Assessing Training Needs and Capacity Building of Secondary School English Teachers at Aligarh

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Abstract : *Secondary education in India, particularly schools affiliated to UP Board of Higher Secondary education has long been overwhelmed with rote-learning, over dependence on texts and textual information and at the same time examination and curriculum transaction is largely dominated by the lack of scope for creativity and innovation (Ganguli, 2011; NCF,2005; NFG,2006). The study analyses teacher training needs that identify issues and challenges related to the contextualization of ELT materials used and training gaps. This has a strong bearing on the way teachers assess their needs for transacting curriculum aims and materials used in the given context (NCFTE, 2009; NCF, 2005; NFG, 2006).*

The study is based on workshop methodology used to elicit the respondents' data from hundred Secondary School English teachers from nine blocks of Aligarh District. A detailed questionnaire was administered followed by unstructured interviews to elicit their views on their training needs .Keeping in view of the Training Needs Analysis, the focus of the paper is on the following issues:

1) What do the teachers report on developing a model for teaching the text?
2) What are the training gaps between primary and secondary education?
3) What are the different levels in accessing the texts used?
4) What are the constraints of developing capacity building for English teachers in the process of transacting the Curriculum?

Key words: *Assessment of teachers' training needs, capacity building, curriculum development, teacher training*

Introduction

The assessment of teachers' need is an essential method which identifies and determines the type of capacity that needs to be built in teachers. Assessing the needs of teachers has implications for curriculum goals and materials, methods and societal expectations. Teachers need to be given feedback so that they can improve their competence to perform effectively (NCFTE, 2009; NCF, 2005; NFG2006). A teacher needs to arrive at an informed decision to enable the students to develop their present levels of understanding and abilities in different areas considering their interests and developments of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The teachers' awareness about the differences between the syllabus and the textbook and the familiarity with level of the students authorize him/her to make a choice between textbook and other resources which manifests in the inherent capacity building to update his/her knowledge, skills and competence(NFG, 2006). The focus of the paper is on reporting the respondents' data on working on a model to teach the text by way of the following objectives under mentioned with a view to assessing teachers' training needs for capacity building based on UGC Major Research Project on Training Needs analysis of Secondary School Teachers working in Aligarh.

Objectives

The following objectives are designed to assess teachers' training needs for capacity building:

5) What do the teachers report on developing a model for teaching the text?

6) What are the constraints of developing capacity building for teachers in transacting the curriculum?

7) What are the different levels of learning in accessing the texts used?

8) What are the training gaps between primary and secondary education?

Background Information

Since my PhD is similar to Project area it is important to let you know that we are also a part of UGC Major Research Project on 'Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of Secondary School English Teachers in Aligarh: Implications for English Language Teacher Education.' The data used in my paper is based on this Project.

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Methodology

Subjects

The subjects are 99 UP Board secondary school teachers from ten different blocks of Aligarh District: Lodha, Bijauli, Gangri, Iglaas, Gonda, Akrabad, Jawa, Kher, Tappal and Chandaus.

Methods

The data has been collected by using following methods at different period of time:

(1) Teacher's schedule
(2) Focus Group Discussion
(3) Telephonic Interview with the selected participants

Procedure

The Schedule (Annexure-1) for teachers was administered on 99 secondary school teacher respondents to collect information regarding assessing their training needs. A focus group meeting has been arranged at UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh, as part of UGC Major Research Project, for the purpose of collecting information. School teachers have been interviewed on training needs assessment (TNA). As part of TNA, participants shared their views on the objectives mentioned above.

Results and Discussion

The following results are based on the information gathered through schedules, the focus group discussion and the interview.

Objective- 1. Teachers' report on developing a model for teaching the text

Syllabus of UP Board English Text Books (Class IX and X)

The set of textbooks for secondary level students has been prepared considering the State Government's policy. It emphasizes the qualitative improvement in education at the secondary level by keeping in view the needs and requirements of the students. The aims of the textbooks are following:

- To provide the students with texts of their taste, interest and needs
- To develop their linguistic abilities and to acquire sufficient command of structural and lexical items
- To supplement, strengthen and increase the usage of grammar and vocabulary
- To help students to read the text with greater speed and better comprehension
- To develop the understanding and enhancing knowledge of English literature

- The study of the lessons and the exercises provided within the lessons will increase the vocabulary resulting in the development of their communication skill

(Dwivedi, 2010-2011; Saxena, 2010)

Teachers report that the students do not get enough opportunities to interact with the text. They do not get opportunity to practice grammar, vocabulary and other language items rather text is reduced to rote learning and dictation exercises in mother tongue. Recently, there have been modifications in the textbooks since some lessons have been reduced and modified. As a result, there has been a lot of reduction in the content of the books. On this issue, teachers finally report that content should be based more on literature, moral values, philosophies, ethics, science and Indian culture. What they felt was that text should be more value oriented and must have strong cultural leanings. This came up as a discussion for revising the textbook of the course. This was one of the models discussed for the needed change in textbook. At the same time, respondent's rate themselves using textbooks effectively (please see 66% report that they are good at using textbooks and 38% consider themselves good at using supplementary materials). Majority of respondents also report that they do not have scope to use audio-visual materials (79%) and audio materials (78%). Only 38% respondents believe that they are efficient in using supplementary material.

But this figure is not reliable because of the survey method because it is often deceptive. A group of teachers were interviewed, although the group was a different one which of course is of no statistical relevance to this objective but a corollary can be drawn that these findings are not a reliable one. Here, we reporting this figure are simply because the survey used as an instrument to assess teachers' need may not be reliable. The data presented here prove my point.

And this figure could be their underlying competence untested in actual teaching conditions. The other model was made on the basis of justifications of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation drills, varieties of language. There are reports that U.P. board textbooks contain varieties of topics, but teachers are unable to transact the language items effectively. They report that they should be provided a model to teach the texts. They need training to use the materials pitched at the level of students to bridge the gap between Primary and Secondary education. The chapters in UP board textbooks are difficult for the students to read and understand. Teachers want to be trained for adapting the textbook materials by making it accessible and interesting for the students. Table 2 shows teachers' favorable attitude towards interacting with the variety of activities that could of some interest to the learners. In a way this actually implies the set of constraints involved in capacity building that is highly contextual.

Discussion also came up for setting up of textbook writing committee which would also look into these aspects. There was also an urge for strong networking between the practicing teachers as textbook writers and state Board of textbook writing committee.

Table 1:- Self-rating of Respondents to Use Teaching Materials

Rating Scales→ Areas of Proficiency ↓	Good	Average	Poor	NA (Not applicable)
Using Textbooks	66%	27%	1%	6%
Using Supplementary Materials	38%	36%	4%	22%
Using Audio Materials	11%	7%	4%	78%
Using Audio-visual Materials	9%	8%	4%	79%

Objective- 2 Constraints of Capacity Building for teachers in transacting the Curriculum

The respondents are asked to report their preferences for different concepts related to effective classroom teaching as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2:- Self-rating of respondents regarding effective classroom teaching

Preference Scales→ Concepts related to classroom teaching↓	5	4	3	2	1
Dealing with facts out of books makes teaching dull	11%	30%	7 %	6 %	45%
Set patterns used for teaching is boring	20%	27%	6%	3%	43%
Using a variety of activities makes teaching more effective	42%	17%	7%	0%	33%

NOTE: The preference scale has been assigned a numerical value as: 5= strongly favorable to the concept; 4= somewhat favorable to the concept; 3= undecided; 2= somewhat unfavorable to the concept; 1=strongly unfavorable to the concept

Table 2 above shows that majority of teachers (45%) believe that dealing with the facts in a language do not make teaching dull. Also 43% teachers find that set patterns in language teaching are not boring. Similarly, 42% strongly favor that use of varieties of activities makes teaching more effective.

Teachers report that they need training on capacity building for acquiring subject knowledge. Teachers opine that they need training on writing materials. Some teachers report that they have the ability to write textbooks but it is not considered. Teachers demand training on effective content delivery. They also report that they need training on adapting materials. Having knowledge to teach students by coming to their level is also an area of training need as this was felt by the teachers. Teachers also need training on writing and delivering a lesson plan. They felt a need for training on developing variety of activities.

Table 3:- Self-rating of respondents for the General Teaching Abilities

Table 3 below shows secondary school teachers responses on their different abilities to become an efficient teacher. The lack of any of the following qualities actually act as constraints of capacity building for teachers in transacting curriculum since a high degree of percentage is tilted towards showing a favourable attitude towards showing the general abilities of aiming to building capacity in the following areas.

Preference scales→ General abilities of a Secondary School teacher↓	5	4	3	2	1
Having subject knowledge	57%	17%	11%	0%	1%
Classroom Communication skills for content delivery	35%	30%	15%	3%	2%
Team building and networking abilities	34%	27%	12%	3%	9%
Ability to produce appropriate classroom materials	35%	29%	13%	3%	5%
Using a computer and internet	28%	30%	15%	5%	7%
Updating with the relevant books in your areas	42%	27%	7%	4%	5%

NOTE: The preference scale has been assigned a numerical value as: 5- Strongly Agree; 4- Agree; 3-Undecided; 2- Disagree; 1- Strongly Disagree.

74% respondents agree for having subject knowledge to teach effectively. 65% respondents strongly agree to the fact that classroom communication skills are important for content delivery. 61% respondents agree to the fact of team building and networking abilities among colleagues. 64% respondents agree for having the ability to produce appropriate classroom materials. 58% respondents agree to the fact of using computer and internet as a mean of capacity building for teachers. 69% respondents agree to update with relevant books in English language teaching.

Objective- 3 Levels of learning in accessing the texts

Regarding the various levels of learning in accessing the texts the respondents report that most of the secondary school students have the ability to learn but they are not able to access the textbook prescribed in their syllabus. This is because of this reason students have a poor level of knowledge about English language. They have non-English environment at their home, in the locality where they live and in their schools. That is why the students of UP Board schools are not able to access the textbooks as efficiently as the students of English medium schools. They report that the teacher reads texts to the learners and translates it into their mother tongue line by line. Then, the teacher tells the meaning of difficult words to enable students to comprehend the text accurately. After that the teacher dictates/writes the answers on blackboard which is copied and memorized by the learners.

Objective- 4 Training gaps between primary and secondary education

When asked about the training gaps between primary and secondary education the respondents report that there is lack of exposure to English environment at every stage of schooling i.e. from primary to secondary level. Due to the lack of interest in studies and lack of proper training in language teaching at the primary level ,the students at secondary level lack knowledge to speak, read, write and understand English well. Some students do not even know English alphabets at secondary level. The teachers report that half of the quantum of training session is consumed on teaching the primary level syllabus to the students at secondary level. Hence, primary level students must be given proper attention for teaching and learning English language, as it affects the secondary school teaching.

Implications for the study

Along with the four initial parts of a curriculum: students, teacher, teaching materials, institutional processes, '*teacher*' is the only essential element who can bring the educational changes (Siddiqui, 2004: 139). The teachers themselves do not know about the best suitable pattern which they will follow in order to best facilitate their learners (Archer, Cripe, and McCaslin, n.d. website: http://ohioline.osu.edu/bc-fact/0009.html). Therefore, a careful state level planning is necessary to furnish a solid group of trained teachers and for their continuous up-gradation (CABE committee report-2005). To reformulate the part of our curriculum at school level all the curriculum development and capacity building organizations (DIETs and SCERTs) need to play facilitative and empowering role to work together with teachers and administrators to evolve teaching materials (NFG on Systemic Reforms for Curriculum Change).

The analysis of data generated in Aligarh district shows different training needs of Secondary School English teachers. The areas in which teachers demand training on capacity building to transact curriculum are listed below:

- Material adaptation
- Classroom communication skills
- New methods of language teaching
- Effective content delivery based on a lesson plan.
- Making teaching materials easy and interesting for the students
- Generating interest for reading and writing among students
- Enabling students to speak, read, write and understand texts in English
- Improving the motivation level of students to use texts
- Use of technology/ multi-media in making texts effective
- Team building and networking skills

Notes

Focus Group meeting was arranged as part of workshop on 'Professional Development of Secondary School Teachers in Aligarh'conducted at Academic Staff College, AMU, Aligarh (7-8 July, 2011) in association with DIOS under UGC Major Research Project (2010-11): **'**Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of Secondary School English Teachers in Aligarh: Implications for English Language Teacher Education' carried on by Dr. Raashid Nehal, Principal Investigator.

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Annexure 1

Teachers' Schedule

Training Needs Analysis of English Teachers at Secondary School level (class IX-X)

Dear Respondent,

*I shall be grateful for your responses to this questionnaire. **The information given will be used only for research purposes and will be kept confidential.** Please note that there is no right or wrong answer. Thanks for your cooperation.*

Dr.Raashid Nehal,Dept. Of English, AMU, Aligarh

[SECTION 1] - <u>SCHOOL INFORMATION</u>

1. Name of the school:...

   School Address (mention block also): ……………………………………………………

2. Contact no. of school:………………………………………………...……………………

3. Mark (✓) the category to which your school/institute belongs and also mention the board and medium also.

Category:		Board	Medium of Instruction
Government			
Private aided			
Private un-aided			
Minority/Missionary			

[SECTION 2] – <u>RESPONDENTS' DETAIL</u>

4. Name:…………………………………………………….ID No. (optional): …………………

11%5. Mother Tongue…………………………………..

6. Gender: Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]

Age Groups↓	
Group-[1] 18-25 years	
Group-[2] 26-35 years	
Group-[3] 36-45 years	
Group-[4] 46- 55 years	
Group-[5] 56-above years	

7. Previous employment……………………………………………….. NA (Not Applicable)…………………..

8. Tick(✓) the box that relates to your situation. :

TGT	☐	Part-time	☐	Permanent	☐
PGT	☐	Full-time	☐	Temporary	☐

Any other (Please mention):..

9. How far is your school from home? …………………………………………..

10. Strata (class/caste)…..

11. Domicile (District)…..

12. Residential address: ....

13. Residing here since...

14. Contact no. of teacher…..

[SECTION 3] - <u>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</u>

15. Educational Background:

Degrees (achieved)	*Tick the box that relates to your situation*	Name of the Institution
Ph.D.		
Post Graduate		
Graduation		
B. Ed.		
D.Ed. (Diploma in Education)		
B. Tc.		
PGCTE (Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching of English)		
PGDTE (Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching of English)		
Certificate in Teaching of English (CTE)		

16. Total teaching experience…...

17. Teaching experience in this school…..

[SECTION 4] – **TEACHERS' WORKLOAD**

18. How many periods are you engaging per week?.................

19. Your job descriptions in brief, (please tick(✓) *suitable boxes*):

1.	Teaching	☐
2.	Setting the Test Paper	☐
3.	Invigilation	☐
4.	Evaluating Answer Sheets	☐
5.	Extra Curricular Activities	☐
6.	NCC activities	☐
7.	Sports Activities	☐
8.	Fee-collection	☐
9.	Keeping records of students' attendance and test results	☐
10.	Writing lesson plans	☐

11. Any other administrative responsibility, please mention:…………………
…………………………
……..………………………
……….……………………
…………………..………………
…………………..………………
…………………..………………
…………………..………………
…………………..………………
…………………………..……
…………………....…
…………………….........

20. What problem(s) do you consider English teachers facing today? (*Please tick(✓) suitable boxes*):

Implementing a lesson plan	
It is not a well paid job	
It is stress-proned	
It is time consuming in school hours	
Finding resources to supplement a course	
Designing and implementing language activities as per the curriculum goals	
Supervising school project-based activities	
Classroom-management (Group and pair work)	
Implementing new methods for the delivery of content	
Not getting access to the available resources	
High diversity of students	

Mixed ability learners	
Low ability learners	

21. Mention the no. of students you have in your class:

Students (gender wise)	Class IX	Class X
Boys		
Girls		

22. Result of the students in English subject only (please mention the pass percentage only).

Classes↓ Year→	2009-10	2008-09
IX		
X		

23. How much classroom teaching takes place in the following skills of language during the session? (*Please tick(✓) only one suitable box in a row*):

	NIL -0%	10-20%	30-40%	50-60%	60-70%	80-90%	NA =*not applicable to your situation*
Speaking							
Reading							
Writing							
Grammar							
Listening							
Pronunciation							

24. Rate your students' (IX and/or X) classroom performance in the following language areas.

(*Please tick(✓) the relevant box in all the rows*):

Lg. Areas↓	Poor (10-20%)		Average (30-40%)		Satisfactory (50-60%)		Good (70-80%)		Excellent (90-100%)		NA =*not applicable to your situation*	
	IX	X	IX	X	IX	X	IX	X	IX	X	IX	X
Speaking												
Listening												
Reading												
Writing												
Grammar												
Pronunciation												

[SECTION 5] - <u>DOMAIN –SPECIFIC LANGUAGE USE</u>

25 (A). In which of the following situations do you need training to use English?

[1= seldom 5=very often, *NA = not applicable to your situation.*]

	5 (Very often)	4	3	2	1 (Seldom)	NA
Talking to students in the classroom						
Talking on phone at workplace						
Talking to colleagues at workplace						
Teaching speaking skills						
Talking to Officials in the Workplace						
Reading and Writing Official Documents						
Using Computers and Internet						
Any other (please mention): a. Formal Telephonic Conversations b. Formal Meetings c. Taking notes during meetings						
d. Attending training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars e. Public speaking, making presentations f. Reading Reports, brochures, correspondences g. Writing business letters and reports						

25 (B). What are the areas of urgent concern for training, based on your response in the above

columns?………

……

……………

26. How far do you use English Language and/or Hindi/Urdu /any other language (as the case may be) while teaching?

	0 None	1 Very little	2 Little	3 Moderate	4 Much	5 Very much
English						
Hindi						
Urdu						
Any other language						

27. Which newspaper do you read? Where do you read them (at home/ at office)?

……

28. Which magazine do you read? Where do you read them?

……

29. Which TV program(s) in English do you watch?

……

[SECTION 6] - LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

30. How proficient are you in English language in the following areas? (Very good =5, Good=4, Average=3, Poor=2, Very poor =1).

Skills and Proficiency ↓	5	4	3	2	1
Speak					
Read					
Write					

	High	Average	Low
Students			
Parents			
Local Community			
Colleagues and friends			

32. How proficient are you in making classroom teaching effective? Please tick (✓) mark (NA) if the resources are not accessible in your situation.

	Good	Average	Poor	NA
Using textbooks only				
Using also supplementary materials				
Using Audio materials				
Using Audio/Visual materials				
Language Laboratory/Multimedia				

Any other material prepared by you? (Please mention)

….…………………………………………………………………………………………..

33. What difficulty you face in evaluating the different language skills of your students? Please encircle your response as slight difficulty=1, Moderate difficulty=2, very serious difficulty=3.

Listening: 1 2 3	*Your comment, if any, please write*:……………………….. ……………………………………………
Speaking skills : 1 2 3	:………………………..
Reading skills: 1 2 3	……………………………………………
Writing skills: 1 2 3	……………………………..….................
Grammar: 1 2 3	……………………………..….................
Pronunciation: 1 2 3	……………………………..….................

[SECTION-7] - <u>ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION</u>

34. *Rate your responses in the boxes according to your satisfaction with the given statements. The abbreviations stand for: SD-Strongly Disapprove; D- Disapprove; A- Approve; SA- Strongly Approve; and UD-Undecided. (Strongly approve =5, Strongly disapprove =1)*

    1)   I am involved in decision making.

SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)

    2)   Distribution of work is made on merit and specialization

SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)

3) The work environment in my current job meets my most of the needs.

SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)

4) I am satisfied with my job.

SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)

35. You find English language teaching to be:

	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
Interesting					
Useful					
Satisfactory					

36. Do you consider teaching profession as Challenging for the following reasons? Tick (✓) mark the option(s) you agree with as [Extremely Challenging=3; Challenging=2; or not Challenging at all=1]

Some basic reasons ↓	3	2	1
Covering the course on time			
Scheduling the given administrative responsibilities			
Commitment to see the desired learning outcomes			
To fulfil the commitments made by school that relates to my job profile			
Any other suggestion (mention please):			

37. How much do you agree with the following facts? [1=strongly unfavourable to the concept; 2= somewhat unfavourable to the concept; 3= undecided; 4= somewhat favourable to the concept; 5= strongly favourable to the concept and NA= not applicable to your situation].

	5	4	3	2	1	NA
Dealing with facts out of books makes teaching dull						
Set patterns used for teaching is boring						
Using a variety of activities makes teaching more effective						
Teaching through computers is difficult						
Teaching through computers is time consuming						
Correcting pupils answers/scripts is the most tiring job						
Any other suggestion (mention please):						

[SECTION-8] - <u>TEACHER TRAINING NEEDS</u>

38. What are the areas/topics in language teaching that you feel you need to develop as a teacher and they may be included your training sessions? Mention please:

………

39. What are the general abilities a secondary school teacher of English should possess?

> ***Rate your responses according to your satisfaction with the given statements. The abbreviations stand for: SD-Strongly Disagree (1); D- Disagree (2); UD-Undecided***

Expected abilities of a Secondary School teacher↓	5	4	3	2	1
Having subject knowledge					
Classroom Communication skills for content delivery					
Team building and networking abilities					
Ability to produce appropriate classroom materials					
Using a computer and internet					
Updating with the relevant books in your areas					
Any other suggestion please:					

[SECTION-9] - <u>TEACHER SUPPORT NEEDS</u>

40. The principal of my school understands and supports my role as a resourceful teacher.

Strongly approve (5)	
Somewhat approve (4)	
Undecided (3)	
Somewhat disapprove (2)	
Strongly disapprove (1)	

41. We have thought of organizing a workshop, in which we would all get together to further identify the areas we want to develop during professional development activities. Do you have any particular suggestion for discussion in the workshop?

……………………………………….………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………
…………………………………………………….

What do you consider to be the single biggest problem facing English teachers today relating to in-service/pre-service training needs at secondary level classes? (IX-X).

Any Suggestion/comment, please do write in the blank space given below:

Thanks for your cooperation!