

# TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NORTHERN MINDANAO

Grace S. Pimentel

University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Correspondence Tel.: +63 9353745397, E-mail: [grace.pimentel@ustp.edu.ph](mailto:grace.pimentel@ustp.edu.ph)

**ABSTRACT-** *This research examined the training needs of the Higher Education Institutions teachers in Northern Mindanao. Online class observation, Focus Group Discussion sessions, and survey questionnaires were used to gather responses from eighty-five teachers in the Region. The researcher determined the pedagogical learning areas that HEI teachers need to improve on. Furthermore, a training program was designed to address demands on content, strategies, and testing. Research results showed the respondents’ non-communicative language teaching approaches hence the development of the training module. This training material was rated very satisfactory based on scales of organization and content. The implication of can guide HEI teachers to plan and deliver suitable instructional interventions.*

**Keywords** – Training needs, Development, Assessment, Instructional Interventions

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to [1], problems with training needs will affect the success rate of Training and Development (T&D) curriculums. This was found specifically true among Higher Education teachers in Northern Mindanao. As the indispensable pillar in the educational system, these teachers need the training to assure learning gains. Hence, educational organizations are driven by the motivation to accomplish competence, efficacy, and proficiency. This places in the forefront the necessity of training teachers, aside from the scholarly reading preparation they do for daily academic engagement.

Yet, engaging teachers in a variety of training is not sufficient. To gauge if they successfully enhanced their competencies, the priority to conduct a needs assessment is essential. In their paper, [2] conclude that needs analysis provides vital information to design the training plan. Furthermore, they posit that identifying the training requirements with appropriate valuation instruments improves the training outcomes to a higher degree.

In the first quarter of 2021, the researcher conducted a remote training needs assessment among select Higher Education teachers in Northern Mindanao. The teaching strategies and approaches of Language teachers were found to be more non-communicative. Lectures, discussions, and dominated the teaching-learning process. Hence, a training plan was designed to address this concern.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design and Instruments

This study employed both descriptive and investigative research designs in assessing the needs of the Higher Education Institutions' teachers relative to training needs to achieve the desired quality in terms of effective teaching approaches, techniques, and strategies and provision of other instructional interventions to improve their teaching performance. The researcher gathered data based on the research respondents/trainees using three instruments online class observation, Focus Group Discussion sessions, and survey questionnaires to assess their needs. The need to upgrade their competencies was identified, with emphasis on content, strategies, and activities. Likewise, the assessment employed these fundamental mechanisms: 1) need for training, 2) motivation techniques, 3) teaching approaches and strategies, and 4) evaluation components.

### 2.2 The Instruments

The paper utilized focus group discussion prompts modified from [4], questionnaire, and [5] evaluation tools for assessing the training needs. These validated instruments formed part of the laid-out training design process.

### 2.3 The Respondents

The respondents of this research involved eighty-five (85) Higher Education teachers who were teaching language courses and were taken randomly from 120 teachers representing the entire population of Higher Education institutions in Northern Mindanao. They were contacted through their language coordinators, and created group chats and Google meet conferences. Furthermore, they were oriented about the purpose of the study and informed to actively participate in the online class and FGD sessions and honestly answer the survey questionnaires to come up with valid findings of the study.

### 2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

In this paper, the researcher facilitated five focus group discussion sessions among the respondents. The modified FGD prompts were then utilized. The same group of respondents answered the validated survey instrument through a Google form, which highlighted teaching strategies, content, motivation, and evaluation. The needs assessment table was developed for this phase. Similarly, this qualitative paper, which is based on the research and development method; investigated the current conditions of the teaching-learning process, placing more focus on the training needs component of teachers. Experts were likewise invited to evaluate the designed training plan before it was developed.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. The Beginning Techniques Employed in Language Classes**

Teaching Approaches Employed/Motivation Techniques	Number of Teachers who Utilized the Approach
Question and Answer	6
Reading a passage	2
Quotation	5
Teacher Discussion	60
Student-led Discussion	8
Gamification	4

Table 1 manifests that out of 85 respondents, most teachers use teacher discussion as a beginning technique. This data was obtained from the online classroom observation and Google –sheet-initiated survey questionnaire. Correspondingly, the paper of [6] presented similar results. Teacher discussion dominated the teaching-learning process. Student engagement in a communicative environment was thus missing. The students were presented with the lesson objectives and motivated to lesson despite the fifteen-minute attention span limitation. The level of engagement of the participants was therefore observed to be low among the classes observed. Another study [7] showed a comparison between the usage of communicative and non-communicative activities in an EFL classroom. The study revealed that students enjoyed participating when they were exposed to communicative sessions. The study concluded that student engagement was indeed high in a communicative-laden classroom.

**Table 2. Language Activities Utilized among HEIs**

Language Activities Employed among Classes	Number of Teachers who Utilized the Activity
Tongue Twister	11
Joke	5
Song	6
Teacher-Discussion	48
Homonym	15

Table 2 shows that the teacher-respondents utilized five language activities in their classes which are as follows: tongue twister, joke, song, teacher-discussion, and homonym. Yet among these five, the commonly used activity was teacher discussion. This entails a non-communicative teaching approach, as students were only involved through listening. This is sustained by [9] study which indicated that teamwork and collaboration enhance the students’ engagement in the lesson. A good number of students developed their communication skills and increased speaking confidence when they collaborated in groups; compared to the traditional learning scheme. Perceptions about communicating improved also: fifty-five percent of the class felt confident by speaking on a given theme.

**Table 3. The Training Design for a Communicative Classroom**

Theme	Sub-themes	Activities	Resource	Duration
Social Cues	Facial expressions Body language Voice pitch and tone Personal space	Performance Activities	Expert 1	2 hours
Active Listening	Building trust and rapport Demonstrating concern Paraphrasing Using nonverbal cues	Interview	Expert 1	2 hours
Straight Talk	Quotes Words Phrases Fragments	Role Play	Expert 2	2 hours
Verbal Communication	Advising others Assertiveness Conveying feedback in a constructive manner Disciplining employees Giving credit to others Recognizing and countering objections	Guided Discussion	Expert 2	2 hours
Interpersonal Communication	Language use, Perception, Listening, Social Cognition	Debate	Expert 3	2 hours
Being a Conversationalist	Rules, Good Topics and Habits	Jigsaw	Expert 3	2 hours

The study by others was aimed at employing games to overcome the speaking anxiety that students face when dealing with on-the-spot communicative lessons [10]. The main idea of the paper was to produce a systematic introduction to the concept of communicative competence. The scheme further shows the varied opportunities for students to voice out their ideas in different settings. Evaluation of the research among tertiary-level students in this field showed very good results.

Using the results of the needs analysis, the researcher came up with six themes for the training design. Each of these has sub-themes that are founded on the notion of a communicative classroom. Cited by [11], an ‘inverted pyramid’ classroom model was proposed to represent communicative competence that consists of grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence. All the components are inter-linked and inter-dependent. The activities set for the training design address these issues.

**Table 4. The Experts’ Evaluation of the Training Activities**

Areas	Large Extent	Some Extent	Not at All
Correlated with the skills developed	4	0	0
Practical and feasible	4	0	0
Encourage Active Involvement	4	0	0
Logically arranges	4	0	0
Suitable to the academic level	4	0	0

All four experts believe that the training activities evidently portray a large extent of these five zones: correlation of the activities with the skills developed, practicality and feasibility, encourage active involvement, logically arranged and suitable to the academic level. Four of them ticked a large extent to the areas identified in the evaluation sheet.

**4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

To conclude, Communicative Language Teaching was found to have gained popularity in the academe to improve the communicative competence of the students for language curriculums. However, CLT was not successfully implemented due to some constraints like large classes, lack of AV aids, problems in conducting pair and group work, and low level of learners’ proficiency in the English language. This paper then assessed the training needs of the teacher-respondents and consequently developed a training design. As meaningful communication provides the students with a better opportunity to enhance their communicative competence, it is recommended that teachers may prepare CLT activities, plan lessons, and create a CLT environment to develop students’ communicative competence. To design a CLT environment, assessment instruments may be developed to assess the communicative competence of the students.

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