

Pakistani Students' Ethical and Social Development through Punjab Textbook Board (PTBB) Grade VIII English Textbook

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Abstract

The research aimed to review and evaluate one of the five competencies of the National Curriculum for English Language (NCEL) 2006, Ministry of Education, Pakistan. The competency studied in this paper was “appropriate ethical and social development” through the Punjab Textbook Board Grade VIII English textbook in the light of standard learning outcomes (SLOs). To equip the students with English language competencies, academic and social communicative competence, NCEL-2006 intends to embed appropriate ethical and social development. Keeping in mind the competency five, standards, benchmarks and student learning outcomes, the findings revealed that the textbook covered the themes of tolerance and humanism. However, it does not furnish the intended student learning outcomes to develop students' moral and social competencies, ignoring that both the aspects are essential in a multicultural and civilised society. Values and attributes have also not been incorporated in the textbook to be inculcated amongst the students through the reading of texts. The findings also showed that students are unable to recognise and practice values and attributes such as tolerance, humanism, patience, equity, justice, honesty, empathy which are relevant for peaceful coexistence between individuals, groups,

societies and nations. The importance of individual worth, valuing diversity and equality among people were the proposed themes of the said competency but the textbook content does not portray these themes through actions. The textbook does not take into account the need for inculcating vices and virtues, ethics and attributes amongst the students.

Keywords: Pakistan, National Curriculum for English, Textbook Evaluation, Competency, Standards, Benchmarks, Student Learning Outcomes

Introduction

The National Curriculum for English (NCEL) was created in 2006 by Ministry of Education, Government of the Punjab, for grades I-XII. The aim of the document was to develop and provide a comprehensive step by step guide to teachers for language teaching and learning, equipping students with competencies and skills in English language, developing academic and social communication/setting/context while enabling students to become autonomous as well as life-long learners and become capable to represent themselves globally.

Need for National Standards

The focus of national standards was geared towards making students active citizens, lifelong learners; and acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to entail the growth of their personal, social and emotional skills. National standards aim to apply and incorporate Bloom’s taxonomy in students’ learning (to think critically, analyse, apply, synthesise and finally to evaluate) inside as well as outside the classrooms.

The current study was qualitative and analytical in nature. Content analysis was used for meticulous evaluation of the English textbook of grade VIII. The evaluation of the content was based on the fifth competency which is “Appropriate Ethical and Social Development”, in the backdrop of student learning outcomes developed in the latest English curriculum, 2006.

Competency 5: Appropriate Ethical and Social Competency

Standard 1: All students will develop ethical and social attributes and values relevant in a multicultural, civilized society.

Rationale of the Competency

The world is increasingly becoming a global village with people of different languages and cultures coming in frequent contact both at intra and international levels. Text content provides a realistic and diverse learning exposure and is an important mode for developing a personal world view. Texts that reflect multiple perspectives and diverse communities

create awareness about contemporary ideas, issues and themes (Government of Pakistan [GoP], 2006, p. 9)

Standard 1: “All students will develop ethical and social attributes and values relevant in a multicultural, civilized society.

(Please note: This competency will be developed and incorporated across the other four competencies; hence, the teaching and learning of the appropriate values and attributes is to be embedded in the chosen themes and topics of the reading texts, and through writing and speaking activities performed in the learning environment of the class)” (GoP, 2006, pp. 9-10).

“Benchmark I: Recognize and practise values and attributes such as tolerance, humanism, patience, equity, justice, honesty, empathy, etc., relevant for peaceful coexistence between individuals, groups and nations.

Benchmark II: Develop and portray through actions, a sense of importance of individual worth; simultaneously valuing diversity and equality among people” (GoP, 2006, p. 10).

Literature Review

It was evidenced by Alharbi (2015) that Saudi Arabian high school students were not satisfied with the vocabulary section of their English textbook, and they viewed that insufficiency of vocabulary list or glossaries and distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary was not presented completely in the textbook. Ghazi, Shazada, Khan and colleagues (2011) analysed the content of Grade VIII Social Studies and Grade X Pakistan Studies textbooks of North West Frontier Board, Peshawar and found out that three objectives on religious tolerance for social studies that is “use of unity of diversity, empathy for other people, love for humanity and service for humanity” were incorporated. Whereas, two objectives of the curriculum that is “to lay emphasis on the right and obligation of the citizen of an independent and sovereign state and inculcate awareness about multicultural heritage of Pakistan” were also found to be incorporated in the textbooks and an effort had been made to help students appreciate the social and cultural diversity of Pakistan.

Another research was conducted in Pakistani context by Hashmi (2014) on “content Analysis of the Provincial Pakistan Studies Textbook for Class IX-X”, published by the Sindh Textbook Board (STBB). The textbook was analysed and evaluated on the basis of objectives set by the Federal Ministry of Education and White and Marsh’s (2006) checklist was adapted for analysing the selected textbook in the study. The researcher concluded that quite a few instances of alignment were found between the textbook and the objectives of the curriculum. Moreover,

Hashmi (2014) found that the textbook tried to retain the content proposed by the National Curriculum, but the images and examples chosen and given in the textbook were not appropriate. Hashmi (2014) reported that

The problems are not only in the textbook of Pakistan studies but in every aspect ranging from the curriculum development till its final implementations, transference of objectives, teacher training, printing and publication, teaching methodology and finally the assessment criteria (p. 76).

Fatima, Shah and Sultan (2015) analysed and evaluated English textbooks “Step Ahead 2” and “Step Ahead 3” used by some private schools in Pakistan for Grades 7 and 8 respectively. The researchers explored how well the textbook matches learning program needs and how appropriate the activities included in the textbooks are. The authors identified some problematic areas that need to be improved in the textbooks pertaining to the four language skills and representation of culture as only the foreign culture has been represented in the textbooks and teaching and learning of the basic skills have not been given equal and sufficient emphasis. The findings accentuated the need for revisiting the material to improve English textbooks in accordance with the levels these are taught at.

Panezai and Channa (2017) carried out a study to understand how Pakistani government primary school teachers in the Balochistan province view the English textbooks of Grades 1–5 and impacts of the effectiveness of these textbooks. They found the teachers to be moderately in favour of the effectiveness of the selected textbooks. However, some issues were also pointed out by the teachers such as they disagreed with the grammar and vocabulary components included in the textbooks and limited time allotted for teaching English on daily basis, lack of proper training provided to the teachers for teaching English through these textbooks, deficiency of teaching resources in the primary schools, and inadequate support available to students from their families for learning English at their homes.

Chaudhary (2014) analysed the elements of character-building values and incorporation of character-building traits in English textbook of grade X prescribed by the PTBB. Her study dealt with five aspects of character building which were expected to be achieved through the teaching of the selected textbook. Chaudhary (2014) found that the textbook concentrates on some value dimensions such as religious values, social values, personal value, nationalism, and environmental value. She also found that the textbook contains social values, personal values frequently. However, the other two values that is religious, environmental and nationalism are not frequently integrated with the English textbook of grade X.

Methodology

The paradigm of this study falls under interpretivism since not only because of interpretation but because it deciphers all aspects of the selected textbook (Baig, 2020). The paradigm links to the textbook evaluation because it is associated with the development of the society hence based on the English curriculum, 2006, and intends to make the learners active citizens, autonomous, life-long learners.

Findings

Table 1 presents the types of text that comprise the content of the textbook, examples and the evidence of the text from the textbook.

Table 1

Text Types

Text Types	Examples	Evidence from Textbook
Narrative/expressive/reflective texts (Literary texts) Intention: To entertain, explore, imagine, enlighten, share experiences so as to get the reader involved in story and characters. Focus: Literary, creative and aesthetic appeal.	Stories Poems (lyrics, ballads, sonnets) Play scripts Biographies Anecdotes Diary, journal entries Fantasy, adventure, science, fiction	Given Poems are given, “On the Ocean by S.T. Coleridge” Not found
Persuasive/argumentative texts Intention: To persuade, argue, advise. Focus: Influence the readers or viewers to change their mind about something.	Brochures Advertisement of consumer products Letters to the editor conveying pinions Editorials Campaign literature	Not found

	Magazine articles supporting a position	
<p>Expository (factual/ Informative texts)</p> <p>Intention: To inform, explain and describe print and computer-based informative and reference texts.</p> <p>Focus: Document, organize and convey information and ideas.</p>	<p>News reports</p> <p>Magazine articles</p> <p>Memos</p> <p>Menus, blurbs</p> <p>Indices, forms</p> <p>Maps</p> <p>Recipes</p> <p>Minutes</p> <p>Tables</p> <p>Flowcharts</p> <p>Diagrams</p> <p>Fact sheets</p> <p>Information leaflets</p> <p>Prospectuses</p> <p>Plans</p> <p>Summaries</p> <p>Records</p>	Not found
<p>Expository (analytical texts)</p> <p>Intention: To analyze, review and comment.</p> <p>Focus: Present weighed and evaluative views of ideas and issues.</p>	<p>Commentaries</p> <p>Analytical articles</p> <p>Essays and reports</p> <p>Reviews</p>	Not found
<p>Texts used for Interpersonal / Transactional Communication</p> <p>Intention: To communicate a message for transactional or interpersonal purpose.</p> <p>Focus: To communicate and share ideas, feelings and information.</p>	<p>Dialogues (informal/ formal)</p> <p>Letters (informal/ formal)</p> <p>Greeting cards</p> <p>E mails</p> <p>Notices</p> <p>Talks</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Job advertisements</p> <p>Resumes</p>	<p>Dialogue given eleven times</p> <p>Vote of thanks (see p. 9)</p> <p>Not found</p>

Table 2 presents data on the themes and sub-themes and their evidence from the textbook.

Table 2

Themes and sub-themes

	Themes	Sub-Themes	Evidence from Textbook
1.	Ethics and Values (Moral character in accordance with rules of right and wrong) Values: (established ideals of life, objects, customs, ways of acting that given members of a society regard as desirable).	Humanism Patience Respect for rules and laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pg.1 Chap 1 “Tolerance. A story about the Rasool (SA) his patience, tolerance and humanism. • Pg.80 Chap 14. Let’s make our roads safer! • Pg. 38 Ch.7. Clever Mirchu Only a story is given no lesson of humanity except his care and love for his mother. • Pg. 60 Ch.10 Hazrat Umer (RA) • Pg. 65. Ch 11. A Great Virtue. <p>Pg.80 Ch. 14 Let’s make our roads safer!</p>
2.	Peaceful co-existence /Peace education	Friendship and co-operation Awareness of and empathy with special people	Pg. 65 Ch. 11 A Great Virtue Not found
3.	Self, people and places	Knowing children from other nations Places of historical and cultural importance and of interest in Pakistan	Hockey game
4.	Patriotism / National Pride	Understanding national pride	Not found

5.	Nature	Natural beauty in Pakistan	Not found
6.	Gender equality	Role of women in development of Society	Not found
7.	Festivals and cultural events	Festivals and cultural events around the world	Pg. 19 Chap.4 Magic show exhibition
8.	Role models Male/female (Past and Present.)	Role models depicting noble cause, national cause	Hazrat Umer (RA) for his noble cause and beings a first caliph of Islam known for his best administrative system of the world, justice and care for humanity
9.	Environmental education	Effects of man's actions on environment	Not found Pg. 80 Ch. 14 Bad traffic, accidents and causes
10.	Population education	Impact of population growth on health and nutrition	Not found
11.	Travel and Transport	Traveling Etiquettes	Not found
12.	Technology	True accounts of inventions, explorations and discoveries	Not found
13.	Education and Employment careers / occupations)	Exploring educational opportunities	Not found
14.	Dignity of labor	Appreciating value of labor	Not found
15.	Media	Media as a source of specialist Knowledge	Not found
16.	Crisis awareness and management	Awareness of crisis, accidents and natural calamities	Not found
17.	Participatory Citizenship	Traffic education • Respecting Community resources • Using public facilities	Pg.80 onwards Ch. 14.

		• Practicing cleanliness	
18.	Health, Safety, Drug education	Understanding physical wellbeing • Visiting a doctor • Knowing harmful medicines and dangerous drugs	Not found
19.	Life Skills education	Learning organized approach through identifying, prioritizing and following schedules: • Social etiquettes and manners • Learning through personal interests, abilities and hobbies • Sports and sportsmanship	Not found Hockey, just information oriented but does not cover the sub-theme of sports and sportsmanship Not exploited well

The fifth competency aims at developing ethical, social attributes, values, multiculturalism in a civilised society which were somehow found to be taken care of in the textbook. The students are expected to learn to tolerate, accept other human beings regardless of their age, gender, cast, creed and religion as an outcome of reading the textbook content. The competency also aims to inculcate the culture of humanism to spread love and harmony in the world. For example as is evident in this excerpt from the book “Each human is equal as stated by the RASOOL....Black and white.....but story is about the tolerance of the Rasool SA but the intended learning outcomes (see pg. 1, make nouns from the verbs, identify and use suffix and change the sentence into negative and interrogative)”. The instructions given to teacher are to: enhance students’ interest for the given topic with the help of pre-reading activity; help students in understanding paragraph i.e. topic sentence, supporting details, etc. Tolerance is only covered through typical comprehension question and answers. The dialogue given at the end, has a theme of tolerance embedded as can be seen in seventh and eighth line:

“Asghar: I think you should forgive him. You should show tolerance.
Aslam: Yes, you are right! I forgive him”.

Only the stories or titles of the Rasool (SA), Clever Mirchu, Hazrat Umar, A great virtue and let's make our roads safer show relevance to the theme. These themes depict relevance to and come under benchmarks of the competency.

Humanism is found in Chapter 1 of the textbook in lessons on *Tolerance of the Rasool*, *Hazrat Umer*, and *A Great Virtue*, where, students can feel the sheer feeling of the attributes and values.

Justice is mentioned in *Hazrat Umer*, for example “He (RA) introduced a great system during his ‘reign’ such as administrative courts to investigate the complaints against the offices of the state. He (RA) also reformed army; police force and tax system (see pg. 61). Hazrat umer gave great importance to justice, and well-being of people. He was very strict in case of judgment, for example “He would not spare anyone, not even his own son, if wrong was committed by him” (see pg. 61).

Equity: As can be seen in *Tolerance of the Rasool* “For him high and low, rich and poor, were all equal before law”, Treat your servants as you would treat yourself” and “Master and servants are both equal to ALLAH” (see pg. 3).

Tolerance: Students might only have recognised attributes and values in information like “the worship places and property of non-Muslims were given protection”. But, its certain, that they have not practiced any of the evaluation themselves. No free writing is given. All exercises are completely irrelevant to the title. The students must have been given a reading time which is semi controlled. However, almost all exercises are totally controlled, and no application of Bloom’s taxonomy is seen and are merely at understanding level. No higher order skill is used to evaluate the critical thinking and even the concept of the attribute has not been clarified by its spirit and meaning.

The kind of stories included in the textbook have been a part of the textbooks for many decades but looking at the broader perspective of the 21st century skills, sustainable development goals (SDG’s), SLO’s, and competencies nothing has been achieved. The modern times demand that students should learn to tolerate each other, respect each other’s views and observe patience. As far as benchmark two is concerned, it has been attempted to be portrayed through action, for example in the lesson *Hazrat Umer (RA)*, and by narrating that he was kind and sympathetic to the poor as can be seen in the following excerpts: “One night he passed by a house and saw children crying. ...he helped the widow with food, money and clothing” (see pg. 61).

Once there was a holy man ...always liked to help others. The pious man without any hesitation asked him to step in. He gave him a towel to dry himself. The pious man said: “you are very simple. This house is small indeed, but if one has the will one can manage” (see pg. 66).

“The old man was very kind and generous. He could not see people in trouble. He was always ready to share whatever he had with others” (see pg. 67).

The findings revealed that the competency five revolves around inculcating vices and virtues, ethics and attributes in the students. Some stories were found to be about moral values, but these are not sufficient, and something more has to be done. In particular, major themes which are needed during this time of restlessness to create peace and harmony at large need to be included in the textbook. For this purpose, respect for rules, women empowerment, friendship, co-operation, national pride, role models depicting national cause, travelling etiquettes, exploring educational opportunities, traffic education, using public facilities, practicing cleanliness, understanding physical well-being, knowing harmful medicines, and life skills education like following schedules, etiquettes, manners should be added and embedded in the other four competencies.

Conclusion

The textbook does not offer sufficient material for learners to progress their cognitive and mental level from the previous class. Their cognitive level is still stagnant where it was a year back. Neither any language skill has been touched upon nor has the competency been incorporated in the textbook. There are a number of areas which are part of the curriculum but are not part of the textbook. Values and attributes (see GoP, 2006) have been implicitly added and embedded in such a way that the said purpose has not been fulfilled. The textbook has a very subtle start and from the first page it is mentioned in the learning outcomes to make nouns from the verbs, identify suffix, change sentences into negative and interrogative. The information given for the teacher is very inappropriate.

Keeping in mind the competency five, standards, benchmarks and student learning outcomes, the findings revealed that the textbook covered the themes of tolerance and humanism. However, it does not furnish the intended student learning outcomes to develop students’ moral and social competencies, ignoring that both the aspects are essential in a multicultural and civilised society. Values and attributes have also not been incorporated in the textbook to be inculcated amongst the students through the reading of texts. The findings also showed that students are unable to recognise and practice values and attributes such as tolerance, humanism, patience, equity, justice, honesty, empathy which are relevant for peaceful coexistence between individuals, groups, societies and nations. The importance of individual worth, valuing diversity and equality

among people were the proposed themes of the said competency but the textbook content does not portray these themes through actions. The textbook does not take into account the need for inculcating vices and virtues, ethics and attributes amongst the students.

The textbook can be improved to meet the competency requirements by including biographies for adding the theme of national pride, and women development in society as a role model. Anecdotes should be included for students' free writing instead of letting them write with no purpose. Brochures, adverts, news reports, plans, blurbs, maps, recipes, minutes, table/flow chart, information leaflets, prospectuses, and writing a summary should be included as an important part of language for writing and speaking communication. Themes to follow rules, friendship, co-operation, travelling etiquettes, traffic education, using public facilities, practicing cleanliness, understanding physical well-being, and life skills education; following schedules, etiquettes, manners should be added in the textbook.

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