

## Evaluating the Syllabus of ELT Research and Testing with CIPP Model

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### Abstract

The study aims to discuss the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ELT Research and Testing course of the M.Ed. program, third semester, major in English. The research is based on an interpretive paradigm. The method is narrative inquiry. Three students, who had completed the course and three teachers who have been teaching the course, were interviewed with open-ended questions. From the brief discussion, it was found that the course offers excellent and smart ideas based on the research as well as English language teaching.

**Keywords:** empirical, outcomes, skilled manpower, student teachers, educational program

### Introduction

Any program, academic or nonacademic, should always include evaluation. Different courses are offered by universities following the needs and expectations of the times. One of Nepal's top universities, Tribhuvan University (TU), offers a variety of programs across several faculties with the dual goals of producing the broad, useful, and prompt production of knowledge and research in the domains of the arts, education, science, and technology, as well as the capable human resources needed for Nepal's overall development. Among the main faculties of TU is the Faculty of Education. Teacher Education in Nepal started in 1947 with the foundation of the Teacher Training Program. The main objective of the College of Education was to produce qualified instructors for use in elementary and secondary education.

The curriculum, syllabus, or educational program is created to achieve particular goals through particular approaches. Assessment of the curriculum offers unique program feedback and draws the attention of the universities that have created various courses for various student populations. Stufflebeam (2017) defined Evaluation as, directing businesses, provide accountability reports, sharing best practices, documenting

lessons learned for future development, and educating stakeholders and decision-makers, evaluation is a methodical procedure that determines an object's quality, cost-effectiveness, and relevance. The systematic process of defining, acquiring, reporting, and using descriptive and judgmental data regarding the merits, affordability, reliability, safety, equity, and relevance of an object is called evaluation. An evaluation procedure culminates in an assessment of a product. The primary functions of assessments are to support and bolster businesses, provide accountability reports, aid in the dissemination of best practices, document and save lessons learned for future organizational development, and, when necessary, alert stakeholders, decision-makers, and customers to businesses that have proven unworthy of continued use. So, evaluation always plays a crucial role in any program and training and it is one of the major weapons to measure the effectiveness and impact of the program.

The primary aim of the study is to thoroughly examine and evaluate the suitability and efficacy of the course 'ELT Research and Testing' (538) offered to the students enrolled in the M.Ed. third semester at Tribhuvan University's Faculty of Education. This research intends to analyze various aspects of the course to assess its appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs and expectations of the students. The study will delve into the course content, instructional methods, assessment strategies, and overall learning outcomes to determine whether they align with the requirements of the students and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) research and testing. Additionally, the research will investigate the perceptions and experiences of the students regarding the course, seeking their feedback and suggestions for improvement. By conducting this study, valuable insights will be gained into the strengths and weaknesses of the course, enabling the Faculty of Education to make informed decisions and enhancements to ensure a more beneficial and impactful learning experience for the students pursuing their M.Ed. degree in ELT Research and Testing.

Research and testing are important terms of any academic program. The modern education system is influencing and promoting research-based study in their educational program. Teaching is a field where teachers are encountering various challenges and problems every day. To get rid of the problems, every teacher should know the root cause of the problem and it can be possible through the systematic and scientific study of the problems and can be solved through effective methods which are possible from the abundance of knowledge of research only. This course has the objective to provide access knowledge to the student teachers about the research and testing methods. So,

the rationale of the study is to make the students, teachers, and the program designer about the effectiveness and appropriateness of these subjects for preparing the skilled and productive manpower in the teaching field.

### **Method of the Study**

This research followed an interpretive paradigm and employed a narrative inquiry approach to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the course. Parvin & Mokhtar (2022) claimed that to rebuild the text's intended meaning, researchers might investigate, explain, express, and position themselves in the participant's vision or thinking pattern using the interpretive paradigm to find in-depth life experiences through data analysis. In the same way, researchers are more likely to look into a deeper knowledge of the phenomena and their complexity in their context rather than trying to generalize the foundation of understanding for the entire population according to Creswell (2007). As a result, when conducting a narrative inquiry, the focus was always on the interpretations of the participant's end, on interpreting the theme via a complete understanding of the tales. The study involved six participants, each representing different roles within the educational setting. The participants include two experienced teachers who have been teaching the ELT Research and Testing course, two students who have completed the course, and two students who are currently enrolled in the subject. Data collection was carried out through individual interviews with the participants, where open-ended questions were utilized to elicit detailed responses and personal narratives. The interviews were conducted separately with each participant, allowing for a focused exploration of their unique perspectives. By gathering data from multiple stakeholders, including teachers and students, the study aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the syllabus's effectiveness and appropriateness.

The analysis of the collected data involved a careful examination of the participants' narratives, focusing on common themes, patterns, and variations. By employing a narrative inquiry approach, the study sought to provide rich and contextualized descriptions of the participants' experiences and perceptions. This analysis was conducted in line with the CIPP model, examining the context in which the syllabus was implemented, the input provided in terms of course materials and resources, the instructional processes employed, and the resulting product or outcomes of the course.

### **What is the CIPP Model ?**

The CIPP model is one of the evaluation models or methods of educational programs and pieces of training “The CIPP evaluation model belongs in the improvement and accountability category and is one of the most widely applied evaluation models” (Zeller. 1, 2011). In the same manner, Deshpande (2016), claimed that:

For assessing the current curriculum, the CIPP model is a fairly straightforward yet thorough method. Context, Input, Process, and Product are all abbreviated as CIPP. The CIPP model's fundamental technique is examining each of its four components, namely the context, input, process, and product, independently. By responding to a few inquiries in the context of all four of these factors, it may be accomplished.

Likewise, A thorough framework for formative and summative assessments of several projects, programs, people, goods, institutions, and systems in the CIPP Model.

Thus, the CIPP model is an effective model for evaluating any of the educational programs and training. The program is evaluated through context evaluation, input evaluation, process, and product evaluation. Context evaluation refers to the needs, problems, and necessities of the program. Input evaluation refers to the approaches to meet the needs of the objectives of the program. Process evaluation refers to how the principles and approaches are implemented, and refers to the outcome of the program or overall evaluation of measurable gain of the program.

### **Course Description**

ELT Research and Testing (538) is the course of M.Ed. third majoring in English designed to make students familiar with different concepts of research, to enable the students to apply different research designs in the field of ELT. Similarly, this course aims to enable the students to design various types of tests to assess language skills and aspects and eventually, expose the students to the analysis, interpretation, and use of the information generated through testing to enhance their testing skills and abilities. The course has two sections: research, and testing. The first section overviews the different types of research in EFL and the second section talks about testing and its types with methods. The first section aims to provide the students with an overall understanding of research works in general, and the specific research activities carried out in English language teaching and learning. This section has two

units. The second part deals with language testing and aims to provide theoretical knowledge on language testing, skills, and abilities for developing and using the English language tests to assess and report students' achievement and proficiency in the English language.

### **Discussion**

The CIPP model of one of the major models discussing the effectiveness of the educational program. In this study, the discussion about the effectiveness and usefulness of M.Ed. third semester ELT Research and Testing (538) was done through the CIPP model. The perceived effectiveness through the interview is discussed under the heading of context, input, process, and product evaluation.

#### **Context Evaluation of the Course**

Context evaluation refers to the thorough examination and analysis of the requirements, possibilities, and objectives associated with a particular text. The Master of Education (M.Ed.) program aims to equip aspiring educators with the necessary knowledge and abilities to become competent and proficient teachers. In "ELT Research and Testing," the primary goal is to empower students with the skills to identify and comprehend research problems as well as to understand the objectives and methodologies employed in different research designs. Moreover, the course endeavors to differentiate between language teaching and language testing, elucidating various types of tests and their impact. It also explores the practicality, reliability, and validity of these tests, in addition to discussing contemporary issues in the field of language testing.

ELT Research and Testing is a course divided into two sections. The first part of the text describes different types of research and their methods. The first section has two units that discuss the theory of research design along with the different research types. In this section, students get knowledge about the systematic and scientific process of research and its various types along with a comprehensive discussion of data collection tools. Not only about the introduction and types of the research but also students become familiar with the application of the research in English language teaching. Throughout this section, students become familiar with the everyday challenges and needs they encounter in the field of teaching as well they know the methods of identifying problems and searching the way of solutions to them.

The second section provides an efficient method of testing and measuring along with an abundance of examples about the types of tests and qualities required for the standard test.

The teachers who have been teaching the course believe that the course not only helps the student teacher identify different needs and challenges but the teachers themselves are beneficial through the methods given in the text. They have the view that the research section has provided sufficient basic ideas about the research methodology whereas the testing section briefly discusses the practical way of designing tests and evaluating the test.

The students who enroll in the course have the view that the first section has many ideas all together in a very brief. Sometimes they got confused regarding the specific terminologies however they got sufficient help from the teacher. Student participants believe that if they did not have the background knowledge of research, they so many terminologies at the same time made them confused. Overall, the context is discussed as the syllabus has a very good content of knowledge as input and it has a goal to make students familiar with basic research methods and language testing however many challenges occur throughout the course description.

### **Discussion on Input Evaluation**

Input evaluation refers to the information about the resources. The resources include time resources, human resources, physical resources, infrastructure, curriculum, and content for evaluating the quality of education at the school. The course has general and specific objectives. It aims to make students able to identify different types of EFL research along with various testing and evaluation methodologies. It intends to make student teachers able to use different types of research methodology to solve the problems they may face in the course of teaching. The course focuses on giving basic ideas about the research and its application as well as language teaching and techniques. The first section helps students to be familiar with the scientific and systemic study and design of research along with its application and the second section describes language teaching and testing. The teachers are sure about the beneficial outcomes of the course but the students are confused about whether they will be able to meet the learning outcomes. According to Student 1:

I found the "ELT Research and Testing" course challenging due to its extensive coverage of various topics and the incorporation of two distinct

ideas: research and testing within the same curriculum. Switching between language teaching and language testing proved difficult, and I would have appreciated more clarity or separate modules to bridge the gap. Furthermore, understanding the practicality, reliability, and validity of tests posed an additional challenge.

This participant student mentioned that this course should offer research or testing only. Going through the course, he claimed that, just started to understand the technical terms of research and at the same time our content changed to the test. If the course provides only research or testing the student gets deep knowledge about anyone. Agree with his view another student said we are being Jack of all but master of known. The participant teacher has the opinion that the student of Master Level should have a brief knowledge about research and testing. Though the course is divided into two different parts, the idea present in the course is very useful for going to be teachers and it is enough for novice teachers.

In my opinion, I strongly believe that students at the Master's level should have a basic understanding of research and testing. They need to acquire knowledge in these areas to enhance their overall competence and effectiveness as future educators.

Despite positive compliments from the teacher responses, one of the participants mentioned that teachers are not using the instructional techniques mentioned in the course. So, students have difficulty with the application. He further said,

In theory, we grasp the fundamental concepts of research, language teaching, and testing. However, when it comes to practical application, we encounter difficulties. While we can define and interpret these ideas, we lack hands-on experience from the course.

The course's overarching goal of preparing skilled teachers in English Language Teaching (ELT) aligns with the demands of the modern era. However, several factors contribute to doubts regarding the successful implementation of the program. Firstly, the understanding level of the students plays a crucial role. If the course material is too advanced or complex for their current knowledge, it can hinder comprehension and hinder their ability to grasp the concepts effectively. Secondly, student interest and motivation also significantly influence the course's success. If the students lack

enthusiasm or fail to see the practical relevance of the topics covered, it may impede their engagement and hinder their overall learning experience.

Moreover, the instructional techniques employed within the course can greatly impact its effectiveness. If the instructional methods fail to address the diverse learning needs of the students or do not promote active participation, it can hinder their ability to fully grasp and apply the concepts taught. Considering these factors, it becomes crucial for the course designers and instructors to assess and address these challenges. By adjusting the course content, enhancing student motivation, and implementing effective instructional strategies, the chances of successful implementation and achievement of the course objectives can be significantly improved.

### **Process Evaluation of the Course**

Process evaluation is a critical aspect that focuses on both the running of the program and the teaching-learning processes within it. The implementation phase, as defined by Aziz et al. (2017), involves the effective utilization of inputs to accomplish the desired aims, objectives, and goals of the program. Similarly, process evaluation, as stated by Stufflebeam (2003), serves as a means to regularly assess the extent to which the program is being implemented properly and efficiently. This evaluation process becomes a valuable tool for obtaining feedback, identifying necessary adjustments, and overcoming challenges that program administrators and determiners may encounter. Moreover, it allows for the assessment of decision-making processes and their impact on the overall functioning of the program. By engaging in comprehensive process evaluation, program stakeholders can gain valuable insights, make informed decisions, and foster continuous improvement for enhanced program effectiveness. Ornstein and Hunkins (1988) further emphasize the significance of process evaluation in facilitating necessary adaptations and ensuring the program's success by addressing hardships and evaluating various decision-making aspects.

Talking about the course EIT Research and Testing has 48 teaching hours and students must read 3 credit hours. Teacher participants have the view that the time is sufficient for the course and each topic can be discussed briefly within the brief time. But at the same time, one of the student participants claimed that the time given is only sufficient for theoretical reading, they need more time or empirical work. The course designed various instructional methods to meet the targeted objectives. The instructional techniques for the first two chapters are Reading, discussion, and reflective



writing Teacher's presentation is the review of one article of each design in terms of objectives, design, methodology, and findings. Likewise, Students' group discussion and presentation of one or two articles of each design in terms of objectives, design, methodology, and findings. Other techniques are writing research papers and presentations. For the second section of language teaching and testing, the strategies and techniques are self-study, instructor-guided reading, discussion, comparison, and presentation as well students will apply a variety of texts as practical activities.

In the discussion with the participant teacher, about the techniques and strategies applied to achieve the targeted goal, he said that the given techniques are fine but the most used technique was the lecture method, and only a few students or sometimes none of the students show interest for the project and empirical work that should be done by the students.

From the contrary of teacher participant's view, while answering the question of what techniques were applied by the teacher going through the course, one of the participant students answered ironically that maybe a teacher also only familiar with the theoretical knowledge about the course so we didn't get any practical assignments throughout the course. Talking about the same questions the other two participants, have a common view that the teacher provided the assignments however the instructions were not clear to the students so they are not so serious about the practical work that should be done.

So, while analyzing the discussion among students and teacher participants about the process evaluation of the course, it is found that both students and teachers are not able to use the proper instructions and techniques given in the course. Due to that both of them are not getting the targeted objectives of the course. The teachers are found not utilizing the guidelines given in the course however students are also found not being very serious about the practical outcomes and learnings which may help them in the field of teaching.

### **Product Evaluation of the Course**

In the CIPP model product evaluation refers to the actual outcomes of the program. Guili Zhang et al. (2017) claimed that product evaluation means Measuring, interpreting, and judging project outcomes, and interpreting their merit, worth, significance, and probity. Based on this course, students' achievements are measured through internal and external examinations. The internal evaluation is of 40 percent and

the external evaluation is 60 percent. Internal evaluation is further divided into attendance 4 Points, Participation in learning activities 6 points first assignment/midterm exam 10 points Second assignment/assessment, one or two,10 points Second assignment/ assessment 10 points, and a total of 40 points. The subject teacher is fully responsible for preparing and conducting internal examinations. The external examination is conducted by the Examination Control Office of the faculty of education. Out of 60 marks, 10 marks are for the objective question, 30 marks are for short answer questions, and for long answer questions, 20 marks are divided.

Despite enriching with heavy content of empirical knowledge about English language teaching and testing along with the brief introduction of research, methodology, and types, the outcomes of the course of ELT Research and Testing could not be seen as different from another general subject of M.Ed. English. The course offers sufficient practical implications and instruction however the maximum part of the evaluation is based on writing an examination paper that belongs to the theoretical implications only. This made students dull and gave them less interest in the project and practical work. While talking about the practical implications of the course, one of the participant students argued why they waste their time in doing research and presenting them because students must write an examination and it covered 60 percent of 100.

From the brief discussion with students and teachers who are involved with the course directly, the common view they shared is the course is highly useful in the field of English language teaching. On the one hand, this course offers a brief idea about the research and its types along with practical implications, and on the other, it enriches students with the idea of language teaching and testing. The course has several implications. Going through it one should have enough basic knowledge about the research and English language teaching and testing. Research and testing both are demanding terms of modern times. In the field of teaching, novice teachers should encounter many obstacles and challenges and this is the course that helps them to show the path to come out of it, one of the teacher participants said.

### **Conclusion**

ELT Research and Testing (Ed. 538) is a comprehensive course offered during the third semester of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) program. It aims to provide students with a solid foundation in understanding the fundamental concepts related to research, English language teaching, and testing. To gain deeper insights

into the course, I conducted interviews with six participants who were directly engaged with ELT Research and Testing, using open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses. Based on the gathered data and analysis, several conclusions can be drawn about the course's effectiveness and impact on the participants' learning experiences.

The inclusion of the course in the M.Ed. third semester serves several key objectives. Firstly, it aims to enhance students' understanding of the quality of language tests, enabling them to discern the effectiveness and reliability of different assessment methods for evaluating language skills and aspects. By delving into the intricacies of language testing, students gain valuable insights into the design and implementation of various types of tests. Furthermore, the course seeks to expose students to the analysis, interpretation, and utilization of the information generated through testing, fostering the development of their testing skills and abilities. By equipping students with these competencies, they are better prepared to navigate the complexities of language assessment and contribute to the field.

While the course offers a wealth of knowledge about research and testing, it is not without its challenges. The successful empirical and practical implications of the course can be hindered by various factors. For instance, both students and teachers must exhibit a high level of dedication and seriousness when it comes to implementing the course material in practice. Without the commitment and active participation of all stakeholders, the desired learning outcomes may not be fully achieved. Additionally, the course is divided into two sections, and it may be more advantageous to focus on one section in greater depth rather than attempting to cover both sections comprehensively. This approach allows for a more thorough exploration of the subject matter, promoting a deeper understanding among students.

To attain the targeted objectives of the course, both students and teachers must embrace prescribed instructions and techniques. By adhering to established guidelines and utilizing recommended methodologies, the desired learning outcomes can be more effectively realized. This collaborative effort between teachers and students facilitates a cohesive learning environment where knowledge is acquired and applied in a structured manner. Furthermore, while internal evaluation serves its purpose, external evaluation should ideally be based on practical project-based work. This approach offers numerous benefits to both students and teachers, as it

allows for the practical application of acquired knowledge and skills, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

In summary, the inclusion of the course in the M.Ed. third semester aims to enhance students' understanding of language testing quality and their ability to design various types of tests. The course presents challenges for successful empirical and practical implications, which can be overcome through dedication and the use of prescribed instruction and techniques. Focusing on one section in greater depth is recommended, and external evaluation should be based on practical project-based work. By embracing these approaches, both students and teachers can contribute to the achievement of the course's objectives.

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