for students on the course. In many contexts, too, there are no failures on an ITE course, and many graduates are inadequately prepared for a career in the classroom. There is a need for rigorous 'gatekeeping' at both entry and exit levels in order to ensure the quality of those joining the profession.

Many ITE courses rely on partnerships with schools in order to make teaching practice available to trainee teachers. This kind of devolution of responsibility can make it more difficult to assure quality. Indeed, the degree of co-operation between host schools and the home institution varies from context to context, but it is important that common views of teaching and learning are negotiated and understood by both university teachers and teacher-mentors. Any serious disparity between these views will have a negative impact on the quality of experience for trainees.

All these factors, and more, have contributed to a growing understanding of the need for some kind of quality-oriented regulation in the field of ITE. It is no longer good enough to leave the preparation of teachers to each individual providing institution, with its own preferences and traditions, and many countries are now establishing regulatory bodies to set and oversee quality standards. As we shall see later in this paper, this development brings with it dangers as well as benefits.

Quality in continuing professional development (CPD)

It is clearly difficult to plan for quality in ITE, but this difficulty is multiplied many times over in the largely unregulated field of CPD for teachers. Very few countries have clearly articulated policies and norms for CPD and, where they do exist, they are often restricted to the provision of in-service training, for example by requiring a teacher to attend a course at least once in five years, or for a set number of days per year. This is based on a hopelessly narrow and essentially top-down view of CPD, one which leads to box-ticking and low levels of motivation among participating teachers and training providers alike. A more generous view of CPD would include multiple opportunities for teachers to turn to and benefit from (Bolitho and Padwad, 2013; Craft, 2000), but the diversity and the individual nature of such a view, coupled with the wide range of potential actors in the processes of CPD, naturally pose immense challenges to any attempts to set quality standards. It is worth remembering that CPD is a journey for each individual teacher, and that there can be no 'one size fits all' approach to planning this journey. In recognition

of this, a number of bodies, including the British Council, the Council of Europe, Cambridge English and EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services), have drawn up frameworks to raise awareness of potential professional development pathways for language teachers, and work is well advanced on a tailor-made framework for India and the wider South Asian region. These frameworks are based on perceived stages in a teacher's career and on the kinds of higher qualifications which might help them in their development at each of these stages.

'Push' factors: why quality is becoming a priority in ITE and CPD

We are constantly hearing about the pace of change in our globalised world and about the challenges that this poses to teachers and learners. As mentioned above, teaching remains an essentially conservative profession, slow to adapt to external pressures and slow to adopt innovations. There is a clear need to maintain the most important values that underlie teachers' work and at the same time to take note of and absorb new ideas and developments where they are relevant. Globalisation has led us to look beyond local and national standards in education and to compare our own practices and provisions with those that obtain in other contexts. The Common European Framework of Reference, for example, has led to a widespread re-examination of language standards and to the setting of new proficiency targets for language learners. The OECD/PISA survey focusing on educational achievement across (at the time of writing) 65 countries is another development that is making ministries and educational institutions reassess the quality and outcomes of their own provision.

In many countries, accounts of teacher shortages abound and the attrition rates among newly qualified teachers are depressingly high, leading to an urgent review of the effectiveness of ITE programmes in preparing their graduates for a career in teaching. Teacher mobility, from country to country, is increasing all the time, making it important for employers in different contexts to be confident about the quality of the teachers they are taking on. Added to these factors is the clear evidence that the English language is in a constant process of change and there are significant developments in language teaching methodology, making it difficult for non-native-speaker teachers and teacher educators to keep their own proficiency levels and classroom skills up to an acceptable level.

'Drag' factors: what gets in the way of quality?

Quality initiatives in teacher education can be impeded by a number of factors which vary in strength of influence from one context to another.

- **Quantity and scale.** In populous countries such as India, with a necessarily huge and varied provision for teacher education, it is very difficult to impose and monitor quality standards. The flow of new recruits to teaching needs to be maintained at all costs, to keep pace with retirements and resignations, and this often happens at the expense of quality. In this connection, it is important to be wary of claims about the effectiveness of training initiatives which are

based solely on numerical criteria (for example, about numbers of teachers trained on short, in-service courses). It is far more important to establish and apply quality-related criteria.

- **Tradition and the status quo.** Most higher education institutions value their academic freedom, and they often resist attempts to subject them to external regulation. Coupled with this is the tendency for tenured academics to support the established order of things and to resist change and innovation, not least because they have prospered within a system that has nurtured them. In many contexts, this means that lecturers deliver courses on their specialisms (e.g. semantics, phonology or pragmatics) from a theoretical perspective, rather than addressing the needs of future teachers.
- **The training gap.** The training of teacher educators is still not seen as a priority. Very few of those who train teachers have themselves been trained as trainers. This has an inevitable impact on the quality of provision in both ITE and CPD.
- **Status and salary issues.** In many contexts, teachers and teacher educators are poorly paid and their professionalism is constantly subjected to criticism by politicians, employers and the general public. Everyone is an 'expert' in education and the correspondence columns of newspapers frequently carry evidence of the age-old sport of 'teacher bashing'. All this has a negative impact on motivation in the profession. In countries such as Finland and Singapore, teaching is a sought-after, high-status and well-remunerated profession and the results of this are evident in OECD/PISA studies and other measures of educational achievement. In Canada, future teachers even receive a salary while they are in training (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman, 2012).
- **Assessment practices.** Variations in assessment practices on ITE courses are all too common, particularly in the assessment of practical teaching, which is often based on subjective perceptions rather than objective criteria.
- **Funding.** While it is imperative to fund ITE at least to a basic level, CPD in general and in-service training in particular are among the first areas to be subject to funding cuts in times of economic crisis.
- **Bureaucratisation.** When quality assurance procedures result in new layers of bureaucracy, become prescriptive and authoritarian in character, and begin to generate large quantities of documentation and take up large amounts of time, their effectiveness decreases proportionately. Teacher education takes place in three dimensions, in real time and with real people, and there is no excuse for basing quality assurance solely on paper evidence. We all need to remember that there is a chain of dependency in education, with learners as the ultimate beneficiaries and the rest of us as 'parasites' – teachers owe their existence to learners, teacher educators to teachers, and quality officers to all of these. Teacher education provides a service to society and we are all accountable for its quality.

The underlying ingredients of quality

Quality assurance procedures are bound to include a certain amount of checking and box-ticking. India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council, for example, works with 72 criteria for evaluating quality in higher education (Menon and Rama, 2006). However, quality in teacher education also depends on a number of less tangible factors which can only be accessed through first-hand accounts of experience on programmes. Here are some of them, each accompanied by questions for a teacher educator to reflect on.

- **Congruence** between the values and beliefs of teacher educators and the way in which a programme is delivered. Does your institution have a shared vision of teacher education and is this vision implemented in practical ways in your programmes on a day-to-day basis? Is your institution developing? Can it be regarded as a learning organisation?
- **Quality of relationships.** Becoming and being a teacher is an intensely personal experience and a demanding career journey for every individual who embarks on it. Do you acknowledge and work with this realisation on your programme, and do you treat each participant individually as they work out how to become the best teacher that they can be?
- **Empathy.** Good teacher education, just like good teaching, starts where your participants are, not where you are. This is why lecturing is so inefficient and inappropriate as a method in teacher education. Do you build on your participants' existing experience as learners or as teachers? Do you remember what it was like for you when you started out? Do you demand that they understand what *you* want them to understand, on your terms, or do you start where they are and walk through the course hand in hand with them?
- **Creativity, responsiveness and flexibility.** Teacher education should never be simply a repetitive, routinised process. Each new cohort of trainees or group of serving teachers is different, and quality resides to a great extent in the degree to which the teacher educator adapts to the needs of each new group. How flexible are you in the way you teach your courses? How far do you adapt your content and your methods to each new situation as it unfolds?
- **Self-esteem.** Every teacher needs to go into a classroom feeling confident about the task that faces them. For trainees, the early experience of teaching practice is crucial in this respect. In your courses and in the way you supervise trainee teachers, do you aim to build their self-esteem or do you focus on criticising them for their weaknesses?
- **Partnership.** A positive working relationship between teacher educators and co-operating teachers in schools is central to the trainee teacher's experience of teaching practice. Do you invest time and effort in nurturing this relationship? Do you see and treat your schoolteacher colleagues as professional equals, playing a key part in assuring the quality of your programme? Do you work together to set standards and exchange views?
- **Professional development for teacher educators.** It is very important for teacher educators to function as a team, to meet regularly and to exchange

ideas. This can be difficult in university environments, where lecturers often hide away in their personal office space, preferring to concentrate on their own research rather than to engage with colleagues. Do you have a policy on CPD for yourselves? Do you learn from each other and from your students? Do you practise what you preach and set a good example to the future teachers you work with? What steps can you take to avoid professional stagnation and isolation?

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to present a view of quality in teacher education that is embedded in the wider context of education in general, and which reminds us of our obligation as teacher educators to work together to give trainee teachers the best possible experience as well as developing an approach to working with serving teachers that enhances their own professional development in flexible and appropriate ways.

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Theme one

Policy and quality initiatives

Rethinking teacher motivation for professional development

Amol Padwad, National Convener, AINET, India, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, J. M. Patel College, Bhandara, India

Abstract

Current teacher motivation theories and research seem to view teacher motivation as a static phenomenon. They do not take into account its dynamic nature as it evolves over time during teachers' careers. This paper argues that teacher motivation needs to be seen dynamically in its three dimensions – motivation to join, to stay and to grow in the profession. It also argues that different sets of features and factors characterise each of these dimensions, which need to be independently investigated. For this purpose it is important to reconceptualise teacher motivation, since the prevalent notions do not account for the dynamism of teacher motivation. A possible way of reconceptualising is also proposed, applying Pink's (2009) postulations about three different motivation models and Maslow's (1943) pyramid of hierarchical needs to teacher motivation.

Introduction

Although teacher motivation has been explored from various perspectives and in various contexts, the overall corpus of research in teacher motivation is still small. The research so far has led to developing some frameworks to theorise about teacher motivation and exploring issues like factors affecting teacher motivation, but there are still many grey areas in conceptualising teacher motivation. One unexplored area is how teacher motivation changes and evolves during a teacher's career. As teachers mature in their career, the nature of their motivation also changes, but in the current conceptualisation of teacher motivation this aspect remains unexplored. Prompted by a research study, this paper tries to raise the issue of dynamism in teacher motivation, argues for a change in thinking about teacher motivation and hypothesises about some possibilities for such a change. The paper begins with a brief description of the background, discusses some key points of the current thinking about teacher motivation and finally proposes a possible way of change.

Background

This paper has been inspired by some intriguing experiences with teachers in the course of a recent PhD study on factors affecting teachers' motivation for professional development (Dixit, 2014). Among the teachers surveyed for the study were two very different groups. One consisted of some young 'CHB' (clock hour basis) teachers working for between three and seven years on a purely temporary basis and paid by the hours of work they put in, without any assurance, security and benefits of full-time employment. Their job was uncertain because

they could be fired at any time. The other group comprised senior teachers with over 20 years of experience, who had full-time and secure employment, assured time-bound promotions and no performance-related incentives or punishments. The data clearly indicated that neither group showed any interest in professional development or reported undertaking any activities for their professional growth. When asked about the reasons for such lack of motivation for professional development, the replies from the two groups showed two exactly opposite positions. The young CHB teachers mentioned the uncertainty and insecurity of their current jobs as the reason for not feeling motivated about professional development, since finding a steady source of earning and 'getting settled in life' was their top priority. The 'veteran' teachers indicated that, since they had complete job security and assured career advancement, they did not feel any need for or interest in going beyond their routines and doing something for their professional development. Thus, the two groups justified the lack of motivation for professional development by giving opposite reasons. One group was not motivated because there was no job security and the other was not motivated because there was complete job security.

No satisfactory explanation of this intriguing situation can be found in the current literature on motivation. Various theories mention attractive salaries, career growth opportunities and job security as key factors in teacher motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2001), but these apply to one group and not the other. This implies some possible gaps in the prevalent thinking about teacher motivation. This paper is a small attempt to explore some of these gaps and suggest ways of covering them.

Current thinking about teacher motivation

Although teacher motivation has attracted considerable attention in the recent past, the research in teacher motivation is still quite limited, a large part of it coming primarily from American and European contexts. Motivation studies in general have predominantly concentrated on learner motivation and have begun to explore teacher motivation fairly recently. Richardson and Watt (2010: 139) observe that:

there has been little inquiry into teacher motivation that has been systematic and theory-driven ... the concentration on students has tended to overlook the centrality of teacher motivation as integral to teachers' goals, beliefs, perceptions, aspirations, and behaviours, and thereby to student motivations and learning.

It is, therefore, not surprising that studies specifically investigating teacher motivation for professional development are hard to find. In spite of the general acceptance of teaching as a learning profession and teaching as scholarship (Shulman; quoted in Tell, 2001), there are no systematic studies on what motivates teachers to learn and update themselves. So far, teacher motivation for professional development 'remains a critical yet understudied component of teacher professional development interventions' (Richardson, Karabenick and Watt, 2014: 1).

There are some general motivation theories proposing different formulations of teacher motivation and factors affecting it, which include Expectancy-value theory, Self-efficacy theory, Goal-setting theory and Self-determination theory (see Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2001 for an overview). The factors influencing motivation include both intrinsic factors like the rewarding nature of the profession, love for subject (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) and psychologically satisfying features like autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci and Ryan, 1985), as well as extrinsic factors such as social status of the profession, attractive salaries and career opportunities.

An important limitation of these theories is that they seem to view motivation in a static and monolithic way. It is possible that the nature of teacher motivation, and factors affecting it, may change over time, but this dynamic nature of teacher motivation is not adequately addressed by these theories. The contrasting reasons for the lack of motivation for development cited by the two teacher groups in the PhD study mentioned above (Dixit 2014) suggest that motivation is operating differently for beginner teachers and for mid- and late-career teachers. This is not unexpected in view of the changing concerns, needs and interests of teachers as their careers evolve. This evolution may be considered as comprising three aspects from a motivational perspective. Teachers may be motivated to join teaching for various possible reasons, but, after joining, some additional reasons may motivate them to stay in teaching for years and to keep growing professionally. In other words, teacher motivation may comprise three distinct dimensions – motivation to *join* the profession, motivation to *stay* in the profession and motivation to *grow* in the profession. The current conceptualisation of teacher motivation, as manifested in the prevalent theories, does not seem to take these three separate dimensions into account. They seem to assume no essential difference between motivation to join, stay and grow, implying that factors motivating teachers to join teaching also continue to motivate them to stay and grow in the profession.

There have been, however, a few attempts to explore what affects teachers' motivation to stay and grow in their careers. Studies by Blackburn (1997) and Pennington (1995) identify some factors which motivate teachers to stay in the teaching profession. These factors include open-ended career paths with planned and anticipated stages of career advancement, sustained autonomy, sustained intellectual challenge and a sense of growing self-efficacy. Explorations of the factors which motivate teachers to grow are even rarer and mostly incidental. In their studies of teacher motivation, Raynor (1974) and Deci and Ryan (1985) also dwell upon factors which may encourage teachers for professional development. Raynor (1974) argues that 'contingent career paths', in which career advancement depends on fulfilling some performance enhancement conditions, may motivate teachers to engage in professional development. Deci and Ryan (1985) identify intrinsic motivation and self-determination as motivating factors for professional development, though this implies that the source of motivation for professional development is individual initiative rather than any systemic provision.

Rethinking teacher motivation

Thus, the area of what motivates teachers for professional development remains severely under-researched. However, it is not merely a question of research but also a more fundamental question of reconceptualising teacher motivation in a more complex and dynamic way. Such reconceptualising needs to account for the changing nature, characteristics and triggers of teacher motivation over time through different stages of their career. It also needs to take into consideration the three dimensions of teacher motivation – the motivation to join, to stay and to keep growing in the teaching profession. Though these dimensions are interdependent and difficult to isolate in reality, they need to be explored separately in their own right to gain a better and deeper understanding of teacher motivation. In this regard I would like to propose an adaptation of Daniel Pink's (2009) model of motivation as a possible way of reconceptualising teacher motivation.

Tracing the history of what motivated people regarding creativity, productivity and innovation during the evolution of human society, Pink postulates three different motivation models, which he calls Motivation 1.0, Motivation 2.0 and Motivation 3.0, as characteristic of three different historical stages. Motivation 1.0 was prevalent for a long early period of human history when socialised life was still emerging. This motivation regime was characterised by survival-related concerns. Basic human needs like food, security and sex acted as the motivational triggers prompting creative and innovative action. As more stable human societies emerged, survival concerns were no longer the supreme concern, since most basic needs were reasonably cared for. This stage led to Motivation 2.0, which worked on punishment and rewards. Improving performance, efficiency and achievement gradually became the key concerns, leading to various systems of punishments and rewards. Punishments encouraged people to stay away from unwanted acts, while rewards encouraged them to undertake desired actions. In the 21st century, Motivation 2.0 does not seem to work any more. Pink argues that, in the present globalised world, punishments and rewards may continue to ensure performance of routine and mechanical 'algorithmic work', but are no longer effective in motivating people into creativity and innovation. He cites several case studies and statistical data to suggest that the new world needs a new model, Motivation 3.0, which is based on three key elements – autonomy, mastery and purpose. People still need to have their survival assured – in terms of job security, reasonable wages, supportive work conditions and so on – and incentives and penalties to discriminate between 'workers and shirkers'. But all this does not guarantee creativity and innovation any more; it may only ensure routine and mechanical performance of prescribed actions. Pink argues that people feel motivated to go beyond mechanical, algorithmic work into creative and innovative work when they find autonomy, mastery and purpose in their assigned jobs. The essence of Pink's discussion may be graphically represented as shown in Figure 1.

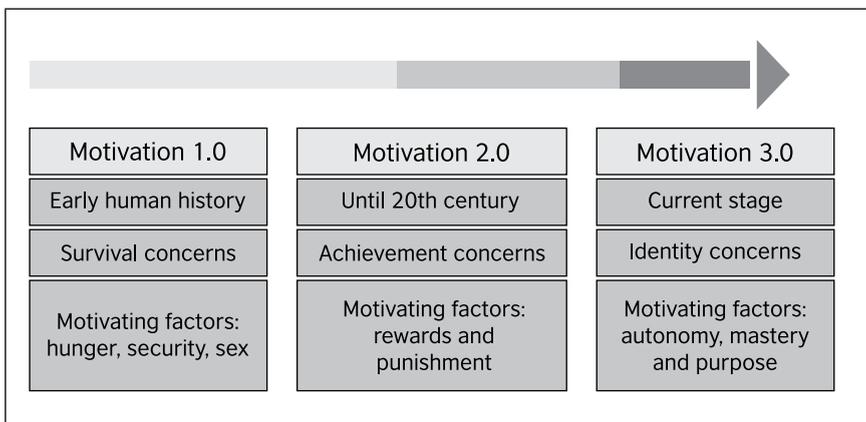


Figure 1: Daniel Pink's (2009) historical overview of motivation

What Pink postulates about the evolution of motivation in the human history may be applied to an individual teacher's career history. It may be postulated analogously that in the course of their career, teachers pass through three key stages of motivation. While choosing teaching as a career, and in the beginning years, survival concerns are their top priority. In this Motivation 1.0 stage, primary needs like salary, work conditions and security may strongly affect their motivation and may lead to some teacher engagement with creativity and innovation. However, a few years into the profession, once their survival is assured, they are no longer worried about salary or security and these triggers lose much of their effect. The Motivation 2.0 stage of rewards and recognition, which mid-career teachers may come across, also seems short-lived. For a brief while teachers may show some impact of incentives, recognition or punishment, but the predictability and routineness of them quickly erodes this impact. So a third stage – Motivation 3.0 – seems to hold potential for motivating teachers who are settled in the profession and who may be expected to give high priority to their continuing professional development.

This way of conceptualising may be able to explain the contrary responses of the two groups in the PhD study referred to above. The young CHB teachers were still at Motivation 1.0 stage associated with survival concerns and could not think of professional development until their basic needs such as job security and decent salary were satisfied. The senior, permanent teachers had already crossed this stage, having their basic needs satisfied, and perhaps also Motivation 2.0, having passed through at least some instances of incentives and punishments. It can thus be plausibly argued that the motivating factors associated with these two stages were not effective in motivating teachers for professional development.

Such postulation also significantly corresponds to Maslow's pyramid of hierarchical needs (Maslow, 1943) progressively leading to self-actualisation (see Figure 2). At the base of the pyramid are physiological and safety needs which roughly correspond to the survival concerns of Motivation 1.0. In the subsequent levels the

needs of belongingness, love and esteem may correspond to Motivation 2.0 based on incentives, recognition, rewards and punishment. The next levels of cognitive and aesthetic needs, corresponding to Motivation 3.0, require something more than what satisfies the earlier levels of needs. These needs require cognitively challenging, intellectually engaging, purposeful work which is also personally fulfilling. Pink’s triad of autonomy, mastery and purpose reflects these needs, in the absence of which one may not have any motivated for professional development.

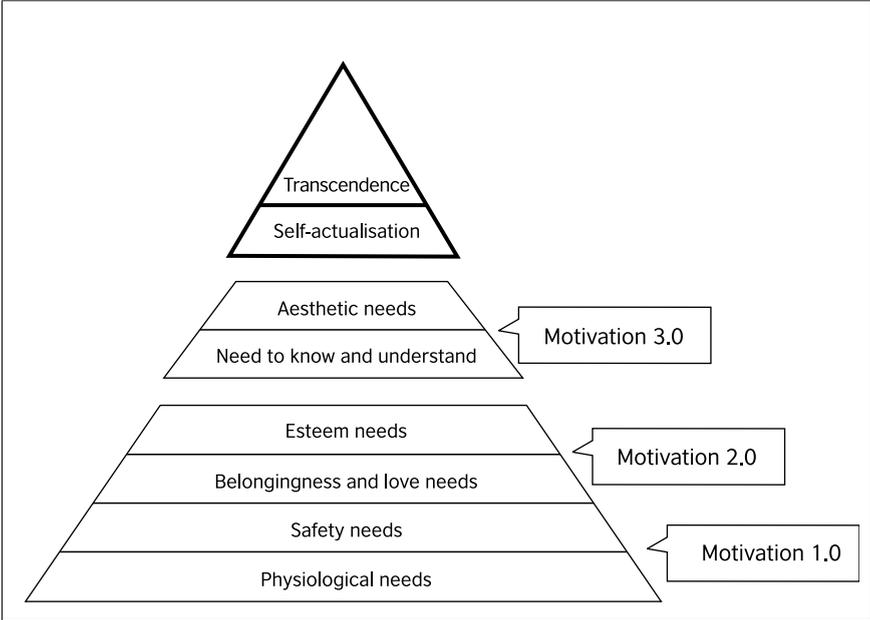


Figure 2: Mapping motivation on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Applying Pink’s postulate about the three motivation models to teaching leads to the hypothesis that Motivations 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 may correspond to three different stages of teachers’ careers – beginning, middle and advanced – or alternatively to the three dimensions of motivation: to join, to stay and to grow in the profession. Mapping motivational stages on Maslow’s pyramid of hierarchical needs leads to another hypothesis about the interdependence and a hierarchical relationship between these three motivational stages. Motivations 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 may be hierarchically related in such a way that Motivation 2.0 becomes operative only after Motivation 1.0 is in place and Motivation 3.0 comes into play only when Motivations 1.0 and 2.0 are in place.

All this discussion is essentially hypothesising and speculation. A large amount of comprehensive research will be required to test these hypotheses. Pink’s arguments are based on numerous research studies in psychology, management and social sciences. It would be premature to claim the same validity of his ideas for education, especially language teaching, without a reasonable amount of research in education along similar lines.

Conclusion

The basic argument of the paper is that the notion of teacher motivation currently prevalent in teacher education theory and practice needs to be further problematised and better formulated. Teacher motivation is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic one, which keeps evolving over time. Different dimensions of motivation dominate different stages of a teacher's career. It may, therefore, be useful to conceptualise at least three dimensions of teacher motivation in terms of motivation to join, to stay and to grow in the teaching profession. Although interdependent and overlapping, these three dimensions are worth exploring separately in order to better understand teacher motivation in its complexity. This paper argues that, apart from the factors that motivate teachers to join and to stay in the teaching profession, there are some other factors which crucially influence their motivation to engage in their own professional development. Pink's (2009) triad of autonomy, mastery and purpose offers a possible framework to theorise about these factors, while Maslow's (1943) pyramid of hierarchical needs suggests possible interrelationship between different stages and dimensions of teacher motivation. A substantial amount of research specifically investigating these issues is needed before any reliable theorisation can be attempted. At the moment, the paper only attempts to make a tentative proposal in this direction.

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Needs analysis for English language teacher development: Lessons from Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh

David Hayes, Associate Professor, Department of Applied Linguistics, Brock University, Canada

Abstract

English is regarded as the key to economic advancement by parents of children in schools across India who press state governments to strengthen its teaching in schools. State governments respond by developing in-service teacher education (INSET) programmes to improve teaching quality and thus student outcomes. This paper examines the needs analysis for INSET at the primary level in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. It discusses how the needs analysis was conducted, its results and the challenges in designing effective in-service training programmes in these contexts. The challenges are many and varied as, often, teachers do not have the English language proficiency which is required to be effective teachers of the language, nor are they skilled in the activity-based, student-centred methods which are recommended in the National Curriculum Framework for English (NCERT 2005). Further, an environment which might promote English language learning and use among students does not exist in the school or local community where English is very much a foreign rather than a second language. The paper discusses ways forward for the state governments, including the possibilities offered by technology in addressing the needs of teachers (and their students) if progress is to be made in raising standards.

Introduction

In India, English is now widely recognised as an Indian language in its own right, part of the multilingual framework of the country (Mohanty, 2008), though there remain significant differences in the place that it occupies in the educational experiences of school students from different social strata. For children from upper socio-economic groups it functions as a second language and the medium of instruction in schools, while for children from lower socio-economic groups it is a foreign language, a school subject taught largely through the medium of the first (or dominant regional) language. In recent years attempts have been made to democratise the possession of English through education, with its teaching beginning in the earliest grades of primary school in 26 of the 35 states and union territories (Yadav, 2011). An example of the objective to make English available to all is articulated in the Madhya Pradesh State Curriculum Framework (RSK, 2007: 2):

It is our primary objective to reach English to every child of the State and to ensure that the child gains a sufficiently high level of proficiency in it and does not suffer discrimination for lack of it.

However, these attempts to extend possession of English do not always consider the feasibility of offering English in the early years in government primary schools where there is a serious shortage of teachers with both appropriate training and adequate language skills, and where the existence of an enabling environment to promote the acquisition of English outside the school for the majority of children is lacking (Battacharya, 2013).

Nevertheless, state governments throughout the country find themselves under increasing pressure from parents who regard English as an aspirational language, the key to economic advancement for their children, to provide more and better-quality English teaching. State governments cannot ignore these pressures in society and typically respond by attempting to strengthen English teaching and learning through in-service teacher education (INSET) programmes in the expectation that they will improve teaching quality and thus student outcomes. Having limited capacity themselves to develop or deliver large-scale INSET programmes, the governments turn to outside providers for assistance. In recent years the British Council India has been involved in a number of such programmes and this paper examines needs analysis for in-service educational programmes at the primary level conducted in two states, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, at the request of, and in partnership with, education officials in both states. The challenge of providing effective INSET programmes in these states is immense. In Madhya Pradesh where the intention is to commence with a pilot project in one division (Ujain), there are 11,900 schools involved with some 30,000 teachers educating 960,000 students. In Gujarat where the intention is to develop a state-wide programme from the outset, 33,000 schools with 200,000 teachers serving 6 million students must be catered for.

Needs analysis for INSET programmes: gathering data

For any INSET programme it is imperative that a needs analysis is conducted to provide data on the teaching and learning situation which can then be used to determine appropriate programmes to meet the needs. The process followed in both Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh was broadly similar, with the British Council's English Partnerships team engaging in discussions with state representatives to plan and prepare the needs analysis. There then ensued a period of data collection by teams of British Council training consultants (TCs) using standardised instruments translated into either Gujarati (for Gujarat) or Hindi (for Madhya Pradesh). The TCs worked in pairs, visiting schools to observe teachers, conduct focus group meetings with students and teachers, and administer teacher and student questionnaires. In Madhya Pradesh, data was collected in six districts in Ujain division in February 2013, and in Gujarat in eight of its 33 districts in September 2014. Although additional information was gathered from head teachers and teacher educators as well as in meetings with state, divisional and

district education officials, this paper focuses on teacher and student data, as described in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of needs analysis data collected

Instrument	Madhya Pradesh Number/Respondents	Gujarat Number/Respondents
Student questionnaires	314	400
Teacher questionnaires	65	193
Student focus groups	27 involving 255 students	20 involving 220 students
Teacher focus groups	13 involving 62 teachers	19 involving 64 teachers
Lesson observations	27	72
Schools visited	24	55

Given the space constraints of the paper, and as findings are broadly similar in both states, I have chosen to present here (1) analysis of teachers' English language competence and use of English in their lessons from Madhya Pradesh; and (2) analysis of teachers' English language teaching skills from Gujarat.

Teachers' English language competence and use of English in lessons: Madhya Pradesh

English language levels were assessed in two ways. First, during observations and focus group meetings TCs were asked to record informal assessments of teachers' competence according to levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), an internationally recognised scale; and, second, teachers were asked to provide self-evaluations of their levels of confidence conducting various classroom-related activities in English. International experience indicates that B2 on the CEFR is regarded as a prerequisite for teachers of English (Hayes, 2014), but the summary report of the teacher focus group meetings concluded that:

it was very difficult to identify the language levels of teachers as most of them insisted on responding in Hindi. However, during lesson observation and informal conversation it was seen that most of the teachers' language levels were between A2 and B1.

On the CEFR, A2 describes a 'basic user: elementary' and B1 an 'independent user: intermediate'. Estimates of the time required to move from one level of the CEFR to the next vary widely, though it is generally accepted that faster progress is achieved at the lower levels. Thus, while it may take up to 500 learning hours to pass through A1 and A2 to reach B1 level, it could take another 500 learning hours to reach B2 (Mader and Urkun, 2010). The number of hours will inevitably vary from context to context, as well as from individual to individual, but it seems safe to conclude that if all primary teachers in Madhya Pradesh were required to attain B2 as a prerequisite for teaching English, it would be a very considerable task for most of them.

Teachers’ low English language competence is a serious drawback to improving the quality of English teaching for students. Teachers themselves are very aware of the problem as we can see from their self-assessment of their ability to use English in the classroom in Figure 1. Few teachers rate themselves as having ‘good ability’, while only one or two consider that they have ‘high ability’, and even then in less than half the areas.

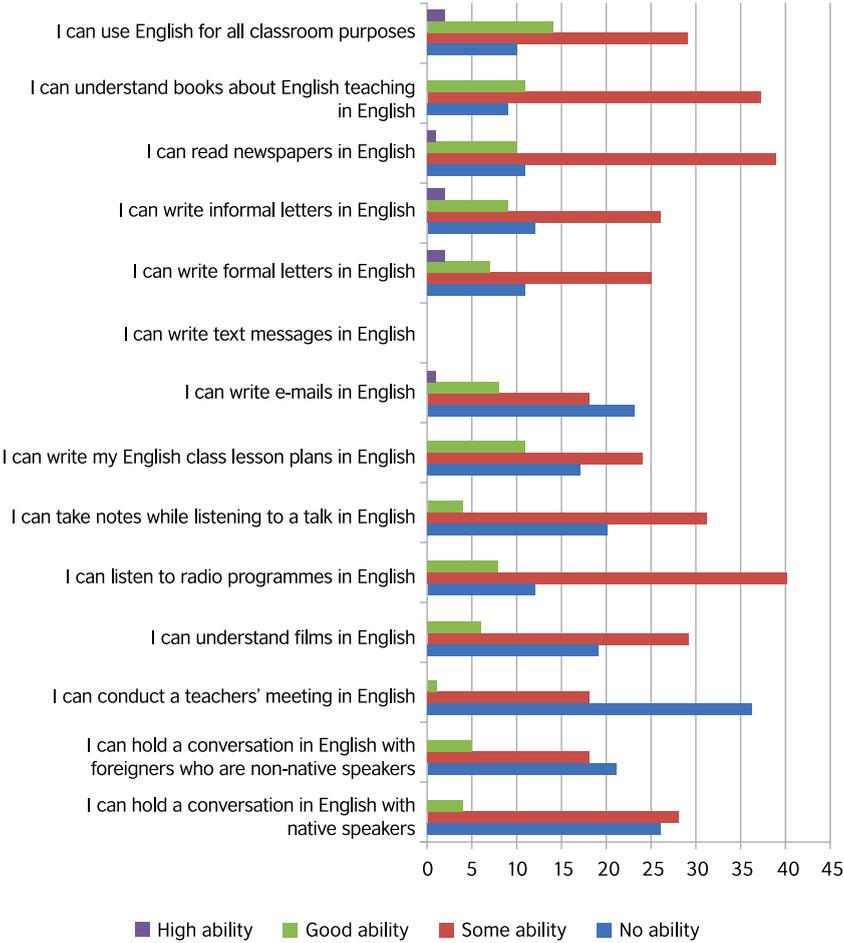


Figure 1: Madhya Pradesh teachers’ self-assessment of their ability to use English

With such low levels of competence, it is scarcely surprising that during the lesson observations TCs observed that there was little use of English by teachers in their lessons (see Figure 2).

How much does the teacher use English during the English lesson?

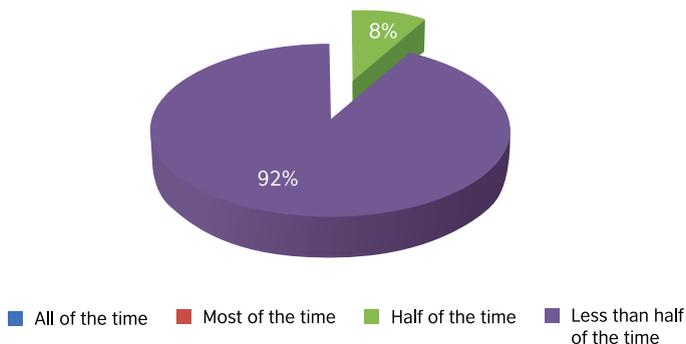


Figure 2: Madhya Pradesh teachers’ observed use of English in English classes

The 92 per cent of teachers using English for ‘less than half of the time’ also needs some qualification as, in several lessons, TCs who made this observation noted ‘not at all’ against their check mark. If the observation form had had a box for ‘not at all’ it would be interesting to see what the percentages would have been for this category. Teachers’ self-assessment of their English abilities correlates with their expressed needs for language improvement in all skill areas, as reported in Figure 3, which should augur well for active participation in INSET programmes.

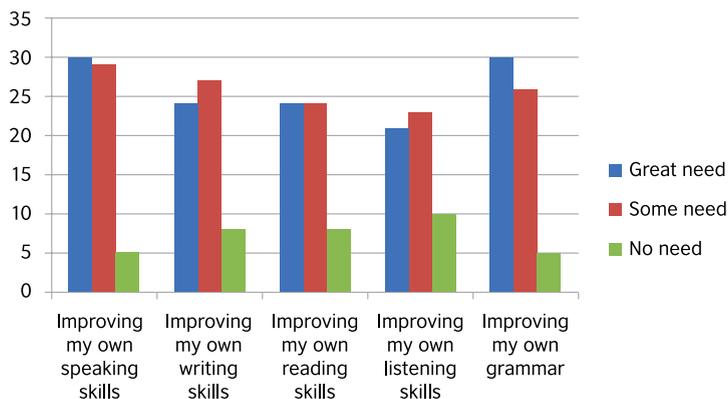


Figure 3: Madhya Pradesh teachers’ expressed needs for English language improvement

Teachers’ English language teaching skills: Gujarat

Teachers in Gujarat had views on teaching-learning processes and the use of English in the classroom which generally reflected current views on effective methods as well as the recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework

(NCERT, 2005) for English. This can be seen in responses to selected statements from the ‘Beliefs and attitudes’ section of the teachers’ questionnaire, as shown in Figure 4. (In this section of the questionnaire statements were formulated in both positive and negative ways to promote active processing by respondents.) Here we see that 102 teachers expressed strong agreement with the statement ‘students respect teachers who make their lessons lively and interesting’ and there was disagreement with statements expressing opinions antithetical to learner-centred classrooms, such as ‘students should not be allowed to ask a lot of questions in class’ (63 totally disagreed, 78 disagreed) and ‘group work and pair work waste time in class’ (50 totally disagreed, 90 disagreed). Attitudes towards some other aspects of teacher competence were more ambivalent, with ‘traditional’ views still holding sway. For example, when responding to the statement ‘an excellent teacher has perfect pronunciation and never makes a mistake’ there was a range of agreement and disagreement: while 58 teachers disagreed, 64 others agreed and 27 strongly agreed. Similarly, for the statement ‘a teacher must correct all the students’ errors’, while 49 disagreed, more agreed (64) and strongly agreed (44). This indicates that the traditional conception of the teacher as a role model who is him/herself completely proficient in the subject matter, and who has a primary responsibility to correct students when they make mistakes, remains very powerful and would need to be addressed during an INSET programme.

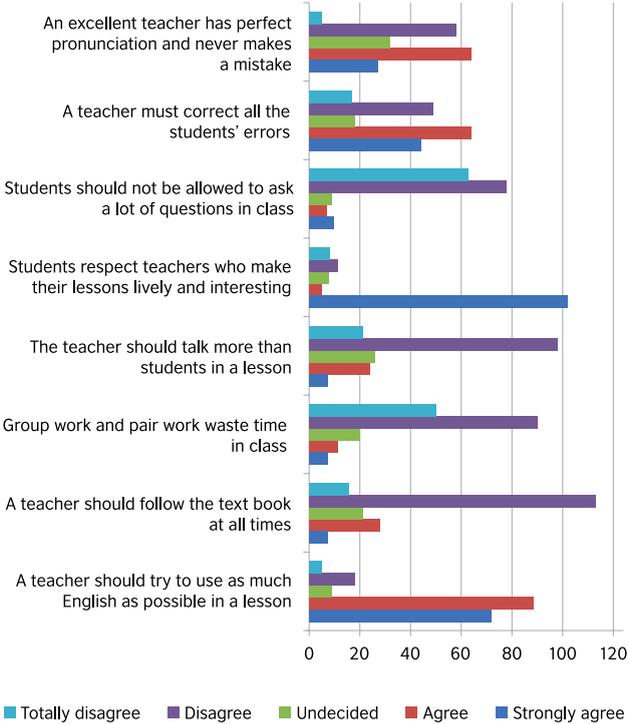


Figure 4: Gujarat teachers’ attitudes towards classroom behaviours

While teachers generally seem to have attitudes consistent with current views on effective teaching-learning methods, their expressed attitudes do not correlate with their classroom behaviours. The TCs' assessment of the extent to which teachers met or did not meet curriculum expectations regarding learner-centred, interactive methods during lessons they observed is shown in Figure 5.

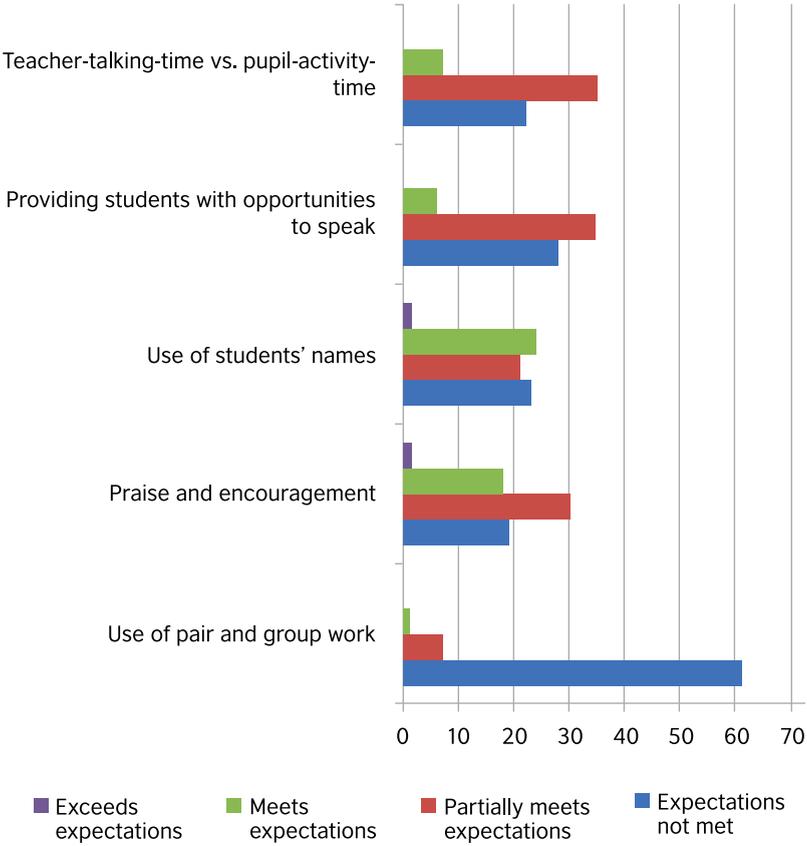


Figure 5: Gujarat teachers' observed use of selected learner-centred, interactive classroom behaviours

Figure 5 reveals a distinct lack of pair and group work in the classes observed, which correlates with the small number of teachers meeting expectations in terms of teacher-talking-time vs pupil-activity-time. This is also confirmed by responses in the student questionnaire, where students were asked to indicate how often 'My teacher reads the lesson aloud and translates it for us'. According to students, 80 per cent of their teachers 'always' did this, 20 per cent 'sometimes' did, and 0 per cent (only one respondent) 'never' did, as shown in Figure 6.

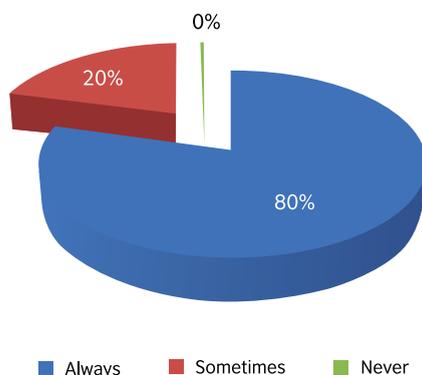


Figure 6: Gujarat students' reports of how often teachers read the lesson aloud and translate it for them

Consistently reading the lesson aloud also implies persistent use of the textbook which is at odds with teachers' views in the questionnaire on whether 'A teacher should follow the textbook at all times', with which 113 of the 185 respondents disagreed (see Figure 4).

Figure 5 suggests that teachers in primary schools in Gujarat dominate classroom talk, and Figure 6 that they use reading aloud and translating the lesson into Gujarati as their principal teaching method, in spite of their expressed positive attitudes towards activity-based, learner-centred teaching. Further support for this interpretation comes from teacher focus group discussions, lesson observations and TC reports. In contrast to views expressed in the questionnaire, the focus group discussions revealed the reality of use of Gujarati in classes as a means to cope with the low levels of English among students: representative teacher comments from Mehsana and Anand districts make this clear:

'[Gujarati is used] all the time for better understanding of the lesson and explaining.'

'It is not possible to teach in English as they [students] are very weak. We speak Hindi and Gujarati in class.'

These comments are corroborated in lesson observations, in which the preponderance of descriptions reveal a methodological norm of teacher-fronted classes using translation, as exemplified by this description of a lesson in Anand district:

The teacher reads the sentences in the bubbles and translates/explains in Gujarati. Students repeat after the teacher. The teacher asks questions in Gujarati and students respond in Gujarati all at once. The teacher does not

use any English other than reading the sentences in the book. Students listen to the teacher and respond/repeat in Gujarati. After the teacher completes explaining in Gujarati she asks a student to stand up and read. The others sit quietly. It goes on till the end of the class. The students who can't read, the teacher reads for them, she reads the lesson and the whole class repeats after the teacher. The lesson ends after reciting the text a couple of times.

Where teachers behave contrary to the reading aloud/translation norm, lesson observations capture the vitality of the classroom, as we can see from this excerpt from an account of a lesson in Amreli district:

Wonderful! The teacher started his class with a lead-in for teaching 'degrees of comparison'. He contextualised by using chalks, books, bags, windows and eliciting their comparative degrees. The students used complete sentences while answering. The teacher uses English 80% of the class time. [...] Great, positive learning atmosphere.

Positive appraisals of teaching like this are, unfortunately, rare, and from the data in Gujarat (and similarly in Madhya Pradesh) it seems that there is an urgent need for teachers to be shown how to transfer what appears to be largely theoretical knowledge of desirable, learner-centred classroom behaviours to their day-to-day classroom practice. At present teaching methods are heavily dependent on indiscriminate translation of English into Gujarati (or Hindi in Madhya Pradesh), the justification for which is often students' poor levels of English, indicating an urgent need for effective, practical training in interactive approaches to teaching for low-level English language learners.

Implications for INSET programmes in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh

The implications from the data collected in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are very direct. Teachers in primary schools are in urgent need of language improvement if they are to be expected to teach English effectively and they are very aware of their own needs in this respect. Any INSET programme must have a direct focus on English language improvement alongside a focus on the development of teaching skills, for which training will need to be at least bilingual in English and Gujarati or English and Hindi given teachers' current low English language levels.

With respect to teaching styles, the general picture that emerges of primary English classes is that they are teacher-centred with the teacher dominating classroom talk and most often using Hindi or Gujarati as the principal means of communication. Where English is used, it is translated into Hindi or Gujarati and students' use of English is largely confined to repeating and reading aloud after the teacher: students do not appear to engage in meaningful communication through the medium of English. Promoting a transition to more learner-centred, activity-based teaching where English is seen as a means of communication rather than an object of study should form the content basis of the teaching skills element of future INSET programmes.

How can these English language and teaching skills-focused INSET programmes be developed and implemented in resource-constrained environments? First of all, they need to be structured to maximise all available resources, and both needs analysis reports have recommended a combination of face-to-face and digital training, the latter now becoming increasingly viable in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, particularly with the advent of widespread mobile communication. Second, teachers must be supported as they practise what they learn on courses in their own classes, ideally by teacher educators who have themselves been trained as mentors. Third, recognising the importance of an enabling environment, effective support for classroom change must also be provided both centrally by education officials and locally by head teachers. Finally, given the low English language levels and the scale of the changes in classroom behaviour required, state governments need to be realistic about the timeframes needed for change to occur, however high the quality of the INSET programmes provided. In this way we hope that the objective expressed in the Madhya Pradesh State Curriculum Framework (RSK, *ibid.*: 2) 'to reach English to every child of the State and to ensure that the child gains a sufficiently high level of proficiency in it and does not suffer discrimination for lack of it' may, over time and with the commitment of all stakeholders, be realised in both Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

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Integrating English with content learning in wet-weather conditions in Indian primary schools

Michael Scholey, Freelance consultant

Abstract

Young students in such a densely populated, linguistically diverse and complex multilingual environment as India invariably face major psycholinguistic issues, even risking 'losing' their mother tongue – and by implication a large part of their cultural heritage. Sometimes we grossly underestimate the psychological damage caused to even the best students who are forced into English-medium education at a young age. It should be incumbent upon all those involved in primary education language policy and implementation to find ways to preclude life-long socio-cultural damage to these young students and ensure that an awareness of these important linguistic issues is part of the 'quality' input into pre- and in-service teacher education. If English were introduced in the lower-primary school as a medium of communication rather than as a subject or medium of instruction, its place in the curriculum would not be so controversial. The fundamental question here is: how can learners in the lower-primary school develop useful and meaningful English language knowledge and skills and at the same time not forfeit their mother tongue development? Different arrangements for teaching English via a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach offer one solution to this conundrum.

English as a medium of instruction (EMI)

The belief that EMI, a nebulous and often inaccurate label, is either the best or only way for Indian students to learn English is educationally controversial. A huge proportion of children in India attending 'private schools' are in so-called 'English-medium' ones, often a misnomer for something very different. In two Indian states that have a policy of English-medium the whole primary curriculum is taught in English; in several other states English is introduced in Standard 1 as a subject, and in one state in Standard 3. So, the presence or otherwise of English in the primary school curriculum, at whatever grade it is introduced, is more a debate over whether it should be learned via EMI or non-EMI means. EMI in India tends to be largely instruction-oriented (as per the abbreviation), which implies a pedagogy bearing little if any relationship to contemporary approaches to communicative or content-based language learning.

And all is not well with English in the primary school curriculum for reasons other than the EMI debate. Teachers are often addicted to and students inured to rote methods, with learning often characterised by isolated or linear and arbitrary formulae and formats: curriculum, subject syllabus, textbook, tests, classroom

rows, fixed time-slots for lessons (35–45 minutes) and other types of conditioning (bells, tests, rules). To compound matters for their eager students, many teachers of English often possess in abundance the traditional instructional skill of teaching about rather than in English, complementing the outdated and conservative educational tenets which they often cherish. Children too often rarely speak in language classes and language output in a lesson tends to be by the teacher, with much of the children's oral production involving choral repetition. Lots of copying from the board and testing of lists is commonplace; and even before the need for English literacy actually arises, classwork is accompanied by too little meaning-based aural and oral activity.

Lastly, what 'English-medium' schools often lack is quality English-speaking teachers, for reasons that are well understood.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005)

As a consequence of the foregoing conditions, rapid progress in English at Standard 1 level is well-nigh impossible for many if not the majority of students, vouchsafed by a teaching regimen of perfunctory routines and slavish adherence to a structured syllabus about language. Yet it is now ten years since the National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) proposed guiding principles for curriculum development and improvement in standards of teaching and learning:

- to ensure that learning shifts away from rote methods;
- to enrich the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks;
- and to make assessment more flexible.

The NCF (2005) recognises the child as an active learner within an across-the-curriculum approach to English and asserts that children should relate what they are learning in school to things happening outside; answer in their own words; and learn to question, think, reason and solve problems *in English* through activities that challenge them to try out themselves what they are learning. Real learning involves making connections within complex webs of knowledge; relating what we already know to new experiences and constructing and reconstructing knowledge and interpreting and applying it to real-world tasks.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

CLIL resembles EMI only in that it is not a methodology; rather, it is another approach, differing from EMI in two major respects: it *does not* emphasise English and it *does* emphasise learning. CLIL, like English-medium around the world, is often considered to be elitist, yet it is anything but. Within a learner- and learning-centred classroom, children from different socio-economic backgrounds and of different levels of ability, interests and motivation can help each other in paired and group-oriented classroom activities and tasks within the framework of a social/cognitive constructivist approach to learning.

By accepting that *all* students’ languages are an integral part of every subject (i.e. CLIL), writers of newly developed syllabuses and textbooks can include inter-disciplinary and thematic linkages between topics listed for different school subjects, and make connections between school knowledge in different subjects and children’s everyday experiences.

Although the abbreviation CLIL is familiar to many ELT practitioners, not all understand its formulation or its intention. CLIL is a pedagogical approach with an emphasis on three variables: content (i.e. ‘subject matter’); the learner; and contemporary psychological notions such as social constructivism (co-operative and collaborative learning) and cognitive development. These three variables determine and facilitate – through the curriculum process mediated by effective teaching, classroom management and organisation – what and how students learn. Hill (2009: 72) reminds us that a CLIL approach is pedagogically and psychologically sound for children at Piaget’s concrete operations stage, ‘where random topics, absence of cross-curricular linking and a lack of grounding in personal, hands-on experience are known to be detrimental to learning’; and, secondly, that ‘many of the best (published) teaching materials ... for primary level ELT are structured around thematic units for precisely this reason.’

In the CLIL approach, both the content and the language are interwoven, whereas a traditional language classroom tends to focus on recalling language facts (grammar) and understanding basic concepts (vocabulary) through rote learning, and only minimal student cognitive processes (lower-order thinking skills, or LOTS) are activated (see Figure 1).

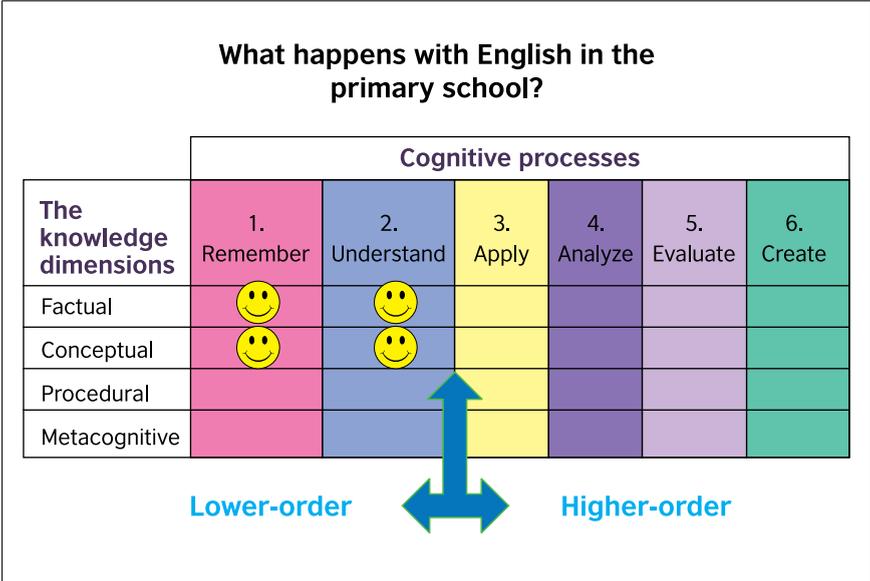


Figure 1: Cognitive processes

Cross-curricular topic work can be designed to activate and utilise other cognitive processes (higher-order thinking skills, or HOTS) and so move beyond a mechanical learning paradigm. That said, a limiting factor in initiating a CLIL approach in schools is, as already noted, in too many cases the teacher's own limited language proficiency.

Removing the barriers that exist between languages (L1, L2, L3, etc.) and subjects in the primary school can be facilitated by organising learning activities designed to create a comprehensive awareness of the world around the child, making use of the child's existing linguistic achievements and cognitive development in the mother tongue/regional language. Content and language learning materials need to be designed to promote such multilingual activity (see Figure 2 for an example), and clear methodological guidelines need to be worked out in co-operation with teachers to see how more than one language can be naturally learned and used in the same lessons.

Example of HOTS
A mathematics problem

- **A bat and a ball cost \$1.10 between them.**
- **The bat costs \$1 more than the ball.**
- **How much does each cost?**



Figure 2: Example of HOTS

Short intensive 'showers' or 'storms' of CLIL (rather than whole English lessons) may be more productive and advantageous in terms of the interest, motivation and linguistic-cognitive development of the students than high exposure (a 'flood' of English medium), particularly with certain types of learners. There appears to be no evidence so far which would support the view that low-to-medium exposure to English would threaten the young students' mother tongues if approached in such a way. Linguistic development could even be accelerated at this early primary school age, not only in terms of grammar and lexis but also in terms of the students being able to handle complex topic-related input and concepts through interesting, meaningful and motivating learning content and activities.

Teacher training (PRESETT)

As CLIL is diverse in its subject and topic areas of use, and demanding of a degree

and level of training and concomitant professional competence of teachers implementing it, pre-service teacher training (PRESETT), or at the very least some effective in-service training (INSET), is essential for developing the teacher competencies and inputs for CLIL-oriented classrooms. So there remain serious fundamental problems of systemic feasibility and preparedness for introducing English so early in the primary school, not least the selection and training of sufficient appropriately qualified and competent teachers.

The dramatic changes required in classroom systems cannot happen without re-orienting both PRESETT and INSET, the former for long-term impact, the latter as a short-term, stop-gap measure. After all, as the NCF for Teacher Education (2009–10: 4) notes, ‘The bottom line for Teacher Education is the quality of teacher performance in terms of impact on the learner’. The formal teaching of English and its accompanying obsession with test results has led to widespread linguistic underachievement and disappointment among students, teachers, parents and educational institutions alike.

Overly high expectations of spectacular results in the short term (given the dearth of competent CLIL teachers) is a major reason why plans for ‘systemic change’ can fail. For example, a recent Malaysian CLIL INSET course (called ETeMS: English for the Teaching of Maths and Science) involved much instruction and little learning (trainers not practising what was being preached) on the teachers’ parts, with an impossible expectation of the teachers improving their standard of English in a matter of weeks. Teachers need lexis and pedagogical skills for CLIL, not more grammar, and confidence-building more than anything else. Ill-thought-out, overly complicated language improvement materials serve to hinder teacher progress in such programme designs. Furthermore, public relations problems (such as parents misunderstanding what is happening, thinking that their children are ‘missing out’ on maths and science, for example, if these subjects are not taught in the mother tongue) add to the mistrust during such large-scale change processes. National(ist) language sentiment and vested interests can further militate against a programme’s success. Notwithstanding these barriers to progress, in the Malaysian case the PRESET training for primary school teachers during that period was very successful, involving a four-year BEd programme and young CLIL-disposed pre-service language teachers eager to try out new ideas in their schools and escape the straitjacket of the traditional English syllabus.

Joint British Council English INSET projects in Mumbai and Maharashtra

The English Language Improvement for Primary Schools project (ELIPS) aimed to assist the state government of Maharashtra in achieving part of its reform agenda: for every government primary school in the state to have a dedicated English teacher to work in line with the principles of the NCF (2005). In addition, the Municipal Council of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) has followed up the ELIPS project with the English for All (EFA) project, using a cadre of teacher educators (TEs) which includes master trainers from the ELIPS project.

Key objectives of Maharashtra ELIPS and EFA projects have been, among other

things, to build the language proficiency skills of primary teachers to enable them to conduct child-centred and child-friendly lessons, to assess student progress in line with the NCF (2005) and the policy of continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE), and to build a sustainable infrastructure to support INSET and continuing professional development (CPD). The training content of both projects was designed specifically to meet the needs of primary school teachers and linked to their new, content-rich coursebooks and curriculum.

A major result of the two Maharashtra/Mumbai primary school projects is the sea change that has been brought about in teachers' attitudes to teaching and learning through INSET courses designed to change educational perceptions through constant reflection on current professional practice, and to develop interactive, communicative methodologies which encourage real language use in the classroom, with a focus on lexis and language skills. Experiential learning communicates more to TEs and teachers than any handouts, lectures or presentations ever can. A major intended outcome of these projects was to change the teachers' perspectives and philosophies and to enable them to envision their classrooms as multicultural, multilevel and multitopic environments, and to know how to treat all students as individuals in a group-oriented classroom in order to encourage optimum linguistic and cognitive development.

Conclusion

Weaker or less fortunate children get left further and further behind in a 'one-size-fits-all' system, bogged down in a largely irrelevant swamp of predetermined knowledge and rote-learning. When language is taught for its own sake as a set of forms or rules, and not introduced as a medium of communication, it becomes just another subject to be passed, rather than a communication skill to be used. The introduction of English at age 6–8, when children are already orally fluent in their mother tongue and/or regional language, need not be the exclusive domain of immersion EMI.

One of the major drawbacks of traditional teaching is the artificiality and linearity of syllabuses, textbooks, lessons and teaching, an underlying and undying belief that subject and lessons can be compartmentalised and 'presented' by the teacher. In order for environmental rather than piecemeal change in classroom practice to be effected, any change in entrenched teaching and learning practices must involve changes in thinking and behavioural processes among trainers and teachers.

No single methodology is an ideal one for all learners, but whereas more traditional courses underestimate the importance of skills and processes and overemphasise products and knowledge, a CLIL approach offers an alternative language learning direction. It has become increasingly clear that topic-related authentic materials are preferable to arbitrary, artificial and contrived ones; and that teaching methods which stimulate active participation by the learners are preferable to those that do not. Methods based on a CLIL approach appear to create a better learning environment than any other method – a shift from 'instructivism' to

‘constructivism’, where students learn by actively constructing knowledge and developing language skills for themselves.

If Indian researchers and educational administrators are agreed that literacy in the first language/state language should precede literacy in English, it follows that any introduction of English in the primary school should involve only basic fluency, with English literacy taking a back seat until the upper-primary stage. As students are gradually introduced to English, the emphasis should be on interesting and motivating inputs and activities, leading to basic oral fluency and the acquisition of topic-related lexis. Such an approach, combined with an anticipated accompanying increase in student confidence and proficiency in listening and speaking skills, should lead to improved, level-appropriate fluency by the upper-primary (and later, secondary) level. By successfully developing the primary language skills (listening and speaking) and appropriate age-level cognitive skills – via ‘gentle showers’ and ‘intensive storms’ of English, after basic literacy and cognitive development are already well under way in the students’ first language/state language – we can make it more likely that students will succeed in English in all four skills later on. Such a course of action is preferable to the guaranteed and perpetually high failure rates that constantly result from much traditional primary school English teaching and learning (i.e. drowning in so-called EMI ‘immersion’ conditions).

The lack of proficiency in English of large numbers of primary school teachers is a severe handicap, and improvements in proficiency to more educationally acceptable levels will come gradually with the advent of new pre-service teacher education curricula and training approaches, a clearer understanding of the psychology of language learning, and a concomitant improved and more appropriate classroom practice.

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Using cloze-based summaries to develop reading comprehension: Materials for ESL teachers

Lina Mukhopadhyay, Assistant Professor

Abstract

Reading comprehension abilities range from comprehending isolated bits of information in a text to understanding the gist of the text. Textbooks and exams mostly prepare ESL learners to show an understanding of texts as isolated bits of information through multiple choice questions and/or short answers. Checking for integration of the whole text, or 'text representation', is an equally important skill but goes largely untapped. This skill is the one that helps in assimilating new with previous knowledge. Therefore, it is a necessary higher-level skill ESL learners need to acquire. One way of knowing whether text representation has taken place in the learner mind is to ask for free recall of texts. We adapt this strategy to propose, in this paper, a series of practical and easy tasks with which teachers can aim to develop text representation skills in a structured and systematic manner. These tasks are designed with a gradual increase in cognitive and linguistic demands to enable learners to write summaries. Thus, the tasks aim to develop the higher-level understanding and problem-solving abilities of learners.

Introduction

In Indian schools, ESL learners are trained to develop reading skills along with its several sub-skills, but most often assessment of comprehension is done in a manner that largely requires only the piecemeal understanding of texts. This is evident in the nature of questions asked such as multiple choice questions, short answer questions, reference to context questions and a few essay-type extrapolative questions. Such question types abound in English textbooks and summative exams. While these questions tap understanding of several parts of a text and develop the necessary sub-skills of reading in lower grades, a much higher level of comprehension in the form of whole-text comprehension or 'text representation' largely goes untapped. However, academic success in higher grades would necessitate learners to remember past information and integrate it with new information and thereupon improve their understanding on a subject matter. In knowledge integration, one has to be able to formulate a representation of a text previously read and recall it when required. Learners frequently struggle to do this and somehow learn to survive the educational system by developing a rudimentary knowledge of text representation and integration almost on their own. While self-learning is commendable, learners are often not able to build the most appropriate text representation, as they may not know which ideas are the most crucial ones to select, what the links between such ideas are, or how to represent those ideas and the links between them in writing. So, if teachers make learners

attend to text representation in ESL classes (and extend it to other subject classes) in a sustained and guided manner, learners can begin to employ this higher-level reading skill more effectively. They can learn to use this skill to attempt a range of higher-level academic tasks like summarising, paraphrasing, writing critical reviews and integrating sources while writing a full academic paper – all of which require them to use higher-level cognitive skills like *apply*, *analyse*, *evaluate* and *create* and the corresponding linguistic abilities that express the presence of these steps in speech and/or writing.

What is text representation?

Let us try and understand the multiple components and skills underlying reading comprehension. This ‘psycholinguistic guessing game’ (Goodman, 1967) involves mastery of multiple sub-components, ranging from lower levels like word recognition, fluency, syntax, vocabulary and working memory to higher levels such as inference generation, comprehension monitoring and problem-solving abilities. Comprehension can be at multiple levels starting from easier local factual comprehension (i.e. ability to notice facts in a paragraph) and identifying factual information from several parts of the text, to higher levels like local inference generation (e.g. word meaning in context or filling gaps in the texts locally) to whole-text inference generation, integration of thematic links between texts, identifying authorial voice and intention and moving on to discourse structure knowledge of text-types. Of these, text representation knowledge involves creating in the mind a map of all the main ideas and their corresponding links to hold the entire meaning of the original text in a nutshell. Although what one identifies as the core meaning of a text can be subjective and the length of information one puts down in a summary may vary, commonalities in selecting the main ideas and identifying links between those can be worked out systematically. One way of doing this would be to ask learners to construct a text map (Grabe, 2009). Hence, in attempting text representation, learners would have to do the following: first, chunk information to *select* ideas; second, *organise* them by the order of the links (as inferred from the original text); and, third, *construct* an appropriate text representation either as a text map or as a summary. While in creating a text map learners would have to select and organise the main ideas in the form of short lexical phrases, writing a summary is a more advanced step, as it is linguistically and cognitively more challenging. This is because more resources are required in constructing a new text: the learner has to use language, i.e. syntax, vocabulary and rhetorical structure, to express the ideas and choose appropriate, cohesive devices and perform syntactic operations like subordination and co-ordination to capture the transformations/transitions in ideas. So, the gap between drawing a text map and writing a summary is rather wide.

Interestingly, most ESL teachers do not seem to perceive this difference in linguistic and cognitive load between drawing a text map and writing a summary. Consequently, they believe that brainstorming and having a text map in place are enough as aids to make learners construct a summary successfully. But sadly in real life this is not the case. No wonder most learners struggle to write a summary that captures their understanding of the whole text or a text representation

they might have built in their minds. Let us consider the components involved in constructing a summary: the task requires one to identify the main idea(s) and the relationships between them and supporting ideas. Then these have to be expressed in appropriate language, meaning use of syntax and vocabulary. Additionally, learners would have to use discourse structure knowledge to attend to text unity and the tone and style of writing an academic text without diluting the tone or voice of the author of the original text. Learners who are still struggling with language and have poor writing skills may find it very hard to express whole-text understanding through a free writing task, such as a summary.

What can be a way out of this problem? Can learners be taught to summarise texts in a more guided and step-wise manner? As an answer to these questions, we propose in this paper using cloze-based summaries as scaffolds in the form of cognitive and linguistic supports and thus help learners attempt the summary-writing task in a context-embedded but cognitively demanding manner (Cummins, 1979, 2007). We explore such ideas in the next section.

How to teach text representation

To teach text representation we need to first identify summary propositions (SPs). A text is made up of numerous simple propositions (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983). The number of clauses or reduced clauses in a sentence counts as simple propositions. Combining one set of simple propositions that captures a single idea can form an SP (Taylor, 2013). Therefore, the set of simple propositions dealing with the same idea are rephrased as an SP.

A reader has to use his or her discretion to be able to chunk ideas that go together, and this might be somewhat subjective. A teacher can do this and later check whether the chunking is similar to other colleagues' and thus work a way out of the problem of 'inter-rater reliability' in identifying SPs. However, a few reliable measures of chunking to identify change in ideas are available. These measures are: (a) idea transitions indicated by cohesive devices in the text and (b) to follow discourse structure clues like paragraphs and identify rhetorical functions of sentences like topic sentences and concluding sentences within paragraphs. These measures can be employed to come up with consistent ways of chunking a text (Brown and Yule, 1983).

In this paper we take a text and show with example tasks a step-wise method to teach text-representation knowledge. For this, first we consider the first paragraph of the text 'Enjoying ballet' (Richards and Eckstut-Didier, 2003) that we have used to design tasks. As a first step a teacher needs to analyse the text and come up with the simple propositions and their corresponding SPs, as in Table 1.

Table 1: Identifying summary propositions (SPs)

Text with simple propositions	Summary propositions
It is very odd (3) that no one is afraid of the word 'dance' (1) and no one would object to the phrase 'let's go dancing', (2) but mention 'ballet' and people start complaining.(4)	dance and ballet perceived differently (SP1)
These social prejudices (5) come from several misconceptions (6) and from certain historical facts. (7)	several prejudices about ballet (SP2)
Ballet is a Western theatrical dance form (8) that developed over a period of four centuries (9). It has always depended upon government (10) or royal support for its life (11). In more modern times, this support came from wealthy people (12) who attend ballet in beautiful theatres in some of the world's great cities (13).	patronised by royalty in the past, and wealthy people support it presently (SP3)
People have therefore come to see ballet as a cultural form, unfamiliar to anyone who does not from a particular city (14) or a particular class (15).	[so] common people feel they do not belong to the group (SP4)
Over time, ballet has developed its own language (16), one that many ordinary people do not understand (17). Being a ballet dancer involves seven years of very difficult training from an early age (18), yet anyone can dance at a social gathering (19), given a certain amount of effort and desire (20). The physical image of both male and female dancers is very stylised (21) and costuming is so unnatural in many cases (22), with its tights, slippers and tutus (23).	dance has special language, stylised presentation in unnatural costumes (SP5)
For these reasons, it is not possible for the general public to have the kind of identification with a ballet dancer (24) that they often feel for an actor, film star or athlete (25).	[thus] identification with ballet dancers not easy (SP6)

After having identified the SPs, teachers can design cloze tasks to help learners construct the summary in a context-embedded manner, moving from more to less support, before expecting them to compose the summary independently. Given below are three sample cloze tasks, where cognitive and linguistic support is provided at varying levels of more to less support. These supports are to draw learners' attention to the links between main ideas, crucial for text representation.

Box I: Task-type one – A cloze-based summary task with cohesive links (choice-type)

In the text 'Enjoying ballet' the author brings to our notice that _____ (1) dance as an art form is liked by all, ballet as a Western theatrical form is not that widely acceptable. He cites several reasons for the unpopularity of ballet. _____ (2) he mentions that in the past ballet was supported by royal class, _____ (3) in the present times wealthy people patronise this dance form. _____ (4), the general mass feels that it does not belong to the class that can watch ballet. Second, the author says that rigorous training, stylised presentation of the dance form, _____ (5) unnatural costumes restrict people from appreciating ballet.

- | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | a. because | b. even though | c. that |
| 2 | a. First | b. So | c. Then |
| 3 | a. whereas | b. and | c. though |
| 4 | a. Then | b. But | c. So |
| 5 | a. and | b. because | c. but |

In the first task (Box I), the maximum amount of linguistic support is given and the blanks are to be filled by appropriate cohesive devices. So this task is to help learners focus on the links between the ideas, as the ideas to be included are already selected and paraphrased. This task can be used at two levels: first, it can be a choice-type where for each blank three options are given and the most appropriate device is to be chosen; second, it can be used as a supply-type task where the appropriate cohesive device has to be supplied. The supply-type format is cognitively and linguistically more demanding.

Box II: Task-type two – A cloze-based summary task with phrases (supply-type)

In the text 'Enjoying ballet' the author brings to our notice that even though _____ (1) is liked by all, ballet as a Western theatrical form is _____ (2). He cites several reasons for _____ (3). First, he mentions that in the past _____ (4) and in the present times _____ (5) this dance form. So, the general mass feels that _____ (6) that can watch ballet. Second, the author says that rigorous training, _____ (7) of the dance form and unnatural costumes _____ (8) from appreciating ballet.

In the second task (Box II), the blanks have to be filled using appropriate lexical phrases and moves to the level of selecting and supplying lexico-grammatical links. Although the base text is provided, the linguistic cognitive support in this task is less than the previous one and is more demanding. Learners have to select appropriate ideas, at phrase level, to fill the blanks and also figure out the links between them. If learners find this task too difficult then a teacher may use the choice-type format before the supply-type one.

Box III: Task-type three – A cloze-based summary task with summary propositions (supply-type)

In the text 'Enjoying ballet' the author brings to our notice that

_____ (1). He cites _____

_____ (2). First, he mentions that _____

_____ (3). So, the general mass feels that it does not belong to the class that can watch ballet. Second, the author says that _____

_____ (4).

In the third task (Box III), the blanks need to be completed by inserting appropriate summary propositions. A good way to do this task would be to first make learners identify the summary propositions from the sets of simple propositions in the original text. Teachers can then look at the responses and give feedback on the selection of ideas and appropriate paraphrasing to construct the summary propositions. With a common list of propositions, now the learners can attempt the cloze task. In this, they again might have to paraphrase ideas to fit the linguistic cognitive structure of the summary text. Again, if the learners find the supply-type format challenging, they can be given the choice-type format first.

Note that in all the three tasks, learners are taught elements of writing starting from the insertion of appropriate cohesive devices to establishing logical links between summary propositions in task one to selecting appropriate information at phrase level in task two and clause level in task three. In both the second and third tasks, learners need to paraphrase to suit the linguistic cognitive structure of the guided summary text provided as the stimulus. So the tasks can be used to teach learners selection and construction of ideas in a structured and graded manner. As a last step, learners may be asked to attempt independent summary writing.

The tasks require learners to identify the main ideas and the links between them. The help given in the tasks gradually decreases. For instance, in the first task the most salient links have to be identified by choosing or inserting cohesive devices to mark a transition of ideas. In the second and third tasks the links are less clear and have to be constructed more independently by the learners; this makes the later tasks more cognitively challenging. Also they need to fill blanks from cohesive devices to lexical phrases to summary propositions. The increase in text length to fill in the blanks appropriately makes the tasks increasingly complex linguistically.

In Figure 1 we present a task analysis to show the increase in cognitive and linguistic loads in the tasks.

	select	organise	construct	less difficult  more difficult
Step one: cloze, cohesive links	provided	part them	provided	
Step two: cloze with phrases	part them	part them	part them	
Step three: cloze as propositions	part them	them	part them	
Step four: free summary	them	them	them	

Figure 1: Task analysis – levels of difficulty

Each task will help learners focus on distinct aspects of text representation. Each task builds on the previous level of linguistic-cognitive difficulty by adding one more component and/or employing a higher level of that component as indicated in Figure 1. This systematic manner of using cloze-based summaries, we hope, can train learners to hold text representation and recall when required to integrate the previous knowledge with new knowledge.

Conclusion

As teachers we have the task of developing ESL learners’ reading comprehension abilities. For this, we are required to use effective instructional methods, materials and modes of assessment. But, as discussed earlier, in most Indian ESL classrooms, reading comprehension is not taught (or assessed) by using appropriate methods or materials. Teachers mostly base their instruction on coursebooks and make their learners ‘test-ready’ by dictating ‘right’ answers, which the learners can reproduce during end-of-year exams. This assessment method, though popular and appealing to common sense, is in no way valid or adequate to develop comprehension abilities, as it does not check ‘comprehension’ but content knowledge, and assumes reading comprehension is equivalent to isolated bits of knowledge that can be tested through discrete items (e.g. multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks or short questions). As a way out of this problem and to teach learners reading to achieve higher academic goals, both teacher educators and teachers can adopt a guided process of writing summaries as proposed in this paper. They can use such cloze tasks to teach as well as assess knowledge of text representation.

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Curriculum review: Need and modalities for prerequisite language competence in teacher education

Harisimran Sandhu, Freelance examiner, teacher trainer and training consultant, India

Abstract

Although English is in greater demand than ever before in India, sufficient English-proficient, non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) are not available. The small minority of genuinely English-medium schools are an obvious exception. Experts believe that this may partly be because of negative backwash, there being no language proficiency exams endorsed by the government. However, the general run of teacher education in the country continues to stress the primacy of pedagogy over language competence. Numerous studies suggest that it should be the other way around. There is a need to accept B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale as the required level for teacher-training before admitting aspirants to pre-service training, which could then stress essential aspects of language awareness and pedagogical competence. The assessment criteria for pre-service training also need to be revised to allow proportionate weighting for language competence for beneficial backwash.

After an overview of the current ELT context, this paper highlights the rationale for prerequisite language competence, followed by suggestions that could potentially have far-reaching implications for both teacher educators and teachers and could significantly upgrade language-learner competence in the long term.

English in India: aspirations and reality

In addition to being the associate official language and undisputed lingua franca, English in India is also the 'language of opportunity' and 'aspirational language', with enormous transformative potential:

'English is ... a basic skill ... all children require ... to fully participate in 21st-century civil society' (Graddol, 2010: 10).

As a consequence of the functional importance of English, several states now favour direct instruction in English from the pre-primary level. In such a scenario, it is not uncommon to see both school teachers and students rank the English language higher in importance than even their L1, purely for economic reasons. This pre-eminence of English is echoed in the National Knowledge Commission Report 2009 (cited in Graddol, *ibid.*: 93): 'The time has come for us to teach our people, ordinary people, English as a language in schools.' The eleventh Five-Year

Plan sought to implement this vision by introducing English from Class 3, although 18 Indian states have already gone ahead and introduced English in Class 1.

Similarly, India's National Curriculum Framework 2005 highlights language proficiency and communication skills as 'critical factors' for teachers (NCERT, 2005: 39): All teachers who teach English should have basic proficiency in English. However, notwithstanding such assertions and the fact that English is in 'greater demand in India than ever before' (Graddol, *ibid.*: 72), sufficient English-proficient teachers are not available over large parts of the country. This should come as no surprise, given our great language divide, with only 7 per cent of children being taught through the English medium (Graddol, *ibid.*: 83). This has, quite obviously, created a crisis in 'delivering the courses now being embarked on' (Graddol, *ibid.*: 94).

In a recent survey, the majority of teachers of Class 1 were of proficiency too low to be measured on the CEFR (Graddol, *ibid.*: 95). Indeed, this is a serious inadequacy if we accept language proficiency for L2 teachers as 'the bedrock of their professional competence' (Murdoch, 1994: 254). In fact, sub-threshold proficiency is known to even impact their confidence levels (Richards, 2011: 3–4; Murdoch, *ibid.*: 258) and, indirectly, those of the taught. This lack of minimal language proficiency is also a major hurdle in both pre-service and in-service programmes, notwithstanding the deployment of resources for language development for teachers (LDT).

Taking stock of this problem, the Knowledge Commission Report on English (2006: 8) declared:

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.

Contributory factors

Among some of the possible contributory factors for low-quality ELT in the country is the want of any proficiency examination that measures English language proficiency (ELP). This also explains the skewed qualitative requirements for most ELT jobs in the country, which seldom carry any stipulations of language competence. A qualification in English literature or, to be more precise, 'Literature in English' is very often the passport for entry into many ELT jobs. While the National Curriculum Framework 2005 highlights language proficiency and communication skills as 'critical factors', rarely in the educational process is 'communicative competence' of teachers, or students, seriously posited as a curricular goal. The resultant low ELP levels inevitably impact ELT.

To examine the observation of the Knowledge Commission that our teacher-

training programmes are ‘not based on any real needs-assessment’, let us compare our professional pre-service training programmes with the widely acclaimed Cambridge CELTA (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of BEd, PGCTE and CELTA programmes

	BEd – Teaching of English (Elective)¹	PGCTE (First Semester)²	CELTA³
<i>Entry requirement</i>	a) 50% marks either in Bachelor’s degree and/or in the Master’s degree b) Or, any other equivalent qualification	a) MA in English with 55% marks or equivalent b) MA in allied discipline with 55% marks (Education, Linguistics, Mass Communication or Psychology)	a) Min 20 years old with first degree or equivalent b) Proficiency level of C1 in English (7–8 Band IELTS)
<i>Curriculum content</i>	a) Creating classroom environment conducive to learning b) Understand nature, characteristics and use of English c) Teaching and evaluation of language skills d) Methodologies and techniques of teaching English e) Lesson planning f) Use of teaching aids	a) Six courses from ‘English language teaching’, ‘Linguistics’, ‘Modern grammar’, ‘Phonetics and spoken English’, ‘Literature’ b) Practice teaching	a) Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context b) Language analysis and awareness c) Language skills d) Planning and resources for different teaching contexts d) Developing teaching skills and professionalism
<i>Duration (full-time)</i>	One year (part of taught BEd)	Four months	Four weeks

As against the CELTA, neither the BEd programme nor the PGCTE has any ELP stipulation as an entry requirement. This is a major shortcoming in that it is anything but rational to train candidates with unproven ELP levels as NNETS.

Neither do any of the courses include any language development for teachers (LDT) component. While CELTA may have good reason for this because it already has an ELP stipulation as an entry requirement, this is a serious omission in the other two courses which have no such stipulation and do not allocate any curricular effort to LDT either.

¹ Adapted from BEd course of Punjab University, Chandigarh

² Adapted from PGDTE (First Semester), English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. <http://www.efluniversity.ac.in/>

³ Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Adapted from the official Cambridge English website: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/21816-celta-syllabus.pdf>

There is also a wide difference in the duration of training. An analysis of the curriculum content reveals the far sharper, need-based focus of CELTA on classroom teaching compared to that of the PGCTE, which includes much curricular effort in all its five courses, with little immediate classroom relevance for a NNEST on the threshold of a career in ELT.

Where CELTA really scores over our indigenous pre-service training programmes is in assessment, particularly with that of the practicum. While the teaching practices for both BEd and PGCTE are largely assessed based on often imprecise guidelines that leave much scope for impressionistic and subjective evaluation, the entire CELTA assessment is criterion-referenced, with its primary focus on the practicum. Even assessment of the accompanying written work and professional development is classroom-related.

Altogether, the CELTA assessment framework is a fine example of positive backwash, in that the total of 41 classroom best practices identified by Cambridge University and listed under three headings ('planning', 'teaching practice' and 'professional development') constitute its 'tick-box' style assessment criteria which significantly drive classroom teaching.

A sample of the criteria is given below.

Planning (total 13 criteria):

- ordering activities so that they achieve lesson aims
- selecting, adapting or designing materials, activities, resources and technical aids appropriate for the lesson
- ensuring balance, variety and a communicative focus in materials, tasks and activities
- analysing language with attention to form, meaning and phonology and using correct terminology
- anticipating potential difficulties with language, materials and learners

Teaching practice (total 25 criteria):

- teaching a class with an awareness of the needs and interests of the learner group
- teaching a class with an awareness of learning styles and cultural factors that may affect learning
- establishing good rapport with learners and ensuring they are fully involved in learning activities
- providing accurate and appropriate models of oral and written language in the classroom
- managing the learning process in such a way that lesson aims are achieved

Professional development (total 3 criteria):

- noting their own teaching strengths and weaknesses in different teaching situations in the light of feedback from learners, teachers and teacher educators
- reflecting on and evaluating their plans in the light of the learning process and suggesting improvements for future plans
- participating in and responding to feedback.

We need to appreciate that the fourth criterion under ‘Teaching practice’ (‘providing accurate and appropriate models of oral and written language in the classroom’) is of special relevance in an L2 context because L2 users must predominantly rely on models provided by their teachers (Saville-Troike, 2012: 34).

Perhaps the greatest advantage of such detailed listing is that the assessment criteria are ‘clear, accessible and transparent’, ensuring that no teacher is ‘surprised by the criteria used in their assessment’ (Bolitho, 2013: 12). Although such box-ticking of competences can distract an assessor from the ‘big picture’ of a lesson, these checklists serve as useful evidence while recording the holistic impression, or a more complete view, in the assessment template.

Addressing fault lines

Almost since Independence, we have viewed English in India through a politico-emotional prism, clouding our vision and, thus, precluding any pragmatic policymaking. There is, first of all, a need to shed this emotional and political baggage and view English as a value addition, ‘as an element of basic literacy’, and as a ‘functional’ or ‘working language’ (Bolitho, 2016).

Second, there is a need to separate ‘language competence’ and ‘proficiency’ from much that has systematically obfuscated ELT and teacher training in Indian academia. Most pre-service training in the Indian context, by default, stresses the development of ‘language awareness’, pedagogy and the teaching of ‘literature in English’ as the natural way to ELP and ELT. The absence of any proficiency examinations only seems to endorse and perpetuate this anomaly.

While the National Curriculum Framework 2005 highlights language proficiency and communicative competence as ‘critical factors’ for teachers (NCERT, 2005: 36), it is silent on measurable standards.

We cannot expect to develop ELP unless we begin testing it. There have been several false starts in our country to introduce proficiency testing, but these seem to have petered out in no time because of an apparent lack of will. It is standard practice in schools the world over to ‘teach to the test’ and to ‘test to learn’. Simply put, only proficiency testing can beget proficiency teaching.

As part of fostering such positive backwash, we need to consider proficiency standards for English teachers in the country. In the absence of any official

standard, we might adopt CEFR B1 as the minimum ‘communicative competence’ for teachers as recommended by Cambridge Assessment, along with C1 as the target level, being the minimum required in an undergraduate (Graddol, op. cit.: 95).

Third, we must recognise ELP as the ‘key quality in Preset or Inset’, along with the importance of ‘initial teacher education’ in the overall value chain, since ‘only quality can beget quality’ (Bolitho, 2016). It needs to be clearly understood that it is not possible to improve delivery in ELT without clear entry standards for teacher education, and this unambiguously underscores the need to ‘vet the quality of entrants’ (Bolitho, 2016).

Fourth, our PRESETT and INSET need a rigorous review. PRESETT, in particular, should admit only candidates who achieve CEFR B1 in an entrance proficiency test. Alternatively, the PRESETT may be run in two phases. Initially, candidates may be admitted based on their qualifications and interview, but should then attend a four-week LDT programme that focuses on nine areas: four language skills and four systems (grammar, lexis, phonology, spoken and written discourse), plus metalanguage, required to be part of a teacher’s vocabulary. At the end of four weeks, they should take a proficiency test, and only candidates who achieve a minimum of CEFR B1 should attend the teacher training in phase two.

Another option is for our Regional Institutes of English and the EFL-U to add an LDT programme to their repertoire of courses to allow lateral entry into PRESETT for candidates who achieve the desired proficiency scores. We need to appreciate that any such proficiency stipulation is likely to impact robustly on the environment, encouraging aspirants to develop their ELP.

The duration of our PRESETT, and INSET too, needs to be reduced to a maximum of six weeks, which is only possible if the curriculum content is made much more classroom-focused, along with an assessment framework that objectively drives best classroom practices. At the same time, recognising the significance of language competence among NNESTs in an L2 context, and the prevalent low proficiency levels, all teacher training should also include an LDT component to revitalise proficiency levels.

Conclusion

The aspirations–reality mismatch in the ELT context in India is the direct outcome of flawed policymaking that has failed to accept the need for language proficiency stipulations for teachers. As a consequence, our teacher training programmes annually expend vast resources on training teachers who lack proficiency levels widely recognised as the minimal prerequisite.

In addition to shedding our emotional and political baggage that has long hampered any hard-nosed policymaking relating to the status of both English and ELT in the country, we need to seriously review the structure of all our teacher training: one, to allow the vetting of entrants; two, to revise the curriculum content

for a much sharper classroom focus; and, three, to revamp the assessment framework, thus paving the way for positive backwash that should drive best classroom practices.

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Theme two

**Monitoring and evaluating
quality**

Challenges of monitoring and evaluating large scale teacher education projects: PEELI

Sobia Nusrat, Project Manager, Punjab Education and English Language Initiative, British Council, Pakistan

Abstract

This paper discusses the issues and challenges faced in creating and implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework for large-scale projects, with emphasis on PEELI, the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative, a teacher training project aiming to improve the ability of 180,000 Pakistani government school teachers to teach through the medium of English. PEELI was launched by the British Council to support the implementation of the Government of Punjab's policy of introducing English Medium Instruction across all government schools in the province.

The paper focuses on PEELI's approach towards monitoring and evaluation, how it measures progress against its goals and tracks the impact of its various interventions including face-to-face and online training and self-access learning opportunities for teachers, teacher educators and education managers. After presenting a few highlights from the monitoring and evaluation findings so far, the paper talks about the various challenges involved in assessing the project's impact and ways in which PEELI is addressing them.

English Medium Instruction (EMI) policy in Punjab

In March 2009, the Government of Punjab (GoP) introduced English as a medium of instruction in government schools across Punjab. The policy was subsequently amended in February 2014 with Urdu reinstated as the medium of instruction for Grades 1–3 and English medium starting from Grade 4. GoP's argument in support for EMI is founded on the assumption that teaching students in English from the primary level will facilitate a smoother transition to secondary schooling, leading to higher levels of comprehension and 'use' of subject knowledge. The teaching and mastery of Urdu (as well as vernacular languages) is of great importance, but at the same time it is also clear that English is needed to enable young people to develop the skills and knowledge needed to capitalise on opportunities in an increasingly competitive globalised economy.

The teaching and learning of English and through English faces many challenges, however, such as a lack of adequate training opportunities and support systems for teachers; a weak long-term framework for teacher development; little or no linkage between curricula and textbooks; and a teaching model based on rote learning with insufficient emphasis on the acquisition of communication skills

through activity-based, child-centred approaches (Powell-Davies and Khalid, 2012). In 2013, British Council Pakistan administered the British Council's **Aptis** English test to 2,008 primary and middle school teachers in government and private schools in Punjab and found that:

- 56 per cent of government school teachers tested lacked basic English knowledge and skills, and a majority of the remaining teachers had only a beginners' level of English (PEELI Baseline report, 2013)
- the Society for Advancement of Education's (SAHE) report, 'Policy and practice: teaching and learning in English in Punjab schools' (2013), which was based on an observation of 126 lessons of maths, science and English in government schools, also indicates that teachers' English competence is a major concern, notably in maths and science lessons.

Moving towards EMI then creates a risk that student learning outcomes could actually fall, as children and teachers struggle to engage with lesson content delivered in a language that they may not be familiar with or confident in using. Therefore, to implement EMI effectively there is a dual need to improve the overall quality of teaching to facilitate better learning, and to improve levels of English competence and confidence among teachers so that they can deliver content in maths, science and other subjects effectively (PEELI One Year On Report, 2014).

PEELI – Punjab Education and English Language Initiative

Responding to these needs, in 2013 the British Council launched PEELI in conjunction with the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), the apex institution for the capacity development of educators across Punjab. PEELI is a five-year project that aims to improve the ability of 180,000 primary and middle school teachers to teach English as a subject, and to strengthen the ability of middle school teachers of maths, science and computer science to teach their subjects through the medium of English. Overall, PEELI will be helping 300,000 teachers across Punjab improve their English language skills.

PEELI's contribution is targeted at providing training, resources and self-directed learning platforms for not only teachers and teacher educators but also district officials and head teachers. PEELI's training is embedded into GoP's annual training calendar for educators and is integrated into all promotion-linked, induction and professional development training carried out by DSD. PEELI also collaborates with development partners and other stakeholders to ensure that the project is aligned with ongoing systemic reform initiatives and contributes strategically to the government's ambitions for improving the quality of education in Punjab.

PEELI's theory of change

PEELI's theory of change (Figure 1) defines the pattern of interdependent building blocks required to bring about the longer-term aims of the project, i.e. better-quality teaching which supports better student learning outcomes.

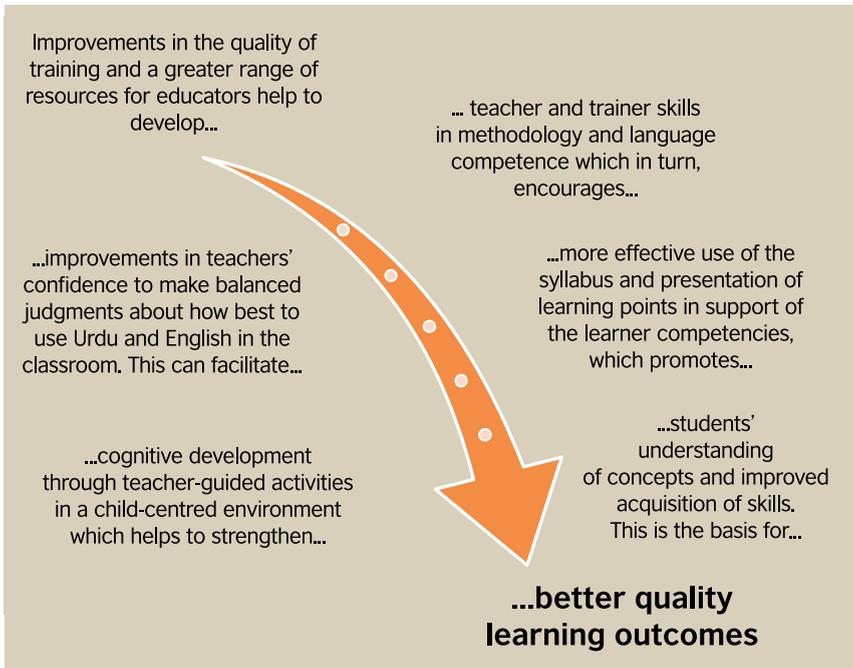


Figure 1: PEELI's theory of change

To meet these objectives, PEELI is working towards creating and implementing a holistic continuous professional development (CPD) framework (Figure 2) for educators as well as focusing on the institutional capacity building of DSD to maintain and expand the framework across Punjab.



Figure 2: PEELI's approach

PEELI's activities

Face-to-face training: One of the fundamental components of PEELI, the project is implementing a wide range of face-to-face training to enable teacher educators and education managers to train and provide ongoing support to teachers, enabling them to deliver high-quality lessons in the classroom using EMI.

PEELI's training courses are delivered by a team of highly trained training consultants. Extracts from GoP's official textbooks are embedded in PEELI training materials as source material, and the training courses engage participants in microteaching to develop their confidence levels and enable them to apply the skills and knowledge gained during the training in their classrooms.

Skype tutor groups: PEELI is also delivering monthly online tutor groups to district teacher educators (DTEs) who go on to mentor primary school teachers in schools and during professional development (PD) days organised by DSD. These tutor groups are designed to help the DTEs develop their mentoring and training skills. (Punjab has 4,000 DTEs who are part of the teacher educator tool of DSD. DTEs are responsible for monitoring, mentoring and providing training support to primary school teachers. Each DTE is assigned 15–20 schools in their districts.)

Self-access learning platform: Crucial to the success of the face-to-face training delivered by PEELI is the creation of a strong self-access platform which provides educators with the necessary tools to build on the skills and knowledge acquired in the training. To this effect, PEELI has set up six pilot resource centres across Punjab. The resource centres offer printed materials for teaching methodology as well as language improvement and touch-screen computers with internet connectivity to help educators access the British Council's extensive range of resources for teachers and learners. They also provide videoconferencing facilities which are being used to conduct Skype tutor groups for DTEs.

PEELI has also designed a series of teach training videos to support educators in addressing issues such as implementing EMI in the subject classroom; teaching methodology; learner-centred, activity-based lessons; and classroom management. These video resources are in completion phase and will be distributed in a variety of formats using different technologies across the province.

Institutional capacity building of DSD: Central to PEELI's strategy is the institutional capacity development of DSD to manage a province-wide system of continuous professional development. Based on a thorough needs analysis, PEELI is conducting a series of material development workshops to support DSD staff in producing better-quality teacher education content. Similar interventions are planned to build DSD's competencies in the areas of planning and monitoring and evaluation.

Progress so far

PEELI has made significant progress towards achieving its objectives over the last year and a half, having delivered face-to-face and online training to as many as

6,325 educators in 32 districts of Punjab as shown in Figure 3. The master trainers and DTEs trained by PEELI have been delivering cascade training to teachers, enabling PEELI content and methodology to reach more than 100,000 teachers.

Training participants

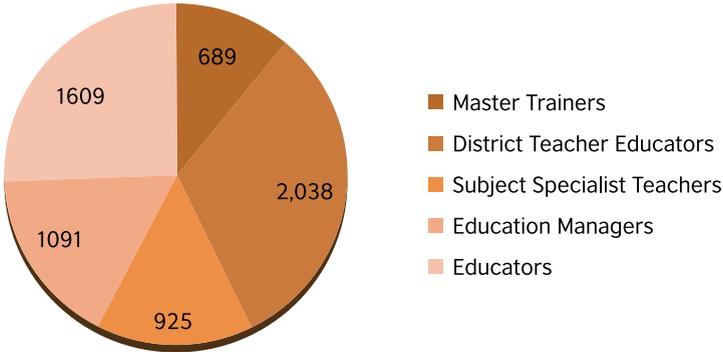


Figure 3: Numbers trained

Monitoring impact

Essentially, PEELI is a process project, which is developing in response to the needs of the target groups. What this means in practice is that the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework plays a crucial role in providing feedback to the project team on areas of positive impact and potential areas of concern that may require adjustments. To ensure robust M&E of its interventions and the results delivered through them, PEELI is collecting data on progress against the project’s logical framework, analysing it and incorporating any lessons learned.

To assess its impact, PEELI is using the British Council’s project logic model (Figure 4).

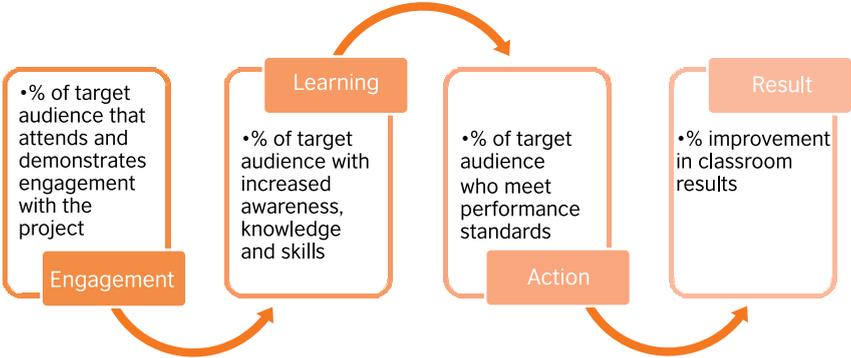


Figure 4: British Council’s logic model for assessing impact

Figure 5 shows the tools that form a part of PEELI’s M&E framework and are being used to measure impact at different stages of the logic model.

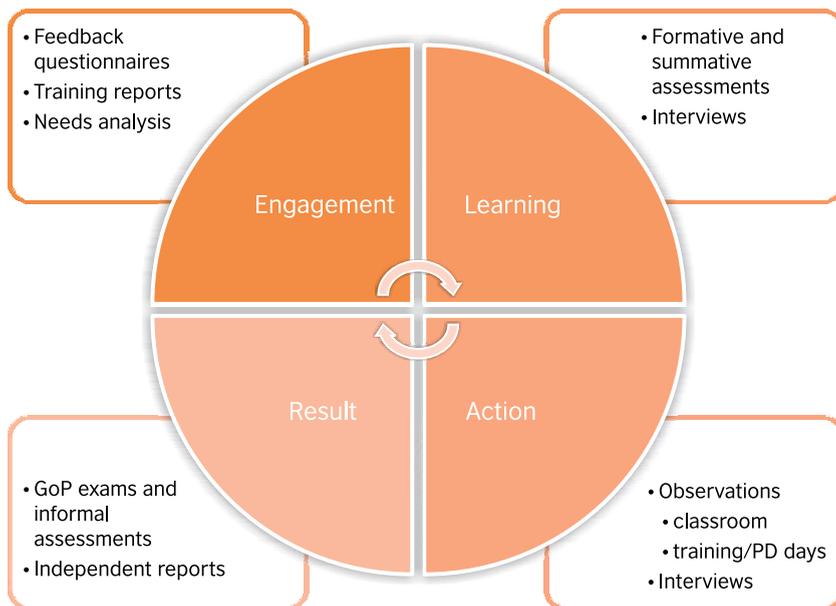


Figure 5: PEELI’s monitoring and evaluation framework

Engagement: To measure audience engagement, PEELI administers feedback questionnaires after each of its interventions. Apart from standard questions related to the quality and relevance of the training attended, the questionnaire also asks participants to reflect on how their teaching/training practices will change as a result of the training and to what extent it encouraged them to use English in the classroom. PEELI’s training consultants submit a report after completing training to comment on their relevance and suggest areas for improvement. In addition, PEELI has been gathering needs analyses data from master trainers and DTEs through questionnaires and focus group discussions to understand their requirements and incorporate them into its interventions.

Learning: To gauge the knowledge and skills gained by training participants, PEELI has started conducting summative assessments – assessment of participants where the focus is on the outcome of a programme – as part of its training. Learning levels of participants are also being assessed through interviews. In the coming months, formative and summative assessments will become a part of all face-to-face and online training conducted by PEELI and will be administered in collaboration with DSD.

Action: PEELI's classroom and training observation tool was drafted on the basis of National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan which has a total of ten standards focusing on three equally important areas: knowledge (what the teacher knows), disposition (the teacher's behaviour, attitudes and values) and performance (what the teacher can do and should be able to do). The tools were developed by the PEELI team and training was provided to SAHE researchers on how to observe teachers and trainers effectively.

Result: PEELI works with the understanding that several factors above and beyond teacher training and mentoring impact classroom results. It focuses on improving teachers' learning and classroom practice with the belief that this can make a positive contribution to learning outcomes in the long term.

Main findings from the first round of monitoring and evaluation activities

PEELI is working in partnership with the Society of Advancement of Education (SAHE), a non-profit research organisation based out of Lahore, Punjab to carry out many of its M&E activities. PEELI's M&E activities have been concentrated in seven districts of Punjab so far identified on the basis of regional variance in developmental levels and have been carried out in close co-ordination with DSD. Some of the main findings are highlighted below.

Of the total training participants, 84 per cent felt that PEELI's training events helped them meet their learning objectives; 87 per cent felt they acquired new skills and knowledge from attending the trainings.

Of the 36 PEELI-trained subject specialists and educators observed, nearly 50 per cent made an attempt to create opportunities for creative and critical thinking of students and foster co-operation and collaboration among them. A similar percentage made an effort to listen and respond to learners' contributions and gave students an opportunity to participate in group/pair work. Despite the limited sample size, these findings can be used as an indication for the positive impact of PEELI's training. The ability of teachers to effectively use an appropriate mix of English and the local language of learners is a major area for improvement and requires further work.

DTEs who have attended PEELI training generally show a strong understanding of activity-based learning while conducting training. They also reported an improvement in their confidence levels when delivering training in English after attending PEELI's training. Skype tutor groups are helping DTEs build upon their training skills further. A majority of DTEs observed also felt they would benefit more with increased duration and frequency of PEELI's training.

Successful implementation of EMI requires the buy-in and support of head teachers and education managers and PEELI. Fifty-six per cent of head teachers who have received PEELI's training on leadership in an EMI environment said that, while EMI is very beneficial, its implementation is fraught with challenges, such as the inconsistent government policy, lack of training support and low levels of

English-level competence of teachers. Results of assessments carried out during training show that education managers are able to develop comprehensive action plans for implementing EMI at their schools. However, a majority of them fail to convert these plans into action due to lack of mentoring and access to resources at the school level (PEELI M&E Draft Report, 2015).

Challenges of monitoring impact

Definition of quality. Achieving quality at scale is a huge challenge for a project such as PEELI which aims to impact hundreds and thousands of teachers across one of the five largest education systems in the world. Despite the multitude of stakeholders working towards the achievement of this goal in Punjab, there is lack of consensus on the actual definition of quality. Currently, the focus of the GoP and its roadmap monitoring mechanism led by McKinsey is on assessing quality through formal and informal assessment of student learning. PEELI on the other hand is more concerned with the development of students as whole persons, enabling them to become creative and productive citizens of society.

Diluted impact of the cascade model. A teaching force that believes in a child-centred approach towards learning is therefore of foremost importance. While PEELI cannot work with teachers at an individual level due to limited resources, it is helping develop the capacity of GoP to train them in adopting a teaching approach that makes learning interesting for students. In training master trainers and DTEs, PEELI is aware of the diluted impact of a cascade model, and to counteract this it is working with DSD to increase the duration and frequency of its interventions with teacher educators. At the same time, it is putting in place self-access resources which complement and supplement the cascade training delivered to teachers and finding ways to encourage teachers to make use of these resources. Carrying out periodic needs analyses of the target audiences is enabling PEELI to refine its interventions and deepen the breadth of its engagement with them.

Limited resources. A limitation of resources affects PEELI's M&E activities as well, since the impact on only a small group can be measured. In the absence of a control group, it is difficult to isolate the contribution of PEELI towards attitudinal and behavioural change among educators. In its next round, PEELI will be working closely with DSD to include its indicators in GoP's M&E system, and also follow cohorts of teachers and educators to track their progress over the course of the project.

System-wide alignment. In addition, PEELI is moving towards creating a system-wide alignment between the efforts of the various players working towards education sector reform in Punjab to strengthen not only the teacher education system but to influence change at the policy level and help create closer alignment between the curriculum, textbooks, teacher training and assessments.

As PEELI evolves as a project, so do the challenges surrounding its implementation. Continued monitoring and evaluation of its activities and impact is therefore essential for PEELI to progress towards achieving its goals.

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CBB project impact assessment: Were the eight years of distance teacher training worth it?

Richard Lunt, Consultant

Dr Lesley Dick, English Projects Manager, British Council
Sri Lanka

Abstract

The Council for Business with Britain/British Council project, approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and working through a network of government centres, delivers a distance self-access course built around the Teacher Knowledge Test (TKT), with portfolio tasks and mentor-led workshops, in 29 locations throughout Sri Lanka. Previous evaluations focused on the ultimate target beneficiaries, the pupils, but proved problematic. In 2014 a further evaluation focused instead on teacher classroom behaviour. Central to this was a series of classroom observations, where the observer did not know whether the teacher being observed had followed the course or not or, if she had followed it, whether that was recent or more distant. The results showed a clear shift among the trained teachers away from teacher-focused classes, and far higher levels of student participation.

Sri Lankan context

Sri Lanka is a small country for the South Asian region, only 270 miles north to south and 140 miles at its widest, with a population of 21 million. The Ministry of Education (MoE) works through the nine provinces, divided into districts and then further into a total of 105 zones. There are around 11,000 schools teaching 1.7 million primary and 2.3 million secondary pupils, with 22,000 state school English teachers. Sri Lanka has achieved adult literacy of well over 90 per cent, and has met all the Millennium Development Goals related to education. Nonetheless, there are areas of educational performance that the government and employers would wish to see greatly improved.

The Ministry of Finance and Planning's 'Mahinda Chintana' (the planning framework of the previous government) aims for all children to leave school with 'functional skills' in English and mathematics, and urges that 'all teachers use their skills and knowledge to engage children and young people as partners in learning' (Department of Planning, 2010: 114). So a more participatory approach is desired, leading to students being able to actually *use* English. As an example of expressed employers' needs, a report from the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka sees English as 'the most scarce primary skill' for new recruits at managerial and operational level (MG Consultants, 2010: 33). There is a gap between the aspirations of government and society, and actual student performance. In 2011, 270,000 candidates took English O Level and under 45

per cent achieved a pass grade. There was substantial inequality within this too. In central Colombo zone, over 82 per cent passed, while in agricultural areas of the Eastern dry zone such as Monaragala, pass rates were in the 20s (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Project description

The project is funded by the Council for Business with Britain (CBB), approved by the MoE, and delivered by the British Council. In its current form, the programme started in 2006 in eight locations, and is now delivered in 29 through an existing government network of 30 Regional English Support Centres (RESCs) spread around the country. These have historically both been supported by British Council projects and supported them in turn as providers of staff and premises for training.

The goals of the training are to upgrade the English of pupils through improving teacher training and to redress the imbalance in rural and urban quality of education. Each cohort had six trainees (ten from this year). They receive distance material for self-study and are supported in regular workshops by their mentors, who are RESC staff. This keeps costs down and minimises issues of travel and attendance. At the end of the six-month course the trainees take the University of Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), which helps with motivation and gives them something to take pride in. The syllabus is driven by the three modules of TKT (syllabus available at www.cambridgeenglish.org), but perhaps the most important element is the portfolio, which has tasks which encourage teachers to apply their increased knowledge to their classroom practice. Teachers are also observed by the mentors three times: pre-course, end of course, and three months post-course. The MoE is happy to back the project because it supports delivery of the Sri Lankan curriculum.

The mentors receive training on the course itself, on teacher training and in observation skills. They also meet annually to discuss progress and the next delivery, and to have further training. While there is some element of a shallow cascade as mentors follow the course before delivering it, the fundamental model is self-study, not cascade training. Still, this shallowness in the cascade element stops dilution of the messages and has been seen to work well in the Sri Lankan context (Hayes, 2002; Kennett, 2005). As of 2014, 60 mentors had been trained, and 1,400 teachers and 100,000 pupils reached (counting only those pupils taught in the year their teacher took the course).

Monitoring and evaluation history

Monitoring was needed initially to check that delivery and assessment were running properly, but it is expensive to cover rural areas, and there was still a war being fought for the first three years. Nonetheless, monitoring, including peer monitoring (RESC on RESC), has been conducted every year and has fed into the annual mentor training workshop conducted at the start of each annual project cycle. The monitoring reports have included observation of study sessions, checking of paperwork, focus groups with mentors and trainees, and review of portfolio work and its assessment. There was also a larger monitoring report

commissioned in 2013, but again that focused on activity and procedure rather than impact.

Two exercises have been carried out to measure impact on the ultimate target of the project – the pupils. Both proved problematic. The first, conducted in 2010, looked at teachers who followed the course in 2009–10, comparing the results of their Grade 9 and 10 classes in December 2008 and December 2009. Results suggested a positive effect on exam results caused by following the course. However, the sample was small due to incomplete data collection and it did not compare the same students from one year to the next, so improvements could be due to different students rather than different methodology. In the second assessment (2012), 200 pupils from ten schools in a spread of locations were tested on paper with the Oxford Placement Test, some in classes taught by teachers following the course and some in control classes. Half that number also had their oral skills tested. The pupils under project-trained teachers showed more improvement in oral skills than those in the control groups, while in the written paper there was no significant change. As most of the tests were only three months apart (due to a mismatch between the project cycle and the school year), any significant change in the latter would have been surprising, but the significant change in oral skills in a relatively short time was highly encouraging.

2014 evaluation: methodology

‘Trained teachers will display a more communicative classroom methodology than non-trained teachers, and this will be sustained by those who followed the programme three plus years ago.’

This research question for the evaluation links back to the government’s Mahinda Chintana hope that ‘all teachers use their skills and knowledge to engage children and young people as partners in learning’ (Department of Planning, op. cit.), in the belief that this will in turn lead to better learning and better results to match the communicative needs of individuals and the country. Whether it will lead to better exam results is a moot point, dependent on the exams conducted as well as the training. However, the government plans to introduce testing of speaking and listening at O Level within the next two years, so impact on exam results is likely to be more significant then.

A letter was distributed via RESCs asking trained teachers to copy their pre-course and immediate post-course observation sheets (which are in their portfolios); 127 complete sets were sent to the British Council and analysed to track improvements against the observation criteria. The letter also included a questionnaire, which those who had followed the course in 2011 or earlier were asked to complete and, again, return to their RESC for forwarding; 143 were collated. In addition, five RESCs were chosen to arrange observations of three teachers each, and focus groups with the most recent batch and with a group of teachers who had not followed the course. They were chosen to give a spread of ethnicity and socio-economic status.

2014 evaluation: findings

Both the pre-course and post-course observations showed a rounded average class size of 29 pupils. Some changes had been made to the observation sheet since the start of the programme, but 24 consistent criteria were collated. Each criterion is marked 'Yes', 'No', or 'To some extent' (TSE). As seen in Table 1, every one of the 24 indicators sees improvement of 10+ percentage points.

Table 1: Observation sheet criteria and results

	Indicator	Percentage point improvement
1	Teacher encouraged student talk and controlled teacher talk	54.6
2	Interaction patterns were varied	53.4
3	Teacher clearly signposted the lesson throughout, letting students know what was happening	51.9
4	There was a logical progression to the lesson	50.0
5	The lesson was well planned with timings and a clear procedure	47.7
6	New language was presented clearly and correctly	41.9
7	A variety of activities was used. Pace was varied to suit students' needs	40.5
8	Instructions were clear and checked	39.7
9	Teacher checked understanding of target language	38.3
10	Student errors were dealt with at appropriate times in the lesson	37.8
11	Timing was observed and managed well throughout the class	35.4
12	The coursebook was suitably adapted to the learners' needs/ level	34.6
13	Students were given opportunity to practise new language through spoken and written activities	33.6
14	Teacher encouraged students to help and teach each other	31.0
15	Teacher elicited information and language from students whenever possible	28.1
16	Teacher monitored unobtrusively and gave support when needed	26.9
17	Teacher used board effectively and wrote new language up	25.5
18	There was a positive classroom atmosphere	24.6
19	Teacher set the scene and engaged the students' interest in the topic	22.5
20	Aims were clear	22.1
21	Teacher gave students the answers in different ways and at appropriate times in the lesson	19.7

22	Activities were planned for group and pair work	18.2
23	Mother tongue was used effectively but not overused	13.8
24	Teacher used mime, gesture/body language	9.9

The improvement was greater than 50 percentage points with four of the indicators, and greater than 20 percentage points with 20 of the 24; this is especially impressive when you consider that eight indicators were already showing a ‘yes’ score of over 50 per cent pre-course. This is seen more clearly by comparing Figures 1 and 2. It is immediately striking what an improvement is recorded.

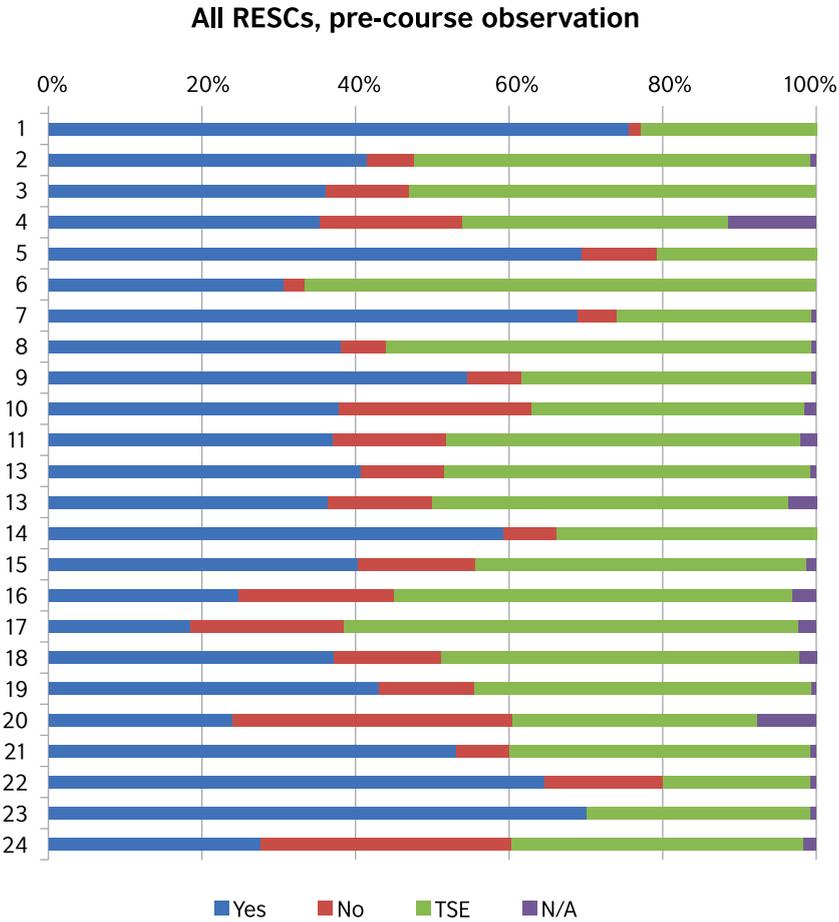


Figure 1: Pre-course observation

All RESCs, post-course observation

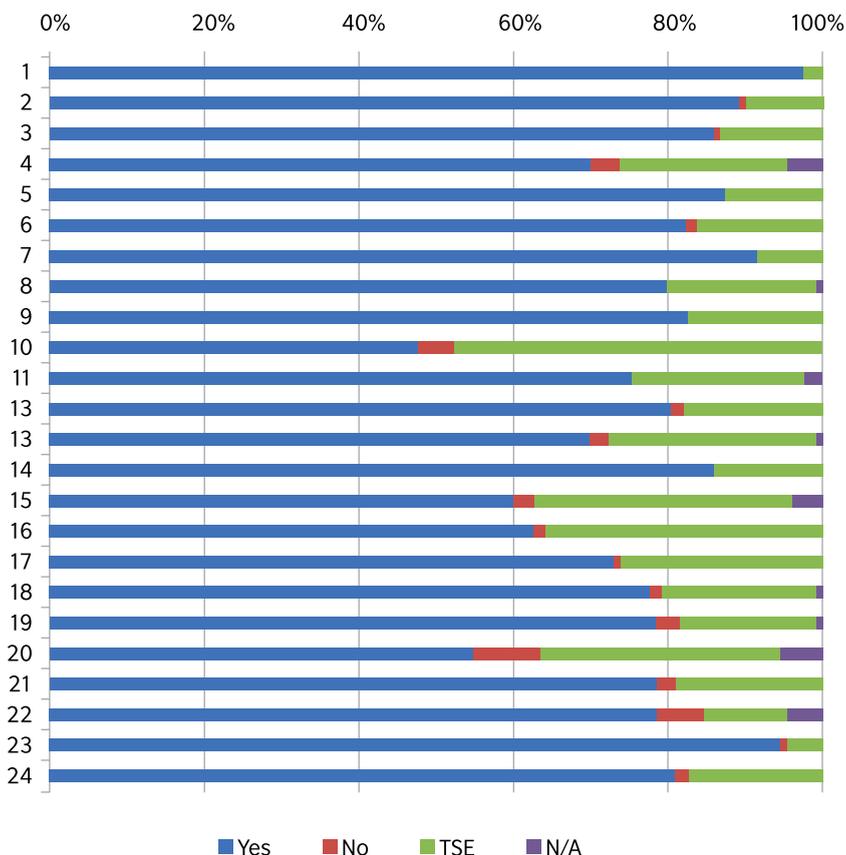


Figure 2: Post-course observation

This strong improvement appears to be across the board, affecting lesson planning, classroom management and an increased student-focus/involvement. The latter is witnessed most spectacularly by criterion 1, which had the lowest ‘yes’ score pre-course at 18.5 per cent. It saw the greatest improvement, increasing by just under 55 percentage points to 73 per cent. At the same time, the ‘no’ responses to this item fell from 20 per cent (higher than the ‘yes’ response initially) to under 1 per cent. This indicates a very strong shift from teacher-centred to student-centred teaching. Similarly criterion 14 started with more ‘no’ than ‘yes’ responses (36.4 per cent to 24 per cent) and saw a marked fall in the ‘no’ responses as well as an increase in the ‘yes’ ones (moved to 8.5 per cent and 55 per cent). This indicator in fact has the highest level of ‘no’ responses post-course (at 8.5 per cent), meaning all ‘no’ responses fell to single figures.

It could be supposed that the observers, who were the trainers, are not independent and are likely to produce more positive results post-course. This is why independent, blind observations were also carried out; 'independent' in that the observers had not met any of the teachers previously, and 'blind' in that they did not know the status vis-à-vis the training programme of any teacher they observed until after they had observed all three teachers under any RESC. The statuses were:

- not followed the programme (though all hoped to, and were seen as potential candidates by the mentors)
- followed the programme in 2013
- followed the programme in 2011 or earlier.

The observer used the current observation sheet adapted to a five-point Likert scale. For each criterion, 1 was awarded for 'never', 5 for 'frequently/always' and for each teacher the total was added up and divided by the number of criteria scored (some were 'not applicable' in some observations) to give an overall score, shown in Figure 3.

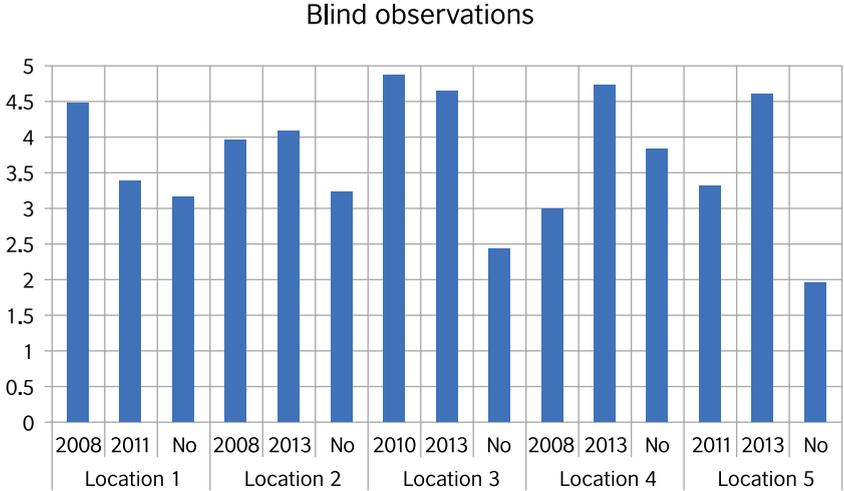


Figure 3: Overall scores following blind observations

After the first three locations, the observer’s impression was that it was the teacher who had followed the course three to five years previously who was the strongest classroom performer, followed by the teacher who had done it the previous year, with the teacher who had not done the course easily identifiable. Computed results agreed as far as the latter is concerned, but not completely about the strongest performer, possibly indicating that the observation sheet could have benefited from differently weighting various criteria. The developing hypothesis – that the benefit of the training takes some time to be fully realised – was somewhat spoiled

by the last two sets of observations. In the final set, the teacher who had followed the course in 2013 clearly performed (and scored) higher than the colleague who had done it earlier, but both outperformed the untrained teacher. In the penultimate set, it was the teacher who had first received the training who scored lowest (and again this was a clear impression). Still, in four out of five locations, the teacher who had not followed the course was readily identifiable and nine out of ten teachers who had received training scored higher in the same area than their colleague who had not. The observations clearly showed a benefit to teaching from following the course.

The observations also recorded classroom activity every five minutes. This is quite a long gap, necessarily as it was one of two tools being used. Results from this measure are reproduced in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

Class activity: No training

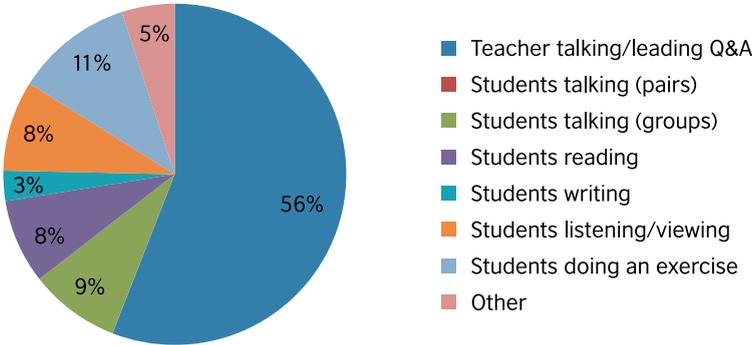


Figure 4: Observation of classroom activity – no training

Class activity: 2013 batch

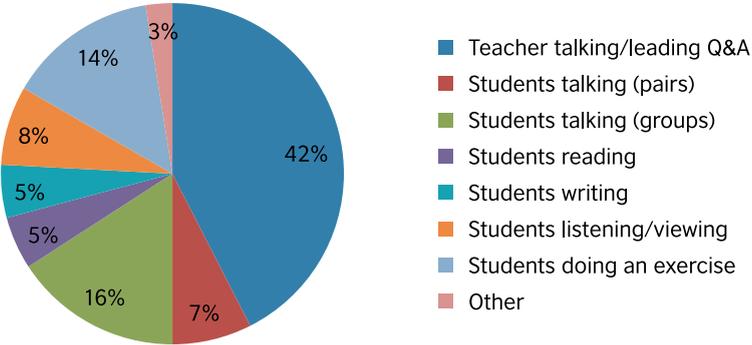


Figure 5: Observation of classroom activity – 2013 batch

Class activity: Pre-2013

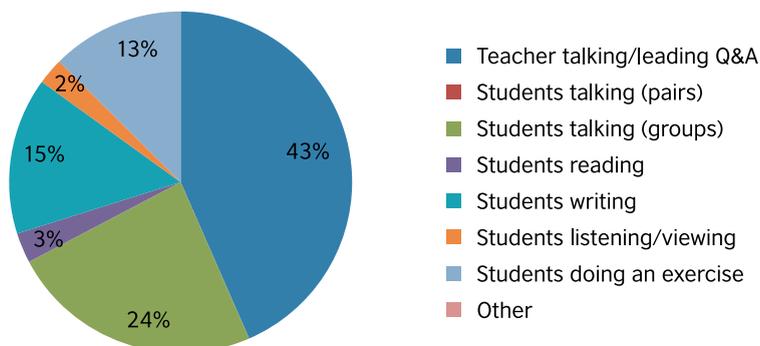


Figure 6: Observations of classroom activity – pre-2013 batch

The first striking difference is that teacher-fronted activity accounts for 56 per cent of the time in the classes of those who have not followed the course, and falls to 43 per cent or 42 per cent in the other two groups. Conversely, student talking rises from 9 per cent to 23 per cent or 24 per cent. The category 'other', which accounts for reading aloud in Figure 4, represents singing (a far more pedagogically justifiable activity) in Figure 5. In conclusion, the independent blind observations confirmed improved performance against the observation criteria among those who have followed the course. Additionally, an activity log showed a significant move from teacher-centred lessons to student-centred ones, in which students were expected to produce far more language.

Turning briefly to the questionnaire and focus groups, a key question in the former concerned content. Teachers were asked to mention which (up to three) areas of the course had been most helpful. Not all teachers responded to this, but Table 2 shows all areas with more than ten responses.

Table 2: Teachers' responses when asked which areas of the course had been most helpful

Rank	Area	Responses
1	Lesson planning	79
2	Classroom management	45
3	Error	43
4	Phonology	36
5	Materials	35
6	Grammar	31

7	Learners	22
8	Language & learning	21
9	Listening	16
10	Speaking	15
11=	Activities	14
11=	Reading	14
13	Writing	10

Lesson planning was the front runner by a considerable distance. (The distance course covered both the TKT and MoE models of lesson planning, which are quite different.) Combining this with the observations, it is clear that the teachers were planning more communicative, child-friendly lessons. While a teacher will always need to think on her feet, ‘planning increases the number of your options – and ... increases your chances of a successful lesson’ (Scrivener, 2005: 109). Classroom management may be a surprise at number two, but it seems teachers are welcoming the chance to rethink this area. Error came next and, of the 43 responses, 23 were specifically about using a correction code for correcting written work. This was mentioned in focus groups, too, and seems to have been something of a ‘light bulb moment’ for the teachers. It is another indication of moving towards more student-led methods. Phonology was not a surprise, as many teachers in Sri Lanka express an anxiety about teaching this, especially word and sentence stress.

Other questions from the questionnaire and the focus groups illustrated:

- a) the dedication of the teachers, who made (or were prepared to make) sacrifices in their home lives and spend a large amount of extra time purely to better themselves as teachers, for the performance of their duties in class, with no thought to personal advancement within the profession
- b) the high regard among teachers for the RESCs and RESC staff, and the service that they provide.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that the trained teachers can be said to be displaying a ‘more communicative methodology’ than the non-trained teachers and the benefits of the training is certainly sustained over a period of three-plus years. Indeed, it may even be that the beneficial effects take some time to be fully realised, and improvement in methodology continues for some time after the course, as ‘new’ routines become more practised and more deeply embedded in the teachers’ classroom repertoire. It would take a larger sample to confirm this, though. Therefore, to answer the question in the title – yes, the eight years have been worth it.

We also think it worth recommending the independent blind observations as a way of confirming these findings in a relatively simple and cost-effective way, while still recognising the importance of the mentors' observations both for reporting purposes and as a record for the teachers to keep for themselves, demonstrating their achievement.

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Teachers' perceptions about monitoring in English in Action (EIA) primary schools

Md. Ashraf Siddique, Senior Research Officer, English in Action

Farhan Azim, Deputy Head of Research Monitoring and Evaluation, English in Action

Abstract

English in Action (EIA) is a nine-year (2008–17) project funded by UK Aid and implemented by a consortium of partners including the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). By 2017 EIA will have reached 25 million learners to improve their communicative competence in English. EIA recognises the importance of monitoring in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning and encourages follow-up actions based on monitoring. This study focuses on exploring EIA teachers' perceptions about classroom monitoring and how it helps them improve. To explore teachers' perceptions about monitoring, the three essential factors of monitoring described by Kiesler and Sproull (1982) were adopted: collection of information (observation), evaluation of information (reflection) and action on results (feedback). Classroom observations and interviews were conducted with primary teachers to explore their perceptions about monitoring. Analysis suggests that teachers perceived monitoring to be a salient feature in ensuring improvement in their pedagogy. However, they felt feedback could be more helpful if it was detailed and more time was spent on it.

Background

According to Kayani, Begum, Kayani and Naureen (2011: 148), 'Adequate, rigorous, inclusive and continuous monitoring' is a vital component of any education programme. The document *Monitoring and Evaluation for Sustainable Communities* (2014) describes monitoring as an ongoing collection of data and analysis during the lifetime of any programme, project or intervention. Similarly, the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2011: 11) refers to monitoring as 'the routine collection and analysis of information to track progress against set plans and check compliance to establish standard'. Barrett (2010) suggests monitoring should aim at measuring the impact of any intervention. Monitoring can be demarcated as an ongoing process of data collection and analysis in order to measure impact and identify issues to make any intervention successful.

As monitoring is a significant component of any project or organisation, projects or organisations have their own monitoring frameworks. For example, the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2011) identifies six steps of monitoring their programmes, which are: 1) identifying the purposes and scopes of the monitoring system, 2) planning for data collection and

management, 3) planning for data analysis, 4) planning for information reporting and utilising, 5) planning for monitoring human resources and capacity building, and 6) preparing the monitoring budget.

Monitoring and the education sector

Narrowing down to monitoring in the education sector, researchers Marriott and Goyder (2009) consider effective monitoring to be a key component of a learning and sustained educational initiative and can improve the working knowledge of educators and administrators which can in turn assist in ‘improving schooling’ and ‘reducing inequalities’. Monitoring in the Bangladeshi education system is led by the Upazila Education Officer (UEO). They undertake ‘full inspection’, covering management, governance and classroom teaching (UNESCO 2004: 45). To strengthen the government monitoring system, non-government support is also visible in the monitoring process in the Bangladeshi education sector. As an example, BRAC, through its large-scale education projects, monitors school improvement, which is similar to the government system (Ministry of the foreign affairs of the Netherlands, 2011: 122). Barrett (ibid.: 15) states that in a large-scale project, participatory evaluation, which means data chosen and recorded by insiders with the help of outsiders, enables monitoring and evaluation ‘to be conducted across large geographies and can build trust and understanding between academic and administrative staff’. In Bangladesh, English in Action (EIA) is a large-scale English language development project, which has developed a participatory monitoring model.

English in Action and monitoring

English in Action is a nine-year long (2008–17) English language education programme which aims to develop the English language competence of 25 million people in Bangladesh to provide better access to the global economy. The project supports teachers with ongoing training and audio-visual and print-based materials for their professional development. Since its inception the project has felt the necessity to develop a monitoring mechanism (Figure 1) to understand the nature of input and measure the output in the classroom. According to the monitoring model of EIA there are two major sources of data:

- 1) training and workshops supported and facilitated by EIA and national ELT experts
- 2) classrooms of government schools which are involved in the EIA project. Evaluation of training is done on the basis of the opinion of the participants and EIA officials. The data on the classrooms is collected through the observations by Government Education Officers and EIA officials (Rahman 2013).

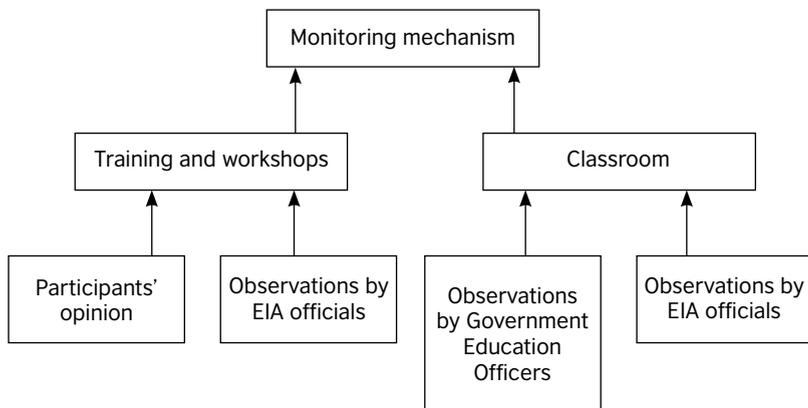


Figure 1: English in Action monitoring design

Methodology

The monitoring of the EIA primary classrooms by Government Education Officers and EIA officials is at the centre of this paper. The paper intends to find out what the primary teachers, involved in EIA interventions, perceive of the classroom monitoring by the Education Officers and EIA officials. Kiesler and Sproull (1982) describe the collection of information (observation), the evaluation of information (reflection) and the action as result (feedback) as the key factors of monitoring. The monitoring tools of EIA used both by the Education Officers and EIA officials have also prioritised the three components. This paper tries to find out the following:

- 1) What are the perceptions of teachers of classroom monitoring?
- 2) How does the monitoring improve their classroom practices?

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations from 30 primary English teachers across seven divisions of Bangladesh.

Findings and discussion

Frequency of visits

In the findings of the study it was reported by two-thirds of the teachers that their classes were observed at least once in two months either by the Education Officers or EIA officials. One third of the teachers reported that their classes were observed at least once in three months. The frequent visits to the classrooms result in 'greater teacher accountability' (Ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, op.cit.). One possible effect of the frequent visits was that teachers were more prepared in the classroom than before. Teachers during the interviews stated:

'Because of the frequent visit by the Education Officers and EIA people I try to make my classes more interactive.' [Teacher Interview 10]

'Before I go to class, I think of the types of questions students might ask.'
[Teacher Interview 22]

Techniques used in the classroom

Education Officers and EIA officials observe the classrooms using the EIA classroom monitoring tool, which focuses on three components: first, the techniques used in the classrooms; second, the materials used in the classrooms; and, finally, feedback provided by the observers. Teachers reported that teaching techniques used in the classrooms were observed and there were discussions between teachers and observers on that. Teachers opined:

'I frequently use group work, as my class is quite large. And it is easy to handle students with group works. Last time I was suggested to use audio for whole-class activities. It might also be effective in the classroom.'
[Teacher Interview 1]

'I use a variety of activities, such as pair work, role play. In the last observation, I was suggested to blend weak and good students, so that students can learn from each other.' [Teacher interview 22]

During the classroom observations for the study it was identified that teachers use group work and pair work as tools for engaging students in interactions (English in Action, 2014). Raja (2012) suggests that group work and pair work are classroom management strategies that can bring positive learning outcomes.

Use of materials

The second key component in the classroom observation tool is the use of the materials. EIA has provided teachers with audio-visual and print-based materials. However, materials are not self-enacting and do not ensure changes (Kurdziolek, 2011). Keeping that in mind, EIA has emphasised teachers' pedagogical knowledge to enable them to use materials to enhance learning. During the interviews, teachers reported that observers do not only identify what materials have been used but also during the reflection session they try to understand why a particular material was used in a particular way, and what other ways it could be used. Teachers mentioned that:

'Observers in discussion talk on the purpose and use of EIA materials.'
[Teacher Interview 4]

'I really find it very helpful as I get to know of diversified ways of using EIA materials.' [Teacher Interview 17]

During the classroom observations, teachers were found to be using EIA materials. The purposes of using the materials were mostly to elicit information from the students. In addition, the EIA quality assurance report (Rahman, 2015) indicated that 45 per cent of the teachers used flash cards or posters every week, and 64 per cent of the teachers used audio in the classroom every week.

Most of the teachers mentioned that comments on their use of materials are important to them as they will enhance their capacity to facilitate learning in the classroom.

Feedback

The final component of the classroom monitoring tool is providing feedback. It is not only the students who need feedback to strengthen their learning but the teachers also need feedback to enhance their professional development. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2012: 3) mentions that ‘accurate feedback based on observation can be a powerful resource for improving teaching and learning’. Providing feedback to the teacher is also considered as a technique to promote effective practices in the classroom (Scheeler, Ruhl and McAfee, 2004). During the classroom observation it was identified that teachers were spending more time in organising students for group work and pair work. During the interview it was stated that in the last observation Education Officers suggested to them to focus more on organising the activities to achieve desired outcomes. One teacher articulated:

‘Three months back, I got feedback on organising group and pair works. But in the last month, I have got feedback on encouraging students to talk more. I will work on it.’ [Teacher Interview 8]

It was also recognised by the teachers that feedback was very helpful for them to improve their classroom teaching.

‘The feedbacks are really helpful. Now I can plan better and get the lesson outcome with less stress.’ [Teacher Interview 11]

Teachers also opined that if more time on giving feedback along with support from head teachers were provided, teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and classroom practices would be improved.

Conclusion

As discussed above, to obtain a holistic picture of the EIA classrooms the classroom monitoring tool focuses on observation, reflection and feedback. Using the tool, observers learn about the classroom practices. Through reflection both the teachers and the observers enrich their understanding of the classrooms, and feedback leads the teachers to further development. Because of regular monitoring, teachers are more prepared to implement their pedagogical knowledge in classrooms. They have increased their use of group work and pair work to enhance classroom interaction. They are also aware of using materials to engage students and reinforce learning. Providing more time in providing feedback and engaging head teachers in the process will benefit further teachers’ professional development.

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Tracking the development of teachers' language assessment literacy online: A case study

Santosh Kumar Mahapatra, Assistant Professor, BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus, India

Abstract

This paper reports a case study in which an effort was made to track the development of the language assessment literacy (LAL) of a group of English teachers after they participated in a needs-based online professional development course on language assessment. The teachers' progress was tracked with the help of various Web 2.0 tools. The collection of data about their learning was closely monitored by the researcher. It was found that the employment of web tools made the collection of relevant information related to the teachers' progress convenient and effective. This paper discusses the online LAL development programme, the process of capturing the development using Web 2.0 tools, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process and a framework for future use.

Background to the study

The process of teacher professional development (TPD) remains incomplete if a record of teachers' progress is not maintained systematically. Keeping a record of professional development (PD) of individual teachers is a challenge that is further multiplied when the PD programme is offered online. Since online PD courses for English language teachers have been gaining popularity in India and other developing countries, it is vital to develop a foolproof mechanism for tracking teachers' progress online so that it can be a part of a national policy. It can be an economical and effective way to help the vast number of English language teachers in India and elsewhere. However, rigorous research is required to arrive at a workable framework for the purpose. The present study was an attempt in this direction. A need-based online course, aiming to develop teachers' ability to design effective assessment tasks, analyse and use assessment results, was designed and offered to a group of ten teachers from different countries including India. Various Web 2.0 tools were employed on the course and to keep a record of the participants' progress.

The rest of this paper is broadly divided into three sections. The following section contains a brief review of relevant literature. Then, there is a section on research methodology and the last section focuses on findings, discussions, implications of the study, suggestions for further research and the conclusion.

A review of relevant research

Defining language assessment literacy

One of the most widely used definitions of assessment literacy was given by Davies (2008: 328) who refers to the 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'principles' required to carry out assessments. For the current study, the 'knowledge', 'skill' and 'principles' were confined to a basic level as the participating teachers did not have any training in language assessment.

Tracking the impact of teacher education programmes

Mathew (2006) rightly pointed out that 'the notion of follow-up evaluation, or rather tracer studies, is comparatively rare' (p. 21) in teacher education research. Very few studies go beyond immediate knowledge and skills tests. According to Vygotsky (1978), internalisation is the last stage of learning. It is a stage of complete understanding in which a person can make use of his or her learning effectively. So the success of any PD programme can be judged by evaluating the indicators of internalisation. It has been claimed by researchers such as Waters (2006) that out of competence, knowledge, belief, attitude and practice, one or more can be measured to trace the impact of a programme on a teacher. It may not be feasible to trace all these factors in a large-scale programme, but it may be adequate to keep track of how teachers' approach to teaching changes and how they make use of the components in their own context.

Using Web 2.0 tools for tracking the impact of teacher professional development programmes

Web 2.0-based TPD courses have been found to have immense potential (Pan and Franklin, 2011; Bustamante and Moeller, 2013; Mahapatra, 2015). However, in all these studies, the focus is on the utility of web tools as platforms of learning and interaction. Jimoyiannis, Tsiotakis, Roussinos and Siorenta (2013) moved a step further and used Web 2.0 tools for guiding teachers' development. The current study utilised them for tracking teachers' development.

Methodology

Research questions

The study tried to address the following questions:

- To what extent is it possible to track the impact of a PD programme on teachers using Web 2.0 tools?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of employing Web 2.0 tools?

Case study approach

A case study approach was found suitable for the study because it was necessary to look minutely into the problem. Only ten teachers participated in the study and a variety of tools were used for collecting data. Moreover, the natural setting was not controlled while collecting data. As a result, the obtained data were holistic and descriptive in nature.

Participants

A group of ten ESL and EFL teachers, of which five were from India and one each from Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran, Mexico and Italy, participated in the study. While four of them taught in college, four others taught in school and two of them taught in other kinds of institutions. The results of a pre-course needs analysis showed that they were extremely motivated, had little training in language assessment and voluntarily requested to be a part of the PD programme.

Tools for data collection

The following tools were used for collecting data for the study:

- **Google Site:** a Google Site was created and used as the main platform for offering the PD programme.
- **Sogosurvey:** this free online survey tool was used for carrying out the pre-course needs analysis.
- **Google Drive:** all the information from the participants was collected and stored through the Google Drive. Study materials including documents, audio and video clips were shared through this and it worked like an electronic portfolio.
- **Voicethread:** the teachers shared their experiences about learning and practices through Voicethread.
- **Google Hangout:** a weekly Google Hangout was organised to keep track of how teachers were using their new learning in the classroom.

Apart from the above, data was collected through a few other Web 2.0 tools such as Jing, Spiderscribe, Vocaroo, etc.

Data collection

The data was collected in several phases. Each phase is briefly described in the following sub-sections.

The professional development programme on language assessment literacy

A need-based six-week PD programme, focusing on language ability, language skills and sub-skills, principles of assessment, designing classroom language assessment tasks, interpretation of assessment scores/results and evaluation and improvement of tasks, was developed and imparted online using various Web 2.0 tools. The teaching materials comprised reading materials, audio lectures and video clips. The participants had to complete a certain number of tasks every week; however, the number varied from one participant to another as it was important to allow the participants some flexibility and respect their busy schedules. All of the participants completed the course.

The programme was based on the framework in Figure 1.

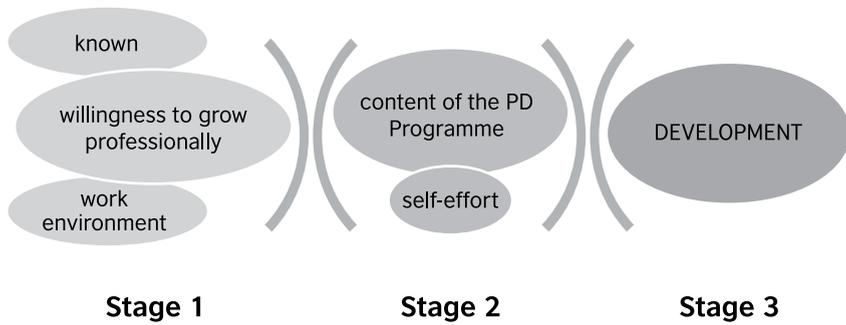


Figure 1: The programme framework

Collection of information about the teachers' progress

Information about the teachers' progress was collected in different ways which are presented below under four sub-headings.

Teachers' stories

All the teachers were asked to orally respond to a set of questions every week during the course. They shared their responses with the researcher and other co-participants through Voxopop. Some of the questions were:

- What did you feel about last week's course content?
- Which of these (course content) do you think you can use very soon in your own classroom?
- Do you want to suggest anything for the next week?

After the course was over, a different set of questions was given to the teachers every fortnight. Some of the sample questions were:

- Did you design any assessment task – which skill/sub-skill?
- What was the task about?
- How did you score your students' responses?
- What about feedback?
- How good do you think were the tasks?

Teachers' reports

The teachers submitted a weekly written report during the programme about how they would apply their knowledge in their own classrooms. These reports were submitted and shared through a Google Document. In fact, each report was a response to a prompt given to them in the form of a question. Some of the questions were:

- How can a teacher use the knowledge of language ability and skills in his/her classroom?
- How should a teacher utilise the new learning if the school authorities don't give freedom?

After the programme was over, the reports became monthly. The questions were converted to situations and the teachers were asked to respond to them. One such situation was:

- A teacher did not know anything about skills and sub-skills of language. She had no idea about assessment of language ability. How do you think her assessment tasks will be different from those prepared by you?

The researcher commented on each response. The participants had the freedom to choose between whether or not to share their responses with others and everyone did.

Teachers' assessment tasks

All ten teachers submitted assessment tasks during and after completing the PD programme. While the submission was weekly during the programme, it became monthly after the programme was over. Along with the submissions, the teachers commented on each other's tasks. After completion of the PD programme, they were asked to orally evaluate the given tasks against a set of criteria which included questions. They were:

- How appropriately are the objective/s written?
- How closely does the task follow the basic principles of assessment?
- How effective is the feedback plan?
- What can make this task even more effective?

The teachers shared their responses on Voicethread.

Real classroom tasks and happenings

After the teachers completed the PD programme, they were requested to share real classroom assessment tasks prepared and used by them. They were asked to share information about assessment criteria, scoring, feedback, analysis of grades, etc. This was a quarterly programme. Out of ten teachers, six have been regularly sharing the required information. Others have been sharing too, but less regularly. The quarterly meeting happens on a Google Hangout during weekends at night.

Findings and discussion

Web 2.0 tools: effective in tracking teacher development

As presented in the following framework, for each teacher, data about teachers' development, in terms of the target areas, collected through different sources were triangulated and common patterns were traced every week. Finally, the assessment literacy levels of each teacher at the beginning and end of the

programme were compared to arrive at the possible impact of the PD programme (Figure 2).

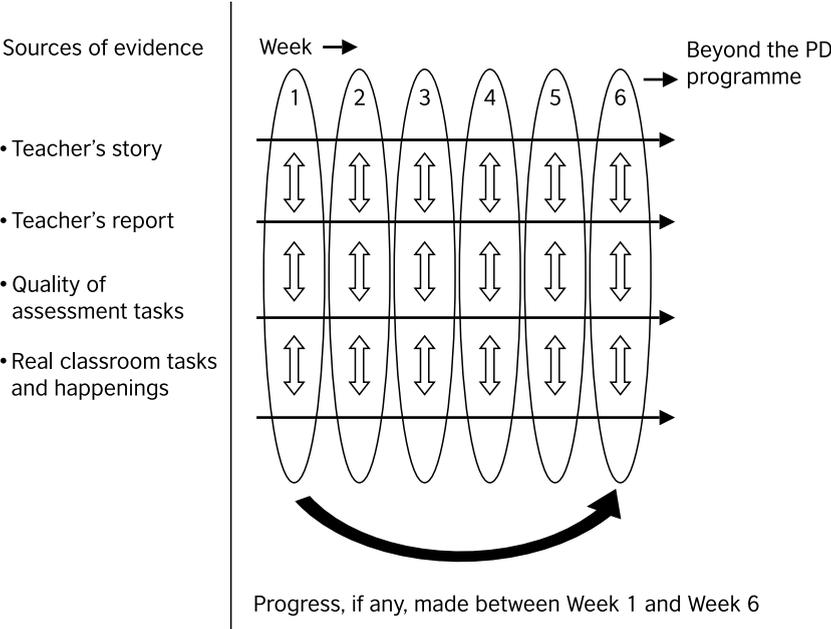


Figure 2: Teachers’ development across the programme

There was observable improvement in the quality of assessment tasks, the teachers’ understanding of the concept of language ability and principles of assessment and their ability to interpret assessment results. The gradual progress of internalisation could be captured through the use of various web tools. The effectiveness of the web tools was measured against a set of four criteria: Utility, Usability, Access and Authenticity. The result of the evaluation is presented in tabular form (Table 1).

Table 1: Evaluation results

Areas of impact	Sources of evidence	Web tools used for tracing the impact	Common changes traced	Evaluation of web tools
Knowledge about language assessment	Teachers' stories and teachers' reports	Voxopop, Google Document and Google Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started recognising skills and sub-skills of language Exhibited some understanding of validity, authenticity and washback 	<p>• Utility: helpful in obtaining most of the data about the teachers' progress but authenticity of the acquired information can be questioned</p> <p>• Usability: easy to use but the teachers were required to pay attention, spend some amount of time and also they needed regular support</p> <p>• Access: easily accessible, free and a few widely used tools</p> <p>• Authenticity: absolutely authentic and credible tools and platforms</p>
Beliefs about assessment	Teachers' stories, teachers' reports and weekly hangouts	Voxopop, Voicethread, Vocaroo, Google Document, Google Hangout, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showed much resistance to the belief that assessment can be a tool for facilitating learning Recognised the importance of involving students in the process 	
Ability to design assessment tasks	Teachers' assessment tasks	Google Document, Google Drive and Voicethread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started developing assessment criteria for individual assessments Could create assessment tasks for different sub-skills Made attempts to offer feedback 	
Classroom assessment practices	Real classroom tasks and happenings	Google Drive and Google Hangout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used a few non-traditional tasks Shared a set of assessment criteria with students in advance 	

It was not possible to obtain objective data on teachers' classroom practices. The web tools, though, made sharing of reflections and remarks easy for the teachers, which were completely dependent on the teachers' own reporting. However, tools like Voxopop, Google Document, Google Drive and Voicethread facilitated the collection of information about the teachers' progress, in terms of knowledge about assessment and ability to design assessment tasks and allowed teachers to do everything at their own convenience. Moreover, the systematic storage of all the data made it easy for the teachers and researcher to revisit those and reflect on the changes in their knowledge, ability and skills. In addition, the constraints of time and place could be overcome with the help of the tools.

The use of Web 2.0 tools is certainly a practical option for tracing teacher learning in the case of in-service programmes. The rapid spread of the internet in India at this point promises a better future. As more teachers get access to the internet, online teacher education programmes will become more popular. There will be better web tools too. However, a lack of honesty and motivation on the part of teachers may hinder these efforts. Nevertheless, these factors are also present in face-to-face programmes, so online tracking of teachers' progress, after an online or face-to-face PD programme, may become the preferred option soon.

Advantages and disadvantages of employing Web 2.0 tools for tracking

Some of the main advantages have already been discussed. Apart from convenience and ease, the accessibility and interactivity are two big advantages. Of course, there are a few disadvantages. Lack of motivation and enthusiasm and access to good internet service on the part of teachers can hinder the sharing of information. Also, if the tools are difficult to use, participants may lose interest in participating and sharing information.

The web tool literacy of teacher educators may determine almost everything related to the integration of tools in teacher education programmes. Thus, it may be pertinent to train teacher educators in using web tools so that they can select appropriate tools and put them to use.

Implications of the study

The study has implications for teacher education policymakers and teacher educators. It is important that policymakers have a research-driven attitude. This kind of attitude will open doors for innovative practices in the country, so there will be more scope for the induction of technology and increases in the effectiveness of teacher education programmes. Teacher educators must make efforts to design better programmes in which the existing beliefs and practices can be accommodated along with new research findings.

Suggestions for further research

Online tracking of the impact of PD programmes may not become part of official practices in the near future. However, if more research attention is paid to the topic, the process can be speeded up. It is suggested that studies focusing on the same area may make use of the framework in Figure 3, which was designed on the basis of the findings of this study.

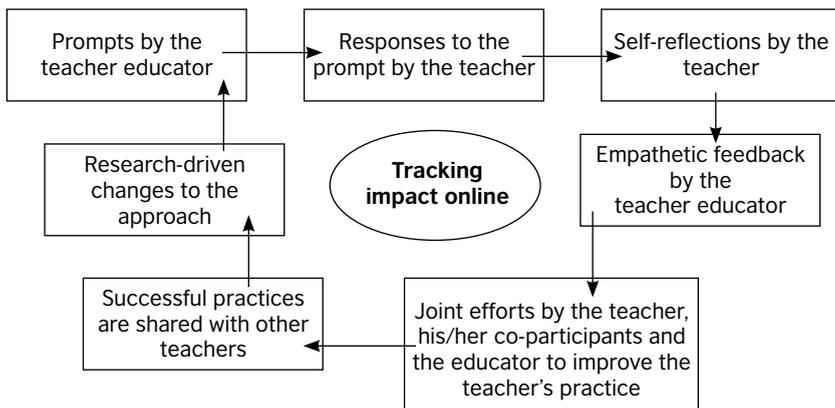


Figure 3: Tracking the impact of PD programmes online

Conclusion

Research on PD should be a continuous process. The efforts made through this study to track the impact of a PD programme online should be considered a direction that needs to be explored further. As the findings of the study are positive, more studies should be undertaken in the same or similar direction to arrive at something more reliable and conclusive. Only then will it be possible to support English language teachers professionally and help them grow.

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Refresher courses in English: Their role in ensuring quality in ELT

Prithviraj Thakur, Assistant Professor of English, G. S. Science, Arts & Commerce College, Khamgaon

Abstract

Refresher courses are an integral part and a mandatory requirement for college and university teachers in India for career advancement. It is an integral part of their career advancement scheme (CAS). English teachers also have to go through this system where they are required to complete a 21-day training course three times in their entire career – one in the first six years, and one each in the next two spells of five years.

This paper will evaluate the scheme of refresher courses in English with the help of a random online survey of college and university teachers of English as well as the organisers, policymakers and administrators. The aim is to look at the problems and shortcomings as well as achievements of the refresher courses and how they have contributed to the development of English teachers over the years. Various problems, such as the problems of organisation, content, delivery, etc., will be analysed and an attempt will be made to give some suggestions to make these courses more effective and relevant for the teachers.

Introduction

The 21-day refresher courses are professional development courses for early and mid-career teachers. They were recommended for college and university teachers by the fourth Central Pay Commission and adapted soon afterwards. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India has made these courses an integral and mandatory part of the career advancement scheme (CAS) of the college and university teachers. They have to attend these courses at various stages of their career to go to a higher pay band or pay scale. Unlike the orientation courses, which are a kind of induction course for new teachers and are general in nature, the refresher courses are subject-specific. They are offered in different subjects and a teacher has to do a refresher course in his or her subject. They are conducted by the UGC academic staff colleges spread over the country. These academic staff colleges organise refresher courses in different subjects once or twice a year.

A new college teacher has to attend one orientation and one refresher course to go from AGP (Average Grade Pay) 6000 to 7000 after six years of continuous service. If the teacher has done an MPhil, he or she needs only five years of continuous service and if he or she has done a PhD, the teacher needs only four

years of continuous service to progress from AGP 6000 to 7000. However, the condition of attending one orientation and one refresher course remains.

The second career advancement stage occurs after five years of the first stage (i.e. generally after 11 years of continuous service). In this stage, the teacher progresses from AGP 7000 to 8000. During these five years, it is mandatory for the teacher to have completed one refresher course. After another five years, the teacher progresses to a new pay scale with the designation of Associate Professor. For this advancement, it is mandatory to complete one refresher course and one short-term course.

This study was aimed at finding out what the teacher participants feel about the refresher courses in English, whether the present scheme of refresher courses meets their expectations and what (if any) changes they would like to be made for the English refresher courses to become more meaningful.

The survey

A survey was conducted to find out what the teachers and other stakeholders feel about the refresher courses in English and how the role of these courses can be made more meaningful not just in the career advancement scheme of the college and university teachers but also in their overall continuing professional development. The survey was conducted online and administered to around 100 people. The respondents were asked first about their role, i.e. whether they were teachers or teacher trainers. They were also asked about their teaching experience and the number of refresher courses in English that they had completed. They were asked if they would have done the refresher course had it not been mandatory for career advancement. Their opinion was also sought on the themes and content of the English refresher courses at present and they were asked to mention what kind of input they would like to have in these courses. Finally, they were asked if they were happy with the present scheme of the refresher courses and whether they would like the involvement of agencies such as the British Council, Regional English Language Office (RELO), Regional Institutes of English (RIEs) and EFL University to make these refresher courses in English more meaningful and more practice-oriented.

Results

It was found that the majority of the respondents (around 64 per cent) were teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience at college/university level, and it was not surprising, therefore, that most of them (about 55 per cent) had completed two or more refresher courses. The majority of them (about 65 per cent) seemed to understand the importance of refresher courses and they replied that they would have gone on these courses even if they had not been mandatory for career advancement. This indicates that college teachers, who receive no pre-service teacher training, are yearning at least for some kind of induction or in-service teacher training relevant to their teaching contexts. A high percentage of respondents (about 67 per cent) said that refresher courses should be mandatory for the career advancement of college/university teachers.

A key question was about the content of the refresher courses in English. Each academic staff college decides its own theme and content of the refresher course that it conducts. There is no uniformity in the content at least of the refresher courses in English in the country. Often, the wishes and needs of the participants are also not taken into account. Hence, the respondents were asked what the content of the English refresher courses should be according to them. They were given four choices:

- applied knowledge of ELT (how to teach English effectively)
- anything from various topics of literature to ELT
- language and linguistics
- any other (please specify).

About 42 per cent of them said they would either prefer applied knowledge of ELT or language and linguistics as the content of the refresher courses. Around 46 per cent of them said they would be happy to know about anything from various topics of literature to ELT. A few of them chose none of the other options and specified that the content of the refresher courses should be decided according to the needs of the participants. Some of them also said that they would like to know about the process of adult learning.

When asked whether they were happy with the present scheme of refresher courses in English, about 44 per cent replied in the negative while 31 per cent said they were happy. The rest of the respondents said they couldn't say anything about it or it didn't matter to them.

Almost half of them did not want uniformity in refresher courses all over the country. An overwhelming majority (73 per cent) said they would like to see the help of external agencies such as the British Council, Regional English Language Office, EFL University and Regional Institutes of English to improve the overall quality of the refresher courses in English.

Analysis

The premise of this study was that the refresher courses in English present a wonderful opportunity for in-service teacher training of college teachers of English in India. However, the potential of these courses is not fully utilised to extend the maximum possible benefits to the teachers of English. Therefore, some amendments need to be made to the entire scheme of refresher courses.

The survey suggests that the majority of the participants are not happy with the present scheme of refresher courses in English and would be happy to see changes. Most of them want the applied knowledge of English language teaching to be included in these courses. This means that the refresher courses need to be more practice-oriented with a major focus on the acquaintance with the recent approaches and developments in the teaching and learning of English. Instead of hastily deciding the theme and the content of these courses, some consideration

should be given to the demands of the teachers at least in the concerned university or opinions may be taken from the participants of the previous courses. Furthermore, it would be possible to make these courses more prestigious and desirable with inputs from reputed agencies working in the field of ELT, such as the EFL University, the British Council, RELO and others. The existing network of Regional Institutes of English can be used for improving the overall experience of these courses. PGCTE and PGDTE courses at the EFL University have each been given equivalence of one refresher course. However, there is an obvious difference between the quality of PGCTE/PGDTE and a normal refresher course. Why not raise the level of all normal refresher courses to the level of PGCTE or PGDTE of EFL University or a PGCTE of a Regional Institute of English? Why not invite experts from independent agencies such as the British Council or RELO so that the quality of input increases?

Conclusion

The respondents in the survey have expressed their opinion on the overall improvement of the English refresher courses. It must be understood that opportunities for teacher development at the tertiary level need a considerable boost as they are highly insufficient to meet the challenges that are being continuously presented by the changing world and the changing requirements of students. One of the reasons why the college and university graduates remain unemployable is the ill-trained or undertrained teachers that teach them at the highest level of the academic hierarchy.

While they would not like to see a uniformity in the course content all over the country, the respondents have certainly indicated that they are not happy with the present scheme of refresher courses. They would like to see a radical improvement in the overall quality of the English refresher courses, for example by obtaining the help of agencies, institutions or organisations such as the British Council, RELO, TESOL, IATEFL or EFL-U, etc.

College and university teachers, unfortunately, receive no pre-service teacher training nor do they receive any kind of induction training and support. Hence, it is necessary to utilise the opportunity presented by the refresher courses to train them, support them and help them keep abreast of the latest developments in the field of English language teaching and learning. This will encourage them to embark on an everlasting journey of continuing professional development (CPD) because, as Padwad and Dixit (2012: 7) define it, 'CPD is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organization and their pupils.'

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Your name (optional):
2. Are you a teacher educator/teacher trainer?
3. What is your teaching experience?
4. How many refresher courses of English have you completed?
5. Had it not been compulsory for career advancement, would you have joined a refresher course?
6. Do you think refresher courses should be mandatory for career advancement of college teachers?
7. What, in your opinion, should be the contents of English refresher courses?
8. Are you happy with the present scheme of English refresher courses?
9. Should there be uniformity in the English refresher courses all over India?
10. Should the help of external agencies like the British Council / RELO / EFLU / RIEs be taken to improve the quality of the refresher courses in English?

Training communicatively to teach communicatively

Donald Sargeant, Regional Teacher Trainer and Adviser,
Dhahira Governate, Ibri Training Center, Sultanate of Oman

'To me education is a leading out of what is already in the pupil's soul'. Muriel Spark

'Education is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten'.
BF Skinner

The rationale behind this paper is that teachers teach in ways that they have been taught and trained as teachers. It is our belief that lecturing teachers on communicative methodology will not be successful in helping them to teach communicatively in the classroom. In training centres in the Sultanate of Oman, we adopt an experiential approach and this paper seeks to justify this by showing how it is collaborative and leads to teacher autonomy and ultimately we hope to the encouragement of independent learning in schools. In this approach our participants experience different techniques and afterwards they reflect on educational issues such as classroom management, learning styles, learner independence and collaborative learning. This paper seeks to show how this can be done by examining several of the techniques that we use in our training. It also shows how we have evaluated the success of such training and some plans for the future.

Introduction

Even in this post-method era, many, if not most, EFL teacher training courses stress the need for the target language to be taught communicatively. Yet, as Oleson and Hora (2012) have pointed out, many teachers teach in the way that they were taught and many teachers were taught the language by other methods. If this is the case then lecturing on the virtues of communicative methodology or presenting prospective teachers with research evidence that points to its efficacy will not convince the future teachers of its usefulness in the classroom.

Rationale for our approach

As we believe that teachers need to experience the methods they will use in teaching, the English in-service training carried out in our training centres in the Sultanate of Oman is in general experiential. Our major belief is that while they are being trained prospective teachers must, as far as possible, experience the techniques and methods that students will encounter when trying to learn English in our classrooms. Likewise, our trainees need to experience classroom management techniques, opportunities for continuing professional development, peer observation, peer coaching and mentoring as well as other aspects that go to make up a teacher's life. In order that our trainees learn experientially we employ

techniques that are 'participant-centred' which encourage learner independence, autonomy, creativity, discovery, collaboration and co-operation and above all reflection on what they have done.

This approach is founded on the belief that successful teaching can only be grounded in successful learning. At a teachers' forum recently on 'What makes a successful lesson?' a supervisor asked a question about a lesson that he said was 'good', but the students had failed to learn. Surely, the answer is that no lesson can be judged as 'good' or successful if learning does not take place. Of course, what helps students to learn is a matter of great debate. Most people would probably agree that what helps learning to take place is multifaceted, and includes such factors as student motivation, teacher qualities, size of class, the curricula, equipment and materials, and learning and teaching styles. Theoretical backing for our position comes from educationalists, like Carl Rogers (1951), who emphasised that a person cannot teach another, but only facilitate learning, which we try to do by encouraging learner independence. From Kolb, Rubin and McIntyre (1974) we have found support for the following ideas that they say will encourage learning:

- concrete experience
- observation of and reflection on that experience
- formation of abstract concepts based upon the reflection
- testing the new concepts.

Fisher and Frey (2008) in their 'Gradual Release Model' add further support to the idea of gradually giving the learner more and more autonomy by a process of at first encouraging collaborative learning before the student reaches full independent learning. This can be seen in the model shown in Figure 1.

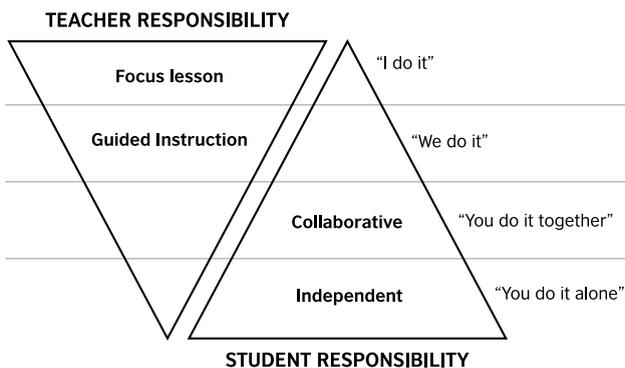


Figure 1: Gradual Release Model (Fisher and Frey, 2008)

Task-based learning (Prabhu, 1987) with its emphasis on providing students with a 'reasonable challenge' is also a central tenet of our courses as nothing seems to motivate students more than success. Thus tasks on our training courses are designed to allow students to succeed, though to do this they may need

scaffolding from peers which will encourage collaborative learning. Scaffolding can of course be provided by the teacher, but to encourage learner autonomy the teacher can point the student towards materials that will scaffold him or her and thus act as a facilitator, as Rogers recommends.

Our philosophy on successful teaching which leads to successful learning and the overall strategies which, we believe, go to achieve this can be summed up in Figure 2.

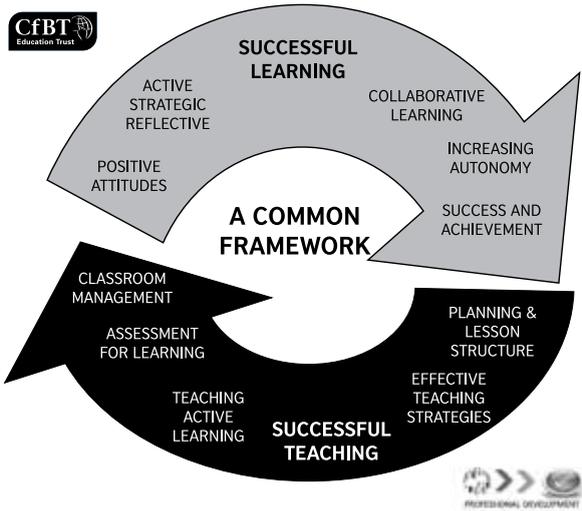


Figure 2: Successful teaching and learning framework

This shows that, in our view, successful teaching leads to successful learning which in its turn leads to successful teaching. To achieve this goal, the teacher must plan lessons carefully to ensure that the teaching strategies used are effective in that they promote learning through varied activities that promote collaboration and help students to achieve success at each stage of the lesson. This cannot be done unless the management of the lesson proceeds in an ordered way which allows the students to be actively engaged in the lesson and for this to happen the teacher must constantly assess whether learning is taking place so that he or she can, if necessary, adjust tasks before proceeding to the next stage. If the teaching is successful, learning will take place and the students will be on task and collaborate to achieve the outcomes and will succeed in their learning, which will motivate them to be engaged in further stages of the lesson.

To sum up, in our view the five main characteristics of successful teaching are:

- 1) assessment for learning
- 2) interactive teaching strategies
- 3) teaching active learning strategies

- 4) class management: practical ground rules for behaviour and learning
- 5) effective planning and lesson structure.

Similarly, we believe that successful learners:

- 1) achieve
- 2) learn actively
- 3) progress towards increasing independence
- 4) work collaboratively
- 5) have positive learning attitudes.

Our practice

Now that I have defined our philosophy I will show how we do our best to put this into practice in our training of in-service teachers. First, we have to find out what knowledge and skills our teachers already have before they attend our courses so that we can tailor these courses to meet their needs. Once we have identified the topics they wish to develop we must explore ways in which we, the trainers, and they, our teachers, can jointly investigate these topics. It is also important that both the teachers and the trainer reflect on the process before deciding how to explore further topics. This is shown in Figure 3.

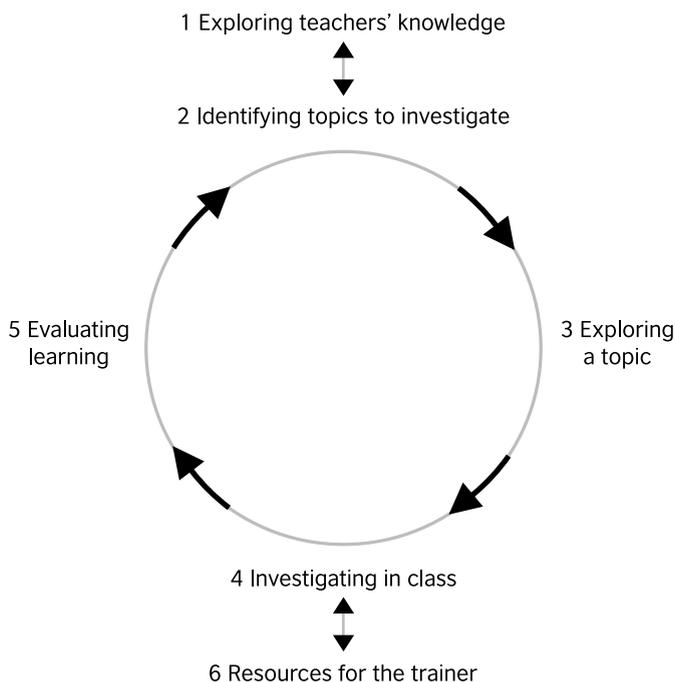


Figure 3: Reflective process

As mentioned earlier we believe in experiential learning and therefore the great majority of our activities involve an element of experiential learning in which the teachers reflect on how and what they learned and whether they can adopt or adapt the technique in the teaching of their own students. In the next part I will present some of the actual activities we have used.

The activities

The activities can be divided into several broad categories, most of which are developments of methods well known in the teaching of EFL. From Tessa Woodward (2003) we have adopted, or in most cases adapted, ideas from 'Loop Input'. In the loop input technique the trainees experience a process and consider the content at the same time. A good example of this process is the running dictation which is discussed in the next section. Other adaptations from other common EFL techniques include: jigsaw readings, information gap activities, role plays, EFL games, sorting, matching and prioritising activities, to mention a few of the techniques. In some cases our activities may incorporate several of these techniques in one task. I will now give examples of some of our activities.

The loop input: a running dictation

This is adopted directly from Woodward. In this activity several identical texts on the instructions for how to do a running dictation are placed on a wall outside the classroom. The teachers are divided into pairs. One is a scribe and the other the runner. The scribe remains seated with pen and paper to copy the text he hears from the runner who runs to the wall dictation and memorises some text and then runs to the scribe and tells him about it. The scribe can run back and forth as many times as the two feel is necessary to produce the full correct text.

After they have completed the activity we return to the classroom and the teachers are encouraged first in groups and then in a plenary to reflect on the activity and whether and how they can adapt such an activity for their own classes. Such reflections inevitably bring up issues such as class and time management, how to find suitable texts, and learning styles. Such activities are noisy and will stir up the children and this can lead to a discussion on 'stirrer' and 'settler' activities and how after a stirrer you may need a settling activity, such as a writing task, to restore a more tranquil atmosphere.

Another loop input activity: jigsaw reading

This can also be done as a loop input with the instructions on how to do a jigsaw reading being divided into three separate sections. The teachers are divided into three equal groups, with each group reading one section. The groups then discuss their sections and make notes on the important points in their sections. It is important that each person in the group makes notes. Then each person in each group is given a number and all the people with the same number from the different groups get together and tell the others in their new groups about their information. At this stage it is important that they do not just read the information.

Once the jigsaw reading is complete the teachers reflect on issues such as the instructions needed to do the activity and class management issues that may arise from such an activity and what they need to do if they are to use jigsaw readings with their own classes.

A final stage in this experiential activity on learning how to use jigsaw readings is that the teachers take a text from one of the textbooks they use in school and see how they can adapt it for a jigsaw reading. Ideally the teachers should then try these texts in their classes and report back on the results in a subsequent session. Ideally we should try and visit some of the teachers at this point and evaluate the impact this has on their behaviour and students' learning.

Role play on learning styles

The objective of this activity is for the teachers to experience what it is to do a role play while finding more information about learning styles. This is usually done after the teachers have already been introduced to the idea of different learning styles in a reading text. The class is divided into four groups and each group is given the same role card which is about one pupil who has a certain learning style. (See Appendix 1 for the role cards.) Each group then decides what they should say when playing the role of their student in a discussion. This preparation can be for five to ten minutes. Once they are ready they form new groups so that each group contains at least one person for each role.

After the role play, the teachers will reflect on both the importance of learning styles in teaching and how the EFM (English for Me) textbooks used in our schools can be adapted to provide for these different learning styles. They will also discuss the instructions and management techniques needed to conduct successful role plays. In this way they learn how to conduct role plays while doing role plays.

Extensive reading

Several of the courses, like the Senior Teacher Course, that we run in the training centres in the Sultanate have up to 15 sessions that extend over several months. Students in Cycle Two Schools (Grades 5–10), and the Post Basic Schools (Grades 11 and 12) are encouraged to read extensively for pleasure. The value of extensive reading in the development of reading, writing and the building of vocabulary has been emphasised by ESL academics, such as Krashen (1984). We believe that 'Reading Teachers' will encourage students to read and therefore it is important that the teachers should experience extensively reading for pleasure. To help them do this we include in these longer courses an extensive reading element where the teachers are encouraged to borrow both fiction and non-fiction books from our centre library, and to help motivate them do this we set up a friendly competition with prizes for those who read the most and those who produce the most creative evidence to show that they have read what they claim to have read. To encourage them to enter the competition we show in each of the early sessions a short video (2–3 minutes) on extensive reading. We also have at the start of each session a short informal discussion on what we all have been reading.

The evaluation

All teachers who attend our courses complete an evaluation of the course at the end. These evaluations at best can only cover the first two levels of Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (1994) four levels of evaluation. They tell us our participants' reactions to the course and in general this is nearly always positive. To obtain level-two data we try to ask questions that will ascertain how much they have learned. However, these are generally closed questions of the YES/NO type. We have found that more open questions such as 'What techniques were most helpful with your own learning?' are rarely answered in any detail. Such on-the-spot evaluations of the training sessions cannot give us any information about the third and fourth levels of Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's model.

To find out whether the training has an impact on the teachers' behaviour, we need to visit them in their schools and observe their lessons. Unfortunately, time constraints and distance make this very difficult. However, recently after the teachers received experiential training on 'Jolly Phonics', a fun and child-centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics, which has been introduced into primary schools in the Sultanate, supervisors and trainers did go out and observe a selection of teachers using Jolly Phonics in their schools. The observers found that although the teachers were using most of the techniques they had experienced on the course, some of them were leaving out important steps such as blending and segmenting words. Such evidence suggests that even though the teachers have experienced the techniques of Jolly Phonics during the week-long course, both as teachers and as students in micro-teaching lessons, this on its own without follow-up visits to schools is not sufficient to ensure that they adopt these techniques in their own classes. A reason for this was possibly highlighted in feedback teachers gave on the implementation of Jolly Phonics, with many teachers complaining that they did not have enough time to carry out all the steps.

Of course, even though the courses may influence the teachers' behaviour this does not necessarily mean that this will have the desired impact on students' learning. During our visits we try to assess how any new techniques being used by the teachers have had a positive effect on the students' learning. For example, during our visits to teachers who were implementing the Jolly Phonics programme we did notice that there was an improvement in reading and writing skills. However, there has been up to now no systematic research on the impact of this programme, and evidence so far is only anecdotal.

Unfortunately, the same is true for other programmes, though teachers are encouraged to conduct action research on new techniques they have tried out in their classes and some teachers have in fact carried out such research on ideas we have presented in courses or in workshops. For example, a teacher who attended our 'Research for Professional Development' (RPD) course, which is designed to assist teachers to conduct action research on their teaching, conducted an action research project on teaching spelling techniques she had experienced in a workshop on teaching spelling. This small-scale project showed

that the techniques she introduced to her class resulted in an improvement in their spelling.

We recognise that at the fourth level of Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's evaluation we need to conduct more systematic research on the impact our programmes are having on teachers' behaviour which might lead to changes in students' learning. As mentioned earlier, one way we try to do this is to attend classes where teachers are attending weekly day-release courses and observe techniques teachers have been asked to prepare and try out with their classes. However, as we can only visit at most two or three teachers, the evidence collected is not sufficient to generalise on the usefulness of the technique. Recently, several of our Omani trainers have been accepted to do PhDs and it is hoped some of these could be encouraged to undertake research on the impact our training programmes have on the students' learning, as working trainers have little spare time for this much-needed research area.

Conclusion

This paper has been a brief survey of the rationale for the training techniques used in in-service training programmes in the Regional Training Centres in Oman. The approach is largely experiential and is designed to give serving teachers a real experience of the use of communicative methods which they can then adapt for use in their own classes. Anecdotal evidence of the impact of the training on learning in the schools is generally positive, but a more systematic research project on the efficacy of these techniques and how this has impacted on Omani students' learning is needed.

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Appendix 1: Role Play Cards

Bashir

Bashir takes learning English very seriously. He's particularly keen on English grammar and he spends many hours at home studying grammar and doing exercises. In class he often asks grammar questions and he knows so much about grammar that the teacher sometimes finds it hard to answer his questions. Bashir is also keen on learning vocabulary and he always has his bilingual dictionary in class and looks up any new words he meets. He prefers to do this than to listen to the teacher's explanations, because he likes to have an exact translation of the words or phrases. He quite enjoys his English lessons, but he doesn't like group work as he doesn't like speaking to the other students because he doesn't think that they are very good at English. When the teacher does group work he usually looks at his grammar books because he thinks that he can learn more by doing this.

Raya

Raya really enjoys her English lessons, though she is very busy at home helping her mother and doesn't always have time to do all her homework. She likes her teacher and her classmates and enjoys speaking English in class. She always tries to say as much as she can, even when the topic doesn't interest her, because she knows by speaking she is practicing her English. If she doesn't know how to say it she will ask the teacher. She tries to correct herself but doesn't worry too much if she makes mistakes. She knows that she sometimes gets things wrong, but she believes that you will make mistakes when you are trying to learn. Raya is quite good at grammar and she enjoys trying to work out grammar rules from examples. She knows that she should spend more time on her homework, but her duties at home make this difficult. When she is out she will try and speak to foreigners she meets in English and she enjoys reading signs and notices in English.

Mohammed

Mohammed doesn't know why he has to learn English and he doesn't see how it can be useful to him now. He often comes to school late and he is tired because he spends his afternoons playing football and the evenings playing video games. The teacher usually explains new vocabulary and grammar in English, but Mohammed doesn't listen and instead asks his friend Ismail to explain what the teacher says in Arabic. Sometimes the teacher asks him questions in English but Mohammed doesn't try to answer him in English and at most will answer in just one or two words. He feels shy in speaking in English because he knows he makes many mistakes. The teacher often gives them group work and Mohammed uses these times to talk to his friends in Arabic about other things. At home he usually asks his older brother or sister to help him with his homework and is happy when they do it all for him.

Moza

Moza is a hardworking student who finds learning English difficult. She enjoys her classes, though she is a little afraid to speak in group work because she knows that she makes mistakes and is afraid that the other students will laugh at her. She wants to use her English more, but the friend she sits beside will translate what the teacher says for her. She is interested in learning English, but she wants to be able to use what she learns outside the classroom more. She likes doing things with her hands, but finds that the teacher doesn't have many activities that involve them in making things. She doesn't like sitting at her desk for long periods of time, but likes to get up and move around and she wishes that the teacher would have more activities that require them to move.

The significance of understanding learning anxiety among the ESL learners in teacher education

Digambar M. Ghodke, Assistant Professor, Department of English, S.N. Arts, D.J.M. Commerce and B.N.S. Science College, Sangamner, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

The anxiety of students in ESL classrooms is a major challenge that teachers have to face. Research in L2 anxiety reveals that it often results in poor academic performance, lack of confidence in presentation skills and moreover loss of interest in learning. Young (1991) identifies six sources of language anxiety: personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language learning, instructor–learner interactions, classroom procedures, and testing. The participants for this classroom research were undergraduate (UG) students, studying English as one of their compulsory subjects in Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), India.

The researcher used both qualitative (semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, classroom observations) and quantitative (questionnaires for students) methods. The first part of the paper focuses on English language learning anxiety among the learners and discusses the reasons in the second part. It aims to acquaint teacher educators with the significance of understanding L2 learning anxiety in teacher training programmes to sensitise the future teachers they train, and to prepare them to tackle the anxiety of learners in English language classrooms confidently and sensitively.

Introduction

The paper begins with some personal questions which have always troubled the researcher:

- 1) Why would my classmates miss the 02 classes after the short recesses and come back to their class after the long recesses?
- 2) Why did many of them never pass their Grade X exam?

My colleagues would miss classes to avoid the embarrassing situation they would be plunged in by their English teacher, i.e. answering questions in English, and, secondly, they could not pass the Grade X exam because they failed in English. Now, as a teacher in a senior college, the researcher has been teaching students who enter into their English classes with an apprehension for the subject. These students learn English as a second language for eight to ten years, yet they fail

to reach the minimum competency level in any of the four language skills. The present paper resulted from this contemplation and concern. Thus one of the major challenges the ESL teacher has to face is the anxiety of students in the L2 classroom, especially in English classrooms in non-native contexts.

What is learning anxiety?

Learning anxiety is the feeling of unease, worry, nervousness and apprehension experienced when learning or using a second or foreign language. Foreign language anxiety refers to 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process' (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986: 128).

Consequences and sources of anxiety

Is there a correlation between learning and anxiety? Research into L2 anxiety (Bailey, 1983; Young, 1991) indicates that it often results in poor academic performance, lack of confidence in presentation skills and loss of interest in learning. As mentioned above, many students have to discontinue their education as they fail to achieve the pass mark in English. Given this scenario, it becomes indispensable to understand the origin of this feeling of unease and apprehension among the learners. A considerable amount of research has already been carried out in this area. According to researchers, anxiety is the major hurdle in learning L2 and it needs to be studied to develop strategies to help learners to get rid of the mental unease and distress in the L2 classroom. Horwitz (1986) provides empirical data to confirm an anxiety specific to language learning and its pedagogical implications. Young (1991) identifies six sources of language anxiety. It would be useful to review these sources briefly here to provide the theoretical background to the present study.

Young's (1991) six sources of language anxiety

- 1) **Personal and interpersonal anxieties (PIA):** these include low self-esteem, competitiveness, communicative apprehension, social anxiety and anxiety specific to language learning.
- 2) **Learner beliefs about language learning (LB)** consists of learners' concern over the correctness of their utterances.
- 3) **Instructor beliefs about language teaching (IB):** these include instructors' authoritative and teacher-centered approach to teaching and the role of correcting learners' errors.
- 4) **Instructor-learner interactions (ILI):** this concerns a harsh manner of correcting student errors, learners' anxiety over responding incorrectly and the way their mistakes are perceived in the classroom.
- 5) **Classroom procedures (CP):** these include the fear of speaking in the target language in front of a group, e.g. during oral presentations.
- 6) **Language testing (LT):** This refers to learners' anxiety towards particular language tests, etc.

Relation between language learning anxiety (LLA) and teacher education

Teacher education aims at developing both pedagogical and professional skills among teacher trainees to help them become effective teachers in their classrooms. Knowledge of LLA and its sources might prove helpful to the teachers/instructors in creating a 'low-anxiety classroom atmosphere' especially while dealing with the teacher-related sources such as instructor beliefs about language learning, instructor–learner interactions, classroom procedures and language testing.

Methodology

Setting

The study was conducted at a degree college in a semi-urban area, with rural vicinity, affiliated to the Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), India which offers courses in the disciplines of arts, commerce and science at both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) levels.

Participants

The participants, in this study, are UG students studying English as one of the compulsory subjects (N = 39). The majority of them come from rural environments.

Exposure

As to exposure to English, these learners:

- have studied English for nine to eleven years
- use English only in English language classes delivered by English teachers (bilingual method)
- have no exposure to native speakers of the target language
- have very little exposure to English media: films, serials, channels, etc.

Data collection methods/tools

The researcher used different tools for data collection for this study. They include:

- semi-structured interviews with students and teachers
- classroom observations
- the Marathi version of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) with 20 items translated by the researcher himself.

Data analysis

The data collected using these methods is analysed here into three categories according to the tools used for data collection.

1) Semi-structured interviews with students

The data collected through the semi-structured interviews with the students and teachers revealed that most of the learners thought that English was essential for their career but at the same time they expressed their inability

to understand and use this language in either spoken or written form. They also shared their view that English had often been an obstacle in their academic performance. More than 50 per cent of the students interviewed had to resit exams to obtain the pass mark in English during the second or third year of their degree course.

2) Classroom observations

The researcher has been dealing with students from rural and semi-urban areas for the last 12 years. During regular classes, he has noticed that these learners rarely participate in the interactive sessions such as group discussions, oral presentations and interviews. Indeed, they dislike the teachers who teach them English using English, i.e. they expect their teachers of English to use the bilingual method in the classroom. They are afraid to ask questions and even answer questions.

3) Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The researcher translated Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) with 20 items into Marathi, the main medium of instruction and first language of the majority of learners, and used it for the purpose of eliciting responses from these learners. It was found that the respondents had difficulties in interpreting the questions in English. Hence the translation version had to be used. This section deals with the question-wise analysis of FLCAS. Only the details of the 'agreed'/'strongly agreed' responses are given:

A. Personal and interpersonal anxieties (PIA)

Under this source of anxiety, four responses were sought.

1) It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.

To this view, 18 of the 39 respondents (46.15%) strongly agreed/agreed.

2) During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 11 = 28.20%.

3) I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class

Agreed/strongly agreed: 32 = 82%.

4) Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 19 = 48.71%.

Discussion and implications of PIAs

The responses to PIA reveal that the respondents undergo the feeling of anxiety in their English class. We notice that 82 per cent of the respondents feel their heart pounding when they are going to be called on in English language class. The teacher education curriculum might incorporate

techniques and strategies to help teacher trainees to manage the PIAs of their learners in their classrooms and facilitate their learners to overcome these apprehensions. Young (1991: 430) suggests that 'the instructor ask students to verbalise any fears and then to write them on the board. In this way students can see they are not alone in their anxieties'.

B. Learner beliefs about language learning (LB)

1) I keep thinking that the other students are better at English language than I am.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 24 = 61.53%

2) I feel confident when I speak in English language class.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 30 = 76.92%

3) I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 7 = 17.94%

4) I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 13 = 33.33%

5) I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the English language.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 17 = 43.58%

6) I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 24 = 61.53%

Discussion and implications

The responses to the views on learner beliefs indicate that students develop a kind of inferiority complex in their self-perception. The learners' positive attitude is instrumental in an effective teaching–learning process. So it becomes evident that the teacher trainees need to be trained in handling such situations where they can motivate their learners by discussing the different phases in language learning. They should make their learners aware of the fact that language learning is an ongoing process *per se* and requires sustained efforts on the part of learners.

C. Instructor–learner interactions (ILI)

1) I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 15 = 38.46%

2) I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 25 = 64.10%

3) It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 29 = 74.35%

Discussion and implications

The data indicate that the instructors must be sensitive in the way they correct learners' errors and also should use positive reinforcement.

According to Young (1991) language learners like instructors who have a good sense of humour and are friendly, relaxed and patient. In her view instructors should make students feel comfortable during interactions.

D. Classroom procedures (CP)

1) I don't worry about making mistakes in English language class.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 28 = 71.79%

2) I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English language class.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 20 = 51.28%

3) In English language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 19 = 48.71%

Discussion and implications

According to Young (ibid.: 433) anxieties related to classroom procedures can be reduced through more pair work and more games, and by conducting activities focusing on the affective needs of the learner.

E. Language testing (LT)

1) I am usually at ease during tests in my English language class.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 19/39 = 48.71%

2) The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

Agreed/strongly agreed: 20/39 = 51.28%

Discussion and implications

The gap between actual classroom teaching and the nature of tests conducted enhances this anxiety among learners. Teacher educators can help teacher trainees learn how to 'test what is taught' (Young, ibid.: 433).

Conclusions

- 1) The analysis of the data reveals that most of the learners in this study experience anxiety.
- 2) Knowledge of the sources of anxiety might help teacher educators to equip both pre-service and in-service teacher trainees with effective strategies to reduce learners' language learning anxiety in their ELT classrooms.

- 3) Training related to language learning anxiety in ELT classrooms may help the instructors to make their learners aware of their irrational beliefs or fears by designing various activities and tasks (Crookall and Oxford, 1991; Horwitz 1988).

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Developing the Trinity College Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages in India

Helen Macilwaine, Academic Manager International, Cochin International Language Academy

Abstract

The development of the Oxford TEFL Trinity College Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Cert TESOL) is presented in the context of the increasing demand for English teachers in India able to use communicative methodology, for example the requirement of the Central Board for Secondary Education for students to be assessed in speaking and listening. The issues involved in setting up the course and an audit of the course participants, comparing qualifications with results in the Certificate, are reviewed. This relationship is not straightforward, as many candidates without formal academic qualifications in English obtain outstanding results and some candidates with high levels of academic qualifications in English obtain low scores and are only just able to pass the course. Excellent speakers of English with dynamic personalities are most successful, particularly those with experience in the media, with or without formal academic qualifications in English. Many institutions requiring good communicative English teachers are keen to employ candidates with ELT qualifications such as the Cert TESOL. For non-native speakers, there are significant advantages to communicating with native speakers and this model of English teacher preparation could be adopted by colleges.

Case history

The Cochin International Language Academy (CILA), located in Angamaly South in Kerala, is part of the Oxford TEFL group offering the Trinity College London Cert TESOL since April 2013. Here is a short case history to illustrate why the course was set up in India. The candidate was an Indian English teacher who had been to an English-medium school, taken a BA in English Literature, a BEd in teaching English and a Master's degree in English Literature. When asked why she wanted to take the Cert TESOL, she replied that she wanted to 'transact better with her students and improvise well in English'. Puzzled by her response, I finally discovered that she wanted to learn how to interact better with students and to improve her own English. She was very self-critical and very upset that her English was not of the level she would like it to be and she was well aware of her failings. She said she had studied Shakespeare and Dryden but no one had corrected her English since she left school and she believed that unless she took action she would never improve as there was no one in her circle with English better than

hers. Now she faces additional pressure as teachers are being asked to teach speaking and listening, not taught until recently in Indian schools (CBSE, 2014). She seemed to epitomise the problems of Indian English teachers: deeply aware of her failings but so keen and so motivated that she was willing to invest her time, energy and her own resources in improving her professional performance.

Her motivation and determination were a wonderful antidote to the depressing articles bemoaning the state of English teaching in India. Thakur (2013) offers an exhaustive list of problems and a list of remedies, but our experience is that Indian English teachers are well aware of the problems they face and, as our case study demonstrated, they know well what they need. Bedadur (2012) notes the need to improve the confidence and motivation of teachers in rural India due to their lack of exposure to English. It would seem that many apparently qualified Indian English teachers also feel this lack.

Issues in establishing the course

After reading a great deal of comment and research about the teaching of English in India, the Cert TESOL was set up as another route to developing English language teaching in India.

1) Explaining short English language teacher training courses in India

When the project began in 2011, the CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) was already being offered by the British Council. Trinity College London was known in India for its music exams and latterly known for the Graded Exams in Spoken English. People asked what the course was about and how it would help them. They also wanted to know if the CELTA was better. It was explained to them that the course would help them to improve their teaching skills and that the CELTA and the Cert TESOL are the two qualifications most likely to be required by international employers. It was also explained that the Certificate in TESOL and the CELTA are exactly the same level according to the National Qualifications Framework in the UK. The TEFL/TESOL course market is not generally well regulated but the courses offered by Cambridge English and Trinity College London are validated and externally moderated and so these qualifications are sought after by employers.

2) Validation by Trinity College London

We applied for validation with Trinity College London as an exported course from Oxford TEFL. This means that we and our trainees have the opportunity to use all the vast resources available on the Oxford TEFL Moodle and the graduates from our programme receive lifelong support from Oxford TEFL, as well as receiving an internationally validated qualification. We were granted validation and the first course began in April 2013.

3) Mixed nationality groups

We wanted a mixture of both Indian and non-Indian, preferably native speaker, trainees for our course so that both groups could benefit. This

allows Indian trainees to interact, sometimes for the first time, with native speakers of English and leads to considerable improvements in their use of English.

The courses held so far

Summary of course participants up to January 2015

We have held 11 courses so far and there have been 68 people who have taken the course. There have been 48 Indians and 20 non-Indians. Of the non-Indians, 14 came from the main English-speaking countries and of the other six, four came from Europe, one from South America and one from the Middle East. Of the 12 trainees from the main English-speaking countries, six came from the USA, four from the UK and two from New Zealand.

There have been five referrals during this time. Four out of the five later passed and only one trainee failed to resubmit.

Impact on results of being a native speaker or a non-native speaker

Although the Trinity certificate does not show a grade, all participants are given a grade by the centre. Therefore, it is possible to compare the candidates in several ways. It is important to bear in mind when interpreting the findings outlined below, however, that these are based on small sample sizes. The results of comparing the grades of native speakers versus non-native speakers can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Native speakers and non-native speakers by grade [n=67]

Native speakers			Non-native speakers		
A	B	C	A	B	C
4	10	1	2	23	24
21%	86%	7%	4%	43%	44%

Being a native speaker did not appear to confer much advantage in terms of obtaining Grade A, but the vast majority of native speakers were able to obtain Grade B. Being a non-native speaker did not bar candidates from obtaining Grade A. In fact two non-native speakers gained Grade A as compared with four native speakers. The two very best students so far have been a non-native speaker with an international relations diploma and a native speaker with a degree in religious studies. The former was identified by the moderator as functioning nearer to the diploma level than the certificate level. This person had no previous teaching experience of any kind but was clearly very gifted.

Analysis of motivation for taking the course

A further comparison can be made by reviewing the candidates' motivations for taking the course. The applicants were asked the reasons why they wished to take the course during the interview. There were four main reasons given – career development: 28%, career change: 43%, desire to improve teaching skills: 10%, and to fulfil job requirements: 19%.

Analysis of motivation and results

The candidates' results were then related to the grades obtained by the trainees (Table 2).

Table 2: Motivation and grades [n=67]

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
Career development	2 [3%]	11 [16%]	4 [6%]
Career change	3 [4.5%]	13 [19%]	12 [17.5%]
Desire to improve teaching skills		4 [6%]	3 [4.5%]
To fulfil job requirements		1 [1.5%]	12 [17.5%]

The people seeking 'Career change' and those wishing 'To fulfil job requirements' were more likely than other groups to gain C grades. Although the career change group was the largest group, the much smaller group of those needing to fulfil job requirements obtained the same number of C grades.

Analysis by educational qualifications and results

Qualifications of those taking the course could be divided approximately into English and related degrees, such as mass media and creative writing and other degrees and diplomas, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Qualification and grades [n=67]

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
English and related degrees	2 [3%]	14 [21%]	11 [16%]
Degrees and diplomas in other subjects	3 [4%]	22 [33%]	15 [22%]

English and related degrees included: MPhil in English literature, Master's degree in English literature, Bachelor's degree in English (functional, communicative), Bachelor's degree in English literature. The remainder of the students had degrees or diplomas in 'other' subjects.

It is interesting to note that the 'other' group were just as likely as those with English and related degrees to gain Grade A. When the figures for the English and related degrees are considered, although the numbers are too low to offer meaningful percentages, it is clear that English literature degrees are not necessarily helpful in terms of obtaining an A grade.

Review of the audit

As this was an audit rather than a research project, the sample is certainly not randomised or representative. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised but it is possible to examine the trends within the data for issues that may have been reported in the literature.

The effect of previous teaching experience on the trainees' results

Previous teaching experience had very little effect on obtaining a Grade A as three out of the six people so far obtaining A grades had none. Brandt (2006: 163) notes that tutors often find trainees with many years of experience to be highly resistant to learning communicative teaching methods and this impedes their progress.

The effects of qualifications and experience on results

The group most likely to obtain a Grade C was the group with English literature degrees. The issue of English literature graduates becoming English teachers is mentioned frequently in the literature concerning Indian English teachers. Pande (2013: 1) claims that Indian educational policy fails to distinguish between the teaching of English literature and the teaching of the language and this has led to a collapse in the English standards in colleges. Reviewing the case study, it is clear that the candidate had had no choice but to take a literature degree as there were no degrees in communicative or functional English in her locality. There have been three people with those types of degree who have done the course. Two out of three obtained Grade B and their performance overall was better than the group with English literature degrees, but clearly the sample is too small to be meaningful.

Reddy (2012: 788) suggests that Indian English teachers often lack adequate training, and training programmes use outdated methods and materials. Zhang (2006: 10) notes the need for Singaporean English teacher trainees to improve their own knowledge of the target language while learning pedagogical skills. These problems are not confined to India.

There was one group that seemed to have better than average results and that is the group of trainees who had previously been involved in journalism and mass media before coming for the course. Although this group numbered only seven, they were all remarkably good teachers and they all scored As or Bs.

The effect of national origin on results

Although the native speaker group obtained a larger proportion of A grades than the non-native speaker group, there was still one with a Grade C. The non-native speaker group was far more likely to obtain Grade C, but it was more than twice the size of the native speaker group. Interestingly, three of the best trainees were non-native speakers. There seem to be no comparable studies, so further study is definitely required.

Discussion

Lower levels of performance from candidates with extensive teaching experience

This has been remarked upon by commentators in blogs and on message boards on numerous occasions. Some native speaker teachers and non-native speaker teachers with a lot of experience find the demands of the communicative methodology taxing. As noted earlier, Brandt (2006: 163) found that tutors on short English courses were strongly aware of the often negative impact of many years' previous teaching experience on the ability of trainees to teach communicatively.

Strong performances from trainees with no significant teaching background or special qualifications in English

This again has been remarked upon by commentators as regards native speaker trainees on TEFL/TESOL courses. Brandt (2006: 163) suggests that this may be due to such trainees having an open mind and not needing to 'unlearn' bad practice. The A grade trainees all had dynamic personalities and great enthusiasm for teaching.

Follow-up on the trainees and their careers

The native speakers seem to have little difficulty obtaining jobs. The non-Indian non-native speakers, especially those with European Union passports, also seem to find jobs fairly easily. Of the 47 Indian trainees, at least eight had jobs overseas at the time of writing (March 2015). Obtaining a job overseas is one of the reasons the trainees take the course as most countries in the Middle East require either the CELTA or the Cert TESOL.

Currently, Indian trainees from the course work in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Dubai, Indonesia and Chile. The other trainees quickly obtain positions in private training organisations, corporate training and top international schools in India.

The future

CILA has set up one model to help Indian English teachers to develop. We have native and non-native speakers side by side, with the non-native speakers improving their use of English. We have been asked to develop the Trinity College Diploma and we are reviewing this option at present. We expect initially to offer a blended learning course to help certificate holders to upgrade their language skills to the level required for the diploma and to improve their pedagogical knowledge. We have also discovered that there are many people without English or related degrees, particularly those with media experience, who are able to function as excellent English language trainers and this has many policy implications.

We believe centres such as ours could be useful for colleges developing English language courses and students could graduate with a Bachelor's degree, for example in communicative English, and the Cert TESOL, thus adding an international dimension to their résumé. India needs as many models as possible

to be tested to ensure that English teachers have a strong background in the English language and are able to teach using communicative methods.

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Theme three

**Enhancing the quality
of curriculum, materials
and methods in English
language teacher education**

‘Located’ teacher education: Redesigning the curriculum of a teacher training programme from a socio-cultural perspective

Meera Srinivas, Professor, Department of Materials Development, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India

Abstract

The paper focuses on a unique distance teacher training course offered by EFL University for secondary level teachers located in tribal and backward areas of the country. Though intended for teachers from varied linguistic, geographical and cultural backgrounds, and teaching in specific cultural contexts, the curriculum of this course is designed in a conventional top-down way to deliver empirical and theoretical knowledge and pedagogical expertise from a positivist paradigm. It is imposed on teachers ignoring cultural differences, the socio-cultural and political histories that are located in the contexts of learning and teaching.

As the course is meant for teachers from heterogeneous socio-cultural backgrounds, the paper questions the assumption that there can or should be uniformity in what the teachers should know or be able to do. It argues for the need to restructure the content and activities of the course, taking into consideration the cultural specificities in the contexts where teachers learn and teach, and to involve teachers and teacher educators in this process of curriculum renewal. It advocates an ‘inclusive’ socio-cultural approach to curriculum design to make the course socially equitable and contextually relevant to a pluralistic society.

Introduction

‘Located L2 teacher education recognizes why L2 teachers do what they do within the social, historical, and cultural contexts within which they work and from there, works to co-construct with L2 teachers locally appropriate responses to their professional development needs’ (Johnson, 2006: 246).

In recent years there has been an epistemological shift in intellectual traditions in the way human learning is conceptualised; more specifically, historically documented shifts from behaviourist to cognitive, to a situated social view of human cognition (Johnson, 2009). In the field of second language teacher education too, there has been a perceptible shift from a positivist view, that had long positioned teachers as conduits to students and their learning, towards socio-cultural perspectives, which view knowledge as socially constructed

through participation in socio-cultural practices and contexts. In this latter view, ‘teacher learning and the activities of teaching are understood as growing out of participation in the social practices in classrooms; and what teachers know and how they use that knowledge in classrooms is highly interpretative and contingent on knowledge of self, setting, students, curriculum, and community’ (Johnson, *ibid.*: 13). This embedded or ‘located’ view of teacher learning has far-reaching implications for curriculum design.

Operating within this view the paper critiques the curriculum of a distance training course offered under the District Centre Scheme of EFL University for teachers in tribal and backward areas of the country. It argues for a socially situated approach to the restructuring of its curriculum in view of its unique aim and objectives, which is to ‘reach the unreached’, and outlines steps for the process of restructuring.

Background to the course

The District Centre Scheme (DCS) of the English and Foreign Languages University was set up in 1985 to disseminate good-quality training to secondary-level teachers of English located in remote and marginalised areas of the country, where access for training is limited. Under the scheme, short-term face-to-face courses and a year-long distance training course called the ‘Correspondence cum contact course’ are organised every year. This course is intended for teachers from varied linguistic, geographical and cultural backgrounds teaching in marginalised, backward areas of the country. As part of the course, three contact programmes are held during the year in three phases – initial, mid-term and final – where teachers are familiarised with the core curriculum.

The curriculum of this course has been designed at the university by a team of experts, and the centrally produced materials are disseminated through district centres for English set up by the university in remote districts of the country with support from the state governments. These district centres are staffed by teacher educators called chief tutors who are trained through a Resource Persons’ Course at EFL University. The core components of the curriculum include subjects such as principles of language learning and teaching, speaking, grammar, reading, writing, literature and study skills. The modules aim to provide teachers with disciplinary knowledge about how second languages are acquired, about how the English language is structured and used and on language pedagogy. This curriculum views L2 teaching as a matter of translating theories of SLA into effective instructional practices.

The need for redesigning its curriculum

Learning is greatly influenced by the social environment from which learners and teachers come. The social climate of the school and the classroom exert a deep impact on the process of learning. Given this, there is need to provide a major shift from an overwhelming emphasis on the psychological characteristics of the individual learner to her social, cultural, economic and political context. (NCFTE, 2009: 12)

The present curriculum has been in existence since 2005 and some of the modules are outdated. In a study that attempted a critical evaluation of the materials of the distance training course of DCS, Rangaraju (2011) found that teacher educators (chief tutors) were not fully satisfied with the present curriculum and materials and would like 'topics of current relevance and culture specific materials to be included'. They felt that the materials should 'cater for intercultural aspects and specific needs of marginalized communities' (p. 6). A few teachers who have completed the course have also said, 'If the materials provide room for personal experiences, new methodologies, field work and workshops it would be more useful. My pupils are first generation learners. So the course must focus on how to teach the basics to these learners. Materials should be redesigned as per the needs of the students and teachers' (p.7).

More recently, while discussing the need for 'inclusivity' in teacher education – accommodating the voices of teachers in designing training programmes – the NCFTE (2009) has stated that all distance training programmes must build on the principle of creating 'spaces' for the sharing of experiences of communities of teachers among themselves. Giving teachers space to develop and hear their own voices is of utmost importance. It recommends that 'every group of trainers should either directly participate in the design of the programme, keeping in mind a specific group of teachers, or adapt a given programme to a specific group of teachers' (NCFTE, *ibid.*: 12).

However, the curriculum of this course is designed in a traditional way to deliver empirical and theoretical knowledge and pedagogical expertise from a positivist paradigm. In this conceptualisation, learning to teach is viewed as learning about teaching in one context (the teacher education programme), observing and practising teaching in another (the practicum), and eventually developing effective teaching practices in the induction years of teaching (Johnson, *op.cit.*). Such a top-down perspective ignores the reality of how teachers learn to teach in their contexts, their own sense of self, students and social contexts.

Further, the flaw in this model is that innovations are imposed on teachers with little attention on how to integrate them into existing classroom practices. For example, the course advocates a communicative task-based approach to language teaching to replace the traditional grammar translation and structural approaches. While it is clear that this current approach enhances the opportunities for classroom interaction and makes the learning process more lively and interesting, it does not take into account the local constraints (teachers' own limited oral language proficiency, the traditional examination system and the normative ways of teaching that teachers and learners are socialised into) that have a bearing on how far the teachers are willing to or able to implement these curricular recommendations.

Therefore, in view of the above reasons, there is a need to restructure the curriculum of this course from a more inclusive, socially situated paradigm.

Positivist vs socio-cultural paradigms

The positivist approach looks at knowledge as a set of skills to be transferred from the educated lecturer to the uneducated student. It is predicated on the notion that knowledge about teaching and learning can be 'transmitted' to teachers by others. This paradigm operates under the assumption that it is necessary to provide teachers with discrete amounts of disciplinary knowledge usually in the form of general theories and methods that are assumed to be applicable to any teaching context. In this approach the curriculum could be simplified to the following equation: objectives + input = output.

This kind of approach seems rather simplistic, depersonalised and isolationist as it does not take into view factors like 'Who' teaches English, 'Who' learns English and why in a particular context. 'It whitewashes the complex, social, historical, cultural, economic dimensions that permeate schools and schooling in a broader social milieu' (Shuman, 1986, cited in Johnson, 2006). It does not take into account the complexities of teachers' mental lives and the mediating role that teaching processes play in the classroom.

On the other hand, the socio-cultural perspective defines human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge is said to be socially constructed, emerging from the social practices that people engage in. It seeks 'to explicate the relationship between human mental functioning and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this functioning occurs' (Wertsch, 1995: 3). In this view, learning to teach is shaped by teachers' experiences with students, parents, colleagues and administrators and the processes of learning to teach are 'socially negotiated'. This requires knowledge about oneself as a teacher, about the content to be taught, about students, about classroom life, and about the contexts within which teachers carry out their work (Johnson, 2006). This knowledge is built through experiences in multiple social contexts, first as learners in classrooms and schools, later as participants in professional teacher education programmes, and ultimately in the communities of practice in which teachers work. As Johnson says, 'When language teachers have multiple opportunities to situate and interpret that knowledge in their work, they engage in a process of sense-making that empowers them to justify their practices in the theories that they understand and can act upon in their own classrooms' (2009: 11).

This perspective is based on the assumption that learning to teach comes from participating in social practices of learning and teaching in specific classroom and school situations. Education of a teacher is seen as a dynamic process of reconstructing and transforming those practices, to be responsive to individual and local needs. The teacher is central here because she appropriates knowledge, reconstructs it and refashions it to meet new challenges. She is a 'transformative intellectual' (Johnson, 2006: 249). Given this characterisation of how teachers learn and develop, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005: 359) argue that teacher education must lay the foundation for lifelong learning and help teachers become professionals who are 'adaptive experts'.

It is apparent from the above discussion that the focus has now shifted from the positivist's prediction and generalisation to interpretation and meaning-making. The interpretive paradigm is context-driven and curriculum design within this paradigm tries to understand teaching and learning in terms of the environment in which they take place.

Implications for teacher education curriculum design

Since the contexts in which the teachers learn and teach contribute significantly to teacher learning, an understanding of the social and cognitive processes that teachers go through is fundamental to course design. This would entail recognising why teachers adopt certain practices in the social, historical, cultural contexts in which they work, and necessitate discussing theories of second language acquisition, classroom methodologies, or descriptions of the English language against the backdrop of teachers' professional lives within the settings where they work, and within the circumstances of that work.

Such a socially situated approach to curriculum design would also be in line with the aims and objectives of the DCS's training course, which is to reach out to teachers in rural and backward areas of the country. It is appropriate in the context of the learners, classroom settings and the schools in which they teach.

Challenges for teacher education curriculum design

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) has recommended that teacher education curriculum framework should be in line with the curriculum framework for school education. 'A teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and demands arising in the school context, to engage with questions of school knowledge, the learner and the learning process' (p. 12).

The National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal Position Paper (2009) states that teacher education programmes should 'provide the space for engagement with issues and concerns of contemporary Indian society, its pluralistic nature and issues of identity, gender, equity and poverty. This can help teachers to contextualise education and evolve a deeper understanding of the purpose of education and its relationship with society' (p. 22).

These are significant policy recommendations that provide a working framework for restructuring the curriculum of DCS's training course. They highlight the need for 'inclusivity' and present the challenges in designing a contextually appropriate training course. They are to:

- match the curricular aims of the training course with the aims and objectives of the national curriculum framework for school education
- design the curricular content taking into consideration the social, political, economic and cultural histories that are 'located' in the contexts where teachers live, learn and teach
- equip teachers with the intellectual tools of enquiry to critically reflect and

create contextually appropriate learning opportunities for the students they teach

- sensitise teachers to the philosophy of *inclusive education* and orient them to different kinds of adjustments that schools have to make in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, teaching methods and other school practices to relate teaching to the needs of all learners.

Steps for redesigning the curriculum of DCS distance training course

In order to derive a clear understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of teaching and learning, as a first step, it is necessary to visit the schools in the areas where district centres are located, to understand to what extent the classrooms are sites for professional learning. Though schools are physical sites of learning, these are not neutral or inconsequential to the activity of learning and teaching – they are a powerful force that impact on what and how teachers teach. Thus an explicit examination of the way L2 teachers are constructed in their work settings and the relative status of L2 teaching in those settings would help to lay the foundation for a curricular outline of this course.

As teachers are expected to interpret, reconstruct and adapt the curriculum to local conditions, there is a responsibility to help teachers become more critical and reflective, and this requires creating ‘spaces’ or opportunities in the curriculum for teachers to develop critical thinking and reflection skills. As Johnson (2006) says, the intellectual tools of inquiry must permeate all dimensions of their professional development experiences. Using these tools to inquire about their professional identities, L2 teachers come to recognise their own beliefs, values and knowledge about language learning and language teaching and become aware of their impact on classroom practices. These ‘spaces’ can be created in the curriculum by including interactive group tasks, projects, seminars, online discussion board tasks and conferences, and by providing teachers with informal social and professional networking opportunities for sharing community experiences.

Since teacher educators (chief tutors) play a crucial role in disseminating the course through the district centres located in various states, and reflect the ‘voices’ and opinions of the teachers, their inclusion in the process of curriculum renewal will be mandatory. Their participation in curriculum and materials design workshops at the university would pave the way for an ‘inclusive’ and meaningful process of curriculum renewal.

Conclusion

Becoming a language teacher is a complex, socially constructed, developmental process in which formal education plays only a minor role. Teachers’ prior knowledge, beliefs, experiences, interpretations of their practices, and cultural values shape in critical ways their learning and pedagogic practices. Therefore, acknowledging the role of community in knowledge-building of teachers is foundational to teacher education curriculum design.

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Paradigms of enrichment in language and teacher education

Elka Todeva, Professor of Applied Linguistics, MA TESOL Program, SIT Graduate Institute, USA

Abstract

For years, our goals as language educators and teacher trainers have been framed in deficit terms as challenges to be overcome through better teaching and training. What my TEC15 talk explored instead was reframing models of teaching and language teacher education which view learners as resources with valuable cultural and linguistic knowledge. When artfully tapped, this knowledge leads to expedited, congenial, socially embedded learning that benefits the learners and their communities and fosters important competences for today's globalised world. In the reframing models I examined, teachers are also seen as knowers who, more than anyone else, understand the intricacies of their context. Reports from teacher associations lend support to such models, indicating that more significant change for the better occurs if we experiment with and adjust our own practice on an ongoing basis and share with colleagues our locally constructed knowledge rather than just being consumers of imported 'best methods and practices' that not infrequently lack plausibility and context appropriateness. The intention behind my talk reflected in this paper was not another pendulum swing or another counterproductive dichotomy. What I advocate is simply drawing more fully on what all the stakeholders of the learning enterprise have to offer.

On the power of models, frameworks, metaphors and words

Cognitive psychologists, linguists and philosophers have all drawn attention to the fact that we are influenced by the frameworks, concepts and metaphors we live by (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Blunden, 2011; Landau et al., 2014). They affect our perceptions and understanding, our everyday functioning and also our scientific theorising. As Sfard points out, their power stems from the fact that they often cross the borders between the spontaneous and the scientific, between the intuitive and the formal. They also cross domain boundaries and, through what she calls conceptual osmosis, they let our primary intuition shape scientific ideas, with formal concepts then feeding back into the intuition (Sfard, 1998: 4).

In the last few years there has been growing realisation in our field that speaking of learning and teaching in terms of input and output is too mechanistic. Although useful for certain awareness-raising explorations with important practical implications, if not used carefully, these concepts can lead to diminished learner agency and neglect of the social nature of learning and communication. Now some prefer to talk instead of affordances and learning opportunities and learner engagement and we are gradually beginning to embrace more ecological approaches to teaching. Also, instead of repetition and drills we have started

talking about iteration. In iteration, a term we borrowed from physics, there is repetition but things are never exactly the same. This concept invites us to always have some interest-maintaining twist, content or format wise.

A classic example of iterative practice would be when students are asked to share a story in three rounds, working in concentric circles – the first time they have three minutes, then two and finally one. Each time they are telling their story to a different person, i.e. there are two variables here, the time and also one's interlocutor; people are telling the same story but things are never exactly the same. They typically modify what they are saying depending on whether they have some shared knowledge with their listeners; also, the three versions of their story differ in terms of flow and level of detail. Iteration gives us a chance to develop automaticity through much-needed practice, but unlike with drills, in iteration things are never mind-numbing; we have all the advantages of repetition while avoiding the drawbacks associated with it.

During my talk I also demonstrated the power of the dominant narratives and concepts that shape our work with regard to the grammar dimension of language. I argued that we are likely to plan and teach very differently if instead of thinking of grammar as a set of rules we think of it as a *key meaning-making* and *identity negotiation* tool. Seen and conceptualised in these terms, as a tool of empowerment allowing us to express our feelings and thoughts in a nuanced and sophisticated way (not just get our message across) and also as a vehicle for negotiating a new identity for ourselves, grammar **definitely** becomes worth investing time and energy in.

Learners as knowers and teacher and students as co-explorers

In my talk I contended that, for far too long, as a profession we have looked at language learning and teaching in deficit terms, as challenges to overcome rather than viewing the learners as resources with rich linguistic and cultural knowledge and a capacity for learning that we are yet to fully tap into. This detrimental deficit mentality is discussed in a number of recent publications such as Canagarajah (2013), Garcia and Flores (2014) and May (2014).

Richard Ruiz (1984) argued poignantly nearly 30 years ago for a re-orientation in language planning where the language(s) the learners already have in their repertoire are seen as a resource that we build on with any additional language. Nowadays many raise their voices against the monolingual bias in SLA where for years students were presented as something like 'walking deficits' unable to ever achieve native speaker competence (Cook, 1995, 2007; Block, 2003; Ortega, 2014). We are finally acknowledging that native speaker competence as a target is both unrealistic and perhaps not the most appropriate goal for the globalised world we live in. We have also recognised that the very concept of native speaker is more difficult to define than it seems.

A closer look at the literature reveals that we are no longer aiming simply at developing communicative competence in the learners, defined by Canale

and Swain (1980) as a four-dimensional entity covering one's knowledge of morphological and syntactic rules, sense of appropriateness, discourse competence and strategic competence that refers to our ability to compensate for any gaps in our grammar or lexicon.

These days scholars like Kramsch (2006) make the argument that we should raise the bar (in the old mindset that would be lowering the bar), and aim for what she refers to as 'symbolic competence', i.e. an ability to navigate between languages and dialects. The ability to code-switch and navigate between languages has been shown to lead to better transactional outcomes and better interpersonal relationships as well.

Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), Canagarajah (2013) and others advocate that the goal of language teaching should be the development of capacity rather than competence, with learners soft-assembling their messages from their entire semiotic arsenal and all the linguistic resources they share with their interlocutors.

This is one type of enrichment I addressed in my talk – encouraging students to use all their semiotic resources and all languages in their repertoire while working on their English. This meshes well with the technology-driven penchant for multimodal literacies and acknowledges the fact that the world is a multilingual space and accommodation and diversity are a healthy thing rather than a liability. Both teachers from the trenches and language learners turned teachers and researchers have tried to argue for years that the mandate to leave our L1 at the door never worked as the human brain always contrasts and compares. We are just beginning to officially admit that indeed we are better off being strategic about the use of the L1 in the classroom rather than continuing to impose unrealistic and ultimately counterproductive practices.

To further explore the concept of reframing, I used Hawkins' I/thou/it triangle according to which what unfolds in a classroom is shaped by three key elements: the learners (thou), the subject matter (it) and the teacher (I) with his or her particular teaching philosophy, background knowledge, world view, and biases (Hawkins, 1974). I then argued that in many English classrooms around the world, it is still the teacher and/or the textbook that remain the main input provider, and the lessons often follow the P/P/U format (presentation/practice/use).

Space precludes a balanced critique of this framework. Both anecdotal evidence and research indicate that in P/P/U classrooms learners are often deprived of ownership of the language used and the topics discussed and one sees lack of emotional and full cognitive engagement. Also, the conditions of learning are not in alignment with the conditions of use; as a result, the students can do the exercises they are engaged with but are unable to sustain any real-life communication, i.e. they experience what Whitehead (1929) called 'the inert knowledge problem'.

By choosing pronouns rather than nouns for his model, Hawkins invites us to consider fluid role reversals. Learners don't have to be passive recipients of

knowledge. They can be cast in the role of active explorers, input providers, facilitators, task-masters and presenters; the teacher in turn becomes a learner.

In enrichment frameworks, one tries to maximise the role of each tip of the triangle, while putting the learners centre stage, tapping into their prior linguistic and other types of knowledge and making them and the teacher co-explorers of the way the target language and culture work, while using all available in- and out-of-the-classroom resources.

To demonstrate how cognitive and emotional engagement and mutual enrichment can work in low-tech, resources-poor, large classes, I engaged my audience in a conversation around the Indian 10-rupee banknotes, which, in all their numerous editions, are infinitely beautiful and interesting. My genuine questions were around the various symbols shown on them, how these symbols were chosen, about the scripts used, the political figures depicted and historical buildings chosen, whether some editions were already discontinued. As the real knowers in this conversation, my audience were more than eager to offer rich information on all these questions. When we later looked at the ‘transcript’ of my questions, it became apparent that they were almost exclusively in the passive voice. In an ESL classroom this observation would have triggered a grounded exploration of how the active and the passive voice are different, followed by a closer scrutiny of their respective forms.

In our exchange the ‘I’ (the teacher/the linguistically more knowledgeable other) was doing all the grammaring, i.e. using all these passive voice constructions. The learners, on the other hand, had a pretty easy, manageable task. Linguistically speaking, their responses often contained just a lexical item or two, e.g. ‘In New Delhi’ (in response to my question about where coins are minted). Instructional design specialists call this ‘cognitive load management’ (Sweller, 1988).

My audience, however, were truly the content knowers in this exchange. If I was working with students in India, they would also have been the knowers. Then I asked my audience if they knew what is shown on various American dollar denominations. This piqued people’s interest and most probably triggered follow-up Google searches at home (we used to call this homework!) and we all walked away from this grammaring experience enriched on many levels.

With grammaring, a type of teaching philosophy where one consistently pays attention to what students are interested in while also artfully facilitating the unravelling of significant grammatical patterns, as in the case described above, one helps students achieve both accuracy and fluency and ensures that the conditions of learning are close to the conditions of use. Rather than focusing on the poverty of teaching materials, a grammaring practitioner looks at everything that surrounds us as a huge supplies store that gives us all the resources we need.

Plurilinguistic pedagogy was another enrichment idea explored during my talk. This is a type of pedagogy where the prior linguistic knowledge of the learners

is systematically tapped into (Hufeisen and Neuner, 2004). The learners and the teachers are co-explorers making interesting cross-linguistic comparisons that not only expedite and facilitate the learning of the target language but also help students develop an added appreciation of the beauty and uniqueness of all the languages they already have. In a plurilinguistic pedagogy class the students can act as anthropologists with regard to any element of language – from gestures to intonation, lexicon, grammar and pragmatics.

Teachers as knowers and tinkerers

The I/thou/it triangle is a useful point of departure for reframing in teacher education and professional development as well. Not unlike what we have been witnessing in language classes around the world, in teacher training there has been a predominance of information flow from researchers and trainers to the practising teacher and an emphasis on (e)seminars, training, professional journals and books. Roughly, these constitute the first three of Julian Edge's (2011) CATRA model elements: copying, applying, theorising, reflecting and acting.

Important as these are, they have their downside as well. The 'craft model' – some refer to it as the 'apprentice-copying-the-master model' – may leave little room for creativity and personal growth. The frustration with 'the applied science model' has been that theory often fails to capture the complex realities of the classroom. This leaves practitioners disappointed and has created an unfortunate divide between teachers and researchers. Also, as pointed out by Ur (2013) and others, teachers generally find most research rather opaque and don't have time for or access to the latest research.

Given these realities, there has been much focus on reflection-in and on-action (Schön, 1983). Reflection is considered a major meaning-making and professional development tool; through reflection-in and on-action we pay attention to the ecology of teaching, i.e. this type of professional development is always grounded and practical.

Often in training and in teacher supervision we identify a problem, and using frameworks like Kolb's experiential cycle, we reflect on it, explore alternatives to what we have been doing and proceed to active experimentation and changed practice (Kolb, 1984).

What Fanselow (1987, 1992) invites us to do instead is to experiment with everything we do, even when there is no problem. If we have always done an activity in small groups, rather than as individual work, he invites us to change that and see what we will gain and lose with this change in format. Or let's say if we tend to give out handouts before an activity, experiment and see what will happen if we offer the handout after our activity, or leave it to the students to decide when to get the handout we have prepared. Some students love handouts. They give them a sense of security, activate schema, etc. Others get distracted. They want them 'after the fact' so that they can review things later. Without active experimentation we can never know what works best for our students.

In India people know all about constant experimentation and innovation. In common parlance there is even a word for it, *jugaad*. Fanselow's appeal for experimentation is also reminiscent of the Japanese concept of *Kaizen* that the Toyota company initiated with their workers, encouraging them to constantly make minor improvements rather than rely on top-down initiatives.

Some call such small changes tinkering. Prabhu calls this a search for 'plausibility' – through small changes in the classroom, through active and thoughtful experimentation, we develop a feel for the phenomenon of learning and an ability to judge what is best for given learners at a given time (Prabhu, 1990). This is a stance recently echoed by Harry Kuchah, an IATEFL 2015 keynote speaker. His large-scale work with teachers in his native Cameroon reveals that they find locally constructed and lived 'best practices' more helpful than imported or imposed ones.

Through experimentation and trial and error we continually get closer to the best we can be for our students. As Borg (2014) points out, unlike external teacher development, which is costly, infrequent and often too generic, such an ongoing growth through constant experimentation is inexpensive, practical and focused.

Technology has created unprecedented opportunities for professional development by offering us access to information from various feeder disciplines to ELT as well as formal and informal ways of sharing practical ideas for facilitating better learning. At the end of the day, we remain the best knowers of our students and their embodied situated learning. Being part of this learning, we can consistently play with small changes, maintaining some stability while doing *jugaad* as well.

Reputedly, Alan Turing, the father of the modern computer, was heard saying that thinking and tinkering are an adventure of the highest order.

Enjoy your journeys of exploration!

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Dialogic interaction and the mediation of learning during pre-service teacher education

Mike Chick, Award Leader, BA TESOL, University of South Wales, UK

Abstract

The development of a sociocultural view of teacher learning (Hobbs, 2013) has stimulated an interest in, and has begun to illuminate, the role of talk in the process of second language teacher education (SLTE), especially during post-teaching feedback discussions (Mann, 2005; Brandt, 2006; Copland, 2010). In other words, there is growing awareness of the need to provide space for learner teachers to talk about what they are experiencing during their pre-service ELT preparation (Johnson, 2009). Such discourse can assist in bridging the theory–practice divide by allowing learner teachers to consider and review the declarative knowledge from their course of education in light of their classroom teaching practice as well as in light of their own language learning experiences. This paper presents findings from a research project that suggest a dialogic pedagogy, which includes both dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2005) and exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976; Mercer, 1995) can support development during SLTE. How such an approach inculcates reflective practice, and how this pedagogy raises awareness of the complexity involved in developing good practice in language teaching, are considered below.

Introduction

This paper details a number of recurrent criticisms that have been levelled at existing models of pre-service teacher education and suggests that a more dialogic pedagogy may help to overcome these through the encouragement of reflective practice among novice teachers. The benefits, as well as the constraints, to implementing a dialogic approach during pre-service ELT are also discussed. It is argued that an extended course of pre-service second language teacher education (SLTE) that adopts a dialogic approach during post-teaching reflection can foster learning by providing novice teachers with the means to reflect on classroom actions, which is brought to bear on both their declarative knowledge base as well as their experience as learners.

Recurrent themes

A repeated criticism of pre-service teacher education is that, especially on short-term, intensive courses of preparation, teachers often enter the profession with a limited theoretical, methodological and linguistic knowledge base (Ferguson and Donno, 2003; Stanley and Murray, 2013). What this can often mean is that learner teachers are not exposed to the reasoning behind activities and procedures and have fewer alternative courses of action to consider during decision

making. Moreover, they are poorly equipped to identify and deal with learning opportunities (Allwright, 2005) and language issues as they emerge during a class. In addition to this, contemporary models of teacher education have been disparaged for the culture of transmission that often exists between the trainee and the trainer (Brandt, 2006; Warford, 2011). Learner teachers are often taught ‘how’ to teach and encouraged to acquire certain techniques and approaches but seldom, especially when time is limited, have to undertake any inquiry into the justification behind such activities. Taken together, these themes suggest that many teachers may start their professional lives deprived of a sufficient knowledge base and without being adequately inculcated into any form of culture of inquiry. This is, of course, detrimental to reflective practice and means that the road to professional expertise may well be far longer, and more arduous, than is necessary.

A dialogic turn

In place of a traditional classroom environment in which the educator transmits the correct way to go about things, Mercer (2000) suggests that an educator may attempt to foster an environment in which the participants are consciously and actively encouraged to participate with ideas, thoughts, suggestions and so on. He labelled this type of discourse ‘exploratory talk’ in which notions of trust, inquiry and constructive engagement with each other’s ideas are promoted. Mercer and Howe (2012: 14–19), in taking a sociocultural perspective to education, view such exploratory talk as ‘a form of co-reasoning in language, with speakers sharing knowledge, challenging ideas, evaluating evidence and considering options in a reasoned and equitable way’. During a course of SLTE, a dialogic pedagogy may serve as valuable aid to scaffolding a learner teacher’s development. Providing learner teachers with openings to talk about what they are experiencing on the practicum, what they find challenging, satisfying, perplexing, and so on, allows them to verbalise their comprehension. That is to say, the extent and potential of a learner teacher’s grasp of a notion may be made visible through his or her articulation. As a result of being given such space, they are able to make their present understandings accessible to the educator who, in turn, is thus better placed to assist, *to scaffold*, the teacher’s development.

From a socio-cultural viewpoint, exploratory talk, with a more expert other, is one of the principal means by which learner teachers are able to bridge the theory–practice divide that exists in teaching. Wells (1999: 6) explains how:

It is frequently in the effort to make his or her understanding meaningful for others that the speaker has the feeling of reaching a fuller and clearer understanding for him or herself.

Such sentiments go to the heart of a socio-cultural understanding of learning as something that moves from the social to the individual and which can be mediated by talk that reflects on action (Johnson, 2009). With regard to teacher education, a feedback discussion that involves reflection on both theoretical notions and actual experience, provides an ideal moment for such mediation to occur.

The observations described below are drawn from wider research into a course of SLTE that is embedded in a three-year BA English with TESOL degree programme at a British university. The action research study examined the potential for learning that surfaces in attempting to take a more dialogic approach to SLTE. Findings from 14 transcribed, post-teaching feedback discussions were triangulated with data collected from interviews with seven learner teachers and also from reflective journal accounts and lesson observation notes. The interpretations reported here stem from a thematic discourse analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) of this data.

Benefits

A number of benefits were seen to emerge from adopting this approach. Firstly, the practicum could be justifiably described as an educative rather than a training process. The greater dialogic focus on uncovering the reasoning behind decision making, both in the planning stages as well as in improvised classroom actions, seemed to nudge the learner teachers' thinking into greater consideration of the intricacies of the language learning and teaching process. In other words, the learner teachers were not primarily concerned with attempts to master a variety of prescribed skills or behaviours. For example, they were beginning to understand the importance of factors such as individual learner needs, the class context, the fact that language learning consists of more than the assimilation of discrete grammatical chunks, and so on. Perhaps most importantly, they were starting to understand the significance of considering such knowledge during planning and classroom decision making. They were becoming aware of alternative courses of action available to them as language teachers; as one interviewee describes:

We explored so many different ways of teaching, different approaches and methods and theories. I feel a lot more aware now of what I could do and it's not all out of a course-book. (MA)

A second benefit that became evident was that judicious questioning, that looked to probe understandings and uncover tacit beliefs, did indeed assist in the process of scaffolding. The effort to create spaces for exploratory talk allowed me (the teacher educator) to ascertain more accurately an individual's comprehension and thus be better placed to help in amending or developing their personal theories. The following extract provides an example of this and revolves around the use of a five-minute video clip used by a learner teacher (LT1). The clip consisted of a number of UK nationals discussing what Christmas meant to them. Prior to starting the video, observation notes record how the learner teacher had urged the class of multilingual, upper-intermediate, adult students to 'listen carefully as I'm going to ask you lots of questions after'. While delivering these instructions, LT1 handed out a worksheet but made no reference to what the students were supposed to do with it. In reading the extract, it is vital to keep in mind that the participants in the discussion are LTs undertaking their first ever experiences of managing the conditions for learning to take place. The passage begins with my query to the class about whether it would have been useful to allow the students

the opportunity to look at and discuss the questions before watching and listening to the clip.

Extract (TP Wed 11th Dec: 8.47)

1. **Educator:** What do you guys think?
2. **LT2:** Yeah or at least if they had a look through the questions first then they'd know what
3. they were listening out for, rather than kind of]
4. **LT1:** [How do you, I mean if they've got questions, I mean
5. they're going to be answering the same time – like they were then. Do you know what I mean?
6. **LT3:** But if you say to them don't answer them, just watch and listen.
7. **LT1:** Yeah ...
8. **Educator:** If they were doing it anyway, what does it matter? All it means is we've enabled them to do so.
9. **LT1:** Well, maybe I should have done it the first time. I just assumed they would need to watch it – then
10. we would watch it again. I don't know. I just assumed that because that's how we usually do it in the
11. classes we have in Welsh. We usually watch videos two or three times you know, even when they
12. are boring (laughs) you know.
13. **Educator:** OK everyone learns differently. Do you feel that's the most effective way? Did you feel that from
14. your experience today? That is what they would have wanted to do? To watch three or more times?
15. **LT1:** No, they wouldn't have wanted to. I don't think so because they didn't particularly like the video, did
16. they? So no, they wouldn't have wanted to.
17. **Educator:** OK, so my next question is ... interest ... does it promote learning? Or should we make students
18. listen again anyway?
19. **LT1:** No, it definitely promotes learning, yeah, but it's hard to find interesting material so you
20. can't make everything really interesting. Or maybe you can, but I don't think you can. You know,
21. you're not going to love every video you see in a language class, right?
(Conversation continues)

Various aspects of this conversation extract point to its essential dialogic nature. For example, four participants make contributions; they are asking questions (lines

5, 16); encouraged to contribute (line 1) and reasons are given for challenges (line 2 and 3). However, it is also clear that a number of the educator's turns are openly directed at uncovering LT1's reasoning behind the approach taken (lines 13–14 and 17–18). In lines 9–12, LT1 positively demonstrates that at least some of his beliefs about how to teach stem directly from his own experience as a language learner. However, it is in response to the probing that follows (in lines 13, 14 and 17) that LT1 appears to think more carefully about the nature of learning. In discussing his own, concrete experience of teaching a class, LT1 begins to question the appropriacy of employing the approach by which he himself was taught and we may deduce that he comes to see the importance that interest and motivation play in language learning (line 19). Allowing the space for such dialogue also made it possible to identify much more clearly his understanding of the issue in question. For example, when he utters 'you're not going to love every video you see in a language class' (lines 20–21), he reveals that what he sees as paramount is the entertainment value (from his native speaker perspective) of the video. In contrast, what I, as the educator, was concerned about was getting the LTs to see the importance of setting an appropriate learning activity to accompany the video clip.

Another benefit to emerge from the data was contained in the evidence that revealed how the fostering of greater dialogic interaction, through increased instances of exploratory talk (Mercer, op.cit.), provided the learner teachers with the opportunity to learn from one another. As van Lier (2004) notes, learning opportunities do not only occur in instances of conscious and reflexive activity on the part of the educator. Creating the space for open, multi-party dialogue meant that the learner teachers were playing an active role in their own development. One participant recalls how:

we got to speak, to discuss what we were doing and it wasn't just us sitting and listening and take notes from a board or slide ... we kind of learnt through doing. (SH)

Obstacles

Organising and fostering a culture of open, honest discussion can be quite a challenge in a formal learning environment. After all, the participants, in this case final-year undergraduates, were understandably preoccupied with their imminent degree classification. In addition, the teacher educator, while attempting to facilitate more symmetrical discourse structures, still had to juggle the dual role of educator and assessor. Given this scenario, it is perhaps logical that a number of possible constraints to the facilitation of exploratory talk and dialogic teaching need to be kept in mind. For example, learner teachers, focused on achieving the highest grade possible, may feel disinclined to reveal where they are facing difficulties or feel unqualified to offer suggestions or thoughts in exploratory discussion. The recollection below provides an example of the importance of grades for the undergraduate learner teachers:

In the third year you're thinking like, this is my final year, anything I do now could be detrimental to the final grade that I have been working towards for three years. (KI)

A second important consideration concerns the dialogue around good practice in ELT. For example, the ability to react spontaneously to emerging language needs is seen as a key tenet of language teaching expertise (Long, 2011). In other words, even though many commentators view the hallmark of good teaching as the ability to respond to classroom events as they unfold, the data collected in this study revealed that the majority of learner teachers do not feel predisposed, at this point of their professional lives, to acting upon learning opportunities which may present themselves during a class. Although the learner teachers are becoming aware of good practice, the initial practicum classes may be too early a point, even on an extended model of preparation, to expect them to enact all aspects of it. As one reflected:

The bit at the end when I was explaining clauses ... it was a bit too confusing. Even I didn't know how to explain it ... I had a rough idea it was about subject and object but didn't entirely understand it myself. (RA)

Conclusion

It may be concluded that although certain approaches and pedagogical actions may not always be attainable on a pre-service practicum (e.g. a spontaneous focus on form), this does not mean that the complexity of expert teaching should be hidden from learner teachers and supplanted with a set of observable competencies. Therefore, instead of placing unreasonable demands on the learner teachers during their practicum experience, the aim should be to construct dialogic spaces that allow the learner teachers to appreciate and identify courses of action that, when ready, they can eventually act upon (Chick, 2015).

Doubts and worries may be offset, to some degree, by making an effort to ensure that not only is the reasoning behind a dialogic approach made clear to the learner teachers but also that the discussions themselves are conducted in a sensitive and supportive manner. In doing so, it is argued here that teacher educators can help learner teachers to develop the framework and critical appraisal skills to (at least) set off on the lifelong path of becoming thinking, reflective practitioners.

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Curriculum change and innovation: Insiders' perspectives

Ravinarayan Chakrakodi, Faculty, Regional Institute of English South India, Bangalore, India

Abstract

This paper will present the new curriculum introduced for the Diploma in Education (DEd) in Karnataka, a southern state in India, and will analyse the factors that have contributed to its successful implementation. As DEd student teachers need to develop their language competence, both grammatical and communicative, and also understand the pedagogical skills required for teaching English at the elementary level, the curriculum was revised focusing on two curricular areas, namely: (1) Language proficiency, language knowledge and communication skills in the first year, and (2) English language pedagogy and classroom processes in the second year. Both courses are compulsory for all DEd student teachers and are stretched to the full academic year. The data gathered through questionnaires and interviews with teacher educators and student teachers indicated that the course is effective and is beneficial to the majority of student teachers.

Introduction

Research studies done so far on second language teacher education (SLTE) tend to focus on second language teacher professionalism, teacher preparation, teacher identity, language teacher cognition, the practicum, mentoring, language teacher supervision, etc. Even studies done on the curriculum of SLTE address issues such as content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, knowledge about language, SLA theories, discourse studies, pragmatics, literature, culture, theories of teaching, teaching skills, subject matter knowledge, etc. There are hardly any studies on the communication skills or target language proficiency of student teachers in SLTE. Issues discussed under 'What do teachers need to know about SLA?' are learner errors, order and sequence of acquisition, interlanguage, input and interaction, language transfer, cognitive aspects of L2 learning, linguistic aspects of L2 learning, individual differences, learning strategies, instructed SLA, etc.

There is hardly any study on student teachers' ability to use the language for communicative purposes. This study is an attempt to examine a few issues related to the second language proficiency of student teachers doing a pre-service course in Karnataka, a southern state in India.

Rationale and objectives

The last DEd curriculum revision that took place in Karnataka was in the year

2002. The publication of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 has changed our perspectives of language learning, language teaching and language teacher education. Constructivist pedagogy has influenced the traditional teacher-centred approach. The basic focus now is to make learning experiential. It is in this light that the areas that need to be seriously reconsidered in the present system are examined. As far as English is concerned, there are two components in the present curriculum. They are:

- 1) a content enrichment programme of three months' duration in the first year
- 2) a paper on the methodology of teaching English in the second year, offered as a specialisation only to those students who opt for it.

The content enrichment programme mainly focuses on grammar and other linguistic aspects. Usage seems to have been put on the backburner. The three-month programme was not so successful in developing the English language proficiency of the prospective teachers. The study conducted by the RIE Mysore on the evaluation of the DEd curriculum of Karnataka has made the following observations:

- 1) the DEd curriculum does not reflect the needs and abilities of DEd students
- 2) there is a need to look at the content enrichment programme from different perspectives.

NCF 2005 observed that teachers' low proficiency in using the language is a major concern and has hampered the provision of rich comprehensible input to learners at the primary level. Lack of language competence on the part of the teachers has resulted in mechanical ways of teaching English in the classroom. For example, teacher talk has been reduced to questions and answers and there is hardly any meaningful interaction taking place in the classroom. Also, teaching has been reduced to the teacher explaining the content and learners learning the content by heart.

It is worth, in this context, mentioning the following observations made by the NCFTE (2009):

- Teachers need to be prepared to view learners as active participants in their own learning and not as mere recipients of knowledge.
- Teachers need to be trained in organising learner-centred, activity-based, participatory learning experiences – play, projects, discussions, dialogue, observation, visits, etc.
- Teacher education should engage teachers with the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks to critically examine them rather than taking them as 'given' and accepted without question.
- Teacher education should provide student teachers with opportunities for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule with teacher-directed activities alone.

It is hoped that when the student teachers equip themselves with these abilities, they will be able to use finely tuned language appropriate to the context. The curriculum envisaged therefore needs to take into account these language and communication needs of the student teacher and also the curricular/textbook requirements at the primary levels of learning in Karnataka. In other words, the curriculum must be highly need-based with suggestions for effective classroom interaction and transaction of the content.

Against this backdrop, it was decided to revise the DEd curriculum so that student teachers will be able to make the teaching–learning of English more meaningful and effective. The Directorate of State Educational Research and Training (DSERT) played a pivotal role in this regard.

As student teachers need to develop their language competence (both grammatical and communicative) and also understand effective methods and techniques of teaching English at the primary level, the following two curricular areas have been included in the DEd curriculum:

- 1) communication skills in English
- 2) English language pedagogy and classroom processes.

The content suggested for the curriculum in the first year of the DEd course are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: First-year course

Communication skills in English				
	Instruction		Assessment	
Year 1	Theory	Practice	Internal	External
	10 hours per month	10 hours per month	20 marks	30 marks
Total	135 hours		50 marks	

The purpose of this course is to enhance the language proficiency of student teachers and also to develop their language knowledge – knowledge about grammatical structures, lexical items and segmental and supra-segmental features of articulation. This course should also help them to develop their communication skills, i.e. to use English for a variety of communicative (both spoken and written) purposes.

Student teachers can gain good mastery over language if they are exposed to a communicative environment in the DEd classroom. The student teachers as well as their educators should see language as a set of skills to be acquired rather than as a content subject to be taught or learned through rote methods.

The main objectives of the course are to help student teachers to:

- listen to a stretch of discourse and comprehend, interpret and respond appropriately
- decode, interpret and evaluate written texts
- use grammatically acceptable language for effective communication
- choose and use the appropriate lexical items and language expressions in speech and writing
- use appropriate learning resources to strengthen their language skills.

This course has been made compulsory for all student teachers. The different components of the first-year course are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Components for Year 1

Unit no.	Name of the unit	Theory	Practice
1	Spoken skills – listening and speaking	15 hours	20 hours
2	Reading and writing	15	15
3	Communicative grammar	15	15
4	Language functions	15	15
5	Language learning resources / reference skills	10	10

In this paper, I will mainly focus on the curriculum developed for the first-year course.

Communication skills in English

In order to implement the new curriculum effectively in the classroom, face-to-face training for teacher educators was conducted for six days. The training was based on the Teacher Educator’s Handbook that was prepared for the above purpose. The Teacher Educator’s Handbook included strategies and activities for the effective classroom transaction of the new curriculum. In addition to this, a sourcebook was prepared for student teachers which had all the content, tasks and activities aimed at developing their English language proficiency. Also, class talks – talks by experts in the field on relevant topics – were video recorded and supplied to teacher education institutes. A one-day teleconference programme was conducted for teacher educators to clarify their doubts and to share classroom experiences.

Assessment procedures

Another interesting aspect of the curriculum was the introduction of formative assessment. The internal assessment was carried out through formative procedures by giving project work, encouraging student teachers to make presentations and involving them in interesting classroom activities. Summative

assessment was conducted for 30 marks, which included a written test (20 marks) and an oral test (5 marks). The oral test had three parts as shown below:

- self-introduction
- knowledge of functional English and an extended talk on a given topic
- reading aloud an unseen passage.

The test was administered by an external examiner who was a faculty member from the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET). The oral test of 6,394 student teachers was video recorded and was sent to the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board (KSEEB) for marking.

The test results are as follows:

- Total number of student teachers who appeared for the final examination: 6,394
- Total number of student teachers who passed: 2,664
- The pass percentage: 41.66%

The pass percentage in the 'Communication skills in English' paper was low when compared to the other subjects in the first year DEd programme.

The reasons cited by a few teacher educators whom I have interviewed are as follows:

'Student teachers lack basic language competence. They are not motivated to develop their English skills.'

'The curriculum is heavily loaded and is found difficult by student teachers in rural areas.'

'It's difficult to design and conduct a wide range of tasks and activities in the classroom without adequate training for the teacher educators.'

'There are no specialised teacher educators to teach English in some DEd colleges.'

'A few teacher educators themselves are not competent in transacting a proficiency-oriented syllabus.'

'Many teacher educators treated the course as a content subject rather than as a language/skills-oriented syllabus.'

As a member of the curriculum design committee and as an insider, I strongly feel that one of the reasons for the low pass percentage is that the majority of teacher educators treated the language proficiency course as a content subject and encouraged the mastery of the content knowledge rather than the development of the language skills.

Data gathered

Student teachers' opinions on the use of the sourcebook and the effectiveness of the first-year course were sought through a questionnaire. Data from 50 student teachers was gathered. The majority (92 per cent) of the student teachers felt that the course was well designed. As many as 85 per cent of them stated that the first-year course was useful in developing their communication skills in English. They also expressed that the same pattern and content should be continued in future as well. However, some of them (32 per cent) were of the opinion that the curriculum load should be reduced. Especially, they felt that tasks related to the transcription of words and writing skills should be limited.

Interviews with three teacher educators revealed that the new curriculum was helpful in breaking the monotony and making classrooms more interactive. One of the teacher educators expressed the following opinion:

Even I too enjoyed teaching on the course. All these years it was mechanical. But this year both of us – students as well as I – enjoyed the interactions ... children were waiting for my classes ... they used to show a lot of interest in my classes. They used to collect advertisements, take part in role plays and conversations.

It was clear from the interaction with the majority of teacher educators and student teachers that the new curriculum has enhanced their confidence levels in using English for a variety of communicative purposes. This was evident in the oral test that was conducted at the end of the year where student teachers were able to introduce themselves in English and speak confidently on the given topic.

What next?

In order to improve the effectiveness of the course and also to achieve better results, it is desirable to address a few issues. Item analysis which will examine student responses to individual test items in order to assess the quality of those items and of the test as a whole could be carried out. Also, the curriculum load may be reduced by revising the sourcebook, keeping in mind the weighting (50 marks) for the first-year course. Self-instructional teacher development materials and videos such as the ones prepared by TESS INDIA could be supplied to teacher educators to enhance their language competence and professional skills. Additionally, in-depth studies on the communication skills or target language proficiency of student teachers in SLTE could be done in future.

In sum, as Legutke and Schocker-v. Ditfurth (2009) point out, student teachers should experience the very processes they are supposed to initiate with students in their future classrooms. In this sense, the new curriculum designed for the DEd programme in Karnataka provides indirect classroom-based learning experience to student teachers.

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Collaborative action research: An effective tool to research, reflect and renew teaching practices

Krishna Chaitanya E, English language trainer, College of Technology (TVTC), Al-Kharj city, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The use of collaborative action research (CAR) for the continuing professional development (CPD) of EFL teachers is well studied and established, but the use of CAR for the CPD of teachers teaching ESP courses in Hyderabad is rarely used and, even if used, rarely documented and researched. The study examined whether providing training to teachers in CAR helps them in improving classroom research skills, self-reflective thinking and renewing teaching practices for their professional development.

The present study was carried out at Osmania University, Hyderabad. The research was conducted in two phases (preliminary and main study). Research tools such as teachers' and learners' questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used. The preliminary study was conducted to elicit data on problems and challenges which impede teachers' professional development. The data indicated that there is limited scope for teachers' professional development. Teachers in the study received a two-week training programme on CAR. It encouraged them to design need-based modules in their classrooms. The experiences of teachers participating in the research were elicited through structured questionnaires and analysed in the light of their professional development.

Introduction

The use of collaborative action research (CAR) for the professional development of teachers teaching ESP courses in India, particularly in Hyderabad, is rarely used and, even if used, hardly documented and researched. Therefore, the researcher aspires to train teachers in CAR and study its impact on renewing their teaching practices, improving classroom research and material development skills.

Action Research (AR) is a teacher-initiated, teacher-conducted classroom research which aims to solve practical problems in classrooms and to provide profound insights of teaching practices. It is carried out by the actual classroom teachers during normal, everyday activities. Supporting this, Burns (1999: 24) states: 'because of its practical nature and focus on immediate concerns, it holds particular appeal for classroom teachers and a promising direction for the building of theories related to teaching and learning.'

CAR can be carried out by a group of teachers who decide to co-operate in a collaborative way. Its approach is essentially 'participatory' and 'collaborative' in nature and is conducted by the actual members of the community, i.e. classroom teachers (Bailey, 2001). CAR is significant for classroom teachers because it encourages teachers to reflect on their practices systematically and gain profound insights of their classrooms, and therefore leads to potential change in their teaching practices (Wallace, 1991: 49). Furthermore, it helps teachers to analyse their texts and to design need-based material for their learners through observation, reflection and collaborative discussions.

Methodology of the research

The present study is exploratory in nature and is conducted through opinion surveys. It aims at exploring the problems and challenges of ESP teachers (working in professional colleges of Hyderabad) with a special focus on their texts, materials and their training requirements. It also aims to study the kind of impact CAR has on enriching teachers' research skills and materials besides contributing to their professional development.

The following are the research questions of the study:

- 1) What are the chief impediments (problems and challenges) that prevent the professional development of teachers teaching ESP courses?
- 2) To what extent does the use of classroom research help teachers in overcoming the problems and challenges in teaching and learning, and contribute for their professional development?

Researcher's model of AR for the study

Of the many models of AR presented in the literature, the researcher considered the models of David Nunan (2006: 2–3) and Anne Burns (2009a: 38–42) to be appropriate for his micro-level study. It is because these models provide detailed and specific information in initial, medial and final phases of research and they represent AR at the macro level without any ambiguity. These models are flexible and simple, and can be read, understood and carried out by experienced/ inexperienced teachers. While designing his own AR model, the researcher adopted and omitted some phases of Nunan's (ibid.: 2–3) and Burns' (ibid.: 38–42) models. Thus, the researcher has evolved his own model of AR and followed it meticulously in conducting the present study (see Appendix 1).

Procedure of the research

The research was conducted in two phases, i.e. preliminary and main study.

Preliminary study

The preliminary study is crucial to research to know the background of teachers, their problems and challenges in terms of teaching texts, designing materials and scope for improving classroom research skills for their professional development.

It also helps to know the background of the students, their problems and needs analysis.

The study involves a survey conducted with 100 teachers and 460 students from 20 professional colleges of Hyderabad. The selection of the sample was based on a random sampling method. The opinions of the participants were elicited from the sample group administering structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

The findings of the teachers' questionnaire and semi-structured interviews reveal that the teachers have limited professional developmental opportunities. They lack knowledge of designing need-based classroom materials and awareness of conducting research in their classrooms. Moreover, most of the teachers require training to teach ESP courses and to design their own materials. The findings reveal that they are unable to meet their syllabus objectives through classroom teaching. It further shows that there exists a gap between students' needs and teachers' instructional methodology.

The findings of the students' questionnaire demonstrate that students have several problems such as shyness, fear, inhibitions in speaking to the opposite gender, language problems, mother tongue-medium background, lack of exposure, etc. Apart from this, students lack the ability to use functional language skills, such as proper use of natural language in different social and professional contexts. Most of the students stated that they need to improve their presentation, résumé and cover letter writing skills, besides non-verbal communication and non-standard Indian expressions in English. Furthermore, they want to enhance their interview skills and answering strategies.

The preliminary findings were used for designing the main study.

Main study

The data for the main study was collected in three stages.

Stage-I – Training programme on CAR to the special interest group (SIG-CAR) of teachers.

Stage-II – Analysis of the prescribed textbooks and design of model course materials (MCM).

Stage-III – Administration and analysis of MCM along with the teachers' questionnaire.

The sample size includes a special interest group (SIG) of 40 teachers who participated in the preliminary study and 120 students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses in professional colleges of Hyderabad. The main study (which took ten months) began with two-weeks' training on CAR for the SIGs in their institutions.

Stage-I

Two-weeks' training on CAR was offered to 40 special interest groups (SIG-CAR) of teachers belonging to eight professional colleges. The training comprised videos of Anne Burns (2009b) and case studies from AR literature on English teachers' professional development through CAR in their classrooms.

The objectives of the training were to encourage teachers to identify problems in their texts; learners' needs analysis; to prepare need-based materials to strengthen their texts and to help teachers in overcoming their problems in teaching ESP courses.

Stage-II

The researcher collaborated with the teacher participants and analysed the problems in the texts. The criterion used for analysis of the lessons is the relevance and selection of content to the learners' background. The criterion for listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) skills is to know whether the activities are graded and followed integrated skills. And it also aims to know whether a variety of task types and materials are used.

The analysis indicates that there is no human interest in the content of the syllabus and most of the content of textbooks is not relevant to the students' background. LSRW skills are not properly integrated or sequenced and there are no guided or free activities. Moreover, there is no systematic and conscious attempt made by the teachers to help learners in overcoming these problems; consequently, language learning becomes mechanical and uninteresting for the learners.

The analysis indicates that teachers require training and there should be a procedural syllabus instead of a prescribed/printed syllabus in the context of teaching English on the technical and management courses. This is because a procedural syllabus gives more scope to teachers to update the content and language tasks according to the learners' needs than a printed syllabus. Supporting this, Prabhu (1987) states that 'it is necessary to abandon the pre-selection of linguistic items in any form and instead specify the content of teaching in terms of holistic units of communication.'

Keeping this in view, model course material (MCM) was designed based on the needs of learners.

Design of MCM

MCM was developed with the aim of encouraging teachers to collaborate, discuss and design need-based material for their learners. This process enabled teachers to work together in exploring several sources, choosing specific content, and designing and modifying particular tasks for the material, which gradually led to their professional development. The researcher in collaboration with teachers designed modules on non-verbal communication, mother tongue influence, and presentation and interview skills, besides résumé and cover letter writing. The design of MCM is based on the objective needs analysis (i.e. improving

communicative competence and language development) of the learners from the preliminary study.

Stage-III

The MCM was administered to the sample group of 120 students pursuing BTech, MBA and MCA courses in eight professional colleges of Hyderabad. The task administration was carried out in 48 classes of approximately two hours each. All the teachers who participated in the CAR assessed the course and classroom practice (based on the checklist of David Nunan (1988) (see Appendix 2), and evaluated the criteria of MCM (based on the checklist of Penny Ur (2008) (see Appendix 3). The responses to the checklists provided the following insights.

It was found by a majority of the teachers that MCM encouraged learners to rehearse and practise skills they need in authentic situations. Learners were asked to discuss and solve problems, and present it to the class. It was observed that the materials used in MCM not only involved students in the tasks but also provided them with opportunities for real-life communication. It was found in the evaluation criteria of MCM that the objectives of MCM are explicitly laid out; content and tasks are clearly organised and graded; there is variety in the tasks and exercises (role plays, information gap, jumbled sentences, multiple choice, comprehension checks, cloze test, etc.) which are tailored to the various learning styles of students; and tasks encouraged learners to become independent in their learning. It was found that MCM provided good practice in a skills-integrated approach to learning.

The analysis of classroom observation and students' oral feedback on their performance (of MCM) showed that they had a rich exposure to various advanced integrated skills tasks and textual, audio and visual materials. A majority of the students (67 per cent) mentioned that their ability to do tasks, i.e. reading/listening for specific and general purposes, sub-skills of reading/writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, gap filling, etc. improved. Many students (64 per cent) further stated that their comprehension of presentation, interview, résumé and cover letter writing skills was strengthened with MCM. More than 69 per cent of students found a gradual development in their content knowledge and language skills, particularly in role plays, discussions and debates.

Analysis of teachers' questionnaire and findings

The teachers' questionnaire, which was administered at the end of the research, elicited their feedback on the aspects of teacher development, improvement of research skills, methods and materials, and learners' needs analysis. Teachers' responses were quantified and presented in tabular format, pie charts and bar graphs.

Teacher development

It was found in the questionnaires that a majority of the teacher participants (78 per cent) stated that CAR improved their teaching competency and practices in terms of exploring teaching ideas, techniques and strategies that students enjoy

and engage with. It was observed that many teachers (68 per cent) particularly mentioned that they became self-reflective, which equipped them with qualities such as self-monitoring (examining their individual teaching practices), self-study (reading from several sources to learn) and self-knowledge (to gain required information for effective teaching). This was witnessed in the teachers' collaborative endeavour of designing MCM.

It was found in the majority of responses (72 per cent) that practising CAR strengthened teachers' teaching and classroom investigation skills and helped in documenting their reflections systematically for discussion. The analysis indicates that such progressive stages developed teacher participants as self-directed teachers for their professional growth.

Improvement of research skills

It was found in the questionnaires that a majority of the teachers (82 per cent) felt a gradual shift from the role of teacher to the role of teacher-researcher. It was mentioned in questionnaires that many teachers (69 per cent), after practising CAR, gradually learned the required research competence and confidence to present and publish their classroom research experiences.

It was observed in the questionnaires that many teachers (71 per cent) felt their inclination for research had been gradually developed. It indicates that such small-scale research (identifying general problems in classrooms and the syllabus) initially seemed to boost their morale for advanced and more challenging areas (designing model course material with particular objectives) of research.

It was also found that many teachers (68 per cent) positively reported that conducting CAR further motivated them to take up small- and large-scale projects of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) on the process of teaching and learning, teacher education and development. Such projects encourage teacher participants to view research as an integral part of teaching.

Renew teaching practices through learners' needs-analysis and methods and materials

Many teachers agreed that conducting needs analysis is a fresh learning experience for them. The majority of them (74 per cent) stated that the CAR programme trained them in eliciting students' academic (presentation skills and body language) and professional needs (résumé and interview skills). Teachers' views here show that students' feedback and needs analysis helped them in designing and evaluating the model course material which had a positive impact on their students' learning.

Additionally, many teachers (82 per cent) mentioned that conducting students' needs-analysis explored several problems, i.e. shyness, stage fear, interacting with the opposite gender, inferiority complex, lack of initiation, etc. It further guided teachers to incorporate specific pre-reading activities in MCM. Many teachers

(77 per cent), interestingly, reported that their learners' willingness to learn was improved because teachers acted on their students' feedback and addressed students' needs and problems in the way their learners wanted.

The majority of the respondents (72 per cent) felt they moved from a dependence to independence stage. They stated that their dependence on outdated materials was reduced; they were equipped to design their own materials (i.e. MCM to supplement the texts); and they used several authentic sources like books, newspapers, websites, blogs, etc. to select appropriate supplementary materials. The positive factors mentioned here led the majority (71 per cent) of the teachers to believe that they achieved the documented objectives of the MCM.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that the study made a modest attempt in encouraging teachers to involve themselves in continuous professional developmental activities; conducting CAR in classrooms is not all about teaching but creating opportunities for continuous learning. Thus, CAR improved teachers' ability in professional growth, classroom research skills, materials development and learners' needs analysis. Furthermore, the study provides helpful information in the use of CAR as an effective tool in researching, reflecting and renewing teaching practices for the professional development of teachers.

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Appendix 1: Researcher's model of action research (AR)

Exploring – phase I: The beginning stage which aims at identifying problems and challenges in the process of effective teaching and learning.

Understanding the existing problems – phase II: The most common problems faced by teachers and learners are analysed, besides incorporating the nature of the problems in questionnaires.

Preparation of tools – phase III: A variety of questions based on the problems of methods, materials, research and training needs of teachers are designed. Tools such as teachers' and learners' questionnaires and interviews are designed.

Preliminary investigation: needs analysis – phase IV: This fact-finding phase draws needs analysis of the teachers and learners from the research tools administered.

Data analysis – phase V: This phase involves analysing the collected data from the preliminary study using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Identifying problems/needs – phase VI: Analysis focuses on the kinds of problems (i.e. methods, materials and training requirements) teachers have.

Hypothesising/speculating – phase VII: The findings of the preliminary study are shared with teacher participants and it leads to the planning of the main study. Based on this, a hypothesis is formed by the researcher. A special interest group (SIG) of teachers is chosen and trained in collaborative action research (CAR) for about two weeks to develop research skills, reflective thinking and to conduct CAR in their classrooms.

Collaborative discussions to design main study – phase VIII: The main study is conducted in two stages with the help of SIG teachers. First, it analyses the prescribed texts. Second, model course material is designed to strengthen the texts and to bridge the gaps found in the preliminary study.

Designing model course material and tools – phase IX: The training helps teachers to design model course material in collaboration with their peers and the researcher. Course material is developed with specific aims. It is decided jointly to use classroom observation and students' feedback to elicit their responses. Structured questionnaires and informal interviews are used for teachers to obtain information on teacher development.

Intervening – phase X: In this phase, the model course material (MCM) of six units is administered and tested out in 48 classes of approximately two hours each.

Eliciting learners' feedback – phase XI: This is a final investigation phase where the MCM is tested out systematically and feedback from learners is elicited. It examines how far the MCM is able to bridge the gaps identified in the preliminary study.

Focusing on teacher development – phase XII: The researcher administers a structured questionnaire and invites oral responses from teachers to elicit their views on their new role as teacher researchers and the advantages of collaborative discussions that they have had with their colleagues and the researcher. Teachers' opinions are also elicited on the needs analysis of the learners, use of apt methods, designing tailored material, taking feedback of learners for improvement, improving research skills, reflecting on their own practices and so on.

Analysis of the data – phase XIII: This phase presents the results of the plan/ intervention (model course material) and its success and impact on the teachers and learners. This phase is also accountable to the analysis and findings of the model course work. The data is analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. This stage will lead to studying the impact of CAR on teacher development.

Findings on the impact of CAR on teacher development – phase XIV: The findings of the research focus on the impact of CAR on teachers' personal and professional development.

Presenting the findings – phase XV: The results are shared in a staff development session to all the teachers who participated in the research, highlighting their valuable contributions.

Appendix 2: Evaluation criteria of classroom practice

Evaluation criteria for the course and classroom practice based on the checklist of David Nunan (1988).

1 = Rarely, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Most of the time, 4 = Always

	Criterion	1	2	3	4
1	There were no cultural misunderstandings			✓	
2	The class understands what was wanted at all times			✓	
3	All instructions were clear				✓
4	Every student was involved at some point			✓	
5	All students were interested in the lesson			✓	
6	The teacher carried out comprehension checks		✓		
7	Materials and learning objectives were appropriate			✓	
8	Student groupings and sub-groupings were appropriate		✓		
9	Class atmosphere was positive				✓
10	The pacing of the lesson was appropriate			✓	
11	There was enough variety in the lesson				✓
12	The teacher did not talk too much		✓		
13	Error correction and feedback was appropriate			✓	
14	There was genuine communication			✓	
15	Teacher was skilful in organising group work			✓	
16	There was opportunity for controlled practice				✓
17	Students were enthusiastic				✓
18	General classroom management was good			✓	
19	The teacher used realia and authentic materials			✓	
20	Learners rehearsed, in class, skills they will need in real communicative situations outside class				✓

21	The objectives of the lesson were clear to the learners			✓	
22	There were opportunities for controlled practice of specific language points.				✓
23	The activities were challenging but not threatening			✓	
24	Learners were asked to do something (e.g. solve a problem, come to a conclusion, complete a task)				✓
25	Learners were required to co-operate			✓	
26	Learners were instructed to share information (i.e. there was an information gap component to the lesson)			✓	
27	There was an evaluation component to the lesson which would allow the learners to judge the degree to which they had succeeded or failed			✓	
28	The activities would have been suitable for a mixed-ability class			✓	

Appendix 3: Evaluation criteria of model course material (MCM)

The checklist for course material evaluation is adapted from Penny Ur (2008).

1 = Rarely, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Most of the time, 4 = Always

	Criterion	1	2	3	4
1	Objectives are explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the material			✓	
2	Approach is educationally and socially acceptable to target community			✓	
3	Clear attractive layout; print is easy to read				✓
4	Appropriate visual materials are available				✓
5	Interesting topics and tasks			✓	
6	Varied topics and tasks, so as to provide for different learner levels, learning styles, interests, etc.				✓
7	Clear instructions				✓
8	Systematic coverage of syllabus			✓	
9	Content is clearly organised and graded (sequenced by difficulty)				✓
10	Periodic review and test sections			✓	
11	Plenty of authentic language			✓	
12	Good pronunciation explanation and practice		✓		
13	Good vocabulary explanation and practice			✓	
14	Good grammar presentation and practice			✓	
15	Fluency practice in all four skills			✓	
16	Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning				✓
17	Adequate guidance for the teacher; not too heavy preparation load		✓		
18	Audio cassettes		✓		
19	Readily available locally			✓	

From product to process: Revision cycle and tertiary level writing performance

Shree Deepa, Senior Assistant Professor, Centre for English Language Studies, University of Hyderabad, India

Abstract

The author in this paper makes the case for two issues in the ELT classroom: viewing writing as a process (not a product) and including revision–editing cycles with maximum student participation in pairs and groups as part of teaching writing. This paper discusses a task that was done as part of a general English class at the University of Hyderabad on 26 students (lower-advanced to intermediate proficiency) at the tertiary level. The focus is on the results and pedagogic implications of teaching writing as a process while demonstrating to the students the benefits of revision and redrafting. Peer assessment, self-reflection and minimal teacher participation in the form of a facilitator are a part of the revision cycle. The framework used for analyses in this paper is adapted from Faigley and Witte (1981) who talk of surface- and meaning-level changes. Analyses of data indicate that when teacher feedback is coupled with peer discussion and reflection, writing skills are enhanced. The limitations of this study include the small sample size, the need for more rounds of revision and increasing reliability with other proficiency levels.

Good written composition is often a ‘product’ after the process of revision, editing and redrafting. In exams and teaching sessions students often submit the first draft. The first draft is never the best performance of the students’ abilities to write. Many students do not know this. In some contexts the ‘products’ are graded without reflection or edits, and the students are almost never given feedback. Even if there is teacher feedback, there is rarely a rewriting of the same composition. This happens because students do not find time and teachers have to teach some other things. It is possible to demonstrate to students that reflection, reaction on feedback from teachers, discussion with peers and revising/editing the written composition in classroom contexts is a useful exercise. Then they become better writers and actively engage in this cyclic process before they submit their written products. The writing exercise then becomes process-based rather than the submission of products.

This paper discusses a task that was done at undergraduate level at the University of Hyderabad. Twenty-six students studying in the second semester of the integrated Master’s programme of the University of Hyderabad participated in this task as part of a teaching-learning exercise. The proficiency level of these students is from lower-advanced to intermediate. Peer assessment is defined as a consent arrangement of assessment criteria and the application of these criteria to arrive

at the amount, level, value, worth, quality, or success of the written product of peers of similar status. Peers in this paper are defined as students studying the same class and doing the same course. Analyses of data demonstrate that when teacher feedback is coupled with peer discussion and reflection, writing skills are enhanced.

Studies have indicated that successful revisions usually depend on the writer's ability to read a written text as communication, to compare his or her intentions and goals for the writing with the actual text produced and, finally, to reconcile these two facets of writing by making all of the necessary adjustments (Faigley and Witte, 1984; Flower et al., 1986). Peer feedback and teacher feedback can complement each other. Also, when teachers provide more specific, idea-based, meaning-level feedback in the multiple-draft context, it can be more effective in promoting student revision in both the L1 (Hillocks, 1982; Ziv, 1984) and L2 contexts (Hyland, 1990). The focus in this study is on 'the process approach to composition, in which writing is seen as a process of discovering and revising ideas' (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 274), and is based on a line of research that regards writing as a continuous cognitive activity.

The framework used for analyses in this paper is adapted from Faigley and Witte (1981) who arrived at a taxonomy of changes that happen during revision: those that affect the meaning of a text (meaning changes) and those that do not (surface changes). They base this distinction on 'whether new information is brought to the text or whether old information is removed in such a way that it cannot be recovered through drawing inferences' (p. 402). Surface (or local) changes made to a text are those that do not bring new or delete old information from the text but only alter the surface structure. They explain that meaning (or global) changes are those that do affect the information present in the text, by adding, deleting or rearranging the ideas. Surface changes are divided into two categories: formal changes, which are copy-editing or proofreading changes in areas such as spelling, tense and punctuation, and meaning-preserving changes, which paraphrase existing concepts in a text but do not alter the essential meaning from one version to the next. Meaning-preserving changes are always recoverable by inferring the information. Both types of surface changes affect the text on a local level. Meaning changes are also divided into two types, both of which affect the text on a global level. Microstructure changes are those that do alter the information structure but do not affect the overall gist (essence) or direction of the text. These are minor changes that elaborate existing ideas or give additional supporting information. Macrostructure changes, the second type of meaning changes, are major changes that affect the overall meaning of the text to the extent that they would affect the way one would summarise the given information. Such changes made to one section of a text would affect the way a reader would read another section of the text. These macrostructure changes are the most in-depth changes that could be made to a text.

The task

Day 1

Stage 1: The students were instructed to write an essay on one of these two topics:

- a) Any city of your choice.
- b) Do you think that earning money in life is greater than building a strong moral character? Why?/Why not?

They did not know that it was a task at this stage; they believed that it was a test. They had to submit the written product. The scoring scheme was not discussed explicitly but they were aware that they would be assessed in the areas of content, language, organisation and originality. The distribution of marks was: content 3 (relevant ideas, suitable examples, title, etc.); language 3 (appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure and control of them, use of cohesive devices, spelling, absence of spoken expressions, etc.); organisation 3 (coherence, proper paragraph divisions, etc.); and originality 1 (exceptional ideas) – in total 10 marks.

Good handwriting was encouraged. There was no mention of the revision cycle, but a casual caution that they look for errors before submission. All the essays were marked and scores recorded. General appropriate written feedback was recorded on each response. Figure 1 captures the cyclical process of the task.

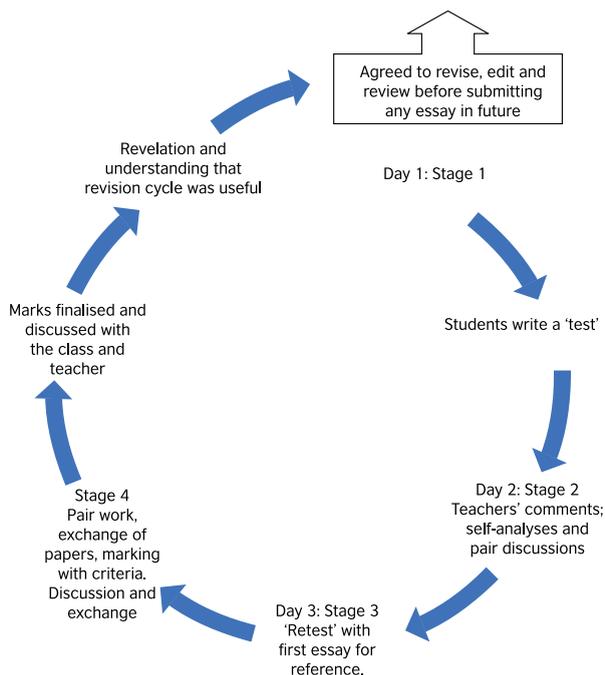


Figure 1: the cyclical process of the task

Day 2

Stage 2: The scripts were handed back and the students could discuss any issues with the teacher. Many students were not happy with the scores and wished they could redo the whole exercise and score more. Next, they sat with their essays and analysed them for possible improvements. They were asked to mark 'problematic areas' in their essays. They were instructed to imagine that they were the teachers correcting the essay and not the student. Later they were put in pairs and discussed their essays with their partners and referred to the errors that could have been avoided if they had paid more attention. They offered suggestions on how to write better. The papers were collected by the teacher.

Day 3

Stage 3: The students were told that they could redo the 'test', if they wanted to. All were happy that they could improve their 'scores'. They wanted to keep the first essay for reference. They were encouraged to make all the necessary changes but stick to the major ideas that were written in the first essay. They were also encouraged to explicitly demonstrate the points of the earlier discussion with the teacher and peers and their reflection in the 'retest'. They were told to keep a mental record of all the thinking processes that happened earlier.

Stage 4: The papers were exchanged between pairs with the marking criteria explained to them in detail (see Appendix). Then they were asked to yet again play the role of the teacher and mark the essay in silence. Once marked, they were allowed discussions with their peers on the marks obtained. In case any pair had a disagreement the teacher was available to help them arrive at a consensus.

Stage 5: At this stage the students stated that they learned a lot more about the writing process and that they wished they had another chance to rewrite the essay. But they agreed that they had lost a never-before-chance of redoing a test with revised information. One student, Bhushan, argued that standards if set high would force students to perform better. Another student, Praneeth, argued that his marks be increased as he was ill on the day of the second 'test'. He even wrote a small note to the teacher explaining this on the 'question paper'.

Stage 6: The final stage was informing the students that this was not a real test and that the feedback–discussion–reflection–revision cycle had been followed to demonstrate that reflection and self-editing if used wisely would result in a better score in examinations. Although there was a little grumbling initially, it was generally agreed that this practical demonstration was a useful exercise and they would 'switch on their teacher hats' and revise their answers in examinations before they submit their scripts.

Analyses and discussion

Table 1: Meaning changes (based on the taxonomy of Faigley and Witte, 1981)

	Meaning changes	No of essays showing these changes
1	Number of meaning-preserving sentences added (>5)	23
2	Relevant content-enhancing sentences added to support the title of the essay	14
3	Deletion of irrelevant or inappropriate information	10
4	Change in titles	10
5	Reorganising of ideas to enhance coherence	13

Table 2: Surface changes (based on the taxonomy of Faigley and Witte, 1981)

	Surface changes	No of essays showing these changes
1	Changes in spelling, tense and punctuation	24
2	Linking devices used, such as 'therefore', 'since', 'furthermore', etc., so that coherence is increased	15
3	Formal writing style replaced spoken forms	5
4	Overall organisation better	20
5	Use of legible or better handwriting	25

Tables 1 and 2 show that there were both surface and meaning changes between the first and second essays. The number of sentences changed usually increased. For example, in one response (on Tirupathi), essay 1 had 22 sentences. while essay 2 had 29 sentences. In another essay (on Calicut) the first essay had 17 sentences and the second essay had 22 sentences. More relevant content-enhancing sentences were found added to support the title of the essay. For example, the first essay of a student that discussed the city of Tirupathi had details of the first impression that a person gets about the city as he or she hears the name, followed by its description as a metropolitan city, followed by its importance as a pilgrim city. Later, the next paragraph moved on to a description of its geographical location. This, in the second essay, was integrated into a single paragraph and the second paragraph saw the history of the place described. More relevant information was added, for example the essay on Tirupathi had a whole paragraph outlining the history of the place. In the essay on Calicut, sentences that contained redundant content were replaced by shorter relevant ones.

Overall the organisation of the essays was better. For example, in the first essay on money and moral character the student had discussed too many examples of corruption throughout the full composition. But in the second essay the examples were carefully chosen and discussed relevantly. In another response to the same

question, the student in the first essay had detailed ‘The basic building block of man’s life is character’ in the third paragraph and this was shifted to the second paragraph right after the introduction in the second essay. In another student’s response, the paragraphs lacked linking devices in the first essay but in the second version linking devices such as ‘first and foremost’, ‘secondly’ and ‘lastly’ were used to introduce new ideas, thus enhancing coherence through appropriate use of cohesive markers.

In some essays the titles were changed completely or partially to make them more relevant to the essay. For example the title ‘Money – the only measurement of moral character’ in the first essay was changed to ‘Money – the standard unit of moral character’. In general the changed titles captured the unified theme discussed in the essays better than the first titles. In some cases use of spoken words (like ‘wanna’) were replaced by ‘want to’. In many cases handwriting was more legible than in the first essay, though it was not a criterion of assessment. Strikethrough was consciously avoided or reduced in the second essays.

The findings above indicate that the feedback–discussion–reflection–revision cycle was effective as a process in producing better essays worth better scores than the first draft. This is evident from Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Comparison of students’ scores

Name	Essay 1	Essay 2	Difference in scores
Bhushan	9	9	0
Praneeth	8	8.5	+0.5
Gomathy	8	9	+1
Anakha	7.5	8	+0.5
David Singh	7.5	7.5	0
Harini	7	7.5	+0.5
Ritu	7	7.5	+0.5
Abhishek	7	9	+2
Sunayana	6.5	7.5	+1
Hannah	6.5	7	+0.5
Lalith Aditya	6.5	8	+1.5
Hafsa	6	7.5	+1.5
Mounika	6	7	+1
Debalina	6	8	+2
Aparna	6	7.5	+1.5
Ashwin	6	6	0
Vamsi	6	8.5	+2.5
Vikash	6	8	+2

Anagha	5.5	7.5	+2
Mekhala	5	7	+2
Athul	5	7	+2
Sheba	5	7.5	+2.5
Akshita	5	7.5	+2.5
Navya Naidu	5	4	-1
Joyal	4	7	+3
Ramya	1	6.5	+5.5

Table 4: Analysis of averages

	Analyses	Essay 1	Essay 2	Difference
1	Mean	6.072	7.5	+1.48
2	Median	6	7.5	+1.5
3	Mode	6	7.5	+1.5

Three students did not show an increase in the scores, but even they did show improvements ('surface changes') in handwriting and the way they used up the space on the pages that they wrote on. Visual appeal of the essay was better in the second essay, though it was not a criterion of assessment. One student showed a decrease in their score. The student felt that she 'deserved' this score as she had not performed to the best of her abilities in the second 'test' and insisted that the teacher retain the lower score. Analysis indicates that the mean, median and mode increased from essay 1 (6.07, 6, 6) to essay 2 (7.5, 7.5, 7.5). This indicates that the revision cycle contributed to an increase in scores and is a helpful exercise.

Limitations of the research

The sample size is small. It is unclear if similar results would be produced in larger classes. The results may or may not be similar for other proficiency levels, particularly at advanced proficiency levels. More rounds of revision could be done but the students did not favour working with the same essay again.

Conclusions

- 1) It can be tentatively concluded that both peer and teacher feedback contributed to the revision process. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrate this.
- 2) The study has indicated that students write better when they take ownership of their writing skills through the revision–discussion–editing cycle.
- 3) It is possible to demonstrate to the students that the revision–discussion–editing cycles work in their favour and make them better writers.

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Appendix: Peer review form

Your name:

Your friend's name:

Remember: Give constructive feedback. Be honest but note helpful reactions and responses as the reader of this essay and mark according to the following scheme. Note special observations on a separate sheet of paper.

Content 3 (relevant ideas, suitable examples, title, etc.) _____

Language 3 (appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure and control of them, use of cohesive devices, spelling, absence of spoken expressions, etc.) _____

Organisation 3 (coherence and proper paragraph divisions, etc.) _____

Originality 1 (exceptional ideas) _____

Total score _____/10

Now look at the essay again carefully and complete the tables below. Make a note of relevant parts of the essay to support your claim.

	Meaning changes	Yes/No
1	Number of meaning-preserving sentences added (>5)	
2	Relevant content-enhancing sentences added to support the title of the essay	
3	Deletion of irrelevant or inappropriate information	
4	Change in titles	
5	Reorganising of ideas to enhance coherence	

	Surface changes	Yes/No
1	Changes in spelling, tense and punctuation	
2	Linking devices used, such as 'therefore', 'since', 'furthermore', etc. so that coherence is increased	
3	Formal writing style replaced spoken forms	
4	Overall organisation better	
5	Use of legible handwriting	

Record your comments below. Be sure to discuss specific ways in which the essay can be improved. Think of ideas, precise vocabulary, well-linked ideas, convincing, effective reasoning, well-developed ideas, attention-grabbing introduction, strong conclusion, etc. Comment on the ideas, their clarity, sufficiency of supporting ideas and their efficient communication.

Utilising tablets and one-to-one coaching to create classroom videos for teacher development in India

Lina Adinolfi, Lecturer in English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University, UK

Abstract

This paper describes an initiative that was employed in preparing for the professional filming of the video element of TESS-India, an Open University-led, OER-based teacher development programme in India.

In the absence of teachers who were familiar with the text-based resources that the videos were intended to complement, an intensive one-to-one coaching relationship was established between paired Indian teacher educators and teachers within four government schools over the two-week period before the filming took place. Rather than specifying in advance the content of the lessons to be filmed, the expectation was that this should reflect the natural point reached in the school syllabus, enhanced by the pedagogic principles underpinning the TESS-India programme as a whole.

The coaching process included a joint review of the teacher's evolving classroom practice, as captured by the teacher educator on a tablet during regular lesson observations. These tablet-based reflective sessions, which informed the teacher's planning of the subsequent day's lessons, continued until the day of filming.

The resulting commentary-enhanced videos, which show English language and other subject teachers genuinely exploring the integration of new practices in their lessons, have proved both useful and inspiring to the many practitioners who have since viewed them.

TESS-India is a UKAid-funded, large-scale, Open University-led teacher education programme co-developed by UK and Indian academics. Its aim is to support national educational policy and curriculum priorities in India (NCERT, 2005) through the collaborative production and dissemination of a repository of freely available, adaptable Open Educational Resources (OER) designed to enhance the classroom practice of teachers of English and other subjects in primary and secondary schools.

The OER are accessible in a variety of forms – in print, online, on DVD and on SD cards for mobile phones and tablets. While they may be used for self-study, the expectation is that they will be mediated by teacher educators in a range of initial

and continuing teacher development contexts, in line with participating state structures and needs.

The resources combine text and video components, the former comprising a theoretical introduction, practical classroom activities, case studies, reflective tasks, further reading and additional resources; the latter, commentary-enhanced classroom videos featuring teachers moving towards the more learner-centred, participatory pedagogic principles underpinning the professional development programme as a whole.

This paper describes the production of the video element of the TESS-India OER.

The intention was that the videos would complement the text-based resources by showing Indian teachers exemplifying some of the practices they featured. This was problematic, however, in that, as the text-based materials had not yet been released, no teachers were available who had experience of their use. Two approaches were adopted in an attempt to overcome this obstacle in making the videos.

The first approach and the resulting videos proved unsuccessful. In this case, the videos were conceived as illustrating some of the classroom activities and case studies featured in the text-based materials. These in turn would include pointers and questions relating directly to aspects of each clip. As such, the videos were envisaged as being an integral, indispensable element of the TESS-India OER.

These 'version 1' videos were produced by approaching a number of schools and providing selected teachers with a brief as to which of the TESS-India activities and case studies they should exemplify and how they should do so in their classrooms. With the support of UK and Indian project staff, each clip was rehearsed immediately before being filmed. Several retakes were sometimes necessary in order to demonstrate the behaviours required.

The resulting videos were clearly staged on the part of both teachers and students, and thus of questionable value. Moreover, the rehearsal and filming process represented a time-consuming disruption to the participants' normal lessons and left them with no positive longer-term legacy.

The second approach to making the TESS-India videos acknowledged these failings. In addition, it recognised that, where suitable technology (website access, DVD players or mobile phone and tablets loaded with the TESS-India SD cards) was not available, end-users would be relying solely on print-based versions of the OER, and would be unable to view any embedded video elements. The new videos thus needed to be complementary rather than integral to the text-based OER.

Instead of connecting to individual activities and case studies, it was proposed that, as stand-alone elements, the 'version 2' videos should illustrate one or more of the ten pedagogic principles underpinning TESS-India in general, as applied to all its subject areas, namely:

- Involving all
- Talk for learning
- Using questioning to promote thinking
- Using pair work
- Using group work
- Using local resources
- Storytelling, songs, role play and drama
- Planning lessons
- Monitoring and giving feedback
- Assessing progress and performance.

(A description of each of these pedagogic principles may be found on the TESS-India website under the heading 'Key Resources'.)

A first step in the production process involved inviting a small number of government teacher educators and teachers to a two-day workshop facilitated by UK and Indian academics.

After an introduction to the TESS-India programme, the participants received a handout describing each of the ten pedagogic principles underpinning the text-based OER to read and discuss.

Although the 'version 1' video clips lacked authenticity, some nevertheless included examples of the pedagogic principles in practice. One or two of the videos were thus shown, with the workshop participants noting all the principles they were able to identify, before sharing their views with their colleagues.

The teacher educators were then each provided with a tablet on which the TESS-India text-based OER and pedagogic principles had been loaded for reference. A brief familiarisation session followed, during which the teacher educators were encouraged to explore functions of the tablet, such as the video camera.

It was explained that teacher educator–teacher pairs would be assigned two or three pedagogic principles to focus on over a two-week period, drawing on the text-based OER for ideas. The teacher educators would observe their allocated teacher's lessons each day over a two-week period, capturing selected elements on video with their tablets and making written notes of their observations on a copy of the template supplied (see Appendix 1).

The content of the recordings and the observation notes would together form the basis of a daily meeting. This involved reviewing the day's lessons, recognising areas of strength and improvement, and identifying elements to focus on the subsequent day. Appendix 2 illustrates the review and forward-planning sheet provided for this purpose.

The workshop then focused on the skill of giving teachers constructive feedback in respect of their application of the pedagogic principles in their lessons. This exchange was modelled by two workshop facilitators, with one of them role playing a teacher featured in one of the 'version 1' videos shown earlier, and the other the teacher educator providing them with feedback. The participants then paired up to undertake a similar exercise based on another classroom video.

The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to the teacher educators and teacher pairs discussing the pedagogic principles that they had been allocated to focus on, examining the TESS-India OER and considering how to integrate new practices into their English language or other subject teaching syllabus over the next two weeks.

To finish, the teacher educator and teacher participants were introduced to the Indian academic who had been tasked with providing locally based support over the two-week coaching period, during school visits, meetings and phone calls, drawing on the observation notes, daily summary feedback forms, tablet-based clips and lesson plans where helpful, while communicating with the UK on a daily basis.

At the end of the two-week period, the teachers were filmed as they integrated their assigned pedagogic principles into their lessons. Some teachers were filmed reflecting on those lessons immediately afterwards.

The resulting edited videos are not intended to be model lessons. Rather, they are a true reflection of the participating teachers' developmental trajectory and their students' authentic response to more participatory classroom practices. As such, they are intended to inspire and motivate other Indian teachers to explore the use of similar practices in their own classrooms.

The nature of the learning partnerships forged between the teacher educators and teachers involved in the intensive coaching process described in this paper has been captured in the form of questionnaires, interviews, lesson observation notes, completed daily review sheets and tablet-based recordings, which are currently undergoing detailed analysis.

A questionnaire at the start of the preparatory workshop indicated that over a third of the 14 teachers attending considered lack of skills and experience to be their main challenge in the classroom.

None of the 23 teacher educators and teachers involved had prior experience of using video to prompt reflection after lesson observations. After the coaching process, the teacher educators nevertheless commented on the notable gains in confidence evidenced among their assigned teachers in analysing the tablet-based clips of their classroom practice and in suggesting ways of modifying this in subsequent lessons.

In all cases, the teacher educators described small but significant shifts in the participating teachers' progression towards more learner-centred classroom pedagogy over the two-week coaching period. Of interest too were the teacher educators' reports of positive changes to their own practice since being involved in this novel initiative.

The complete set of 55 videos was filmed in two Hindi-speaking states. In addition to this set, which has been enhanced with Hindi audio commentaries focusing on the learning key points, versions are available with English, Assamese, Kannada, Odia and Bengali audio commentaries and descriptions.

The text and video elements of the TESS-India English language OER – along with those developed for maths, science, and language and literacy teaching – may be found at: www.tess-india.edu.in/ and the video element alone on YouTube.

In the few months since the videos have been made available, they have been viewed almost 18,000 times.

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Appendix 1: Teacher educator reflection

Name of teacher observed:

Date:

Class(es) observed:

- What went well in the lesson(s) you observed?
- How is the teacher progressing?
- What have you learnt from the lesson observation and follow-up discussion?

Appendix 2: Lesson observation summary feedback form

Teacher educator – teacher discussion

- What we agreed went well (*refer back to previous observation summaries as appropriate*):
- Agreed areas to improve:
- Specific development goals for the next observed lesson:

Teacher educator

Teacher

Date.....

Date.....

Pre-observation, is it worth the effort? A study of Access teachers

Susmita Pani, Former Reader in English, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha, India

Abstract

The 'three-phase observation cycle', originally called 'clinical supervision', was developed in North America as an approach to performance observation and assessment of student teachers (Hopkins, 2008). Pre-observation is the first part of this cycle. During this stage, the teacher and the educator discuss the teacher's plans for the lesson and agree on a specific 'focus' to be given to the observation. Effectively done, this stage establishes an equal power relation between the observer and the observed. While the educator gets an opportunity to assess the teacher's approach and experience with the class, the teacher also gets an opportunity to describe, discuss and bring clarity to her plans which is likely to improve the quality of the lesson. Such articulation also assists in the professional development of the teacher observed. However, this stage is not exploited to the maximum in teacher education. There does not seem to be adequate published research on the effect of pre-observation on the teacher, the lesson and the observer.

This paper presents an exploratory study involving eight teachers teaching in the Access programme at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar. The study examines the effectiveness of the pre-observation stage in a teacher education context, and investigates if it has a role in helping the teacher improve the quality of the lesson and assist in teacher development.

Context

Access is the short form of the English Access Microscholarship Program which is an international programme run by the United States Department of State. This programme provides a foundation of English language skills to non-elite, 13- to 20-year-old students from economically disadvantaged sectors through after-school classes and intensive summer learning activities. Access gives participants English skills that may lead to better jobs and educational prospects. Participants also gain the ability to compete for and participate in future exchanges and study in the United States. Each programme is of two years' duration. Since its inception in 2004, approximately 95,000 students in more than 85 countries have participated in the Access programme. The major purpose of this programme is to make the study of English easier and more accessible to the economically deprived students and to help these students develop fluency and communication strategies in English through meaningful interactions. The present study was

carried out with teachers and students of the Access programme at KISS, the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, which is a unique institution established in 1993. It is probably the only institution in the world which provides free education to 22,500 indigenous students from kindergarten to postgraduate level with vocational and extra-curricular training, free lodging, boarding and other facilities. The Access course at KISS had 200 tribal students, taught by eight teachers who are not their regular teachers. Each Access class is of 90 minutes' duration.

Teachers

All the eight teachers teaching in the Access programme were experienced, well qualified and had an ELT background. One teacher had attended three Hornby summer schools and one had a PhD degree. Most of the teachers had been sent to different universities/colleges in the US for brief training during the course of the Access programme. They all had a good understanding of the learner-centred classroom and skills-focused courses.

Teacher education

The Access programme had provision for teacher support and development with an experienced teacher educator attached to the programme, in this case the researcher. Each year, 40 hours are allocated for teacher development activities in this programme which include workshops and classroom observations followed by oral face-to-face or telephonic feedback. Each teacher is observed twice during the year. There is also a once-a-year train the trainer (TOT) programme organised for all the trainers in the country associated with this programme, which is led by an expert from an American university. Thus, Access is a very well-thought-out programme that is well resourced and dedicated to the simultaneous development of all the people involved in it and not just the students.

Research questions

The study addressed the following questions:

- 1) How useful is pre-observation in helping the teacher make a lesson more effective?
- 2) Do some kinds of teachers benefit more from this stage of observation?

Procedure

The study involved all the eight teachers of the Access programme at KISS, Bhubaneswar. Each teacher was observed twice, with a gap of eight to ten weeks – the first time for 45 minutes and the next time for 90 minutes. For the first observation, only the lesson plan was discussed over email as a part of the pre-observation stage. For the second observation, along with email discussion of the plans, a 30-minute semi-structured interview was carried out just before the beginning of the lesson.

Instruments and data

The instruments used for the study and the data that emerged through these instruments were email discussions based on the lesson plan, semi-structured interviews conducted during the pre-observation stage collected through researcher notes and the researcher's reflective diary. Some of the questions used to initiate discussion at the pre-observation stage were:

- What kind of relationship do you have with this class?
- What types of activities work best for them?
- What are the aims of this lesson?
- What do you expect the students to learn at the end of this lesson?
- What are some of the difficulties that you anticipate?
- Which areas would you like me to focus on?

While these questions were prepared in advance, the discussion was led by the teachers. Another source of data was the unstructured post-observation interview, collected through the structured observation schedule and the researcher's notes. This interview was based on what actually happened in the classroom. There was also an attempt to bring the pre-observation questions into the discussion to see if the teacher had consciously brought about any change because of the discussion at that stage. Most of the post-observation interviews were done face-to-face, though a few of these were done over the phone.

Some observations

One of the things I noticed during this study was that while the pre-observation discussion seemed to be helpful for some of the teachers, it was stressful for others. Three of the teachers were delighted to discuss their plans. But it was stressful for the other five who probably were worried that they might be made to change their plans, though the changes I suggested were minimal. For instance, one teacher wanted the students to find the meanings of 20 words in advance from the dictionary before listening to a text that had these words. I asked her if she could reduce the number of those words, but she thought they needed to know all the words and did not make the change. Thus, there was no pressure on the teachers to change their plans if they did not want to. Even when the teachers did not agree with my suggestions, and I did not push them, these teachers appeared uncomfortable all the same. Two teachers did not send the lesson plans in advance for personal reasons. Again, when asked what they would like the researcher to observe in their respective classes, all of them initially said, 'find my weak points so that I can improve' But on being asked to suggest specific areas, the same three teachers who were comfortable at the pre-observation stage asked me to focus on specific things such as classroom management, elicitation techniques, staging of the lesson, etc. The others were able to suggest a few areas only after they were given a list. Thus, there was a difference between the teachers in their responses at the pre-observation stage.

Answering the first research question

The first question concerned how useful pre-observation is in helping the teacher make a lesson more effective. The answer to this question was both yes and no. While it would not be right to say that the quality of the lessons observed were simply the result of the pre-observation stage, as many factors were involved, pre-observation as an intervention was an obvious factor. Four of the teachers did show changes in their classes after the second observation which had a clearly defined pre-observation stage built in. They modified their plan, seemed to be more focused on the lesson aims rather than seeing the activity as an end by itself, talked about the pre-observation discussion during the post-observation stage, both on their own as well as in response to my questions. One of the teachers thanked me for suggesting that watching the animated story need not be only for fun but could be used as a focused listening activity. She was happy that the students enjoyed it and got practice in focused listening by numbering the sentences. Another teacher said that because I had asked her to anticipate some of the difficulties, she was better prepared for the chaotic condition in the class when she sent the students on a running race to write on the blackboard and could manage the class better. The third teacher mentioned that she got some new ideas as she was discussing her lesson plan with me.

Again, of these four teachers, the teacher with the most questioning attitude found the pre-observation stage most useful. On the other hand, the other four teachers had forgotten the pre-observation discussion by the post-observation stage. They did not refer to this phase during the discussion and seemed uncomfortable while I asked them to recall our pre-observation discussion. Their classes observed during the second observation were not very different from the class observed for the first time. It appeared as if they had completely wiped the pre-observation discussion from their minds.

Answering the second research question

There seemed to be some clear answer to the second question – do some kinds of teachers benefit more from this stage of observation? It was seen that pre-observation appeared effective for three teachers and to some extent for the fourth one. The three teachers who gained most were also those who were more focused on the discussion at the pre-observation stage and were more confident than the rest. They had a better understanding of the goal of the programme. Two of the three teachers had more than 20 years' association with the researcher through training programmes. The third teacher who was associated only through Access (six years) was proactive, constantly trying to develop herself. The fourth teacher, who was the youngest, was a little insecure but wanted to develop and follow the suggestions of the researcher as much as possible.

Three of the four teachers who were influenced by the pre-observation discussion also had a very strong ELT background and had varied kinds of ELT experience. But two of the other teachers who did not show any change in their lessons also had such a background and experience. On the other hand, one teacher with the least

experience also benefited from the discussion. So while a good ELT background seems to be a factor in further development as it keeps the teacher more open to ideas, it is not the only teacher factor for making pre-observation discussion useful and effective. It appears that the stronger the desire for development, the more one is likely to keep oneself open to learning. One would then keep oneself open to new ideas and try to be a practitioner of the 'reflective model' (Wallace, 1991: 15) too. While having an ELT background makes things easier, perhaps more important is the desire for development, which comes from within.

Researcher diary – some uncomfortable questions

My own diary was a major source of data for the study. While one cannot dismiss the possibilities of potential biases that might intrude while reflecting on one's own performance, my diary threw some uncomfortable questions at me. Some of the questions that troubled me were:

- Did I have a 'my way or the highway' attitude during the pre-observation stage without realising it?
- Was I assuming a 'comfortable working relationship' with the teachers – is the idea of equal power relationship a myth?
- Did the pre-observation stage force some of the teachers to examine their lesson aims and lesson plans in a way that made them uncomfortable?
- Did the teachers resent having to come 30 minutes before their scheduled time as the venue was too far from the town?
- Did the teachers resent having their beliefs questioned?
- Was I, in spite of my experience, skilful enough in conducting the pre-observation discussion?

And finally,

- Is pre-observation worth the effort?

There were certain methodological limitations to this study. While the teachers' responses during the post-observation discussion support my personal observation, it would have helped if the teachers wrote post-lesson journals to triangulate my reflective diary. In retrospect, they would have had a better understanding of their lessons and the role that pre-observation played there. Having another observer would have given another perspective to match my perspective and that of the teachers, but it would have affected the classroom dynamics. In spite of these limitations, the study helped me to arrive at some tentative answers to my original questions.

To go back to the original question in the title of this paper, my answer would be a tentative yes. The reason for this hesitation is that I had thought I had taken the necessary precautions – not to be a fault-finding observer or a halfway observer but to be a developmental observer. I had tried to discuss the lesson plan from the teacher's perspective and suggested minimal changes. I had made efforts to

establish good channels of communication. I had also tried to make the teachers relaxed and comfortable by creating a supportive atmosphere through attending to them, encouraging them and by listening to them. But while pre-observation was useful for some, it didn't work with the others. So, while the findings of the study support the use of a pre-observation stage, the answer is not a categorical yes where this study was concerned. There seem to be teacher factors that influence the effectiveness of the pre-observation stage. Pre-observation is worth the effort, but it needs careful planning and a good understanding of the teachers. It needs an understanding of the subtle power roles that exist in the class with an external observer. Finally, teachers need to understand the purpose of pre-observation to make the best out of it.

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Contributors

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Introduction

George Pickering is a coach, trainer and consultant, who has delivered talks and consultancies in over 60 different countries for the British Council and other organisations. He is the academic director of the English UK Diploma in English Language Teaching Management and a tutor on the International Diploma in Language Teaching Management. He is an inspector of language schools for the British Council in the UK (Accreditation UK). George was the co-ordinator of the IATEFL Leadership and Management Special Interest Group for many years and is currently the SIG representative on the IATEFL Board of Directors. He has degrees in Philosophy and Politics and Psychology and Anthropology, a PGCE and a Masters in Second Language Learning and Teaching.

Overview

Paul Gunashekar has been teaching English, training teachers of English and developing instructional materials for language teaching for over 40 years. He is a Professor in the Department of Materials Development, Testing and Evaluation, and Dean, Publications at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. He has authored, co-authored and edited over two hundred ELT textbooks, workbooks, supplementary readers and reading cards. He specialises in course design, teacher development, and English for Specific Purposes. He edits the EFLU research journal *Languageing*, and is the Indian English consultant to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

paul.gunashekar@gmail.com

Rod Bolitho is the Academic Director of Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) and has been active in teacher education and trainer training for over 30 years. He has been consultant to a number of international projects since 1989 and is currently involved in Teacher Education initiatives in Uzbekistan, India and Austria. He has written far too many articles (!) and a number of books, including (with Brian Tomlinson) *Discover English*, (with Richard Rossner) *Currents of Change in ELT*, and (recently, with Tony Wright) *Trainer Development*. He is currently delving into CPD, change management and issues in classroom observation.

rodbol44@yahoo.co.uk

Theme one: policy and quality initiatives

Amol Padwad teaches in J. M. Patel College, Bhandara. He is the Convener, AINET, and an ELT consultant with a special interest in teacher development.

amolpadwad@gmail.com

David Hayes has extensive experience of INSET programmes in South and South-East Asia. He is the editor of the recent British Council publication *Innovations in the Continuing Professional Development of English Language Teachers*.

dhayes@brocku.ca

Michael Scholey has 45 years' experience as a practitioner, trainer and consultant in ELT, and has worked in over 20 countries.

mike.scholey1@gmail.com

Lina Mukhopadhyay teaches in the Department of Materials Development and Evaluation at EFL University, Hyderabad. Her areas of academic interests are second language acquisition, language assessment, literacy, bi/multilingual education, and academic writing.

linamukhopadhyay@gmail.com

Harisimran Sandhu is a freelance ELT professional based in India, who is an examiner, teacher-trainer and training consultant.

harisss2@rediffmail.com

Theme two: monitoring and evaluating quality

Sobia Nusrat (Project Manager – PEELI) has been working with the British Council since 2013. Sobia has a keen interest in education reform and monitoring and evaluation.

sobia.nusrat@britishcouncil.org.pk

Richard Lunt is a freelance consultant based in Sri Lanka.

rrlunt.training@gmail.com

Lesley Dick works for British Council Colombo, Sri Lanka, as the ELT Projects Manager.

lesley.dick@britishcouncil.org

Md. Ashraf Siddique works as a Research Officer at English in Action, Bangladesh.

ashraf.siddique@eiabd.com

Farhan Azim works as the Deputy Head of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation at EIA, Bangladesh.

Santosh Kumar Mahapatra is a faculty member in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani (Hyderabad Campus). His research interests include language assessment, teacher education, mixed methods research and technology enhanced learning. He has presented and published papers in these areas of applied linguistics.

santosh@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in

Prithviraj Thakur teaches English at the G. S. Science, Arts and Commerce College, Khamgaon, Maharashtra. His interests are ELT, teacher development and translation.

prithvithakur1@rediffmail.com

Donald Sargeant is a Regional Teacher Trainer Adviser in Oman involved with in-service education of teachers with special interest in relating theory to practice.

donaldsarg45@moe.om

Digambar M. Ghodke, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sangamner College, Sangamner, Maharashtra, teaches English language and literature at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

dmghodke@gmail.com

Helen Macilwaine is Academic Manager, International Cochin International Language Academy Oxford TEFL, Kerala, and Course Director of Trinity College Cert TESOL.

info@cilakerala.com

Theme three: enhancing the quality of curriculum, materials and methods in English language teacher education

Meera Srinivas teaches in the Department of Materials Development at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. Her areas of academic and research interest include Curriculum and Syllabus Design, Materials Development, ESP Course Design, Language through Literature and ESL Writing and Assessment.

meerasrinivas@efluniversity.ac.in

Elka Todeva is a language educator with a doctorate in applied linguistics. She trains teachers internationally and advocates expedited learning through socially embedded, plurilingual, brain-friendly explorations.

etodeva@hotmail.com

Mike Chick is the award leader for the BA TESOL (Minor) Degree at the University of South Wales.

mike.chick@southwales.ac.uk

Ravinarayan Chakrakodi works at the Regional Institute of English South India, Bangalore. He has done his MA (TESOL), with distinction, from Lancaster University, UK. He is involved in pre- and in-service teacher education programmes and is interested in second language acquisition theories, materials production and testing. He has published articles in many peer-reviewed journals and also chapters in edited books.

ravirie@gmail.com

Krishna Chaitanya E is Faculty of English, MGIT, Hyderabad. He is MA, MPhil., PGDTE, submitted PhD. His research interests are ELT and ESP.

ekcr.81@gmail.com

Shree Deepa teaches at the Centre for English Language Studies, University of Hyderabad. She is currently interested in the study of including blind-visually-impaired students into mainstream education and improving techniques of teaching English at the tertiary level.

deepaeltc@gmail.com

Lina Adinolfi is a lecturer and OER Academic, TESS-India, The Open University, UK.

lina.adinolfi@open.ac.uk

Susmita Pani superannuated from Ravenshaw University, Odisha as an Associate Professor. Currently she is a freelance ELT consultant whose research interests include teacher development and reading strategies.

panisusmita@gmail.com

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