

# NDB Teacher Training Project 2017-2018: Impact Assessment

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## Acronyms

A/L	G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination
CBB	Council of Business for Britain
CCQ	Concept Checking Question
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICQ	Instruction Checking Question
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISA	In-Service Advisor
NCoE	National College of Education
NDB EfT	National Development Bank English for Teaching programme
NIE	National Institute of Education
O/L	G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination
PGDE	Post Graduate Diploma in Education
RESC	Regional English Support Centre
TKT	(Cambridge) Teaching Knowledge Test
TTC	Teachers Training College

## INTRODUCTION

Although the pass rate for English at O/L in Sri Lankan schools has improved from a low of 36.86% in 2006 to 51.12% in 2017, pass rates in the same year of 67.24% in Mathematics, and 73.46% in Science<sup>1</sup> indicate that there is still a problem. One might also consider that 20.34% of passes for English were 'S' or Simple/Ordinary level passes requiring marks of only 35 – 49% and that there remain large disparities in regional pass rates contributing to the island-wide 51.12% result; pass rates in 2015 ranged from 8% for Batticaloa West Education Zone to 80.54% for Colombo Education Zone (refer to the table of zonal pass rates in Appendix A).

English teachers consulted during the evaluation attribute the issue in part to the structure of the examinations system, in part to the lack of exposure of rural students to English outside the classroom, and in part to a lack of skilled English teachers in some zones. In the scholarship examination at the end of Year 5, only 8-10 marks out of 200 are reserved for English language questions; at O/L, a pass in English is not required to continue on to A/L; and students in A/L concentrate only on the 3 subjects that they have nominated as their subjects for examination. In such circumstances, it is heartening to find that three of the four RESCs visited for the purposes of this evaluation, reported that the NDB English for Teaching (NDB EfT) course was over-subscribed and that 171 teachers completed all three phases of the course. Respondents in this study were unanimous about the commitment and professionalism of the teachers undertaking the course.

However, it must be remembered that it is the intent of the course that 'by upgrading the teachers' English language skills and supporting teachers to develop up-to-date learner-centred, activity-based teaching approaches, pupils will benefit from having better trained English teachers, thus improving their English skills and employability'.<sup>2</sup> Hence the goal of this impact evaluation is to examine whether the commitment and professionalism remarked in the course participants is ultimately reflected in teachers with better language skills using learner-centred approaches and activity-based methodology in classrooms. Of course, this narrows the focus of the evaluation to intermediate outcomes rather than impact, with an assessment of student English skills and consequent employability left to a future study.

## APPROACH

Ten RESCs<sup>3</sup> offered the NDB EfT course in 2017-2018 with a total of 184 English teachers participating in Phase 1 of the course (May-August 2017), 194 participating in Phase 2 (September – December 2017) and 178 participating in Phase 3 (January – April 2018).<sup>4</sup> Survey forms were mailed directly to the 171 teachers who had completed the entire course with the inclusion of a pre-stamped and addressed envelope to encourage returns. Focus group discussions were conducted with a total of 21 teachers in four zones and RESC Coordinators in the four zones were also interviewed. In each zone, three lessons were observed – the first conducted by a teacher who had followed the course in 2017-2018, the second conducted by a teacher who had followed the course in 2013-2014, and the third conducted by a teacher who had never followed the course. It is a limitation of the study that RESC Coordinators were requested to invite teachers of their choice to

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<sup>1</sup> Daily Mirror (2019), 'Ordinary Level Exam results 2017 Reaching a milestone in Sri Lanka's Education' <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Ordinary-Level-Exam-results-Reaching-a-milestone-in-Sri-Lanka-s-education-148836.html> Accessed 16/03/2019

<sup>2</sup> Final Report: NDB English for Teaching 2017-2018

<sup>3</sup> Baddegama/Galle, Bandarawela, Batticaloa, Hanguranketha, Kahawatta, Kalutara, Kegalle, Mahiyangana, Nuwara Eliya and Polonnaruwa.

<sup>4</sup> Note that most teachers completed all three phases.

the focus group discussions and to arrange in advance with schools for access to lessons for observation. Moreover, it was expedient to conduct the lesson observations in schools<sup>5</sup> proximate to the RESCs which tended to be larger and better resourced schools in the town area. Only in one case, in Hanguranketha, was a lesson observed in an impoverished rural school. Hence, one must allow for a degree of selection bias and for the fact that the teachers observed knew in advance that their lesson would be observed. In many cases, the evaluator was also told in advance whether the teacher whose lesson was to be observed was a course participant or not. However, the RESCs who participated in the evaluation were selected to be representative in terms of rural-urban location, potential exposure of students and teachers to English outside school, and the probable relative importance of English for employment locally.

At the outcome level, the NDB EFT course has four objectives:

1. Teachers will be more confident in using English in the English language classroom and teachers will improve their English language level from CEFR level A2 to B1.
2. Teachers will create more opportunities for the students to interact in English with each other in the classroom **within the existing curriculum**
3. Teachers will use a more learner-centred and activity-based methodology in the classroom
4. Teachers will have a clearer understanding of the teaching and learning process

This study aims to evaluate the contribution of the NDB EFT course towards the achievement of these objectives. Where evidence is available, the report will also comment on the learning ecosystem that surrounds a student of English and teachers of English in Sri Lanka and its likely influence on the English skills and employability of students.

## RESULTS

This report starts by presenting the findings from the lesson observations, the survey, and the focus group discussions in turn, and then proceeds to draw conclusions based on this evidence, considered both separately and through the triangulation of findings, about the contribution that the course made to achieving each of the four objectives cited above.

### Lesson Observations

Lessons were observed in schools attached to three sample RESCs.<sup>6</sup> RESC Coordinators were asked to nominate a teacher who had done the course in 2017-2018, another who had done the course in 2013-2014 and a teacher who had never followed the NDB EFT course. Other training that the selected teachers might have followed was not controlled; nor was the length of teaching experience. Only female teachers were observed. This was not done intentionally but reflects the fact that the majority of English teachers are female. Table 1 provides a summary of teacher and school details.

*Table 1: Lesson observations - school and teacher details*

RESC	NAME	LESSON OBSERVED	NDB COURSE	OTHER TRAINING
Baddegama	Anula Devi Girls' College	Gd. 10	2017-2018	- NCOE National Diploma of Teaching - BA (Eng)

<sup>5</sup> Refer to Table 1 for a list of schools.

<sup>6</sup> While a FGD was conducted with teachers from Kalutara and RESC Coordinators were interviewed, lessons were not observed in Kalutara schools.

RESC	NAME	LESSON OBSERVED	NDB COURSE	OTHER TRAINING
				- PGDE
	G/Gintota Maha Vidyalaya	Gd. 8	2013-2014	- Princet**
	Anula Devi Girls' College	Gd. 3	Not yet followed	- TC Trained Teachers' Certificate
Hanguranketha	Sirimavo Bandaranaike Girls' College	Gd. 9	2017-2018	- NCOE National Diploma of Teaching
	Diyathilake Central College	Gd. 10	2013-2014	- BA (Eng) - PGDE
	Sirimavo Bandaranaike Girls' College	Gd. 6	Not yet followed	- TKT* - HND - BA - PGDE
	Dimbulkumbura Vidyalaya, Rikulagaskade	Gd. 8	Not yet followed	- B.Ed. - M.Ed. (enrolled)
Nuwara Eliya	Holy Trinity Central College	Gd. 9	2017-2018	- NCOE National Diploma of Teaching - TKT*
	Gamini National School	Gd. 6	2013-2014	- NCOE National Diploma of Teaching
	Holy Trinity Central College	Gd. 10	Not yet followed	- TC Teachers' Training Certificate

\* The Council for Business with Britain (CBB) Teacher Training Project is popularly known as TKT after the Cambridge Teacher Knowledge Test (an internationally recognised certificate level qualification) that most people sit for after completing the course

\*\* Provincial Inservice Certificate of Teaching

The standard NDB/BC lesson observation form (Appendix B) was used for the purpose of this study as it is a proven measure of the approaches fostered by the course. Since the three RESCs participating in this part of the evaluation were asked to negotiate with schools for opportunities to observe lessons, both teachers and sometimes even students, seemed to have prepared for the lesson with observation in mind. Written lesson plans included objectives and timings. All lessons included a variety of activities or tasks, the use of a variety of media resources, and most featured group work or pair work. This is despite FGD participants stating that they only had the capacity to prepare for one or two such lessons in a normal 8-lesson daily timetable. Hence the findings should be taken as an indication of teacher capability rather than what lessons look like on a daily basis.

An important limitation of this component of the evaluation was the small sample size meaning that it was impossible to control for factors such as teacher experience and previous qualifications. Only 10 lessons were observed and one of these had to be discarded when it was found that, while the teacher had not followed the NDB Eft course, she had a degree and a PGDE as well as having secured the Cambridge TKT qualification after following the CBB Teacher Training Programme through the British Council. With some difficulty, RESC coordinators located a substitute teacher in a remote school who had done neither the NDB Eft course nor the CBB Teacher Training Programme. However, this teacher had completed a BEd and is currently enrolled in a Masters of Education.

Most teachers observed were either graduates of the NCoEs or had followed other courses likely to influence their capacity to demonstrate a model lesson.

In addition to this, the evaluator arrived at one school in Hanguranketha on a day when all English teachers were required to teach English using a series of reading books from Ladybird Publishers known informally as the 'Peter and Jane' books.<sup>7</sup> An informal survey done by one of the teachers of the school found that her students enjoyed the stories and found them to be easy reading. However, basing a lesson around a story rather than a concept(s), constrained the scope of the lesson and meant that it was not truly representative of lessons taught by the teacher.

Finally, the lessons offered for observation ranged from a grade 3 primary class to a grade 10 secondary class. Clearly the degree of structure and teacher direction that needs to be provided at grade 3 is different to that required by a year 10 class who can be challenged, at least to some degree, to learn autonomously.

However, lessons were observed in a range of classroom settings representative of teaching-learning environments across the country. Classrooms in well-regarded schools in urban locations were crammed with upwards of 50 students leaving little room for the teacher to move around the class while some lessons in rural locations were conducted in large halls partially partitioned into multiple classrooms (see Fig. 1 for two such examples) meaning that any activities or games would disturb classes on either side.



*Figure 1: Partitioned halls serving 4-5 classes simultaneously*

The lesson observation form includes indicators of lesson planning, lesson delivery, management of the learning environment and management of student engagement. The evaluator rated the lesson against each indicator as 0 – not observed, 1-observed to some extent, or 2- observed. These ratings were combined across the three lessons given by graduates of the 2017-2018 programme, the 2013-2014 programme, and the group who had not followed either programme, giving a possible score of 6.

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<sup>7</sup> Key Words Reading Scheme (Peter and Jane series) by Ladybird Books. The requirement to use the storybooks came from the provincial Department of Education and, while they provided students with an enjoyable reading resource at a suitable level, schools in Hanguranketha found it difficult to provide sufficient copies of the books as the cost needed to be borne by the parents in contrast to English language textbooks and workbooks which are provided by the government.

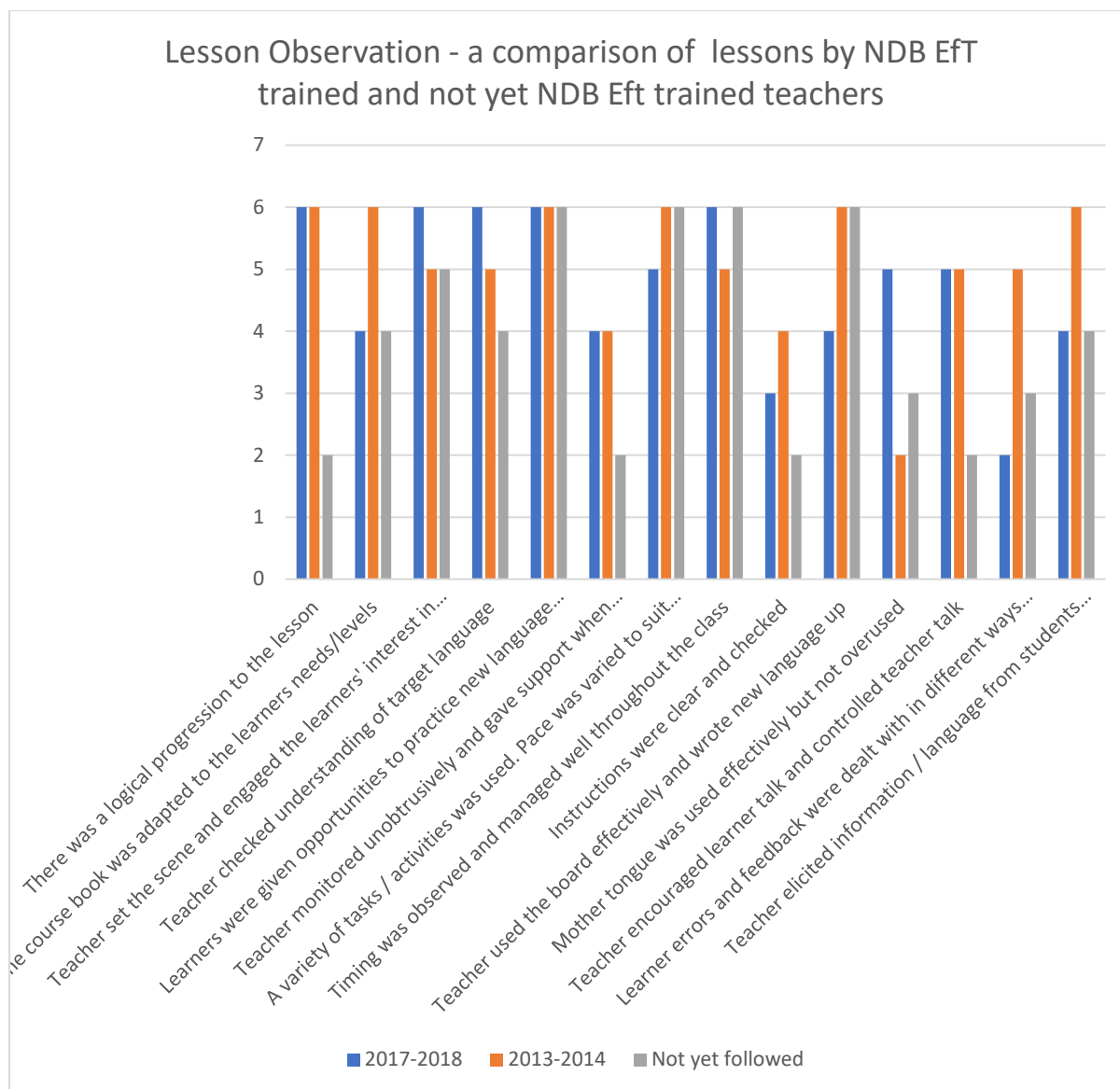


Figure 2: Consolidated evaluator ratings of indicators of lesson planning, delivery and management BY training level

Unsurprisingly, given the limitations outlined above, observable differences were negligible. Most teachers made negligible use of mother tongue even when it meant that instructions given to students were likely to be misunderstood. One teacher even commenced the lesson with an explanation to students that, even though she would normally have mainly used Tamil, they would have to use English because I, the visitor, could not speak Tamil.

The primary differences that could be observed between teachers who had taken the NDB Eft course and those who had not, were a difference in the logical progression to the lesson and a difference in the level to which the teacher encouraged learner talk. In one case, a teacher who had not done the course, started the lesson with a very nice warmer activity using a song downloaded from the Internet and effectively broadcast to the class using a Bluetooth speaker synced to her phone. The text of the song was displayed clearly on a poster. However, the lesson did not progress beyond the students using the words of the song to fill the blanks on the poster. The other case involved a year 3 class where a wide variety of activities (probably too many for the time available) were used to learn the names of a limited number of family pets mentioned in the textbook. In contrast to this, many lessons by NDB Eft graduates demonstrated progression from concepts



reviewed as a whole class exercise to extension or application activities done in pairs or as a group. Teachers who had not followed the NDB EfT course, were also observed to be more likely to rely on the standard workbook.<sup>8</sup>

Most lessons were tightly controlled with a lot of teacher talk and whole class responses to questions from the teacher. In limited cases (most often demonstrated by 2013-2014 graduates) teachers elicited responses from individuals who had not volunteered and not always from the brightest students in the class. The fact that this and other classroom management indicators such as dealing with learner errors and feedback were most effectively done by the 2013-2014 cohort, may be due to the length of their teaching experience or the time that they have had since 2014 to become comfortable with using the new activities and approaches.

Over-reliance on whole class response is concerning as it leaves only one way for the teacher to identify individual student learning issues – through marking workbooks. Although marking workbooks is a requirement and checked regularly by school and zonal administrators, it does not allow teachers to identify problems with pronunciation. Workbook activities are also often done as a group exercise or for homework and so may not entirely reflect individual student capacity. Whole class response and noisy classroom environments also make it very difficult for teachers to correct pronunciation errors. As an observer, it was often very difficult for me to hear student responses to a question even when the teacher called on an individual student to respond.



*Figure 3: Groupwork exercise involving pasting together groups of words to form sentences*

Group work featured in most lessons observed and involved the use of worksheets or an activity to encourage the involvement of the whole group; monitoring of each group during the activity by the teacher; and group-wise feedback and peer correction by other groups. There was little evidence of the teacher initiating mixed-ability grouping but daily rotation of student seating was reported in

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<sup>8</sup> A English textbook, workbook for students and teachers guide is provided by the Government at each grade level.

most schools visited ensuring that the membership of groups changes frequently. Teacher success in ensuring involvement of the whole group was variable ranging from complete involvement in the sentence construction exercise pictured in Fig. 3 above to group work in the class of a non-NDB trained teacher where one or two girls in each group dominated, leaving the boys to look on passively. Disappointingly, instructions for group activities were usually given in English with little use of Instruction Checking Questions (ICQs) to ensure that the activities ran smoothly.

### Regional Differences

While the regional comparison of O/L English results above might lead one to expect to see a different in the performance of teachers based on location, this was not evident in the lessons observed.

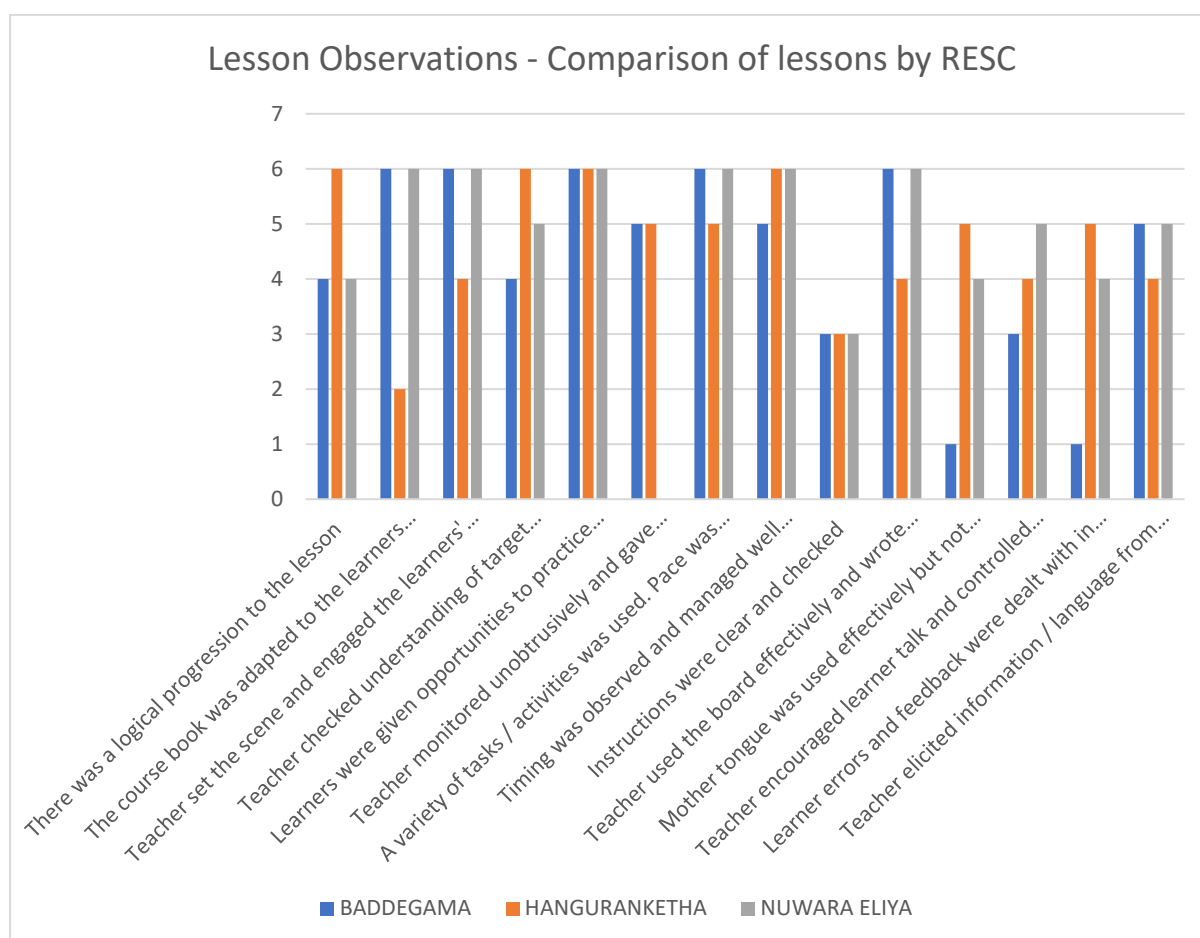


Figure 4: Consolidated evaluator ratings of indicators of lesson planning, delivery and management BY RESC

Differences apparent in Figure 4 can be explained by individual circumstances. Although teachers in Hanguranketha appear to have been remiss in adapting the course book to the learners' needs / levels and not using the board effectively for writing up new language, this was due mainly to two of the three lesson observations occurring on the day when the students were reading 'Peter and Jane' stories with their teacher although it does also reflect the fact that the non-NDB trained teacher based her lesson directly on the class workbook.

Secondly, while Baddegama teachers were not observed to check understanding of language, or deal with learner errors and feedback effectively this can probably be attributed to the fact that the topics of the lessons observed appeared to be quite familiar to the learners such that these measures were not required. All Baddegama teachers also used English almost exclusively in their

lessons (including in the grade 3 lesson) and so were marked as '0' or 'No' against the indicator, 'Mother tongue was used effectively but not overused'. This behaviour can possibly be attributed to the presence of English medium students in all classes or simply the greater exposure to English that students in Galle town and vicinity enjoy.

### The Survey

A survey was sent out to 171 teachers who had completed the NDB EfT course in 2017-2018 to which 51 responses were received (a return rate of only 30%). A low rate of return is often associated with response bias where there is a possibility that the opinions of non-respondents may differ significantly to those expressed by respondents. Hence the findings of the survey reported here cannot be regarded as conclusive except where validated by findings from the focus group discussions and lesson observations.

Other limitations noted include:

1. A very low number of responses were received from teachers who had done the course at the Baddegama, Mahiyangana and Polonnaruwa RESCs (Table 2) so the findings reported cannot be said to represent teachers from these course groups.
2. Question 1 of the survey included a series of statements to which responses were required on a Likert scale of 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. The statements included three sets of statements which were intended as reliability checks. For instance, somebody agreeing with the statement, 'I find it difficult to find the time and money to make the materials and visual aids that we learned about in the course' would logically be expected to disagree with the statement, 'I frequently make and use worksheets and visual aids'. Table 3 shows the statement pairs and the number of responses which were opposing (indicating high reliability), the number of responses that were the same (indicating low reliability) and the number of times where the respondent selected 'Neutral' in response to one, or both, of the statements. Except in the example given above, findings show that survey respondents are just as likely to agree (or disagree) with both the statement and its counter statement as they are to respond in a logical manner (i.e. rejecting one statement in favour of the other). This may indicate that the language of the survey was not well understood or that responses are not genuine. Had time been available, the survey should have been tested with a representative group of teachers before being sent out.

*Table 2: Survey responses by RESC*

RESC	# Responses
Bandarawela	12
Kalutara	7
Hanguranketha	6
Nuwara Eliya	5
Kahawatta	5
Batticaloa	4
Kegalle	4
Baddegama	4
Mahiyangana	3
Polonnaruwa	1

Table 3: Survey response reliability measures

Statement	Counter-Statement	Reliability Measure		
		High	Low	Neutral
Before doing the course I mostly used teacher talk and individual work in class	Even before doing the course, I frequently engaged my students in group work	13	11	19
I find it difficult to find the time and money to make the materials and visual aids that we learned about in the course	I frequently make and use worksheets and visual aids	26	3	14
My classes are too large to know each and every student and their learning needs	I know the level of each of my students and how best to teach them	17	16	10

## Findings

### Teacher confidence in using English

Although most respondents agreed that they already felt confident using English with their classes prior to starting the course (Fig. 5), most also agreed that they felt even more confident after following the course (Fig. 6). The few who did not feel that they gained in confidence, were respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident using English before doing the course.

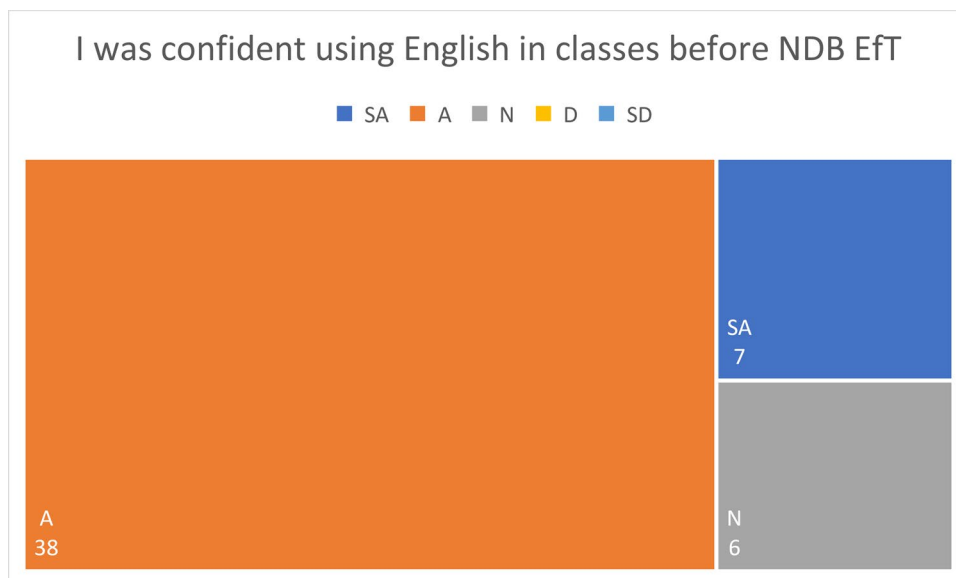


Figure 5: Response to 'Even before doing the course, I was confident using English in my classes'

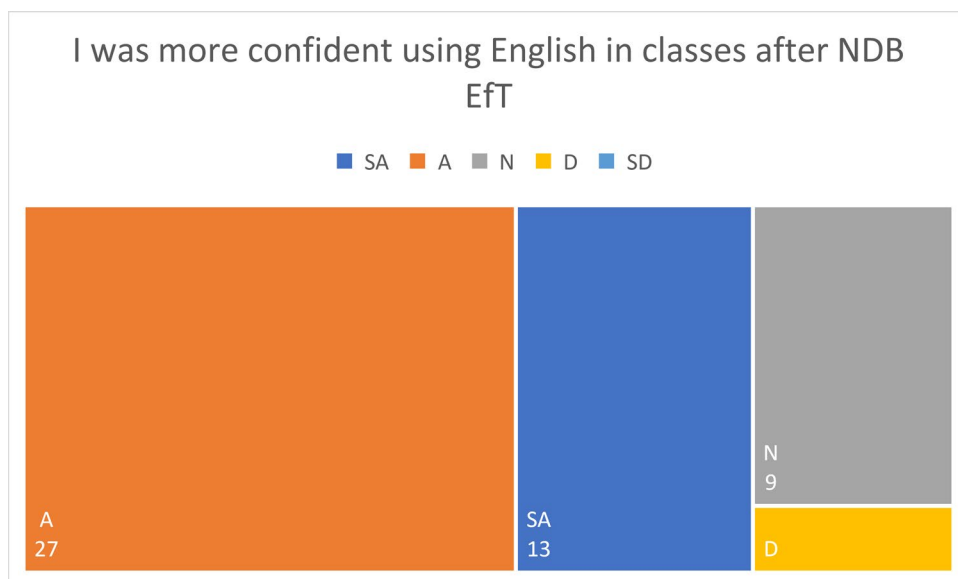


Figure 6: Response to 'I am more confident using English with my students than I was before doing the course'.

English speaking ability naturally leads to confidence in using English in the classroom and accordingly each module in the NDB EFT course introduces new language as well as approaches for teaching it. Improvements in English fluency were tangible, and details are given later in this report. This is what one survey respondent said about her improved English language skills,

'Earlier I was little bit confused of language analysis. While I was engaging activities with the students, I felt most of the words were similar e.g. have to, should, and must. After doing this course I got to know the slight difference and how to use those words correctly and meaningfully. It was introduced very clearly.'

### Activity-Based Learning

Only 33% of respondents disagreed with the statement, 'Before doing the course, I mostly used teacher talk and individual work in class'. While this scenario does not preclude learning (unless the individual work is entirely passive), social constructivists believe that 'an individual's knowledge of the world is bound to personal experiences and is mediated through interaction (language) with others' (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).<sup>9</sup> Hence, learning is more likely to occur where there is interaction between the teacher and the student or between students working together. Interactions that promote cognitive conflict lead to new conceptual development.

While 72.5% of respondents felt that they frequently engaged their students in group work prior to doing the course (Fig. 7), 80% of them agreed that they used group and pair work more frequently afterwards (Fig. 8). With one exception, those who disagreed that there had been a change, were those who already used these approaches extensively before participating in the course.

<sup>9</sup> Jones & Brader-Araje (2002), *The Impact of Constructivism on Education: Language, Discourse, and Meaning*, American Communication Journal, v.5, i.3

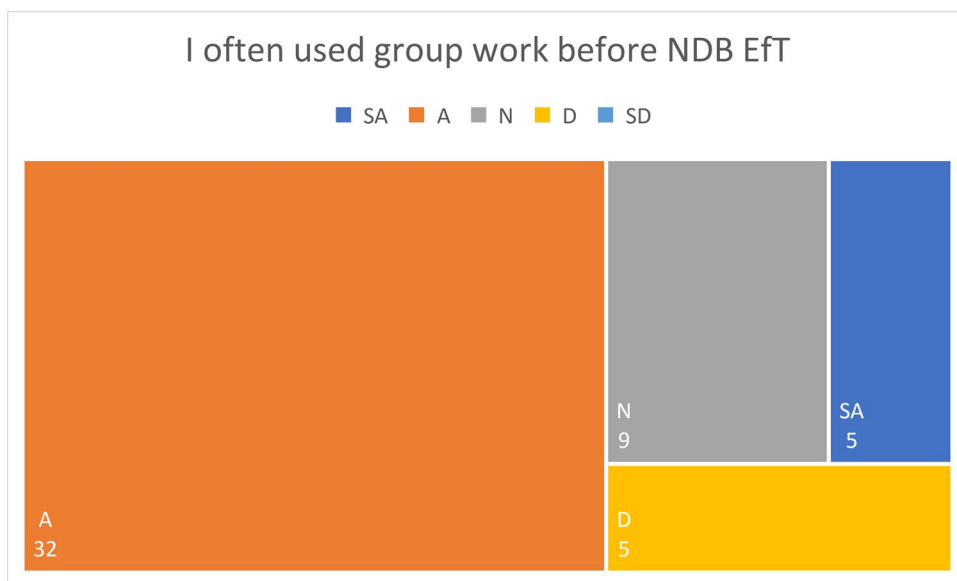


Figure 7: Response to 'Even before doing the course, I frequently engaged my students in group work'.

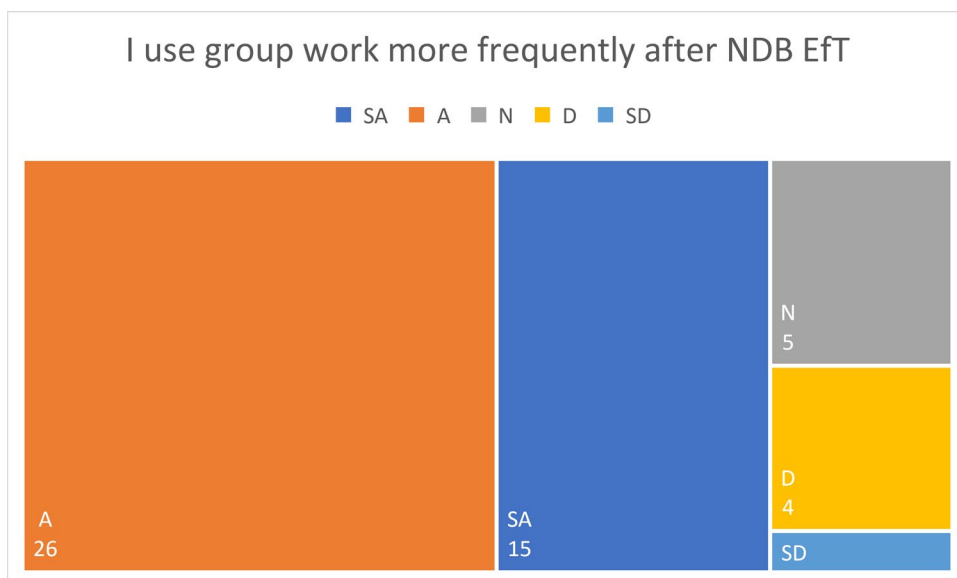


Figure 8: Response to 'I use group work and pair work in classes more frequently since doing the course'.

As one teacher put it,

Before doing this course, I mostly used individual task to teach English. It was not successful because the weaker students could not complete the task successfully but, after doing the course, I used to use group activities. It was very successful because it was encouraged the students to share their knowledge with each other and no one ignored.'

Activities, games, worksheets and visual aids are useful tools for promoting interaction and, of particular importance in the Sri Lankan context, for helping students overcome their reluctance to interact in English. 78% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I use activities and games in almost all my classes these days' and 72% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I frequently make and use worksheets and visual aids'. While these figures paint a promising picture of lively, interactive classrooms, an overwhelming majority of respondents also

agreed with the statement, 'My students use English in class more now because I know more strategies for encouraging them to do so'.

This is how one teacher described the change in her class,

'The class was grade 6. There were eleven students in the class. Two girls and nine boys were in the class. Only two girls like to learn English. But boys don't like. Seven of the boys were newcomers to the school because of different family problems. Most of them couldn't identify the letters of the alphabet. Therefore they hate the subject. But I started to use interesting games and some simple activities that I had learnt from the course. While attending the course, I was able to adapt activities and teaching materials to the level of the students. Finally, I am happy to say that English period was the favourite period in their timetable.'

Participants of the course were exposed to a rich variety of new activities and games that they could use to supplement the examples given in the student textbook and in their teacher guides. Focus group participants emphasised the importance of having these extra resources at hand for supporting students with challenging aspects of the English language such as grammar and pronunciation. Only one respondent disagreed with the statement, 'Since doing the course, I am more confident using my own activities and examples rather than relying on those in the textbook and teacher's guide' (Fig. 9).

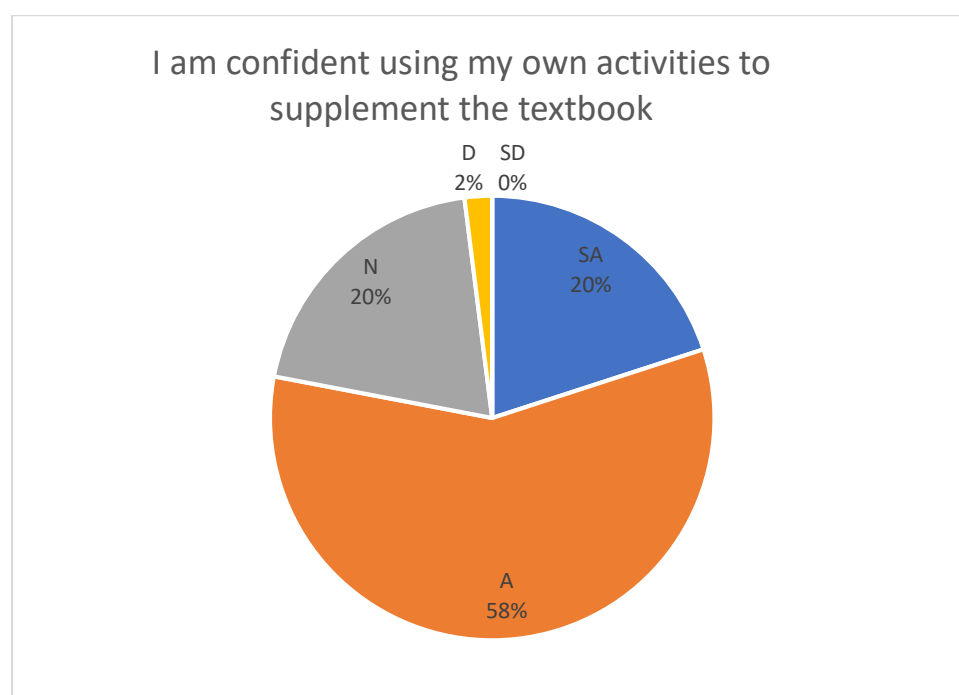


Figure 9: Response to 'Since doing the course, I am more confident using my own activities and examples rather than relying on those in the textbook and teacher's guide.'

While activity-based classrooms can be noisy and require the use of resources such as visual aids which may be in short supply, it is heartening that only one person disagreed with the statement, 'My school management team like me to use activity-based teaching'.

### *Learner-Centred Classrooms*

For the purposes of this evaluation learner-centredness is defined as an approach which recognises and caters to individual differences in students' abilities, backgrounds, and preferred ways of

learning rather than the more evolved concept which promotes students taking control of their own learning path in which the teacher acts as a facilitators and provider of appropriate resources. Based on this definition, it is impressive that 92% of teachers, some of whom teach classes of 40-50 students, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I know the level of each of my students and how best to teach them'. However, a lower proportion (78%) agreed with the statement, 'I am confident that I can adapt activities and teaching materials to any level of student' and even fewer (57%) agreed that 'the learner-centred approach is suitable for all my students' (Fig. 10). Nonetheless, most respondents (80%) agreed that they are now better able to support their O/L classes and 86% agreed that they are better able to support weaker students (Fig. 11). Note that, for the purposes of this analysis,

One teacher who was able to successfully adapt materials and approaches to the level of her students said,

'Before doing this course, I usually used normal teaching materials to teach English. But most of the time they were not very useful because my children are not in a same level and some of them got the idea what I want to give but most of them couldn't understand the lesson. But after doing this course I used different different activities and teaching materials according to their level of knowledge. It was successful and most of the students engaged in the lesson actively and they easily got the lesson.'

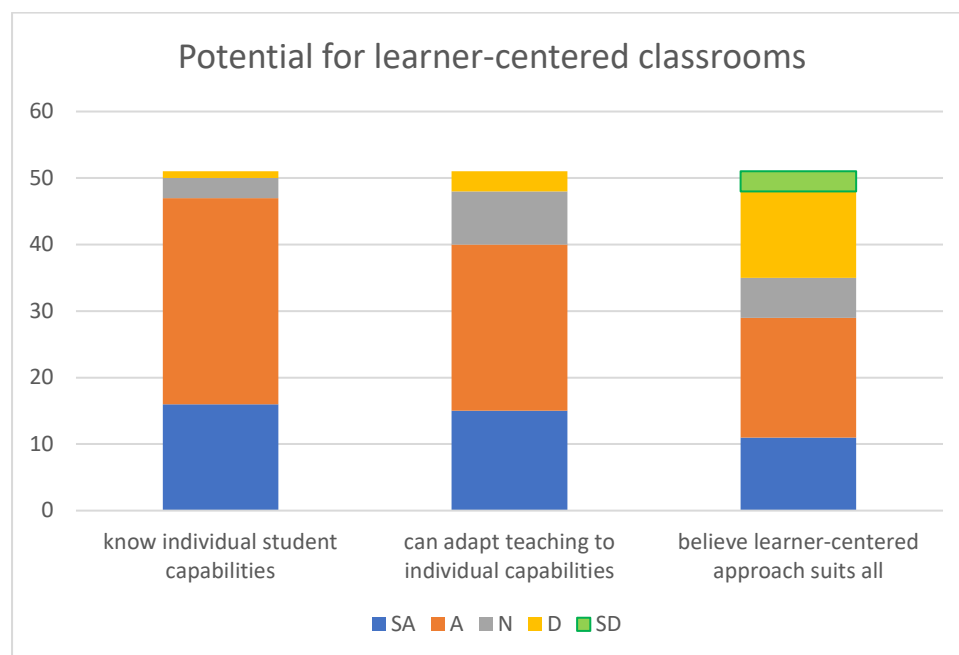


Figure 10: Response to statements related to creating a learner-centred environment



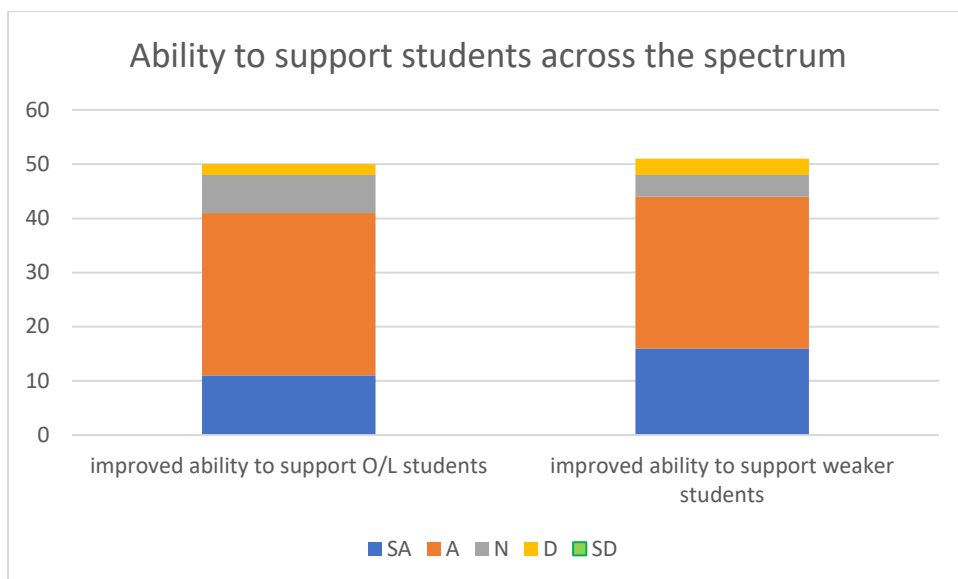


Figure 11: Response to statements about supporting a range of student grades and abilities

The new method most frequently mentioned by teachers as something which helped them to provide individualized feedback and coaching to students was the error correction technique. Here is what one teacher said about the difference this made in her classes.

‘Earlier, when I corrected the exercises/tasks of the students, I got used to mark them just with a V or X. When I delivered the books, they often come to me and asked what their errors were. So, I had to explain their errors one by one to each and every one. Sometimes I was impatient and got angry with the students, those who came to me with their books. After my NDB course, I use a correction code to remark their errors. That method makes students as well as the teacher convenient. Without my explanation as earlier, now they can understand their errors. Wow! It’s an excellent method for a teacher.’

Rather than simply equipping teachers with a set of tools to take to their classrooms, the course emphasises the theory of learning which should enable teachers to be better able to fine tune the learning environment for individual students. Survey responses show 88% of teachers agreeing that they ‘understand teaching theory more since doing the course’.

### *Classroom Management*

The NDB EfT course equips teachers with some important classroom management tools such as classroom contracts, instruction checking questions (ICQs) and the use of activities to control energy levels within the classroom. The effectiveness of this training is evident when comparing responses to the statements, ‘I rarely had classroom management problems, even before doing the course’ (Fig. 12) and ‘Doing the course has helped me to manage my students better’ (Fig. 13).

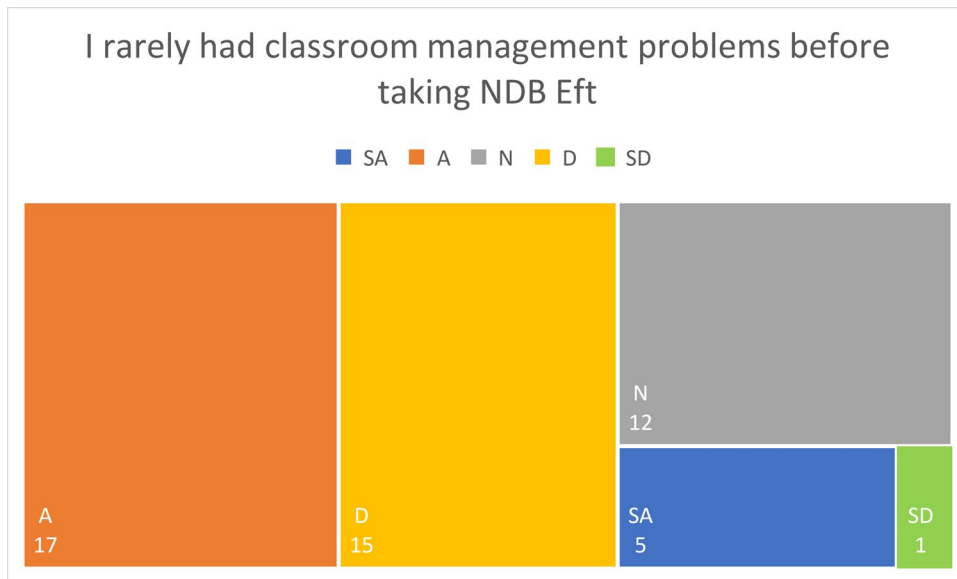


Figure 12: Response to 'I rarely had classroom management problems, even before doing the course'.

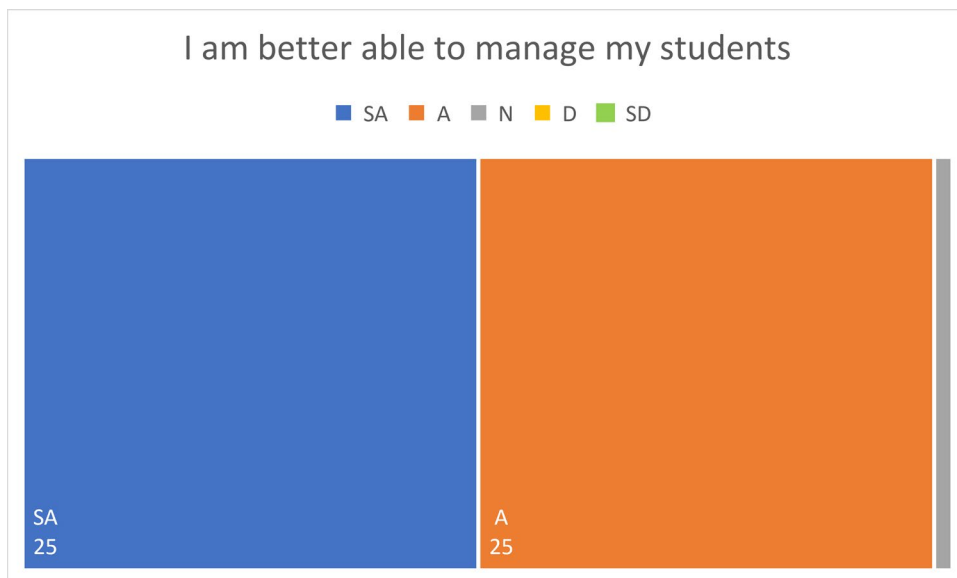


Figure 13: Response to 'Doing the course has helped me to manage my students better'.

Two teachers shared stories about the difference the course made to the management of their classes.

'There was a problem with my grade four classroom. When I was doing the lessons all the students used to disturb and shout in the classroom. It made the classroom rackety. Through the NDB course I was able to find an interesting lesson. It is classroom contract. So, I prepared some classroom rules and informed the students. Then I prepared a class contract with my students. They willingly agreed to follow rules and they signed it and pasted it on the wall. After that I was able to control them, and I could see a different behaviour from them.'

'I am doing English for grade 6 students. They are very playful. It is difficult to get their attention to the lesson. Before the NDB course what I did was shouting at

them. I gave them punishments such as keep standing for 3 minutes. But after doing the NDB course, I get to know many strategies, classroom management and attractive activities. I have been using these teaching methods in my classroom. Now I can see there is a difference and it is better than before. They engage in activities enthusiastically and when I start the lesson they pay attention to the lesson.'

### *Comments on the Course*

Survey respondents were asked to select from a list, the three things about the course that were most beneficial to them. Responses reveal a thirst for new knowledge.

<b>ASPECTS OF THE NDB EFT COURSE REGARDED AS MOST BENEFICIAL</b>	<b>#</b>
Learning new teaching methods such as error correction codes, CCQs, how to teach phonemes, etc.	35
Learning new classroom management tools such as ICQs, mixed ability grouping, warmers, stirrers etc	23
Getting ideas about how to make attractive teaching-learning materials	21
Getting ideas for new student activities and games	21
Learning more about the theory of teaching and learning	16
Being able to have professional discussions with other English teachers	14
The microteaching sessions where we taught each other and received feedback and suggestions	9
Having time between sessions to try new things out in my own classes	7
My Development Journal	4

Only eight respondents thought that the NDB EFT course should be made shorter. Instead, they asked to learn more about how to use ICT to support their teaching (96%) and for opportunities to attend professional seminars or meetings (100%). Although microteaching sessions were not selected as one of the three most beneficial aspects of the course by many, nobody disagreed with the statement, 'I would like the NDB course trainers to observe my classes now and again'. Focus group discussions indicate that the difference lies in receiving feedback in a training environment and receiving feedback about teaching in real classroom environments with the many practical constraints that this imposes on teachers. A number of focus group respondents said that they would appreciate it if their RESC trainers were able to observe their classes and provide feedback and support.

### *Focus Group Discussions*

Focus group discussions were held in three RESCs – Baddegama, Hanguranketha and Nuwara Eliya - with a preliminary FGD held at Kalutara RESC to identify potentially useful survey questions. Numbers of teachers attending are given in Table 4.

*Table 4: Numbers of FGD participants*

<b>RESC</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Nuwara Eliya</b>	4	1
<b>Hanguranketha</b>	4	1
<b>Kalutara</b>	5	0
<b>Baddegama</b>	6	0

Generally, the opinions expressed by teachers in focus group discussions (FGDs) echoed the survey responses.

### *Teacher Confidence in Using English in Classrooms*

The NDB EFT course seeks to build the English language skills of teachers in parallel with skills for teaching English. Teacher confidence in using English in their classrooms is naturally linked to their own language abilities. A teacher fluent in English will be confident in using English with their students and this exposure to English will benefit learners. One of the language skill-building tools mentioned in all four FGDs was phonemics. While only two teachers claimed to have used this directly with students – one as part of an action research project and one with her O/L students – it was still recognised as an important tool because teachers wanted to be sure of modelling correct pronunciation to their students.

A teacher in the Baddegama FGD claimed that the module on phonology had been pivotal in building her confidence in using English.

‘Yes, especially in my case, it was learning the phonetic versions and phonetic groups....like sounds and all that we tend to neglect in speaking. Sometimes we just speak without using the real version...the native version...of the sound so, we revised how to pronounce the sounds. Like P rather than F.’

In one of the FGDs, teachers were asked to self-rate their confidence in using English in their class before doing the course and afterward on a scale of 1-10. Stated confidence levels before the course ranged from 6 to 9 with an average of 7 while all rated themselves as 9 post-course. Another group rated their pre-training confidence as ranging between 7 and 8 with an average of 7.4 and their post-training confidence as averaging 8.5. In all FGDs, teachers expressed the opinion that this was, in large part, due to the opportunity for extended professional exchange in English during the course.

One respondent in Nuwara Eliya described that situation like this:

‘Actually I’m not using English in school mostly...before that. Only for the English lessons because there no one I have to share. But in here we can share....all are English teachers. Then we can talk....when we get together we have more chance and we can get confident also.’

It is noteworthy that teachers report this use of the language and consulting each other about professional issues continuing both in their schools and in workshops organised by the RESCs since the course. RESC Coordinators stated that they always give teachers a chance to discuss their issues during workshops and encourage them to do so in English. Most of the teachers interviewed said they had an opportunity to attend English seminars or workshops at RESCs once or twice a term. The NDB also invites graduates of the course to professional association meetings on a regular basis. On this basis, it is reasonable to expect that the gains in English language fluency and confidence made as a result of course attendance, will be sustained. This is of particular importance for teachers in rural schools who have little other exposure to English.

One teacher in Hanguranketha said,

‘Otherwise, to be honest, if we don’t speak in English, it fade away. Here we are staying in a rural area...we don’t have access to any other English people...only

through media or movies we find English people and in story books....families also they don't speak with us in English.'

### *Activity-Based Learning*

English teachers at secondary level face huge challenges. Problems such as crowded classrooms that constrain groupwork and activities requiring student movement; lessons conducted in partitioned halls where any interaction with or between students is likely to disturb teachers in the teaching spaces on either side; large gaps in student English language ability where students come from different feeder primary schools; and constant interruptions for sports days, prize giving days and so on; were frequently mentioned. However, teachers invariably reported that the positive reaction of their students to activity-based learning inspired them to work on overcoming these challenges to provide at least one or two activity-based lessons to classes each day. Fig. 14 shows a warmer activity taking place at the beginning of a lesson conducted in a partitioned hall.



*Figure 14: Warmer activity in partitioned hall meant as an auditorium (taking advantage of unoccupied stage area).*

Apart from their benefit in motivating students, teachers noted that the games and activities they learnt in the course encouraged students to speak in English. At higher grade levels, activities that developed mastery of grammar were seen to be particularly useful.

In the words of one FGD participant:

'That is the real trauma because everybody fears grammar. They want to speak English, but they feel that they have to follow the correct grammar rules otherwise others will laugh at us. That is the main problem in Sri Lanka when people are speaking in English they fear about grammar. ... In my opinion, the grammar exercises are super.'

However, teachers did stress that gaps in student prior knowledge including basic vocabulary made it very difficult to use grammar exercises effectively. This seems to be a problem where students enter secondary school from multiple primary schools.

### *Learner-Centred Classes*

Teachers reported that the NDB EFT course helped them to determine if individual students had understood concepts covered in their lessons, and to be able to adapt activities to the level of individual students so that everyone in the class is able to learn. Many teachers mentioned the benefit of concept checking questions (CCQs) – a new concept for most. Previously there had been heavy reliance on marking workbooks as a means of assessing student comprehension. Teachers spoke about a formal requirement to have marked a set proportion of workbook activities. However, it is common practice to take workbooks home to mark rather than waste precious face-to-face time in a 40-minute period. As a result, feedback to the class tends to only focus on commonly made errors and does not extend to mistakes made by individual students.

Teachers also welcomed the ideas for new activities that they gained from the course and subsequently used to scaffold teaching the material in the textbook. Many teachers felt that the material in the textbook is presented at too high a level for their students. The difference that being able to adapt activities to the level of the student makes to students' attitudes towards learning English was a oft repeated input from FGD participants.

### *Putting the Course into Perspective*

In the FGDs as in the survey, teachers emphasised that, while many of the activities and games introduced during the NDB EFT course were new to them, the concept of activity-based teaching was not. NCoE, TTC and NIE teacher trainers also emphasise the importance of activity-based teaching. However, the NDB EFT course is an in-service programme which provides teachers with the opportunity to try out new approaches and tools in their own classrooms and thereby develop professionally as they learn. This approach was welcomed by course participants.

One teacher in Hanguranketha expressed her appreciation of the course approach in this way:

'If you can provide more courses like this where we can explore the things ...we have to get knowledge rather than just giving lectures ...you are just coming here and giving a lecture and we are just listening to them. We like things where we can engage and where we can observe and explore and gain knowledge from ourselves and from our friends and if you gave us a demo that is also very good.'

The collegiate atmosphere of the course mentioned here (and indeed the length of time that course participants worked together) was also reported to help teachers to network and build trust relationships with peers for mutual support and exploration of new ideas.

The mere fact of being invited to participate in the course, also helped motivate teachers. The same teacher said:

'We feel that when we come from the college, there is no one to look at us. There is no one to inspect us so sometimes we feel, "Oh today I can't do like this....every day I have to prepare everything. I have to prepare the enlarged copies and visual aids" so, with the time, we are becoming lazy. That happens. For everybody that is happening. So when we do these courses, it is refreshing us.'

There is, in fact, a formal system of lesson observation in place in Sri Lankan schools. A translated copy of the 'Classroom Evaluation – Learning, Teaching and Assessment (Grades 1-13)' Evaluation Format 02 is attached in Appendix C. Indicators in this observation schedule emphasise activity-based learning, interaction with students, supplementing the textbook with additional teaching aids,

activities and resources, and catering to the individual differences of students. The observation schedule is used by Inservice Advisors (ISAs) in their area of subject specialisation. Recognising the potential that skilled implementation of this formal process of lesson observation can have in creating a professional working environment for English teachers, the British Council is training most English ISAs (173 of the current cadre of 250) as part of the iTESL programme. ISAs will be trained in pedagogy as well as ESL skills to be able to provide comprehensive support for English teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section seeks to draw together the findings from the lesson observations, survey responses and focus group discussions conducted during this evaluation and described in detail above, into a concise assessment of the extent to which the NDB Eft course contributed to the intermediate outcomes described in the four course objectives. Since the evaluation is intended as an impact evaluation, comment will also be made on factors that the course cannot be expected to influence but which will impact on the ultimate aim of improving the English skills, employability, access to information and opportunities, and the international mobility of students.<sup>10</sup>

### Objective One – Teachers will be more confident in using English in the English language classroom AND teachers will improve their English language level from CEFR level A2 to B1.

On the reasonable assumption that teachers will be more confident in using English in their classrooms if their English language skills are good, the NDB Eft course focuses jointly on upgrading English language and English teaching skills. Its goal is to improve the English language level of teacher participants from CEFR<sup>11</sup> Level A2<sup>12</sup> to B1.<sup>13</sup> Teachers were given the Oxford Placement Test before and after the course. The overall average improvement was 2.1%. While the average pre-test scores were in the B1 band, 19 teachers who scored initially in the A2 band improved their English language skills to score in the B1 band by the end of the course.<sup>14</sup> Course participants also completed nine language development assignments during the course with an average score of 78.36%.

A preliminary analysis of these results might lead to the conclusion that the language component of the course is less important given the generally high level of English language skills of teachers taking the course. However, some poor English was still observed by the evaluator in lessons where NDB Eft graduates had developed visual aids and exercises to complement those in the textbook. Moreover, the language components of the course focus on advanced language concepts suitable

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<sup>10</sup> Objectives taken from the 'Proposal for Supporting the NDB English for Teaching Plus (Eft+) Project' (Dick, 2016)

<sup>11</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

<sup>12</sup> Defined as 'Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need'.

<sup>13</sup> Defined as 'Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans'.

<sup>14</sup> For more details about CEFR scores for the 2017-2018 batch, refer to the 'Final Report NDB English for Teaching 2017-2018'.



for the target audience. A recent policy<sup>15</sup> of recruiting A/L graduates with a Credit pass<sup>16</sup> in English as secondary school English teachers is likely to result in more teachers in need of language training in future offerings of the course rather than less. In fact, RESC Coordinators report that such teachers benefit less from the pedagogy component of the course than others already fluent in English indicating a need for additional English language training outside the course structure.

Regardless of their initial level of English fluency, FGD participants concurred that the extended professional discourse in English that they experienced as part of the NDB EfT course together, and which appears to be thriving through until the time of this evaluation, improved their confidence in using English including, and importantly, in their classrooms. Teachers who were already fluent benefitted from advanced modules such as that on phonemics while others had an opportunity to improve their grammar. Out of the 51 teachers who returned the survey, 14 (27%) identified 'Being able to have professional discussions with other English teachers' as one of the three most beneficial things about the course. All but those few teachers who were already strongly confident in the use of the language prior to taking the course (78% of survey respondents) agreed that they were more confident using English with their students than they were before doing the course.

### Recommendations

- The British Council continue to support RESC coordinators to offer workshops and seminars for English teachers. Even short courses are likely to maintain the momentum gained through participation in the NDB EfT course. Many of the RESC Coordinators interviewed during this evaluation had heard of the British Council 'Roadshow' series and were keen to be included.
- The British Council has access to a wealth of ICT Apps and audio-visual materials that could be used to help course graduates refresh their knowledge over time. An example is the 'LearnEnglish Sounds Right' App<sup>17</sup> which helps the user master the sounds of English using the British Council's pronunciation chart. As the final report of the course<sup>18</sup> notes that RESC trainers also requested more help with English pronunciation and speaking, making such apps more easily accessible could serve a dual purpose. Sharing such resources on a community of practice web site or Facebook page dedicated to teachers who have completed the NDB EfT course would help to maintain the sense of being part of a dedicated and professional community described by teachers consulted during this evaluation.
- For the same reason, it is recommended that the NDB continue to sponsor professional association meetings of EfT graduates. 100% of survey respondents said that they would like opportunities to attend professional seminars or meetings.

### Objective Two – Create more opportunities for the students to interact in English with each other in the classroom **within the existing curriculum**

The course has equipped teachers with a comprehensive toolbox of activities (surveys, dialogues, mini-dramas) and games that they can use to encourage their students to interact in English in the classroom. The course emphasised the need to build student confidence in using English by supplementing textbook and workbook activities with activities, visual aids and worksheets generated by the teacher to reach students at their own level. Teachers appreciated new ideas

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<sup>15</sup> Verbal communication from RESC Coordinator, Nuwara Eliya

<sup>16</sup> To earn a 'C' pass (Credit), a student sitting the O/L examination in English must score between 55% and 65%.

<sup>17</sup> <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/apps/learnenglish-sounds-right>

<sup>18</sup> BC & NDB, *Final Report NDB English for Teaching 2017-2018*, 30 June 2018



presented in the course about how to help students gain confidence with grammar – lack of confidence with English grammar reportedly being a major disincentive to using English – and, to a lesser extent, pronunciation. Teachers also gained knowledge about how to track the extent to which individuals within their classes were mastering content. Although it was observed that interactions in the classroom were still heavily weighted towards whole class response to teacher questions, teachers who had completed the course more frequently elicited responses from individuals and more frequently set up group activities that encouraged the input of everyone in the group.

Many of the teachers observed or interviewed during the evaluation had adapted the activities and ideas they gained from the course, and from interacting with their peers during the course, to use in their primary classes. They were unanimous that it is easier to encourage their primary classes to speak and engage in English than older students and expressed disappointment that some primary schools neglected the opportunity to build English skills at this foundation level resulting in wide gaps in ability in classes at secondary level.

The support of school administrators in promoting English language assemblies, English-speaking days, and Literary Associations as well as support from the Ministry of Education centrally and provincial Departments of Education for English language, drama/oratory, handwriting, recitation, dictation, and creative writing competitions must also be appreciated given the subliminal messages it sends to students about the importance of English.

### Recommendations

- Given the potential to create a solid foundation in the language at a younger age, there is value in adapting the course to the needs of primary school teachers or providing additional modules for teachers who teach at both levels.
- In rural areas, students may only hear English spoken by their teacher. However, a number of teachers were observed during the evaluation to be competently using audios of songs, poems, and stories downloaded from the Internet in their classes. These were broadcast to students through Bluetooth speakers linked to teachers' smartphones or laptops exposing students to a range of accents. Teachers reported that they were more likely to use such resources rather than take their students to the school ICT Lab as ICT labs can typically only accommodate 20-25 students and taking students there wastes too much time in a 40-minute period. Audio and video resources are widely accessible online under creative commons licensing systems and could be shared, together with similar resources that the British Council itself has access to, through an online community of practice.

### Objective Three – Assist teachers to use a more learner-centred and activity-based methodology in the classroom

While, most teachers consulted during this evaluation claim to have been previously trained in activity-based and learner-centred<sup>19</sup> approaches to teaching, learning new teaching methods, learning new classroom management tools, getting ideas for teaching-learning materials, and getting ideas for new activities and games were the four components of the course that survey respondents found most beneficial. More to the point, most focus group participants were able to describe examples of using the new approaches in their classes and, in all lessons observed, teachers used

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<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of this evaluation learner-centredness is defined only as an approach which recognises and caters to individual student differences rather than supporting students as they determine their own learning path.

visual aids, a range of interaction types generally including group or pair work, and a range of activities all designed to supplement the textbook and help learners at different levels master the content.

Teachers who had followed the NDB EFT course tended to conduct lessons which logically progressed from teacher-led explanations to eliciting student comprehension, to application or extension activities for pairs or groups of students. They were also more successful in managing group work activities to ensure the involvement of all students. The fact that teachers who had followed the course in 2013-2014 were just as likely to exhibit these behaviours as those from the 2017-2018 batch, demonstrates the sustainability of results. On the evidence available, it appears that credit for this is due in some part to the continuing programme of workshops and seminars provided by the RESCs for English teachers and the opportunities that these programmes provide for peer support and cross-motivation.

However, teachers were observed to be weaker in using ICQs to check that students understood instructions and CCQs to check that concepts were clearly understood. The extent to which this was due to the content of the lessons and the activities engaged in being already familiar to students is uncertain. As mentioned above, the fact that teachers knew in advance that their lessons were to be observed and RESC Coordinators being free to nominate teachers and classes to be observed, was a limitation of the study.

Many of the teachers observed also used English almost exclusively throughout the lesson although it was apparent that much of what was said was unlikely to have been clear to the majority of the students. However, it is likely that they would have made more judicious use of mother tongue in the absence of an observer.

Besides motivating students by providing an attractive, inclusive and active learning environment, the new activities, games and teaching methods that teachers learnt through the course are intended to provide teachers with the means to supplement the activities in the textbook and workbook particularly where these are pitched at a level above that of the students. While most of the teachers consulted claimed to have done this successfully, even if it took several attempts, it is concerning that only 78% of survey respondents agreed with the statement, 'I am confident that I can adapt activities and teaching materials to any level of student' and even fewer (57%) agreed that 'the learner-centred approach is suitable for all my students'. Given that teachers often teach English medium students in the one class with Sinhala/Tamil medium students and may have students who come from a range of feeder primary schools which have placed more or less emphasis on the study of English, the ability to adapt activities to support different learners is key to success. One teaching tool that received frequent mention in this regard was the error correction protocol. While teachers said that they had always tried to give individual guidance to students by correcting their work, time constraints meant that this was not always done effectively or comprehensively. Use of the error-correction protocol was uniformly endorsed as lessening the burden on teachers while still providing students with the information they needed about their personal progress.

While teachers who had participated in the NDB EFT course appreciated the value of the micro-teaching session, there were multiple requests for their RESC trainers to be able to observe their lessons in their actual classrooms. While it might be possible to negotiate for this to happen on a limited scale while the course is in progress, there is an official process and structure for lesson observation which is being supported by the British Council through its training of ISAs as part of the iTESL programme.

FGD participants said that, realistically, given the time available and with limited financial support from the school for materials/resources, they were generally only able to conduct one or two activity-based lessons a day. One group requested that the British Council or NDB support teachers by providing them with professionally prepared visual aids and worksheets. One of the RESC Coordinators also related requests that she had received from teachers for pre-prepared activity-based lesson plans.

### Recommendations

- Clearly neither the British Council or the NDB is in a position to provide pre-prepared lessons / materials that will meet the needs of all English teachers in the country and all of their students any more than the prescribed textbook can cover content at a level suitable for all. Nor is this desirable. The ability to adapt methods and activities to promote learning in a given context is the essence of the learner-centred approach as we have defined it here. However, it would be motivating for teachers to be able to share examples of good practice (lesson plans and supporting materials/resources) with each other and to receive comments and suggestions from fellow teachers who have tried to implement the lesson with their own students. Teachers in one FGD commented that they were motivated by the healthy competition in their group for generating good ideas and good examples of applying new concepts in their own schools: 'We did our development journals and how to do interesting lesson plans and we competed. Then we gained some knowledge from other colleagues about how to do the same lesson in an interesting manner'.

### Objective Four – Assist teachers to have a clearer understanding of the teaching and learning process

While 30% of survey respondent identified learning more about the theory of teaching and learning as one of the three most beneficial aspects of the NDB EFT course, it was unclear how they had applied this knowledge in their classes or whether this was new knowledge or simply refreshed what they had already covered during their Diploma/Certificate pre-teaching courses. Several teachers mentioned that understanding students' family circumstances had helped them to appreciate their learning difficulties but, again it was not clear whether this was a new insight or simply a reminder.

### Contribution and Impact

In Hanguranketha and Nuwara Eliya, RESC Coordinators asked if they could offer the course again soon as the 2017-2018 phase had been oversubscribed.<sup>20</sup> Teachers who had done the course were highly appreciative of what they had gained through the experience and urged the British Council and NDB to provide opportunities to more teachers. Teachers in the Kalutara and Galle area have access to courses conducted in Colombo and Galle so the need for professional development training is not felt to the same degree.

While the evidence presented in this report indicates that this fourth phase of the NDB EFT programme enthused teachers, improved the quality of the English language learning experience for their students, and resulted in more students enjoying their English classes and being prepared to use English, there have been three previous iterations of this course and O/L results for English remain very poor island wide. This suggests that the desired impact of improving the English skills,

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<sup>20</sup> Although there was a problem of teacher dropout later.

employability, access to information and opportunities, and the international mobility of young people is unlikely to be realised within the current systemic constraints. This section lists some of these constraints identified to the evaluator by teachers and RESC Coordinators and suggests future inputs that might mitigate these, although it must be acknowledged that most of them are clearly beyond the remit of the course providers.

The examination system is clearly an important influence. Many students (and some school administrators) do not prioritise English, as a pass in English is not essential to progress through the education system. Specifics of this issue are outlined above. Unfortunately, English teachers are likely to experience this as a demotivating influence. One teacher described how, in her first two years of teaching English, she had worked hard to help students to put on a drama performance for the school in English but had been discouraged by teachers of other subjects who criticised her for taking student attention away from their examinable subjects. The teacher networking and peer support that the NDB EFT programme engenders and continues to promote through the professional association meetings convened by the NDB and the continuous programme of professional workshops and seminars organised by the RESCs is an important counter influence here.

Not all teachers have access to this course or similar face-to-face courses because their schools or their homes are located too far from the nearest RESC. Some teachers commute long distances to their schools each day and might actually live closer to a RESC that is not the one linked to their school. They might have better access to the course if they could attend it at a RESC closer to their home – particularly if courses are held on a Saturday. This could be easily resolved by a more aggressive campaign of advertising course availability and providing opportunities for teachers to attend the course at the RESC of their choice. In other cases, it is not so simple. RESC Coordinators acknowledged that the course was, realistically, only accessible to teachers in the same division as the RESC because of travel time. Self-learning or online courses are not the answer, at least in the immediate future. RESC Coordinators in Nuwara Eliya described how, when the British Council ‘Teachers in Action’ course was offered as a self-study course in 2016, only 3 of the 40 who enrolled were able to finish the course. However, Baddegama RESC did manage to negotiate to conduct the 2017-2018 NDB EFT course at Vidyaloka Maha Vidyalaya (school) after the RESC premises were damaged by flooding. No fees were charged by the school. This mobile trainer option might be a solution.

The following comment was made in an article in a Sri Lankan magazine recently:

‘Current Sri Lankan society offers surprisingly little opportunities for practical English usage. Evading is easier. Sadly, neither students nor teachers seem to appreciate the critical fact that one cannot learn swimming without getting into a pool. Students treat English the same way they treat any other subject – something to learn by heart to be reproduced at examinations, and then forget.’<sup>21</sup>

English teachers in all RESC areas agreed with the essence of this comment but hastened to add that it is not just a question of attitude but also one of opportunity. Students in Hanguranketha and Nuwara Eliya were said to have little exposure to English outside school and, without this, not much chance of exiting the school system with a level of English that makes them employable or mobile. Teachers lamented that, although they had English language books in their libraries, students were

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<sup>21</sup> Echelon, Feb 19, 2018. *English Education: Why we still fail*, <https://echelon.lk/english-education-why-we-still-fail/>

reluctant to read. They agreed that there were a multitude of resources available online but said that, even if parents were made aware of these resources, they would be reluctant to provide their children with access to smartphones or laptops because of the dangers of cyberbullying and paedophilia. Teachers in Baddegama RESC area, on the other hand, commented that their students were up-to-date with the latest technology and they needed to find a way to get ahead of them.

For teachers in Galle, the solution seems straight-forward. Students have access to technology which they can use to increase their exposure to English. Teachers, many of whom already make use of technology, are keen to update their knowledge on how to use ICT tools for teaching. 96% of survey respondents agreed with the statement, 'I would like to learn more about using ICT to support my teaching'. Incorporating this component into the course would put teachers into a position of being able to facilitate learning even outside the classroom. Even rural schools are equipped with projectors which can display content from laptops and smartphones and many of the teachers observed owned personal laptops and smartphones. In one school where lessons were observed close to Galle town, a smartboard had been procured but not yet put into use. The solution for rural students, where O/L results indicate that the need is greater, will require more thought. Teacher supervised access to online resources or apps inside and outside the classroom is a possibility. This could be introduced as an extension to English Activity Rooms already set up in some schools.

## SUMMARY

In summary, there is strong evidence of a demand among English teachers, particularly those in rural areas with limited access to other courses, for opportunities for professional development such as that provided by the NDB EFT course. It is recommended that, not only should the course be continued into a fifth phase, but that innovative solutions be found to enable teachers who live or work far from an established RESC to avail themselves of the opportunity. The course is highly regarded and, within the limitations of this study, appears to be having a positive impact at the level of the classroom and as measured by the four course objectives. Nonetheless, there are external constraints which will be difficult to overcome despite the evident enthusiasm and dedication of the teachers consulted and observed during this evaluation.

## Appendix A: Zonal Pass Rates

Education Zone	No. Sat	Distinction (A)		Very Good Pass (B)		Credit Pass (C)		Ordinary pass (S)		Pass (A+B+C+S)		Weak (W)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1. Colombo	14472	5150	35.59	1781	12.31	2310	15.96	2415	16.69	11656	80.54	2816	19.46
12. Kandy	6943	1611	23.2	932	13.42	1287	18.54	1498	21.58	5328	76.74	1615	23.26
3. Jayawardanapura	7248	854	11.78	686	9.46	1269	17.51	1946	26.85	4755	65.6	2493	34.4
4. Piliyandala	5747	616	10.72	473	8.23	946	16.46	1421	24.73	3456	60.14	2291	39.86
53. Batticaloa Central	1650	123	7.45	118	7.15	247	14.97	504	30.55	992	60.12	658	39.88
27. Galle	6890	989	14.35	594	8.62	1069	15.52	1485	21.55	4137	60.04	2753	39.96
5. Gampaha	7521	907	12.06	696	9.25	1067	14.19	1639	21.79	4309	57.29	3212	42.71
60. Akkaraipattu	1064	59	5.55	68	6.39	147	13.82	325	30.55	599	56.3	465	43.7
31. Matara	5129	589	11.48	381	7.43	726	14.15	1145	22.32	2841	55.39	2288	44.61
67. Kurunegala	5410	628	11.61	401	7.41	719	13.29	1236	22.85	2984	55.16	2426	44.84
9. Kalutara	7660	621	8.11	605	7.9	1176	15.35	1816	23.71	4218	55.07	3442	44.93
7. Negombo	6953	687	9.88	495	7.12	946	13.61	1592	22.9	3720	53.5	3233	46.5
18. Matale	3463	311	8.98	254	7.33	468	13.51	819	23.65	1852	53.48	1611	46.52
8. Kelaniya	7053	439	6.22	447	6.34	1064	15.09	1809	25.65	3759	53.3	3294	46.7
96. Kegalle	4211	418	9.93	276	6.55	572	13.58	931	22.11	2197	52.17	2014	47.83
56. Kalmunai	2147	108	5.03	116	5.4	291	13.55	582	27.11	1097	51.09	1050	48.91
83. Badulla	2559	154	6.02	139	5.43	345	13.48	640	25.01	1278	49.94	1281	50.06
68. Kuliyapitiya	3889	168	4.32	226	5.81	520	13.37	957	24.61	1871	48.11	2018	51.89
84. Bandarawela	3287	325	9.89	202	6.15	380	11.56	671	20.41	1578	48.01	1709	51.99
11. Horana	4526	269	5.94	291	6.43	563	12.44	1027	22.69	2150	47.5	2376	52.5
37. Walasmulla	2480	127	5.12	117	4.72	316	12.74	617	24.88	1177	47.46	1303	52.54
74. Chilaw	5251	368	7.01	326	6.21	625	11.9	1166	22.21	2485	47.32	2766	52.68
75. Anuradhapura	4150	235	5.66	265	6.39	538	12.96	894	21.54	1932	46.55	2218	53.45
38. Jaffna	3512	257	7.32	204	5.81	435	12.39	734	20.9	1630	46.41	1882	53.59
97. Mawanella	3476	228	6.56	192	5.52	402	11.57	761	21.89	1583	45.54	1893	54.46
29. Ambalangoda	3143	219	6.97	189	6.01	359	11.42	654	20.81	1421	45.21	1722	54.79
50. Batticaloa	2150	160	7.44	127	5.91	249	11.58	425	19.77	961	44.7	1189	55.3
92. Ratnapura	5754	361	6.27	360	6.26	712	12.37	1139	19.79	2572	44.7	3182	55.3

69. Nikaweratiya	2588	80	3.09	84	3.25	301	11.63	686	26.51	1151	44.47	1437	55.53
80. Polonnaruwa	1637	76	4.64	76	4.64	186	11.36	387	23.64	725	44.29	912	55.71
17. Katugastota	2870	76	2.65	104	3.62	292	10.17	790	27.53	1262	43.97	1608	56.03
32. Akuressa	1959	44	2.25	83	4.24	253	12.91	480	24.5	860	43.9	1099	56.1
71. Giriulla	3531	118	3.34	143	4.05	389	11.02	891	25.23	1541	43.64	1990	56.36
14. Gampola	3175	151	4.76	137	4.31	376	11.84	690	21.73	1354	42.65	1821	57.35
16. Wattagama	2304	43	1.87	77	3.34	228	9.9	627	27.21	975	42.32	1329	57.68
35. Tangalle	2386	90	3.77	101	4.23	224	9.39	586	24.56	1001	41.95	1385	58.05
6. Minuwangoda	5074	183	3.61	238	4.69	577	11.37	1115	21.97	2113	41.64	2961	58.36
42.Vadamarachchi	1636	76	4.65	88	5.38	170	10.39	327	19.99	661	40.4	975	59.6
62. Trincomalee	1687	75	4.45	69	4.09	167	9.9	369	21.87	680	40.31	1007	59.69
10. Matugama	3042	159	5.23	177	5.82	327	10.75	543	17.85	1206	39.64	1836	60.36
13. Denuwara	1866	35	1.88	67	3.59	188	10.08	448	24.01	738	39.55	1128	60.45
72. Ibbagamuwa	2928	122	4.17	108	3.69	315	10.76	605	20.66	1150	39.28	1778	60.72
22. Nuwara Eliya	2626	41	1.56	65	2.48	222	8.45	681	25.93	1009	38.42	1617	61.58
23. Kotmale	1287	37	2.87	53	4.12	127	9.87	276	21.45	493	38.31	794	61.69
33. Mulatiyana	1981	26	1.31	45	2.27	193	9.74	472	23.83	736	37.15	1245	62.85
77. Kekirawa	2274	46	2.02	86	3.78	235	10.33	476	20.93	843	37.07	1431	62.93
57. Sammanthurai	1266	9	0.71	36	2.84	123	9.72	301	23.78	469	37.05	797	62.95
30. Udugama	1764	28	1.59	57	3.23	185	10.49	383	21.71	653	37.02	1111	62.98
36. Hambantota	3605	112	3.11	103	2.86	278	7.71	841	23.33	1334	37	2271	63
98. Dehiowita	3293	57	1.73	92	2.79	300	9.11	769	23.35	1218	36.99	2075	63.01
2. Homagama	3581	57	1.59	114	3.18	339	9.47	804	22.45	1314	36.69	2267	63.31
46. Vavuniya	2056	130	6.32	77	3.75	188	9.14	353	17.17	748	36.38	1308	63.62
91. Bibile	1403	34	2.42	57	4.06	119	8.48	299	21.31	509	36.28	894	63.72
61. Thirukkivil	831	20	2.41	25	3.01	81	9.75	171	20.58	297	35.74	534	64.26
93. Balangoda	2527	82	3.24	100	3.96	230	9.1	462	18.28	874	34.59	1653	65.41
24. Hatton	2709	87	3.21	84	3.1	209	7.72	549	20.27	929	34.29	1780	65.71
86. Welimada	2433	47	1.93	58	2.38	186	7.64	542	22.28	833	34.24	1600	65.76
70. Maho	3341	75	2.24	109	3.26	233	6.97	693	20.74	1110	33.22	2231	66.78
81. Hingurakgoda	2116	61	2.88	82	3.88	198	9.36	362	17.11	703	33.22	1413	66.78
34. Morawaka	2253	40	1.78	63	2.8	180	7.99	463	20.55	746	33.11	1507	66.89
28. Elpitiya	3109	53	1.7	79	2.54	239	7.69	658	21.16	1029	33.1	2080	66.9



64. Kantale	877	3	0.34	15	1.71	57	6.5	202	23.03	277	31.58	600	68.42
55. Ampara	2168	22	1.01	66	3.04	168	7.75	427	19.7	683	31.5	1485	68.5
78. Galenbidunuwewa	1457	8	0.55	22	1.51	87	5.97	339	23.27	456	31.3	1001	68.7
95. Embilipitiya	3275	103	3.15	85	2.6	246	7.51	590	18.02	1024	31.27	2251	68.73
44. Mannar	1321	25	1.89	36	2.73	91	6.89	252	19.08	404	30.58	917	69.42
25. Walapane	1293	31	2.4	31	2.4	79	6.11	250	19.33	391	30.24	902	69.76
26. Hanguranketha	1496	45	3.01	59	3.94	135	9.02	213	14.24	452	30.21	1044	69.79
40. Thenmarachchi	1005	24	2.39	17	1.69	72	7.16	189	18.81	302	30.05	703	69.95
19. Galewela	1934	14	0.72	41	2.12	157	8.12	365	18.87	577	29.83	1357	70.17
65. Kinnya	1295	17	1.31	27	2.08	77	5.95	261	20.15	382	29.5	913	70.5
94. Nivitigala	2168	25	1.15	44	2.03	152	7.01	416	19.19	637	29.38	1531	70.62
90. Wellawaya	2766	44	1.59	62	2.24	221	7.99	478	17.28	805	29.1	1961	70.9
73. Puttalam	4725	80	1.69	120	2.54	306	6.48	865	18.31	1371	29.02	3354	70.98
79. Kebithigollewa	1640	9	0.55	35	2.13	126	7.68	298	18.17	468	28.54	1172	71.46
89. Monaragala	1979	52	2.63	45	2.27	148	7.48	317	16.02	562	28.4	1417	71.6
76. Tambuttegama	1997	11	0.55	38	1.9	142	7.11	368	18.43	559	27.99	1438	72.01
41. Valikamam	2898	53	1.83	57	1.97	195	6.73	487	16.8	792	27.33	2106	72.67
15. Teldeniya	1621	15	0.93	32	1.97	130	8.02	260	16.04	437	26.96	1184	73.04
59. Dehiattakandiya	860	6	0.7	20	2.33	54	6.28	149	17.33	229	26.63	631	73.37
20. Naula	450	1	0.22	4	0.89	24	5.33	87	19.33	116	25.78	334	74.22
87. Passara	1093	5	0.46	10	0.91	61	5.58	192	17.57	268	24.52	825	75.48
66. Trincomalee North	564	3	0.53	12	2.13	21	3.72	98	17.38	134	23.76	430	76.24
58. Mahaoya	517	9	1.74	6	1.16	23	4.45	84	16.25	122	23.6	395	76.4
63. Mutur	1215	8	0.66	14	1.15	57	4.69	196	16.13	275	22.63	940	77.37
52. Paddirippu	1353	14	1.03	20	1.48	57	4.21	214	15.82	305	22.54	1048	77.46
51. Kalkudah	1069	5	0.47	13	1.22	39	3.65	171	16	228	21.33	841	78.67
48. Mullaitivu	1121	7	0.62	14	1.25	51	4.55	149	13.29	221	19.71	900	80.29
85. Mahiyanganaya	1792	24	1.34	31	1.73	71	3.96	227	12.67	353	19.7	1439	80.3
47. Vavuniya North	484	1	0.21	7	1.45	14	2.89	68	14.05	90	18.6	394	81.4
82. Dimbulagala	1240	6	0.48	11	0.89	37	2.98	172	13.87	226	18.23	1014	81.77
88. Viyaluwa	846	0	0	6	0.71	21	2.48	123	14.54	150	17.73	696	82.27
21. Wilgamuwa	552	2	0.36	4	0.72	26	4.71	61	11.05	93	16.85	459	83.15
43. Kilinochchi	2174	15	0.69	27	1.24	87	4	223	10.26	352	16.19	1822	83.81

45. Madu	312	0	0	0	0	7	2.24	42	13.46	49	15.71	263	84.29
49.Thunukkai	496	1	0.2	5	1.01	16	3.23	37	7.46	59	11.9	437	88.1
39. Islands	709	0	0	1	0.14	10	1.41	55	7.76	66	9.31	643	90.69
54. Batticaloa Weast	938	0	0	2	0.21	8	0.85	65	6.93	75	8	863	92
<b>All Island</b>	272576	20039	7.35	14937	5.48	30879	11.33	57937	21.26	123792	45.42	148784	54.58

Education Zone	No. Sat	Distinction (A)		Very Good Pass (B)		Credit Pass (C)		Ordinary pass (S)		Pass (A+B+C+S)		Weak (W)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Hanguranketha	1496	45	3.01	59	3.94	135	9.02	213	14.24	452	30.21	1044	69.79
Nuwara Eliya	2626	41	1.56	65	2.48	222	8.45	681	25.93	1009	38.42	1617	61.58
Galle	6890	989	14.35	594	8.62	1069	15.52	1485	21.55	4137	60.04	2753	39.96

## Appendix B: NDB Lesson Observation Form

### NDB EFT LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

**Teacher's name:**

**Level / Class:**

**School:**

**Date / Time / Duration:**

Area	Assessment criteria	Achieved?			Comments
		Yes	No	TSE	
<b>Lesson planning</b>	1. Aims were clear.				
	2. The lesson was well-planned with attention to anticipated problems and solutions.				
	3. There was a logical progression to the lesson.				
	4. The course book was adapted to the learners' needs / levels.				
<b>Lesson delivery</b>	5. Teacher set the scene and engaged the learners' interest in the topic.				
	6. New language was presented clearly and correctly.				
	7. Teacher checked understanding of target language.				
	8. Learners were given opportunities to practice new language through spoken and written activities.				



Area	Assessment criteria	Achieved?			Comments
		Yes	No	TSE	
Managing the learning environment and activities	9. Teacher monitored unobtrusively and gave support when needed.				
	10. A variety of task / activities was used. Pace was varied to suit learners' needs.				
	11. Timing was observed and managed well throughout the class.				
	12. Instructions were clear and checked.				
	13. Teacher used the board effectively and wrote new language up.				
	14. Mother Tongue was used effectively but not overused.				
	15. Teacher regrouped learners appropriately and efficiently.				
Managing student engagement	16. Teacher established good rapport with learners ensuring they were fully involved in activities.				
	17. Interaction patterns were varied.				
	18. Teacher encouraged learner talk and controlled teacher talk.				
	19. Learner errors and feedback were dealt with in different ways and at appropriate times in the lesson.				
	20. Teacher elicited information / language from students whenever possible.				

**Overall Comment:**

**RESC Trainer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(RESC trainers – please send the completed observation forms and completed reflection forms to the British Council)*

## Appendix C: 'Classroom Evaluation – Learning, Teaching and Assessment (Grades 1-13)' Evaluation Format 02



**Classroom Evaluation – Learning, Teaching and Assessment (From Grade 1-13)**

Name of the school.....

Use this evaluation form to evaluate 04 teachers

1. Name of the teacher ..... Subject..... Grade..... period.....
2. Name of the teacher ..... Subject..... Grade..... period.....
3. Name of the teacher ..... Subject..... Grade..... period.....
4. Name of the teacher ..... Subject..... Grade..... period.....

Awarding marks: Award marks for each indicator according to the following rating scales using the descriptions given in the indicators.

06 marks - Excellent

03 marks - Satisfactory

05 marks - Very good

02 marks - Development required

04 marks - Good

01 mark - Immediate development required

Criteria	Indicators		Marks			
			T.1	T.2	T.3	T. 4
2.1 Planning and approach to the lesson	2.1.1	Subject policy, term, week and daily notes have been prepared and approved				
	2.1.2	The lesson objectives and the competencies have been clearly indicated in the plan				
	2.1.3	Accuracy and adequacy of the subject content				
	2.1.4	Inclusion of various strategies and teaching methods paying attention to learning styles and individual differences of students				
	2.1.5	Paying attention to suitable teaching aids and enjoyable learning opportunities				
	2.1.6	Presence of a pleasant learning environment and displaying of teaching-learning resources in the classroom				
	2.1.7	Paying attention to learning opportunities that help students to gain real life experiences				
	2.1.8	Preparation of a teaching-learning process based on activities				
	2.1.9	Starting the lesson in an attractive manner				
2.2 High quality lesson development	2.2.1	Delivering the lesson step by step according to the plan				
	2.2.2	Maximum use of assessments/ activities resources and teaching aids and effectively in addition to the text book				
	2.2.3	Encouraging the students to ask questions and directing them to act logically				
	2.2.4	Using examples, targeted questions and assignments that suit the different levels of knowledge/ abilities of the students				



High quality lesson development	2.2.5	Developing the lesson taking account of the learners' responses, following a student active teaching pattern and time management				
	2.2.6	Guiding the students to learn as a group with effective interrelations of student-student and teacher-student				
	2.2.7	Guiding the students to do activities, to develop their creativity and other skills				
	2.2.8	Guiding the students for self-directed learning and providing necessary assistance				
	2.2.9	Arranging the lesson to give students real life experiences				
2.3 Assessment	2.3.1	Providing opportunities to students present their findings, appreciates and correcting them				
	2.3.2	Giving a summary at the end of the lesson to consolidate learning				
	2.3.3	Using suitable assessment/evaluation tools and understanding the strengths and the development needs of students				
	2.3.4	Organizing feedback and feed forward activities				
2.4 Exhibiting properly the individual responsibilities and personality	2.4.1	Keeping proper inter-personal relationship with students as well as other staff and making a proper contributing to other activities at the school				
	2.4.2	Taking of personal leave is minimal and has provided assignments/ activities for use during the absence.				
	2.4.3	Arriving at school and classroom on time and maintaining records in the class record books				
	2.4.4	Demonstrating a proper personality and self-reliance				
	2.4.5	Completing assessment/SBA properly, analyzing and implementing remedial programmes.				
	2.4.6	Working to achieve the targets of the syllabus during the relevant time period				
	2.4.7	Examining the accuracy of the exercises and giving students necessary advice				
	2.4.8	Participating in training programmes and keeping the professional knowledge up-to-date				
Total marks						

In awarding marks for the indicators relevant to the criterion regarding individual responsibilities and personality, it is possible to discuss with the principal and the management committee and to check the relevant documents.

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
Number of indicators evaluated				
Total marks that can be obtained for the evaluated indicators				
Marks obtained				
Percentage of marks				

Name of the Evaluator ..... Signature.....

Date .....



## Appendix D: Survey form

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE NDB 'English for Teaching' COURSE

RESC: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Qualification(s): \_\_\_\_\_

This survey is designed to provide the course organisers with an idea of how the course has changed (or not changed) what happens in English classes across Sri Lanka. We thank you for your valuable time in providing us with your carefully considered feedback. Your response is anonymous. **Please return this form to the British Council in Colombo by the 8<sup>th</sup> March using the stamped, addressed envelope provided.**

**1. Place an 'X' in the column that most closely reflects your response to each of the following statements:**

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My students use English in class more now because I know more strategies for encouraging them to do so.					
2	Before doing the course I mostly used teacher talk and individual work in class					
3	Even before doing the course, I was confident using English in my classes					
4	Even before doing the course, I often used my own activities and examples rather than only relying on those in the textbook and teacher's guide.					
5	I use group work and pair work in classes more frequently since doing the course					
6	I use activities and games in almost all my classes these days					
7	My classes are too large to know each and every student and their learning needs					
8	I find it difficult to find the time and money to make the materials and visual aids that we learned about in the course					
9	I am more confident using English with my students than I was before doing the course					

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	I understand teaching theory more since doing the course					
11	Since doing the course, I am more confident using my own activities and examples rather than relying on those in the textbook and teacher's guide.					
12	I frequently speak in English outside school					
13	My students always work in the same groups making it easier to manage the class					
14	Even before doing the course, I frequently engaged my students in group work					
15	I am better able to support my O/L students since doing the course					
16	I know the level of each of my students and how best to teach them					
17	I am better able to support my weaker students since doing the course					
18	I think that the NDB course could be made shorter					
19	The learner-centred approach is suitable for all of my students					
20	I am confident that I can adapt activities and teaching materials to any level of student.					
21	My school management team like me to use activity-based teaching					
22	I create lesson plans for most of my classes					
23	I frequently make and use worksheets and visual aids					
24	Doing the course has helped me to manage my students better					
25	I would like the NDB course trainers to observe my classes now and again					
26	I am interested in attending professional seminars / English teacher association meetings					
27	I have rarely had classroom management problems, even before doing the course.					
28	I would like to learn more about using ICT to support my teaching					

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
29	While doing the course I used a lot of different activities in my classes but now I have settled on just a few favourites					

2. From the list below place an 'X' in the box against the three (3) things about the course that were MOST beneficial to you. ONLY TICK 3.

Being able to have professional discussions with other English teachers	
Learning more about the theory of teaching and learning	
Getting ideas about how to make attractive teaching-learning materials	
Getting ideas for new student activities and games	
Learning new teaching methods such as error correction codes, CCQs, how to teach phonemes, etc.	
Learning new classroom management tools such as ICQs, mixed ability grouping, warmers, stirrers etc	
My Development Journal	
The microteaching sessions where we taught each other and received feedback and suggestions	
Having time between sessions to try new things out in my own classes	
Something else? <i>Please tell us about it here:</i>	

3. Please tell us a story about an important change that happened in any of your classes that resulted from the new skills and knowledge you got through the NDB English for Teaching course. Explain the situation before you attended the course and how it was different afterwards. Explain what you think it was that brought about the change.

***Thank you for your valuable feedback about the course. We greatly appreciate your time and insights.***

## Appendix E: Focus Group Discussion Guide

*Introductions. Purpose of FGD. Request permission to record.*

1. When did you all do the training? (*check that they were participants in 2017-18 batch*)
2. I would now like to go over the purposes of the NDB English for Teaching program one-by-one and ask you to tell me what things about the course are likely to contribute positively towards achieving the objectives and what things about the course or your teaching environment are likely to be obstacles to achieving those objectives. *Check understanding of the purpose of the FGD.*

### **Objective 1: English teachers will be more confident in using English in their classrooms.**

- Did you feel more confident using English in your classrooms after doing the course or were you already confident using English in your classroom before the course. **Show of hands.**
- What was there about the course that helped YOU to be more confident using English in your classrooms? (*English language section at beginning of each module? Pronunciation practice? The opportunity to discuss together the sorts of examples you might use to introduce new elements of English in your own classrooms? Your language and teaching assignments?*)
- What sorts of things tend to make English teachers LESS confident to use English in their classrooms? (*i.e. introducing elements of English that they haven't had an opportunity to practice teaching before? feeling that they haven't had enough pronunciation practice? Not feeling confident about correct use of grammar? Lack of opportunity to use English outside school? Students don't understand leading to classroom discipline issues?*)
- Is there anything about the course that could be improved to help teachers feel more confident in the use of English in their classrooms?
- What do you think are the motivators and demotivators for teachers to use English in their classrooms? (*e.g. support from head teachers and in-service advisors (ISA)? importance placed on English by parents and students? confidence? exams don't measure student speaking and listening skills?*)

### **Objective 3: Teachers will use a more learner-centred and activity-based methodology in the classroom.**

- Do you teach from the textbook / Teacher's Guide or do you use activities/games/methods from the course to adapt the textbook lessons? To what extent...25%? 50%? 100%? **Round Robin response.** Tell me about an example of where you used activities from the course to adapt a lesson in the last week.
- How does this compare to how you used to teach before you did the course?
- Did you use a greater variety of exercises/activities/games when you were doing the course or immediately afterwards than you do now? Why?
- What was it about the course that was most important in encouraging you to make your classes more activity-based? (*Practising exercises at the RESC that you could use directly with your students? Trying out exercises for your language and teaching assignments? Opportunities to discuss activities with the other teachers and the course trainers? Gaining skills in using ICQs – Instruction Checking Questions?*)
- How is a 'learner-centred' class different to a 'teacher-centred' class? Do YOU think that your classes are now more 'learner-centred'? In what ways?

- What elements of the course best support teachers to be more learner-centred? (*Practising CCQs – Concept Checking Questions? Practising error correction codes? Practising ‘warmer’, ‘stirrer’ and ‘settler’ activities? Learning classroom management skills?*)
- Is there anything about the course that could be improved to support and encourage teachers to make their teaching more activity-based? (*i.e. including more exercises directly related to the Sri Lankan curriculum / more exercises suitable for big classes or small classrooms / exercises that are less reliant on having special materials/ exercises that take less time / exercises that can be used with groups have a wide variation in ability*)
- What are the motivators and demotivators for running activities in your classrooms (*i.e. too noisy, too much variation in student ability, lesson time too short, exams don’t measure speaking and listening skills, teacher confidence, support by head teacher and ISA*)

**Objective 3: Teachers will create more opportunities for the students to interact in English with each other in the classroom within the existing curriculum.**

- Have YOU created more opportunities for students to interact in English in your classroom since doing the course or did you already do that before? Give me examples of what you did to encourage your students to speak in English in one of your classes last week.
- What was it about the course that was most important in encouraging you to do that? (*Practising exercises at the RESC that you could use directly with your students? Trying out exercises for your language and teaching assignments? Opportunities to discuss activities with the other teachers and the course trainers?*)
- Is there anything about the course that could be improved to support and encourage teachers to create more opportunities for students to interact in English? (*i.e. including more exercises directly related to the Sri Lankan curriculum / more exercises suitable for big classes or small classrooms / exercises that are less reliant on having special materials/ exercises that take less time / exercises that can be used with groups have a wide variation in ability*)
- What are the motivators and demotivators for running activities in your classrooms where students interact in English (*i.e. importance placed on English by parents and students, too noisy, too much variation in student ability, exams don’t measure speaking and listening skills, teacher confidence, support by head teacher and ISA*)

**Objective 4: Teachers will have a clearer understanding of the teaching and learning process**

- How many years had each of you been teaching before you did this course?
  - Apart from this program what other English teacher training have you had (ie. NIE, ISA-led, projects such as English as a Life Skill)?
  - Do YOU feel that you have a better understanding now about why some teaching approaches work well and others less well and when to use different methods? Can you give me some examples of how the course helped you to develop this understanding?
  - How was this course similar or different to other teaching methods courses you have participated in?
  - Did the course reinforce what you had learnt elsewhere? Were there any contradictions? Did they use the same terminology? Was one more valuable than the other for you personally?
- 3. Is there anything else that you would like to say about how the NDB course has changed the way you teach English?**

## Appendix F: RESC Coordinator Semi-structured Interview Guide

1. How long have you been conducting the NDB English for Teaching course?
2. Do you have any problems recruiting teachers for the course?
  - How is the course advertised?
3. Who tends to apply for the course?
  - Male vs Female,
  - Experienced teachers vs young teachers
  - University graduates vs NCOE graduates vs HND graduates from vocational sector
  - Have any disabled teachers applied for the course and what measures have been taken to support them?
4. What are the prime motivations of teachers to participate in the course?
  - professional improvement
  - certification / SL Teacher Service levels / recruitment to preferred schools
  - encouragement of school principals
  - encouragement of peers
  - do any of the teachers request help teaching children with special needs (e.g. dyslexia, ADHD)
5. The objective of the course is to improve teacher CEFR level from A2 (elementary) to B1 (intermediate or pre-intermediate). The average pre-test score was already in the B1 range and the people who showed the most significant improvement were in the A2 range. Do you think that perhaps that the course is only targeting a special type of teacher?
  - Is there any significant professional or personal difference between teachers who apply for the programme and teachers who do not?
6. What tends to prevent teachers from following the programme and what can be done?
  - home responsibilities
  - teachers from zones too far from the RESC
    - which zones does this RESC administratively / effectively cover?
  - school doesn't support release
  - course perceived as being too long or not useful
7. Do you think that the course is too long? Too short?
8. What other professional development programs are available to English teachers in your zone? (ELLE (English Language Learning Enhancement) project, English as a Life Skill).
  - What are the similarities and differences in these training programs?
9. How has being a trainer for this course supported your own professional development?
  - Use activities and methods in other courses
  - Understanding of teaching-learning process (theory demonstrated in practice in BC training?)
  - Certification
  - Access to online resources
10. RESC trainers do not conduct classroom observations for the NDB course. Should they and is it practical?
  - Do you think that classroom observations by Principals, ISAs, section-heads etc is an adequate alternative?
  - Do these people need any training from you to do this more effectively?
11. Apart from classroom observations and inputs from school leaders, do you have any ideas for how to ensure the enthusiasm, motivation, and professionalism of NDB course graduates into the future?

12. The BC are also starting to work with English teachers in NCOEs so the demand from existing teachers should diminish over time. What are your recommendations for where the program should go from here?

- Provide reinforcement through refresher training
- Integration the training with the provincial/zonal in-service training calendar
- Diversify into production of materials/visual aids