Supporting development through improving English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh

Conference Item

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Supporting development through improving English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh

Sub-Theme: New priorities and partnerships for Education for All: childhood, youth and learning.

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Outline

• Introduction: Teacher Development, Educational Technology and issues of Quality and Scale

• English in Action: Upscaling a school-based, mobile enhanced, Teacher Development Programme

• Research Findings from first large-scale cohort (4,368 teachers) 2012-2013

• Discussion
1. Introduction: 
Teacher Development, Educational Technology 
and issues of Quality and Scale

- ADEA 2005: report on quality of education in Africa: “Access must be combined with an emphasis on quality”

- World Bank 2011: 2020 Education Strategy: “many children and youth in developing countries leave school without having learned much at all”


- Moon 2014: launch of 2013-14 GMR: a great numbers of poorly or unqualified teachers, teaching ever increasing numbers of students
Common forms of Teacher Development

e.g. context: UP 2012:
* RMSA introduction; NCERT maths & Science exams
* 449 new schools; 402 schools ‘uplifted’; 26,000 teachers to train through INSET
Rigorous Literature Review: …Teacher Education in Developing Countries

How can teacher education and guidance materials best support effective pedagogy?

i) teacher peer support;

ii) alignment of professional development with teachers’ needs… and follow-up monitoring of teachers;

iii) support from head teachers; and

iv) alignment with the curriculum and assessment.

Westbrook et al, 2013
Educational Technology?

• Many studies show that increased access to ICT, of itself, has little or no demonstrable impact on quality of educational practices or outcomes

• IRI, classroom audio or video on teachers mobiles, eReaders for literacy, CAL for remedial maths, project based learning: some examples of impact

• Characterised by: strong curriculum-pedagogic focus, supported by learning materials; robust teacher development & monitoring

2. English in Action: 
Upscaling a school-based, mobile enhanced, Teacher Development Programme

Conceptual framework
• teachers identity and expertise is developed in context of local practice
• the school is the main setting of professional learning
• cultural artefacts and tools mediate learning
• support mechanisms integrated school-based peer support


Social Practice Theory. See for example: Chaiklin and Lave, 1993; Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1996; Sen, 1999
As scale increases…

- Availability of international or national expert capacity (time), per teacher, substantially decreases.

- Centralised delivery becomes increasingly unmanageable (workload, travel time, communications).

- Inputs (number of days for face-to-face support, extent of materials) need to increasingly align with national norms for sustainability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase II - pilot (2008 - 2011)</td>
<td>600 GoB teachers</td>
<td>118k students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III - scale (2011 - 2014)</td>
<td>12.5 K Teachers</td>
<td>2M Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase IV - institutional (2014 - 2017)</td>
<td>38k Teachers</td>
<td>4.6 M students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...emphasis on local peer support, with practice expertise via (offline) mobile technology.
3. Research Findings from first large-scale cohort (4,368 teachers) 2012-2013
# teacher & student perceptions

**focus:**

1. teachers’ views (on ELT, practice, students and the programme)
2. students’ views (of English and their experience of English lessons).

**sample:**

269 primary teachers, 123 primary head teachers and 143 secondary teachers.

376 primary and 457 secondary students.

**findings:**

- Teachers report improved competence (96%-99%) and confidence (88-89%) in using English.
- Most teachers (63-66%) strongly agree has impacted teaching practice.
- 89% of all teachers say focus of lessons is now on student communication and interaction.
- students report regularly speaking in English (79%-80%)

**issues:**

- Strong residual attachment to traditional practices: e.g. primary students reported enjoying learning grammar rules (95%) and being corrected by the teacher (98%).
- Secondary teachers perceive improvements in own English competence, not evidenced in assessments.
- 2/3 of primary students, but only 1/3 of secondary students, report talking mostly in English.

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**focus:**
To what extent do teachers show improved classroom practices, particularly in relation to the extent and language of student talk?

**findings:**
- Student talk time increased substantially (to 27% primary; 24% secondary).
- Student talk in target language increased substantially (to 91% primary; 87% secondary).
- Substantial increases in observations of student talk in pairs or groups (18% primary; 28% secondary).
- Teachers talked less (45-48%) but used target language more (76-87%).

**issues**
- Despite increases in pair and group talk, primary student talk was dominated by choral work (46%), and secondary students by individual talk (53%).
- This quantitative study doesn’t shed light on the quality of student talk.
- Observations show secondary teachers using spoken English more than primary teachers; student perceptions are the opposite.

**sample:**
401 lesson observations (256 primary, and 145 secondary).
- Primary (61%) and secondary (21%) female teachers.

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# learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>focus:</th>
<th>To what extent do the students and teachers show improved EL competences?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| sample: | 605 teachers (246 primary, 286 secondary; 73 primary heads)  
884 students (463 primary; 421 secondary) |

| findings: |  
- primary students: improvement over baseline (34% more Grade 1 or above; 20% more Grade 2 or above)  
- primary girls (74% pass) higher than boys (65% pass).  
- secondary students: improvement over baseline (14% more Grade 2 and above, and 11% more Grade 1 and above) |

| issues |  
- Primary teachers improved over baseline (7% more Grade 2+; 3% more Grade 3+).  
- Secondary teachers no statistically significant difference to baseline.  
- Secondary teachers self-reporting of improvement very similar to primary teachers.  
- Secondary students still improved, but not as much as primary. |

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4. Discussion: Quality and Scale - Teacher Development, Educational Technology, Evidence

- how do teachers learn to improve practice?
- challenges of scale?
- role of educational technology, if any, in improving quality?

[Is] …the education research community… [providing] the sort of evidence that policy makers and practitioners want’?

(Moon, 2014. GMR launch, IoE, London)