ASSESSING THE NEEDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN ALIGARH

ABSTRACT
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Abstract

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Introduction

English Language Teacher Education programmes have not kept pace with the recent developments of curriculum issues in English. In realistic terms, the practicalities of teacher training, particularly on-the-job training, monitoring and evaluation have received scant attention. As a result, teaching without quality teacher training directly lessens the desirable learning outcomes. This is largely true because some of the teacher education programmes have in principle imported the western model of language teaching programmes which normally do not adjust well with the local context or given cultural situations (Holliday, 1994; Pennycook, 1989). Thus, precisely for this reason, the importation of methodologies and concepts in second language teacher education programmes need to be redefined in the light of local conditions. The concerns of the proposed study are based on researcher's attempt to understand the issues arising out of the local problems of receiving and imparting teacher training. In order to understand the local dynamics and operational realities of English language teacher training, the study envisages conducting a TNA of Secondary School Teachers of English in Aligarh.

The process of evaluation in Indian education system is normally linked with the grades given in examination. Rather evaluation can be seen in terms of making 'learning and teaching meaningful and joyous for children' (NCF, Op. Cit.: 71). National Focus Group (2006) on Teaching of English mentioned that 'recommendations for ongoing evaluation can become meaningful only when teachers and learners both take responsibility for their own progress, rather than sticking to benchmarks (real or imaginary, immediate or ultimate) (National Focus Group on Teaching of English, Op. Cit.: 15). It further includes that learners participate actively in the process of evaluation and feel comfortable, given that the process of evaluation
leads towards progressive learning rather than a failure. There is the need to explore various procedures of evaluation in teacher education to make evaluation client-friendly, realistic and transparent (CFTE, *Op. Cit.*). The CABE committee report discussed the idea of ‘work-training-work-training cycle’ which is a prerequisite to bring effectiveness in teacher professional development programmes (CABE, *Op. Cit.*: 50). The vision of NCF (2005) for teacher education is based on the idea of reflective practice in terms of catering the emerging demands of the school education.

Teacher evaluation processes are tools which ‘enhance the professional development of the individual and to see it as a way of ensuring that the support mechanisms available are appropriately matches to the individual needs of a teacher’ (Ndlovu, 1991: 09). Evaluation will be effective if it matches with the individual teachers’ needs. The process of evaluation implies analyzing the needs of the teachers. The purpose behind analyzing the teachers’ training needs is ‘to develop an effective programme to enhance the professional development of the teacher by utilizing available support mechanisms’ (*Ibid*: 10). Randell (1972: 1, as cited in Ndlovu, *Op. Cit.*: 08) opines that evaluation is a kind of support to ‘collect, check, shares, give and use’ the information for the benefit of the teachers. Here, collecting implies using a variety of instruments to collect the data. Checking refers to verify the data before using it. When the information is collected and verified then it is shared for the benefit of the teachers by providing them feedback on how to change their certain behaviors (Ndlovu, *Op. Cit.*).

Professional development is a ‘process for professional improvement that includes identifying performance expectations, documenting performance, conferencing about performance, and making personnel decisions based on performance’ (Valentine 1992: 04 as cited in Ndlovu, *Op. Cit.*: 11). Analysis of training needs of the teachers is the first step of professional development of teachers. It includes obtaining information based on what is expected from the teachers in terms of teacher performance, observing teachers and collecting information based on the performance, discussing and analyzing the information collected, and making decisions on what is required to improve the teachers’ performance (*Ibid*). Duke and Stiggins (1990: 117, as cited in Ndlovu, *Op. Cit.* 11) view professional development as ‘the process by which minimally competent teachers achieve higher levels of
performance and expand their understanding of self, role, context, and career' (Ibid: 11). The definition makes it clear that professional development of teachers allows collecting data help teachers to grow professionally. It also provides them a chance to reflect on what they are doing in their teaching-learning contexts. Teacher evaluation and professional development are seen as connected processes where professional and academic needs of the teachers are based on job related context. They provide teachers what they actually need to grow and develop professionally.

The rationale of the study is to explore how well and how far TNA provides in-built teacher training support and development for upgrading the language training skills, abilities and inculcating a positive attitude to English teaching. The central argument is that challenges confronting teacher training in context of secondary school English teachers are too big to be left to curriculum and material designers alone. There is an urgent need to cater to the language training needs of an English Teaching professional. Analysis of training needs of the teachers is the first important step of teacher training programme. In-service training helps teachers revise and refresh their knowledge about teaching and learning. It has implications for the growth-oriented career for the teachers. The process of training teachers for their professional development is a series of continuous training given to the teachers throughout their profession.

Hypothesis of the study

1. Teachers' needs assessment will actually define the parameters for the need for training of teachers in secondary schools of Aligarh.
2. There is significant correlation between secondary school teacher training programmes and Needs Analysis.
3. Assessment of teachers cannot be done without training needs analysis (TNA).

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are:

1.) To study and analyze the issues related to secondary school English language education in India
2.) To find out the areas of Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of English teachers at secondary school level in Aligarh

3.) To find out the implications of data collected on Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

Context of the Study

Uttar Pradesh is one of the states consisted of majority of government schools. In Uttar Pradesh, the private un-aided schools perform better than the government schools at secondary level. The state suffers problems of lack of qualified teachers at elementary and secondary school level. The reason is the recruitment of teachers, which has not or least consideration on the class size, number of teachers required in schools, eligibility criteria of teachers, etc. Less qualified teachers are hired on the contract basis and are paid low salary. That is why the quality of teaching English has suffered a lot (World Bank, 2005).

The issue of assessment of teachers’ training needs is untouched at secondary school level. This necessitates the scope of assessment of training needs of the teachers in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. The problems related to secondary school English language education at IX and X level are ongoing issues since decades. There is a need to take some initiatives to analyze the training needs of English teachers in secondary schools of Aligarh. Concern for improving the status of English language teaching with special reference to teacher training was found reasonable to identify the needs and requirements of teachers. The study makes an attempt to explore the areas of training needs of the teachers by generating primary data on English teachers of class IX and X and the principals of the schools. The aim of the study is to analyze the training needs of the present English teachers and to generate the implications of the data collected on training needs analysis. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the issues related to the secondary school English language education in India?
2. What are the issues related to the assessment of needs of English teachers at secondary school level?
3. What are the issues in Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of secondary school teachers in Aligarh?

4. What are the implications of the data on Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of secondary school teachers?

The present study has been conducted in secondary schools of Aligarh to analyze the problems and issues related to English Education and English teachers’ training needs in the secondary Schools. The schools selected for the study are affiliated to different board – UP, CBSE and AMU. They belong to twelve blocks of Aligarh.

In UP board schools, English-Hindi is largely used as the medium of instruction. CBSC schools follow only English as medium of instruction. In AMU schools, English-Urdu is used as medium of instruction.

The main focus of the study is to analyze the training needs of secondary school teachers from schools affiliated to concerned boards. The analysis is done keeping in view the workplace situation and context and concerns of their professional conditions. Keeping in mind these considerations, an attempt has been made to categorize the schools. The categories chosen are shown in Table-2 in chapter-4.

Subjects

The respondents are 100 secondary school teachers and 100 principals. The survey was conducted in twelve blocks – Lodha, Akrabad, Dhanipur, Jawan, Chandaus, Khair, Iglas, Gonda, Atrauli, Bijauli, Tappal, and Gangiri, of Aligarh district. The researcher followed a mixed criterion of sampling. During the survey, the selection of population was done by following the criteria of convenience sampling. In focus group discussion the criteria to choose respondents was also based on convenience sampling. During interviews, the researcher followed purposive sampling criteria.

Tools

Different tools and techniques are used at different stages of data collection. Following tools are used to collect information:

1. Schedules:
   a) teacher questionnaires
b) principal questionnaires

2. Classroom Observation tool
3. Interview questionnaire

**Data Interpretation and Analysis**

After data collection, the information was arranged, organized, and interpreted. To analyze closed-ended items data was entered into excel sheets. Through excel sheets bar-diagrams and pie-charts were designed. Frequency of responses had been calculated for each item. Content analysis was used as technique while analyzing the data obtained through focus group discussion and telephonic interview. The concepts were quantified obtained in the form of responses of the respondent. The information was transcribed and arranged in various categories, like, what role a teacher has to play in a given teaching situation and context, what are the different teaching complexities, curriculum adaptation, curriculum development and implementation, unstructured materials development, and others.

Significant information was also obtained from classroom observation. Different sections of the observation tool were analyzed separately and the frequency was calculated. The Microsoft excel sheets were used for data entry and the calculation of frequency of responses. The results were analyzed to generalize the statements which served as the significant bases to suggest the implications.

During the telephonic interview the responses were noted down. The responses were transcribed before analysis. While analyzing the telephonic interview, only new information was selected to enrich the findings of the study. The content analysis of the results has been done to cross validate the information obtained through survey questionnaires, focus group discussion, classroom observation, and telephonic interview.

**Findings of the Study**

The problem areas identified are more prominent in rural area UP board schools as the teachers in schools face problems related to curriculum, textbook contents, teaching support and resources, language learning, teacher communication skills,
infrastructure, etc. The respondents report that their students are poor in English language as they lack proficiency and knowledge about the language. Teachers use traditional methods of teaching-learning. Students lack motivation to attend their classes. 67% of the teachers reported that UP board textbook materials are not so effective and they need revision. Classroom teaching-learning situations are not in favor for effective teaching.

Teachers also report that schools in rural areas lack facilities for infrastructure, academic and administrative support. The teachers face the problem of shortage of time for teaching as they were assigned to extra duties and non-academic works. Temporary teachers get low salary. They also face problems in getting official/detention leaves to attend training programmes and workshops.

Teachers also face problems in assessment of language skills/areas. 3-19% of the respondents reported very serious difficulty in the evaluation of language skills and areas. Teachers’ talk time is more than required as the students maintain silence all the time and do not respond to classroom activities. While delivering the contents of the texts, teachers have to use translation. Teachers mention that they lack effective teaching-learning skills.

The major areas of training needs identified are methodology, materials, evaluation, communication skills, professional skills, and academic skills. Teachers report the need to replace rote-learning, dictation, and translation exercises followed in secondary school English classrooms. New methods of teaching of English are the prime areas of training for the teachers. Some methodology based areas of training needs are effective content delivery, generating motivation among students and interest among students to read, write, speak and understand English texts, encouraging learners to respond and ask questions in the classroom, clarity in instruction while delivering the content, etc. Teaching multiple intelligence and low proficiency level students by making content accessible for them is another area of methodology concern. Teachers also demand training on making teaching materials effective and easy for the learners by including more activities to practice grammar, vocabulary, and language skills. Ability to adapt materials to make the content interesting, easier to understand and effective is also a part of training needs.
Teachers also face difficulties in evaluation of listening skills of the students. They conveyed their desire for training on how to evaluate the listening skills of the learners. They require training on communication skills so that they can teach effectively and interestingly. The teachers perceive that they require training on team building and networking skills. Using computers and internet is also one of the areas of training. Teachers are also found not much aware about the difference between teaching of language skills and teaching of content. They also required training on how to achieve goals and objectives of the lesson while transferring the knowledge about the content of the texts. Making grammar and pronunciation drills interesting to develop these areas of language is also mentioned by the teachers as an area of their training needs. Some of the teachers demanded effective training to teach a multi-level group of learners.

Relevance of the Study

The study has its major significance in generating implications for teacher training in context of secondary school English teachers in Aligarh. The study analyzes the government documents and reports, which have been discussed in detail in chapter 2. The discussion based on these documents will help in understanding the issues and problems as barrier to the development of secondary school education and teacher education. The discussion on training needs analysis (TNA) has its significance in generating insights on the issues related to the training needs of secondary school English teachers. It also helps in understanding the importance of assessment of training needs analysis for teacher professional development and English language education development. The data collected from the teachers and principals can help school administrators to reformulate their school policies as it reports the present problems in teaching of English in secondary schools. It can also help school administrators and principals to extend the support for the pedagogical requirement of the teachers. This information generated through training needs analysis can be reused for multiple purpose such as designing teaching materials, designing teacher training materials, and revising curriculum for teacher education. The recommendations of the study have wider significance for the revision of curriculum and reformulation of government policies on English teacher education.
Organization of the study

Chapter 1 Statement of Intent: The purpose of this chapter is to brief the background information of the topic; review the literature on training needs analysis; state the rationale, hypothesis, objectives, and context. The last sections of the chapter are devoted to the research methodology, significance, limitations and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 Secondary School Education and Teacher Education in India: Issues and Problems related to English Language Education: This chapter focuses on the review of literature on secondary school education and teacher education. It also discusses the development, structure, features, importance, issues and problems of secondary school education and teacher education. The chapter ends with a discussion on current status of English language teaching and educating English teachers is followed by the conclusion.

Chapter 3 English Language Education: Training Needs Analysis (TNA): This chapter discusses the background of TNA focusing on the significance of teaching profession and teacher training. A brief discussion of previous studies on training of teachers is also followed by aspects of teacher training and conclusion.

Chapter 4 Methodology: This chapter discusses methodology. It describes the research design, which includes discussion of methods, tools and techniques, population and sample, procedures, interpretation of data and the limitations.

Chapter 5 Interpretation of Data: This chapter provides a detailed discussion on the background of the respondents, situation and context specific problems and areas of training needs, and other requirements. The chapter includes graphical representation of the results through bar-graphs and pie-charts. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 6 Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations: This chapter discusses the findings highlighting the perceptions of teachers for bringing
change in the status of English education at secondary school level in Aligarh. It also includes some significant implications and recommendations for the training needs of English teachers.

Notes

Appendices

Reference