



An Overview of Master-level ELT Modules and Teachers' Competence

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ABSTRACT

The present research article is primarily aimed at giving an overview of essential modules used in master-level ELT curricula and secondarily, at identifying essential competencies that an ELT practitioner is expected to have. Using literature review as a primary source of data collection, the study found nine essential modules for an ideal ELT curriculum and six competencies for an ideal ELT practitioner to enhance the degree of teachability by the teachers and learnability by learners.

Keywords: ELT materials, ELT competence

1. An Overview of Essential ELT Modules

Reviewing available literature on ELT modules used in global and local scenario, the study found nine essential modules for an ideal ELT curriculum as follows:

1.1 *Principles of Second Language Acquisition*

Understanding second language theories, principles, and hypothesis is the prerequisite to enter the field of Language learning and teaching as it lets prospective language teachers know how a second language is learnt inductively and deductively. It lets language teachers understand their learners better and

create appropriate learning conditions for them by designing and delivering effective lesson plans and authentic course materials.

1.2 *Principles of Syllabus Design*

Principles of syllabus design requires planning effective lessons followed by effective delivery of planned lessons, effective uses of authentic course materials to meet the needs of learners with different proficiency levels.

1.3 *Techniques of Evaluation*

Normally, any method of teaching does not hold any value if it is not followed by an evaluation. But in case of language learning techniques of evaluation should be used very sensibly because many a time it has been found that test, assessment, examination or evaluation proves an impediment or a bottleneck in learning a second language. Therefore, many L2 learners develop a kind of testophobia. The term evaluation is loosely associated with assessment and test but Evaluation is used in broader perspective subsuming both assessment and test, whereas assessment is being widely used in the field of ELT with two basic types: formative and summative. Critically speaking, the learners feel over-stressed due to formative assessment, whereas, summative assessment mounts up more pressure on the learners as it becomes vital for them to get through the test with good grades. And this is why, I have always been saying that English should be taught not as a subject but more as a language. Even Stephen Krashen in his Affective Filter hypothesis says Higher the anxiety; Lower the learning and Lower the anxiety; Higher the Learning. So, the purpose of evaluation should be to identify and rectify any learning deficiency rather than grading those deficiencies with scores and marks.

1.4 *Second Language Research Methodology*

The aim of this module is to discuss theoretical, ethical and methodological issues that are central to research on language and language teaching, and to help students undertake research related tasks. All the ELT practitioners must find themselves in the role of researchers or more precisely action researchers as in action research we not only identify but also rectify various language issues.

1.5 *Practicum*

Practicum is an important module of an ELT curriculum. Ironically, it is remarkable that only 6% ELT programmes out of 23 selected ELT programmes across the globe were found to have practicum as a module in their curricula. This module expects prospective ELT practitioners to undergo 50 hours of teaching observed by the mentor faculty and 50 hours of field teaching in any

EFL/ESL setup. This module is an opportunity of translating acquired theoretical competence of ELT into practice for the prospective ELT practitioners. Teaching without practicum is like learning to drive without ever encountering traffic". Hence, practicum-based ELT curriculum is imperative for an ideal ELT programme and its success.

1.6 *Capstone Project*

The capstone project is a unique opportunity for ELT practitioners to do some action research at the end of the programme in order to resolve real-life problems faced by the learners of any second language.

1.7 *ELT Management and Publishing*

This module is important for the reason that very few articles are available on ELT management and publishing. The module guides prospective ELT practitioners, ELT managers and ELT administrators to optimize the functioning of an ELT organization. The module covers a range of topics from structure of ELT organization, teachers' selection, teachers' grooming, availing essential resources and information, developing innovative curriculum, image building of organization, marketing plan of getting learners, maintaining financial records, managing cash flow, and publishing findings of action research in the organization.

1.8 *Blended Use of Technology*

The module, *blended use of technology*, aims at providing a grounding in ELT methodology driven by media technology in the form of computer assisted language learning, audio-video in ELT, media centre management, and using other instructional and educational technology. Additionally, this module aims to familiarize students with the current trends in the sing internet technology for English language teaching and learning. The module also examines contemporary language use online by looking at what people do online, what activities they engage in and what these mean to them. The module explores a range of platforms such as Wikipedia, Flickr, Blogs, Twitter, Youtube and Facebook.

1.9 *CPD (Continuous Professional Development)*

CPD module is primarily aimed at making ELT practitioners aware of new developments in the field of ELT and secondarily, it keeps them motivated professionally active and growing. This module aims to make the existing and prospective ELT practitioners realize the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for them in the course of their professional lives. This also discusses how teachers change during their careers and consider various ways

that have been devised to help teachers to learn, to remain motivated and to avoid burn-out, and to continue to inspire their learners. The module also discusses specific strategies and activities that they can use to keep themselves professionally alive and growing.

2. An Overview of Essential Competence for an ELT Practitioner

An ideal ELT practitioner is expected to have at least six competencies as follows:

2.1 *Systemic Competence:*

Systemic competence is our knowledge about the language on the front of its phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

2.2 *Communicative Competence:*

As for Communicative Competence, it can be seen here as your proficiency of using the language appropriately with proper cohesion and coherence.

2.3 *Sociolinguistic competence:*

It is knowing the appropriate use of language in social contexts keeping in mind the participants' social status, sex, age, and other factors which influence styles and registers of speech. Since different situations call for different type of expressions as well as different beliefs, views, values, and attitudes, the understanding of sociolinguistic competence is very important for today's ELT practitioners.

2.4 *Strategic competence:*

It is one's ability to repair communication breakdowns while fumbling for grammatical knowledge and social communication norms. The breakdowns are normally repaired by using paraphrase, synonyms, gestures, context clues etc.

2.5 *Inter-cultural Competence:*

Intercultural competence is one's skills of getting along, working, and learning with people of diverse cultures as it helps learners view the world from others' perspectives and meet the desired behaviours of the learners from different ethnic groups in EFL classrooms.

2.6 *Research Competence:*

Research competence expects an ideal ELT practitioner to have an adequate amount of competence that could be used to understand the impediments in

effective teaching and learning inside and outside an EFL or ESL classroom from both causal and remedial perspectives. So, research competence can be viewed as a procedural knowledge to introspect and retrospect over errors and right usage of the acquired knowledge.