

A Critique of Teaching English to Undergraduate Classes with Special Reference to Writing Skill at Aligarh Muslim University

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to deal with the present scenario of teaching English for Undergraduate students at AMU. The researcher has tried to analyze the needs, materials and the teaching trends as well as learning strategies of the students, at the Undergraduate level. It also illuminates the difference in study skills between groups of student, as per the findings suggested by the questionnaire. For this purpose, two sets of questionnaires were circulated among teachers and students. On the basis of the findings from the data collected, some suggestions regarding changes in classroom pedagogy and materials are recommended. Checking the suitability of the materials in terms of writing skills with regard to students and teachers needs is the main concern.

Keywords: Materials, Needs, Teaching trends, Undergraduate level, Writing Skill

1. Introduction & Background

AMU (Aligarh Muslim University), initially established as the Mohamman Anglo- Oriental (MAO) College in 1875 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was an initiative to uplift the socio-economic status of Indian natives, as well as their intellectual advancement, in colonial India. Later, after independence it became a government funded Central University, recognized by UGC (University Grants Commission) where the medium of Instruction, itself is English.

The present paper is a part of ongoing research that deals with Compulsory English, recommended at the two beginning years of graduation (B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st and 2nd yr) at AMU. These sheets were produced in-house by a group of teachers from the department of English at AMU. The objective of the course was to equip the learners to proficiently use the basic language skills- LSRW. Herein, the researcher analyzed Writing skill viz. a viz. classroom pedagogy.

2. Objectives and Research Question

It was observed that the students often shy away from writing, as L2 writing needs constant efforts, training and practice. This crucial problem led to the observations and findings of the present investigation. The present paper attempts to analyze-

- 1) Do the needs of learners match with the present syllabus and materials they are studying at present?
- 2) Differences in study skills.
- 3) Present materials/ tasks in Compulsory English sheets; and learners' preferences
- 4) Learning strategies of the learners.
- 5) Suitability of teaching trends & present practices.

3. Literature review

Teaching Compulsory English at Undergraduate classes in many universities of India is the determined need to train students coming from different vernacular medium, in a single understandable language environment. Most of the literatures of subjects such as history, geography, science etc. are available in English, difficult to be translated in the regional languages, as India is multicultural and multilingual country. With the difficulty for a citizen to learn all the regional languages in order to communicate with the natives of other states inside the country, English was given the status of 'Second' and 'Associate Official Language' after independence. AMU followed the pattern set by UGC after 1960s. In the National Workshop on Syllabus Reform it was recommended that, "English should be taught as a Compulsory subject for a minimum period of two years to B.A, B.Com and B.Sc students."¹

Nowadays most of the competitive examinations, interviews for jobs, seminars and conferences and other day-to-day events and practices, are held in English throughout the country instead of any vernacular or regional languages. Public notices, websites, newspapers, CV, Matrimonial & Classifieds (advertisement) and many other varieties of written English are omnipresent in India of today.

For teachers of writing Barbara Kroll (1993:2) states, 'Bartholomae (1986) sums up how best to view those who teach writing: 'What characterizes writing teachers, I think is not that they have a set of 'methods' for the teaching of writing, but they have a commitment to writing as an intellectual activity and to what that activity can produce in the classroom (p.5)²

4. Materials

The present Compulsory English Sheets prepared locally in the department of English in the year 2003, contains the writing activities and tasks on the topics given below-

5. Present(Compulsory English) materials and Items on Writing Skill Course

B.A/ B.Sc/B.Com 1st yr (Compulsory English Course)-

Unit 2-Note Taking, Summarizing, Precis Writing

Unit-4- Describing Yourself, Friends and relatives, Describing Streets and houses, countries, towns and villages, a day, a journey; Writing Applications; Writing Curriculum Vitae

B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 2nd year (Compulsory English Course)-

Unit 2- Paragraph writing

Unit 3- Giving Directions/ Instructions; Writing Processes; Writing Future Plans; Letters of thanks, regret, Condolence, invitation

6. Participants & Instrumentation

The study was conducted among 50 boys and 50 girls (100 in total), a population comprising of students from B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st year and 2nd year; and the teachers (around 16 in number out of which 14 responses were returned back) from the Department of English, both males and females.

The main instruments were two sets of questionnaire. The aim of students' questionnaire was to obtain their general background, their learning styles and preferences, their views, ideas and impressions about their English course/ Study materials (Compulsory English Sheets). The second questionnaire was prepared for the teachers. It aimed to know teachers' views about their learners as related to their classroom practices. The return rate of the students' questionnaire was 100%. The return rate of the teachers' questionnaire was 87.50%.

4.3 Data Analysis Method

The response of the subjects was computed by using the statistical program (SPSS) to find both the frequency of occurrence and percentage of the responses.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Analysis of Teachers Versus Students Questionnaire

A total of 14 teachers returned the questionnaire. From the onset of the questionnaire, which deciphered biographical details, it was observed that most of the teachers (12 out of 14) 85.71% were guest faculties,^{*1} one was Assistant Professor (7.14%) and one Associate Professor (7.14%). Among those only 7 teachers (50%) out of 14 possessed specialized ELT training, 2 teachers (14.29%) were male teachers, while 12 teachers (85.71%) were female teachers. From the point of view of nationality, all the 14 teachers (100%) were Indian Nationals.

100 samples collected from students from five streams (Arts, Social Science, Science, Life- science and Commerce) 40(40%) revealed the following: native speakers of Urdu 48 (48%); native speakers of Hindi 11 (11%); native speakers of other regional Indian languages like Bengali, Kannada etc, 1 student was native of 'Other foreign language'.ⁱⁱ 50 students were from B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st year, and 50 were from 2nd year. The questionnaire revealed that these students had their primary, secondary and senior-secondary education from various boards. They demonstrate differences in medium of instruction. (Table 7.1) below, reproduces the gender-wise distribution of the results.

Table7.1 Distribution of Students Responses for Board and Medium of Instruction in terms of Frequency

Boards	Male Students			Female Students			Medium Of Instruction	Male students			Female Students		
	P	S	SS	P	S	SS		P	S	SS	P	S	SS
AMU	3	4	6	5	6	9	ENGLISH	18	19	18	38	36	36
UP	17	18	18	10	11	12	HINDI	20	20	19	10	11	11
CBSE	10	8	6	25	24	21	URDU	8	7	6	1	1	1
ICSE	2	2	1	2	2	1	BENGALI	3	3	3	0	0	0
BIHAR	1	1	1	0	0	0	KASHMIRI	1	0	0	0	0	0
KASHMIR	6	6	6	2	2	2	ARABIC	0	1	4	0	0	0
BENGAL	3	3	3	0	0	0	PERSIAN	0	0	0	0	0	0
MADARS A	6	6	7	0	0	0	ANY OTHER	0	0	0	1	2	2
ANY OTHER	2	2	2	6	5	5							

The data confirms as the majority of the teachers replied that the majority of the students in class were from 'Mixed group'. The frequency of Mixed group was 13 (92.86%), while only one teacher (7.14%) responded that the students were from Urban areas. It can be stated that due to mixed groups in classes, teachers have to deal with all the levels, boards, age and background students.

In addition, the information on students' time-period of English study (Table 7.2) answered by the teachers deciphers the results as follows;

Table 7.2 Distribution Of Teachers Responses For Information Regarding Students' Years Of English Study

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Not Sure	4	28.6	28.6	28.6
3-5 yrs approx	2	14.3	14.3	42.9
6-10 yrs approx	6	42.9	42.9	85.7
11-15 yrs approx	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	14	100.0	100.0	

If checked for authenticity from the point of students (male and female students), the results show that 9 boys (18%) chose the option (1-2 yrs) which is quiet high as compared to 1 girl (2%), a total of 10 students(10%). Similarly none of the female students ticked the option (3-5 yrs) while among male students 13 students (26%) chose this option (3-5 yrs), total of 13 students (13%). 6 male students and 4 female students opted for the option (6-10 yrs), a total of 10 students(10%) while 22 male (44%) students and 45 female (90%) students opted for option (11-15 yrs). In other words 67 students (67%) told that they have studied English for more than 10 years. The results can infer various views which could be checked further, it could be that girls have spend more time in learning English than boys. It could also infer that boys are more straightforward in telling the exact detail.

a) Needs and Level of Writing Skill

Table 7.3 show that with reference to writing skill 1 teacher (7.1%) reported their students are 'Good', 5 teachers (35.7%) considered them as 'Satisfactory' and 8 of the 14 teachers (57.1%) said that their students proficiency is 'Not Satisfactory'. While for the same question 47 students (47.0%) reported themselves to be 'Good', 41 students (41%) considered them as 'Satisfactory' and 12 students (12.0%) said that their students proficiency is 'Not Satisfactory'. See table below.

Table 7.3 Distribution Of Teachers Vs Students Opinion For Students Level Of Proficiency In Writing Skill

	Frequency of responses by Teachers	Percent % of responses by Teachers	Frequency of Responses by the Students	Percent % of Responses by Students
Good	1	7.1%	47	47.0%
Satisfactory	5	35.7%	41	41.0%
Not Satisfactory	8	57.1%	12	12.0%
Total	14	100.0%	100	100%

Figure 7.1 shows 'Why do you think your students need to study English' 9 teachers (64.3%) said that the students come in class 'to pass exams', while only 3 students 3% ticked the same option; 5 teachers (35.7%) and 23 students (23%) chose the option 'For better jobs'; 7 teachers (50%) and 1 student(1%) chose the option 'Interpersonal Communication' and 2 teachers (85.7%) and 73 students (73%) informed they studied English 'To improve their English'. In this question they were allowed to tick multiple options. Figure 7.1 depicts the results as follows;

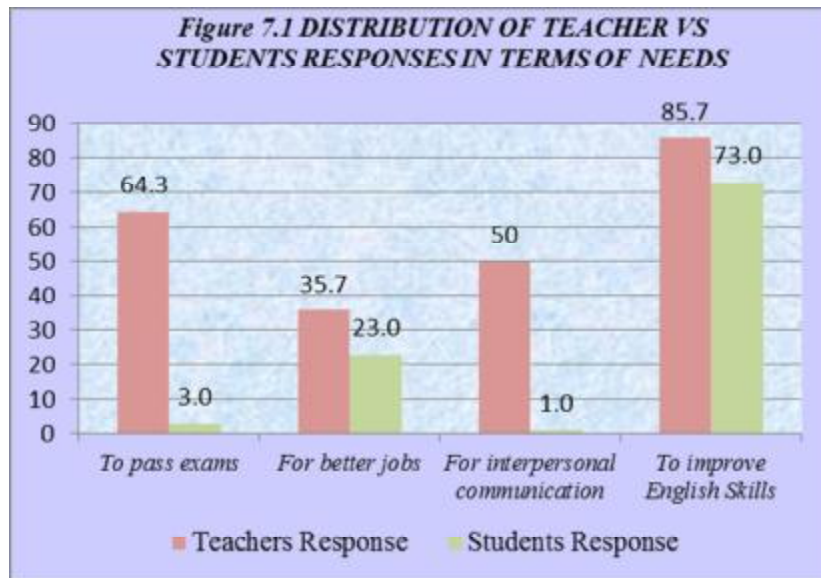
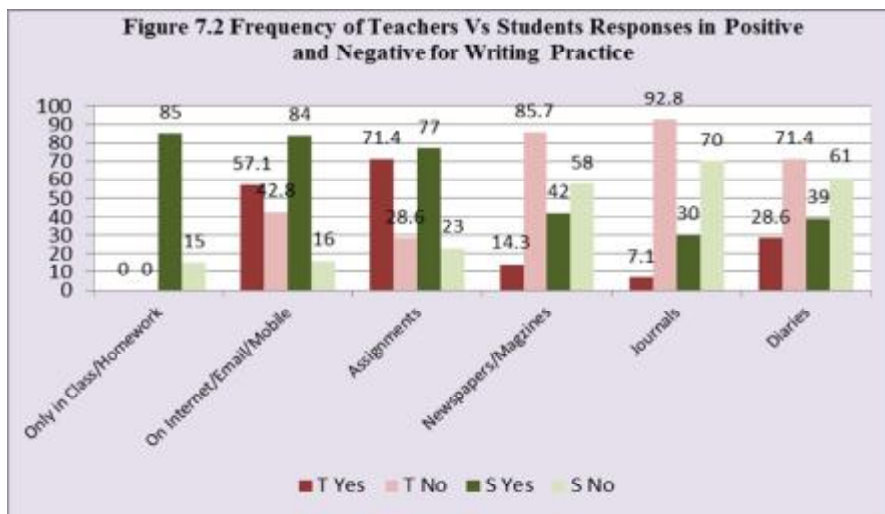


Figure 7.1

The above result depicts a mismatch in the results informing about needs of learners, as opted by learners and as chosen by the teachers. Teaching like this is worthless. It is nothing, but producing mules, without any attention to god-gifted innate capabilities.

b) Study Skill-

Study Skill is related to skill or expertise of the learner’s in managing their study. In response to the answer of the question ‘When do you think your students write in English?’, see the figure 7.2 below-



T yes= Number of Teachers responded in ‘Yes’
 T No= Number of Teachers responded in ‘No’
 S Yes= Number of Students responded in ‘Yes’
 S No= Number of Students responded in ‘No’

All 14 teachers (100%) were of view that their students write in English ‘Only in class and as homework’, 8 teachers (57.1%) responded that their students often write ‘On Internet, Email and Mobile SMS’, 10 teachers (71.4%) told that their students use to write ‘Assignments’, 2 teachers (14.3%) told that their students use to write for ‘Newspaper/magazines’, 1 teacher(7.1%) responded that their students use to write in ‘Journals’ and only 4 teachers (28.6%) responded that the students prefer writing in ‘Diaries’. Whereas for the question ‘How often do you write in English?’, 85 students (85.0%) were of view they students write in English ‘Only in class and as homework’, 84 students (84.0%) responded that they often write ‘On Internet, Email and Mobile SMS’, 77 students (77.0%) told that they use to write ‘Assignments’, 42 students (42.0%) told that they use to write for ‘Newspaper/magazines’, 30 students (30.0%) responded that they use to write in ‘Journals’ and only 39 students (39.0%) responded that the students prefer writing in ‘Diaries’. In this question teachers as well as students were free to select multiple options. See Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4 Distribution Of Teacher Vs. Students Responses For Materials Other Than Compulsory Sheets Used In Classroom

	Teachers Response (Frequency)	Teachers Response (percent)	Students Response (Frequency)	Students Response (Percent)
Only in class and as Homework	14	100%	85	85%
On Internet Email or Mobile SMS	8	57.1%	84	84%
Assignment	10	71.4%	77	77%
Newspaper & Magazines	2	14.3%	42	42%
Journals	1	7.1%	30	30%
Diaries	4	28.6%	39	39%

In response to the answer of Question 'How do your students prefer to learn English in class?', depicts that only 1 teacher (7.1%) said that the students prefer to learn 'individually'; 2 teachers (14.3%) answered that the students preferred to study in pairs; 5 teachers (35.7%) answered that the students wanted to learn in groups; while the majority 6 teachers (42.9%) were of view that they wanted 'Tutor-assisted' learning. Whereas, for the same Question 'How do you prefer to learn English?', 46 students(46.0%) responded 'Individually', 13 students (13%) answered 'In pairs', 32 students(32.0%) said 'In group' and 9 students (9%) gave a reply that they prefer 'Tutor/ Teacher assisted' learning.

In response to the answer of Question 'How do your students prefer to read and write?', about 6 teachers (42.9%) said that the students prefer to learn 'through Books'; only 1 teacher (7.1%) answered that the students preferred to study by computers; 2 teachers (14.3%) answered that the students wanted to learn through authentic materials; while 5 teachers (35.7%) were of view that they wanted 'All of the above' options to be included in learning. While for the same question 'How do you prefer to read and write?', about 34 out of 100 (34.0%) students said that the students prefer to learn 'Through Books'; only 1 students (1.0%) answered that they preferred to study 'Through computers'; 7 students (7%) answered that they wanted to learn 'through Authentic materials'; while the rest 58 students (58%) were of view that they wanted through the combination of 'All of the above' options to be included in learning. The first preference is clearly given to 'all of the above option' and second to 'textbook' by both teachers and learners. Teachers' and students' perceived learning style differently. Majority of the teachers emphasized on 'text-book' while majority of students responded for 'authentic materials'.

c) Materials

The results of question enquiring about the level of Compulsory English Course, look for the results in the table below.

Table 7.5 Distribution of teachers Vs students responses on Level of Course

	Frequency (Teachers response)	Percent (Teachers response)	Frequency (Students Response)	Percent (Students Response)
Very Difficult	0	0%	1	1%
Difficult	2	14.3%	28	28%
Easy	11	78.6%	57	57%
Very Easy	1	7.1%	14	14%
Total	14	100.0%	100	100.0%

When examined on the basis of responses received by 5 faculties, the results depicted that majority of the students consider the course as 'Difficult'.(Figure7.3)

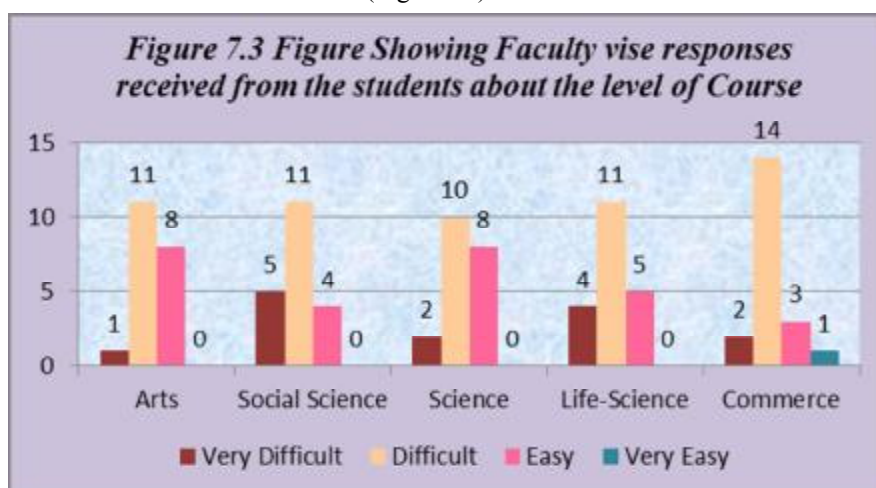


Figure 7.3

In response to the answer of question 'Is the syllabus suitable to your students needs/requirements?', 2 teachers (14.3%) replied 'Always', 1 teacher (7.1%) replied 'Never' and 11 teachers (78.6%) replied 'Sometimes'. In response to the answer of same question, the responses of students reflect that 27 students (27.0%) replied 'Always', 6 students (6.0%) replied 'Never' and 67 students (67.0%) replied 'Sometimes'. These responses are depicted in (Table 7.6) below.

Table 7.6 Distribution Of Teachers Vs. Students Opinion Regarding Suitability Of Syllabus Items

	Frequency (Teachers' Responses)	Percent (Teachers' Responses)	Frequency (Students' Responses)	Percent (Students' Responses)
Always	2	14.3%	27	27.0%
Never	1	7.1%	6	6.0%
Sometimes	11	78.6%	67	67.0%
Total	14	100.0%	100.0	100.0%

In response to the answer of question 'What are the items your students generally like in your Compulsory English Sheets, in Writing Skill? Tick (√) the correct answer, on the basis of your class room experiences.', the teachers put a tick on following options, look at the responses received as depicted in Table 7.7(1st yr) & 7.8(2nd yr)

Table 7.7 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Items Students Generally Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Note Taking & Note Making	9	5	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.3	100.0
Summarizing	5	9	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	100.0
Precis Writing	1	13	7.1	92.9	7.1	92.9	7.1	100.0
Writing Descriptions	11	3	78.6	21.4	78.6	21.4	78.6	100.0

Table 7.8 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Items Students Generally Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 2nd Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Paragraph Writing	9	5	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.3	100.0
Expressing point of view	7	7	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
Giving Instructions	11	3	78.6	21.4	78.6	21.4	78.6	100.0
Giving Directions	7	7	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
Writing a process	10	4	71.4	28.6	71.4	28.6	71.4	100.0
Generating Dialogues & Discussion	9	5	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.3	100.0
Reporting Events	6	8	42.9	57.1	42.9	57.1	42.9	100.0
Reporting Meeting & Speeches	3	11	21.4	78.6	21.4	78.6	21.4	100.0
Essay Writing	4	10	28.6	71.4	28.6	71.4	28.6	100.0

The results from the answer of question 'What are the items you like in your Compulsory English Sheets, in Writing Skill? Tick (√) the correct answer.', the responses received as depicted in Table 7.9(1st yr) & 7.10 (2nd yr)

Table 7.9 Distribution Of Students Opinion Regarding Items They Generally Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Note Taking & Note Making	29	71	29.0	71.0	29.0	71.0	29.0	100.0
Summarizing	29	71	29.0	71.0	29.0	71.0	29.0	100.0
Precis Writing	16	84	16.0	84.0	16.0	84.0	16.0	100.0
Writing Descriptions	34	66	34.0	66.0	34.0	66.0	34.0	100.0

Table 7.10 Distribution Of Students Opinion Regarding Items They Generally Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 2nd Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Paragraph Writing	36	64	36.0	64.0	36.0	64.0	36.0	100.0
Expressing point of view	16	84	36.0	64.0	36.0	64.0	36.0	100.0
Giving Instructions	13	87	13.0	87.0	13.0	87.0	13.0	100.0
Giving Directions	13	87	13.0	87.0	13.0	87.0	13.0	100.0
Writing a process	7	93	7.0	93.0	7.0	93.0	7.0	100.0
Generating Dialogues & Discussion	20	80	20.0	80.0	20.0	80.0	20.0	100.0
Reporting Events	18	82	18.0	82.0	18.0	82.0	18.0	100.0
Reporting Meeting & Speeches	18	82	18.0	82.0	18.0	82.0	18.0	100.0
Essay Writing	18	82	18.0	82.0	18.0	82.0	18.0	100.0

In response to the answer of question, 'What are the items your students generally don't like studying even if necessary; and are prescribed in Compulsory English Sheets, on Writing Skill? Tick (✓) the correct answer, on the basis of your class room experiences.', the teachers put a tick on following options. Look at the responses received as depicted in Table 7.11(1st yr) & 7.12 (2nd yr).

Table 7.11 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Items Students Generally Don't Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Note Taking & Note Making	2	12	14.3	85.7	14.3	85.7	14.3	100.0
Summarizing	4	10	28.6	71.4	28.6	71.4	28.6	100.0
Precis Writing	9	5	64.3	35.7	64.3	35.7	64.3	100.0
Writing Descriptions	1	13	7.1	92.9	7.1	92.9	7.1	100.0

Table 7.12 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Items Students Generally Don't Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 2nd Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Paragraph Writing	3	11	21.4	78.6	21.4	78.6	21.4	100.0
Expressing point of view	3	11	21.4	78.6	21.4	78.6	21.4	100.0
Giving Instructions	1	13	7.1	92.9	7.1	92.9	7.1	100.0
Giving Directions	4	10	28.6	71.4	28.6	71.4	28.6	100.0
Writing a process	1	13	7.1	92.9	7.1	92.9	7.1	100.0
Generating Dialogues & Discussion	0	14	0	100.0	0	100.0	0	100.0
Reporting Events	6	8	42.9	57.1	42.9	57.1	42.9	100.0
Reporting Meeting & Speeches	6	8	42.9	57.1	42.9	57.1	42.9	100.0
Essay Writing	8	6	57.1	42.9	57.1	42.9	57.1	100.0

In response to the answer of question, 'What are the items you don't like in Compulsory English Sheets?' Tick (✓) the correct answer.', the students put a tick on following options. Look at the responses received as depicted in Table 7.13(1st yr) & 7.14 (2nd yr).

Table 7.13 Distribution Of Students Opinion Regarding Items They Generally Don't Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Note Taking & Note Making	18	82	18.0	82.0	18.0	82.0	18.0	100.0
Summarizing	14	86	14.0	86.0	14.0	86.0	14.0	100.0
Precis Writing	24	76	24.0	76.0	24.0	76.0	24.0	100.0
Writing Descriptions	14	86	14.0	86.0	14.0	86.0	14.0	100.0

Table 7.14 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Items Students Generally Don't Like In B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 2nd Year

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative Percent	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Total
Paragraph Writing	11	89	11.0	89.0	11.0	89.0	11.0	100.0
Expressing point of view	14	86	14.0	86.0	14.0	86.0	14.0	100.0
Giving Instructions	15	85	15.0	85.0	15.0	85.0	15.0	100.0
Giving Directions	14	86	14.0	86.0	14.0	86.0	86.0	100.0
Writing a process	8	92	8.0	92.0	8.0	92.0	8.0	100.0
Generating Dialogues & Discussion	11	89	11.0	89.0	11.0	89.0	11.0	100.0
Reporting Events	15	85	15.0	85.0	15.0	85.0	15.0	100.0
Reporting Meeting & Speeches	12	88	12.0	88.0	12.0	88.0	12.0	100.0
Essay Writing	15	85	15.0	85.0	15.0	85.0	15.0	100.0

Table (7.15) shows the answer of 2 questions, respectively.

Table 7.15 Distribution Of Teachers Opinion Regarding Satisfaction Level From The Responses Received, Items Wish To Change & Use Of Audio/Visual & Multimedia Resources

	Frequency			Percent		
	Yes	No	Can't Say	Yes	No	Can't Say
<i>Do you wish to change the items you are teaching in Compulsory English writing?</i>	7	2	5	50%	14.3%	35.7%
<i>Do you think teaching assistance through audio-visual aids/ multimedia will be useful and appropriate for your students at Compulsory English level?</i>	12	2	-----	85.7%	14.3%	-----

Table 7.16 also depicts the results as follows-

Table 7.16 Distribution Of Students Opinion Regarding Satisfaction Level From The Responses Received, Items Wish To Change & Use Of Audio/Visual & Multimedia Resources

		Frequency			Percent		
		Yes	No	Can't Say	Yes	No	Can't Say
Q	<i>Do you wish to change the items you are studying in Compulsory English writing?</i>	42	20	38	42%	20%	38%
Q	<i>Do you think teaching assistance through audio-visual aids/ multimedia will be useful and appropriate for you at Compulsory English level?</i>	43	5	52	43%	5%	52%

The results from the above question emphasizes the fact that the syllabus and the contents need to be revised as soon as possible.

d) Learning Strategies-

When analyzed in terms learning strategies the responses to the questionnaire revealed the following. Students data when carefully observed revealed that majority of the students 37% use 'Internet/email/Social sites/Chat groups; 30% wrote 'assignments'; 29% wrote 'articles/poems/stories/essays'; 23% use to write in 'Vocabulary Criss-Cross' puzzle of newspaper'; 15% usually write 'Applications/Notices'.

While 9 teachers (64.3%) said that students write 'Applications/Notices'; 7 teachers (50.0%) opted for 'Internet/email/Social sites/Chat groups, 7 teachers (50.0%) opted for 'Assignments'; 6 teachers (42.9%) observed there students writing 'Articles/Poems/Stories/Essays' and 2 teachers(14.3%) opted for 'Vocabulary Criss cross puzzles'.

e) Teaching Trends & Present practices-

In response to the answer of **Question** 'Do you use any other material also, while teaching to improve your students writing skill?' only 5 teachers as in (35.7%) responded as 'Always' and the rest 9 teachers (64.3%) responded 'Sometimes'. While when asked with students, 'Do you refer to any other material also, for improving your English?', only 5 students as in 100 (5.0%) responded as 'No', 37 students (37.0%) responded as 'Yes' and the rest 58 students (58.0%) responded as 'Sometimes'. The results reveal that there is much dependency on textbook (sheets) by both teachers and students.

Some of them, who stated 'Sometimes' opted the name of materials they often use to concern. Among the options newspaper & magazine, journal, dictionary, TV / internet etc, there were various responses. The teachers responded most for 'Newspaper and magazine' (12 teachers) and 'supplementary material' (13 teachers). While the students views were distributed over for all five options. In this question teachers as well as students were allowed to tick multiple options. The results are shown in Table 7.17 below-

Table 7.17 Distribution Of Teachers Vs Responses For Material Used By Teachers Other Than Compulsory English Sheets To Teach Writing

	Frequency of teachers responses			Frequency of Students Responses			Percent of teachers responses		Percent of students responses	
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Yes	No
Newspapers & Magazines	12	2	14	73	27	100	85.7%	14.3%	73%	27%
Dictionary & Thesaurus	8	6	14	69	31	100	57.1%	42.9%	69%	31%
Journals & Articles	3	11	14	41	59	100	21.4%	78.6%	41%	59%
Books/Supplementary Materials	13	1	14	54	46	100	92.9%	7.1%	54%	46%
TV News & Internet	4	10	14	50	50	100	28.6%	71.4%	50%	50%

In response to the answer of Question 'Our teacher gives us his/her own supplementary materials, in addition to the Sheets to make us understand better.', 17 of the students (17.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 30 of the students (30.0%) stated 'Disagree', 34 students (34.0%) 'Agree', and 19 (19.0%) 'Strongly Agree'. In response to the answer of Question above, none of the teacher (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', none of the teachers (0%) stated 'Disagree', 8 teachers (57.1%) 'Agree', 5 teacher (35.7%) 'Strongly Agree' and 1 (7.1%) was 'Undecided'.

The responses received for question 'How do your students prefer to learn English? Tick(✓) the options keeping in consideration your classroom experiences.' 9 teachers (64.3%) supported view that their students prefer to learn through textbook, 5 (35.7%) preferred Student-Made material, 6 teachers (42.9%) told that their students preferred Teacher-given Supplementary material and 5 teachers (35.7%) told that they prefer Authentic Materials. In this question teachers were free to select multiple options and they opted for 'yes/No' for every option.

The responses received for question 'How will you prefer to learn English?' 22 students (22.0%) supported view that they prefer to learn through textbooks, 12 (12.0%) preferred Student-Made material, 17 students (17%) told that they preferred Teacher-given Supplementary material and 49 students (49.0%) told that they prefer Authentic Materials. In this question too students were free to select multiple options.

For the Question 'Large classes prove a barrier in teaching writing skill and getting feedback', most of the teachers (10 teachers 71.4%) 'strongly agree' none of them 'Strongly disagree' 1 teacher (7.1%) 'Disagree', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Agree' and 1 (7.1%) was 'Undecided'.

For the Question 'The teachers' notes are helpful and useful', 6 students (6%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 22 of the students (22.0%) stated 'Disagree', 54 students (54.0%) 'Agree' and 18 students (18.0 %) 'Strongly Agree'.

In response to the answer of Question 'I correct my students when they make mistakes while writing in class', none of the teacher (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', none of the teachers (0%) stated 'Disagree', 4 teachers (28.6%)

'Agree', 10 teacher (71.4 %) 'Strongly agree' and none (0%) were 'Undecided'. This question aimed to check the approach towards writing skill. This shows that writing accurate master-piece is what most of the teachers still want in their students, instead of paying attention to actual writing process, and constructive feedback.

In response to the Question 'I usually give time to think before my students write', none of the teacher (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', none (0%) stated 'Disagree', 7 teachers (50.0%) 'Agree', 7 teachers (50.0 %) 'Strongly agree' and none (0%) was 'Undecided'. For the same question 2 students (2.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 7 students (7.0%) stated 'Disagree', 60 students (60.0%) 'Agree' and 31 students (31.0 %) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'I explain the rules first, and then ask my students to write', none of the teacher (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 1 of the teachers (7.1%) stated 'Disagree', 4 teachers (28.6%) 'Agree', 9 (64.3 %) 'Strongly agree' and none (0%) was 'Undecided'. For the same Question, 2 students (2.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 4 students (4.0%) stated 'Disagree', 61students (61.0%) 'Agree' and 33 students (33.0 %) 'Strongly agree'.

In response to the answer of Question 'I first allow the students to write freely their ideas and then explain the rules', 1 teacher (7.1%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 5 teachers (35.7%) stated 'Disagree', 3 teachers (21.4%) 'Agree', 4 teachers (28.6 %) 'Strongly agree' and 1 (7.1%) was 'Undecided'. For the same question, 2 students (2.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 60 students (60.0%) stated 'Disagree', 27 students (27.0%) 'Agree' and 11 students (11.0 %) 'Strongly agree'. The above data presents a picture of controlled writing practices, instead of free-writing by the learners.

For the Question 'The students write freely, whatever comes in their mind', none of the teachers (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Disagree', 10 teachers (71.4%) 'Agree', 1 (7.1%) 'Strongly agree' and 1 (7.1%) was 'Undecided'. In response to the answer of Question 'I write freely, whatever comes in my mind', 3 students (3.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 18 students (18.0%) 'Disagree', 54 students (54.0%) 'Agree' and 25 (25.0%) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'My students begin writing by brainstorming & mind-mapping', none of the teachers (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 1 teacher (7.1%) stated 'Disagree', 11 of the teachers (78.6%) 'Agree', none (0%) 'Strongly agree' and 2 (14.3%) were 'Undecided'. In response to the same Question 'I begin writing by brainstorming & mind-mapping', 4 students (4.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 32 students (32.0%) stated 'Disagree', 51 students (51.0%) 'Agree' and 13 (13.0%) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'The time allotted for writing skill activities is sufficient to train my students', none of the teachers (0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 9 teachers (64.3%) 'Disagree', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Agree', 1 (7.1%) 'Strongly agree' and 2 (14.3%) were 'Undecided'. In response to the same question, 7 students (7.0%) responded 'Strongly Disagree', 29 students (29.0%) stated 'Disagree', 55 students (55.0%) 'Agree' and 9 students (9.0%) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'My students feel more comfortable to write, without my help and guidance as a teacher', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Strongly Disagree', 7 teachers (50.0%) stated 'Disagree', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Agree', none of them (0%) 'Strongly agree' and 3 (21.4%) were 'Undecided'. In response to the same, 9 students (9.0%) 'Strongly Disagree', 47 students (47.0%) 'Disagree', 26 of the students (26.0%) 'Agree' and 18 of them (18.0%) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'Students mostly use dictionary while writing', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Strongly Disagree', 7 teachers (50.0%) 'Disagree', 3 teachers (21.4%) 'Agree', none of them (0%) 'Strongly agree' and 2 (14.3%) were 'Undecided'. In response to the same question, 5 students (5.0%) 'Strongly Disagree', 32 students (32.0%) 'Disagree', 47 students (47.0%) 'Agree', and 16 of them (16.0%) 'Strongly agree'.

For the Question 'Students usually take help from their friends, while writing', none of the teachers (0%) 'Strongly Disagree', 2 teachers (14.3%) 'Disagree', 11 teachers (78.6%) 'Agree', 1 of them (7.1%) 'Strongly agree' and none (0%) were 'Undecided'. For the same question 11students (11.0%) 'Strongly Disagree', 35 students (35.0%) stated 'Disagree', 44 students (44%) 'Agree', 10 of them (10%) 'Strongly agree'.

8. Problem areas

- 1) There is a mismatch in needs as stated by students and indicated by teachers.
- 2) Textbooks (Compulsory English Sheets) claim that process approach is followed, but in actual classroom practices, it might not be so.
- 3) Some of the classrooms are 'Instructions and practice oriented' rather than 'Activity and opportunity oriented'.
- 4) Students with all five streams (Arts, Science, Social Science, Arts, Commerce) are studying the same syllabus and materials, and they have a common exam/ summative assessment (annual exam).
- 5) Slow learners and weaker students have more difficulty in coping up with the materials and course. Students are not streamed in classes according to their level and aptitude.
- 6) Large Classes acts as barrier in teaching. Teachers are dealing with large number of students in classes, sometimes even more than 100 per class.
- 7) Peer-correction is not practiced.
- 8) The amount of writing the students usually do, as per responses 'Only in class and as homework' depicts that learners lack writing practice. They write out of pressure and not self-motivation.
- 9) Task and activities are well-prepared but there are no graphics or pictures in the whole Sheets. Low-level learners generally look for pictures or illustrations for interpretation.

- 10) Teachers had to teach the prescribed syllabus in a limited time-span.
- 11) Faulty and hectic assessment procedures, which don't judge learning and teaching in an effective way.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

From the findings of the results of the questionnaire it can be suggested that-

- 1) There is a need for teachers training. Teachers' manual could be another cheaper option that can be supplemented with the core materials.
- 2) Re-evaluation of syllabus and materials.
- 3) Streaming of students in classes according to their level. For this purpose help from diagnostic test, aptitude test and personality test before the commencement of classes are recommended.
- 4) Extra classes and Bridge courses for weak students and students from Madarsa background.
- 5) Assessment techniques should also be revised, and manual assessment should be replaced by computerized assessment.
- 6) Materials and method in classroom should encourage self-motivation and not enforcement. Teachers attitude should not be a hindrance in learning. Authentic materials should be properly used.
- 7) Learners could be given decision-making authority to choose their own syllabus and materials, with some sort of parental and administrative control. Teachers should also get flexibility and opportunity in selecting syllabus items to be introduced to their learners, produce their own materials and assessing their learners in their own new ways.
- 8) Need for co-ordination among learners, teachers, administration and government; and a need of an interface where every learner can get a chance to share and discuss, criticize in a positive manner, suggest changes, and explore new things; teachers can be free to share opinions, ask for suggestions, and trained in the best possible manner, administrators should check the syllabus, materials and classroom practices frequently and set pre-determined objectives for defining the systematized educational environment; and government should be an asset and not a hindrance in teaching-learning. Help from Computers and idea of blended learning could be a better solution. A website by the department on which the teachers and students are free to post every teaching-learning activity might be useful. This must contain pages where teachers can post their course plans, announcements, assignments, lessons, results etc. and students have discussion boards, procedure of checking the wall-posts, online assignments.
- 9) Weak students should be encouraged for free writing by the teachers instead of guided and controlled writing.
- 10) There is a need for further research in other skills suggesting changes which can keep up with the changing times.

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Notes:

ⁱ Guest faculties are on temporary and contract basis.

ⁱⁱ Other foreign languages includes foreign language other than English and Arabic, like Persian, Irani, etc