NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PGELT

PAPER IV
MODULE 3

POST GRADUATE

PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subject introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analyses.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of proper lay-out of the meterials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that they may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscureor difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great part of these efforts is still experimental-in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these to admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

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Post-Graduate : English Language Teaching
[PG : ELT]

Paper-IV
Module – 3

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Paper IV

Module – 3

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Open University**

Module – 3

Principles of Testing & Evaluation

Module : 7

Principles of Testing & Evaluation

Unit 1 □ Test Administration Self-Evaluation, Teacher Based Evaluation, Materials for Evaluation

Structure

1.1 Objectives

This unit will enable you to :

- understand the basics of evaluation

- evaluate oneself as teacher

- design and frame self-assessment forms and questionaires

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- plant how to motivate learners
- evaluate learner progress
- think of how to select suitable materials for class work and reference work.

1.2 Introduction

Good evaluation is of paramount importance to both teachers and learners as well as syllabus framers. Constant vigilance is necessary to keep track of (educational) progress in areas of teaching, learning, writing materials and testing. Evaluation helps in measuring this progress. It also guides writers of tests and syllabus framers to modify and rewrite items that do not produce the desired results.

1.3 Basic of Evaluations

1.3.1 Text :

Evaluative judgements are usually made by others-teachers employers., lawyers, doctors, spectators, commentators and so on. But it can also be made by oneself i.e. self evaluation. In education, both teachers and learners can assess and evaluate themselves. In our social life we make evaluative statements in a principled and systematic way though the criteria may be vague and illdefined. In education the criteria has to be clear, explicit. Vague and illdefined criteria will not lead to proper evaluation of either teacher or student performance. Moreover different sets of criteria are needed for different purposes. The ones necessary for evaluating teacher, performance in the class-room will have to be different from the ones needed for evaluating learning tasks. We depend on test results.to promote a students to the next higher level or retain him back. We evaluate teacher performance to promote the teacher from middle school to senior school and so on.

1.3.2. Teacher Evaluation :

Teachers are often assessed by their trainers, peers and Board of Examinations. These assessments are primarily for purposes of appraisal. But these can also be used by teachers for self-development and self-evaluation. Practice teaching is a traditional approach to class-room observation. Here the trainer observses a teacher performing and then gives a feedback to the teacher, who learns what his/her mistakes were and tries to rectify them in the next class. But this process can be intimidating as the teacher may feel that she/he is being judged. The teacher may also a get confused trying to follow various strategies that had been taught in (he training programme. Microteaching is also useful in raising teachers' awareness. When a group of students is taught by a teacher for a short while, say about 15 minutes, a particular

topic or sub-skill (a small part or stage of a lesson only) we call it microteaching. The lesson is observed by the trainer and peers who comment on it. As it is short and follows a checklist that is available both to the trainee teacher and his/her peers and trainer, it is less frightening and less confusing that the traditionalmethod of practice teaching.

Microteaching does not only raise awareness but paves the way for teacher self-development and self evaluatioa

Self evaluation is basically a teacher's reflection on what has taken place in the lesson and how he/she can improve his/her performance. These reflections can come in the form of notes the teacher writes immediately after taking the class or it can be a report on the lesson itself. Alternatively a checklist can be used. The teacher will need to plan the lesson highlighting which sub-skill will be attended to and how. These will have to be ticked offas the lesson progresses. For example if the teacher is taking a class in vocabulary building he/she ticks off items on the checklist as the lesson progresses —
parts).

(1) Put diagrams/charts/pictures up (eg Large drawing of a human figure-to teach body parts).

(2) Write the prefixes/suffixes up on the board.

(3) Have enough photocopies for circulation.

(4) Keep a number of dictionaries in the class-room.

(5) Any need to keep objects for demonstration purpose [to teach 'ignite' spark' etc.]?

Like student portfolios teacher portfolios are essential for self assessment. The self assessment sheets will enable you to evaluate your performance and take steps towards self-development. Other teachers can go through your portfolio for the purpose of evaluation as well as getting ideas for trying out in their own classes.

1.	What was my goal in this particular teaching situation ? How successful was I in achieving it?	Teaching vocabulary. Not very, as I had not planned the lesson properly.
2.	Why dod I think of this idea as a teaching point ?	
3.	At what level did I use it ?	
4.	What teaching aids did I have?	
5.	Did the learners find the lesson easy/difficult ?	

6. How much time did I spend on the lesson ?. Was it too long/too short ?

7. Can the activity be integrated with other activities ?

8. Do I have the habit of testing frequenctly ?

Such sheets for evaluating different classes will necessarily make the teacher sit-up and prepare better for the next class.

The portfolio can also have a sheet of statements on the teachers' own professional principles,

1. I tend not to speak much I give instructions and see that these are followed.

2. I prefer pair and group work in class.

3. I use supplementary materials of my choice to make the class interesting. This often makes the students neglect their text books.

4. · I correct errors in their writing but riot often.

5. I change my teaching strategy in every class.

6. I useto lotofaudio/ visual aids.

7. I seldom use the blackboard/white board.

8. I rarely give homework.

9. I allow students to use their first language only when they are unable to state what they exactly meaa

10. I permit there to gossip in their spoken English class.

11. I make them write self-assessment sheets.

Teachers can agree or disagree with the above statements but they must give reasons for their disagreement and rewrite the statement in their own way.

As teacher, development is a primary issue in education, teachers need to constantly evaluate themselves. Thus they can do through self-evaluation using self-assessment forms, questionaires, checklists, inventories, diaries as well as their own observations noted down by themselves the following suggestions are from the book-Evaluation by Pauline Rea, Dickins and Kevin Germaine.

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1.3.3. Design and Procedures

Self-evaluation questionnaires. Four phases may be identified with the class room observations :

1. Pre-observation preparation/discussion

2. The observation itself

3. Teacher reflection on the observation.

4. Post, observation discussion.

The whole process in guided by a questionnaire.

Before the lesson, look at your plan and ask yourself.

---

1. Have you chosen an activity that is interesting and will generate meaningful language use?

2. What classroom arrangement will you use ? What materials do you need ?

3. Is your organisation smooth? Are the instructions clear ? Do the pupils know the 'rules' of you class (who they can talk to, when etc.?)

4. At what point in your lesson will the pupils use language for a real purpose.

5. Write down a question you will ask to encourage a thoughtful answer rather than a correct answer ?

During the lesson and after ask yourself these questions and write the answers.

1. Write down something(s) that a pupil said in the lesson where language was used for a purpose.

2. Write down any evidence that your activity was successful/unsuccessful, was smoothly/ badly organised, was interesting/boring.

3. Who was not involved ? Why ?

4. Which question provided a thoughtful answer? Write down your question.

My thoughts :

What would you like to improve/have done better in the lesson ? What have you learnt ? Write down your thoughts about how you would like to improve/ change/develop your teaching in the future. (Williams 1989; 88).

The questions before the lesson helps the teacher to plan the lesson. During the lesson the trainer gathers data from others about what is happening in the class. After the lesson the

teacher completes the questionnaire, which together with the data gathered by the trainer, provides the focus for the follow-up session.

The second questionnaire concentrates on what the teacher has learned. It focuses more on specific factors and their explanations, for example: Who was not involved ? Why.

- Before the lesson ask yourself.

  Is your activity challenging ? Is it too easy/difficult ? Is it interesting ? Do the pupils get enough opportunity to talk ? What meaningful language will it promote ? Do students get a chance to give their own ideas ? What activity preceded the present one and what will follow it ? Show how it might involve reading, writing, grammar etc. What provisions have been made for pupils who finish quickly/slowly ?

- During and after the lesson ask yourself.

  What evidence was there that the pupils were interested/not interested ? Who was not involved ? Why ? Write down sortie of the language that the pupils used. Which aim/goal did you achieve ? What will you do next to follow up this lesson ? Did pupils come up with their own ideas ? Did they talk enough or did you dominate the discussion.

What have you learnt ? How would you like to devleop your teaching in the future ?

Self-evaluation motivates a teacher to change, to develop. The teaching and testing situations are never free of constraints. To overcome these teachers will have to evaluate themselves and be evaluated by their peers and trainers. How can teachers motivate their students if they cannot motivate themselves to change ? And this entails hard work. If teachers favour pair work and group work they will have to do the same in their situations. Peer, teaching, peer discussions and peer appraisals thus become mandatory.

Review Questions :

1. What is evaluation ?

2. What kind of criteria are needed in education?

3. What is microteaching ?

4. How does a teacher keep record of the progress in her class ?

5. Why are teacher portfolios necessary? Givereasons.

6. Make a portfolio of your own.

7. Who should questanaires be framed and how ?

Teachers based evaluation :

Teachers have to work under pressure-pressure of syllabus, pressure of the-Examination Board/Council, pressure of parents' concerns, pressure of other (personal) commitments and of course pressure of evaluating students constantly.

Self-evaluation helps teachers to change and learn how to develop themselves. Teacher-based evaluation on the other hand help their learners to change and develops.

Teachers evaluate not only learning but also the social behaviour of the learners. Teachers need to be role models for their students, so that they can develop into disciplined, hardworking, successful persons.

Lack of motivation in the students is one of the biggest problem that teachers come across everywhere. This can to a certain extent, be taken care of, if teachers gear themselves up to tackle it directly.

(a) Need based teaching and testing are instruments, among others, that can help in fighting thise problem effectively.

(b) Collaborative activities between students, teachers and parents can provide solutions to the problem also. Parents must help teachers to succeed in their. mission to fight lack of motivation.

One of the easiest way to evaluate what is happening in the class is to collect data. One needs to investigate and find evidence. For this purpose the teacher has to choose a narrow focus to investigate perhaps pronunciation rather than stress and' intonation' in a loud reading class.

Some of the methods useful for data collections for evaluation are self-assessment forms, learner questionnaires, interviews, checklists and learner diaries.

The following self-assessment form is from **Evaluation** by P. Rea, Dickins and K. Germaine **Self-Evaluation**

To be completed by each student at the end of every week and handed in to the Course Director.

1. Out-of-class practice

How much time outside class have you spent :   Approx hours

Speaking Eanglish ? ----------------------------

Listening to English ? ------------------------

Reading English ? ----------------------------

Writing English ? ------------------------------

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2. Who have you spoken to this week in English ? (not including your teacher)

Other course members ----------------------

Members of the public --------------------

Others ---

Do you feel your conversations were generally successful ? Yes/No

Why --

3. What films/TV programmes/radio programmes have you seen/listened to this week ?

What did you think of it ? -------------------------------------

Did it help you with your English ?-----------------------------

If yes, how ? --

If no, why not ? --------------------------------------

4. What did you read in English this week ? -----------------------------

----

What did you think of it ? --

Did it help you with your English? ----------------------------

If yes, why? ---

If no, why not ? ---

5. Have you written anything in English this week?

If yes, what ? --

6. Write down 10 new words in English you have learnt this week with their translation in your language.

translation

1 ....   1 ....

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2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

Where did you learn these ?

Other (phase specify)

7. General progress

What progress do you feel you have made in English this week ?

	a lot	quite a lot	a little	not at all
speaking				
listeners				
reading				
writing				

What are you going to work on/try to improve next week ?

speaking..................

listening..................

reading..................

writing..................

How are you going to do this ? ....

....

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9. Now rate your progress for this week on your own personal scale from 1 -10 (1 lowest 10 = highest)

<u>1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10</u>

The advantage of this approach is that teachers benefit from it-by looking at their progress record they can focus on areas they are weak in. Teachers can utilise the information and plan programmes accordingly.

Short questionnaires on particular areas of learning can give essential feedback to the teachers on various aspects of teaching—such as strategies, use of audio/ visuals, educational tours and so on.

A questionnaire on the classroom activities can be as follows:

1. Did you find the lesson on ————————interesting ?

2. Would you like more lessons on the same pattern ?

3. What did you learn from the lesson?

4. Who spoke more you or the teacher ?

5. Would you like some homework set on the lesson? If yes, why ? if no, why not ?

Such short questionnaires are easy to introduce in the class and the feeback allows the teacher to manipulate materials to suit particular learning events. [See appendix on Questionnaires].

Diaries written by learners can also provide some insight to the teacher only if he/ she regularly checks learner diaries.

Finally, tests too evaluate learner progress and enables the teacher to categorize learners as high achievers, medium achievers and low achievers. A placement test will put learners in a class at an appropriate level, a screening or selection test will help the teacher to decide on which chosen few can opt for a.particular course; an achievement in attainment test will assist the teacher to monitor learner progress and make suitable adjustments in his/her teaching scenario.

Questions :

1. What are the different kinds of stress that trouble teachers ?

2. How do teachers fight lack of motivation in students ?
3. Why is data collection important for a teacher ? Exaplain the various ways it can be done?
4. Frame a questionnaire on a particular lesson you have taught.

1.5 Evaluation of Materials

At various stages of their professional lives teachers need to get involed in the selection of material for their students. Sometimes these materials are of a supplementary kind and sometimes they are used as coursebooks themselves. Teachers often find the materials they have been asked to use not very statisfying. They then, have to go looking for ideas in other books and use them in addition to the prescribed syllabus. The basic questions asked before evaluating materials are— (1) Will the materials be useful to the students ? and (2) How will they help the teacher ?

When answering the first question we have to remember the tests our students have to sit for. Some schools have round the year assessment programmes while others have annual tests. Whatever testing system may be prevalent, what the teachers must have with them are profiles of students and their needs. Jeremy Hermer in his The Practice of English Language Teaching describes the profile of students as having three components—description of students, description of student needs and conclusion: type of material appropriate for students.

Description of Students

1. Age—

2. Sex —

3. Social/cultural background—

4. Motivation/attitude—

6. Educational background—

7. Knowledge   (a) English level—

                          (b) Of the world—

8. Interests and beliefs—

Based on the above, what conclusion can you draw about the kind of materials that would be suitable for your students ?

The above analysis would give us some idea about what kind of materials would be appropriate for the students based on their personal characteristics. The seconcl analysis would enable the teachers to arrive at some kind of conclusion about their needs.

Description of Student Needs

1. What contexts and situations (if any will) your students probably use English in at some future date ?

    a...

    b ....

    c...

2. Give an order of priority for the different language skills (including sub-skills) that your students will need when using English.

    a ....

    b ....

    c ....

    d ....

    e ....

3. Now say what percentage of class time should be spent on these various skills

    a...   d...

    b...   e...

    c...

4. Based on the above say(a) what level students need to reach and(b) what kind of language they need to be able to use on understand (e.g. formal/ informal, spoken/ written, scientific/business etc.)

Conclusion : Type of materials appropriate for students

Based on the description of students and their needs, say what type of materials you think would be most appropriate for these students.

The needs analysis can be done through questionaires, interviews with students and teachers and emplyers. Once this is done the teacher(s) can evaluate materials that are appropriate.

In India we have the different Boards and Councils specifying the kind of syllabus that ought to be followed at various levels sometimes there are coursebooks and text books that have to be covered by the teacher at each level It is in such situations.

That the teacher has to look for supplementary materials specially in cases where the prescribed materials are either inadequate, unsuitable or unsatisfactory.

The material s evaluation form as given in Jeremy Harmer's book will help teachers not only to analyse student needs but also to find out how much they need to develop and evaluate their own teaching.

Sometimes literary texts are used as materials to be taught. In such cases too teachers need evaluation sheets to find out what kind of benefits students will find from reading these texts on whether these materials can be used to motivate students into further reading following are two evaluation sheets, 'quickie' and 'detailed' taken from Gillian Lazer's book.

Literature and Language Teaching.

Quickie	Title of book			
	Authors)			
	Publisher			
	Level			
	Overall aims/approach			
	Types of texts used			
	Skill/language area which			
	book wiUhelp to improve Strengths of material			
	Weaknesses of material			
	Suitable for my students?			
	Yes/No (give reason)			

2. **Detailed Book Evaluation**

Title of Book...

Author(s)..

Publisher..

Aims an Organisation

1. What are the overall aims of the book?

2. What approach to using literature seems to have been adopted ?
   Is the approach suitable for your students ?

low is the book organised ? (thematically) ? according to linguistic difficulty ? Chronologically ? etc.

4. Are units/sections self-contained ? Can you use some of the material, or do you need to work through it all ?

Materials and activities

1. What kinds of texts are used in the book ? (poems ? short shories ? extracts from novels and plays ? literary and non-literary texts ?)

2. Are texts sufficiently varied, interesting and relevant to students ?

3. Are tasks and activities sufficiently varied, interesting and relevant to students ?

4. Are the students given sufficient linguistic guidance with the langauge of the texts (for example, vocabulary exercises, glossaries etc.)?

5. Are students given adequate cultural, historical or literary background information to make sense of the texts ?

6. Are students encouraged to relate the materials to their own lives and experiences ?

7. Is the material challenging enough for the students ?

8. Could the material be adapted if necessary ?

Instructions and Layout

1. Are the instructions in the book clear and easy to follow?

2. Is the layout clear and attractive ?

3. Are there visuals (pictures, photos, diagrams etc.) to supplement the texts ?

Accompanying resources

1. Is the teacher given sufficient guidance in how to use the book (either in the book itself on in a teacher's book ?)

2. Is there recorded material available to accompany the book ?

3. Could the book be used by students working on their own ? (Is there a key for example to help them?)

Suitability for class/group

Would you use this book with your students?. Please give reasons.

* The following evaluation sheet can be used for evaluating a **piece** of published material fairly quickly for example a section on unit of a book.

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Evaluating a piece of material

Title of book ....

Authors) ....

Publisher ....

Page on which relevant material is found...

Please tick the relevant column

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
1. Suitability of approach for your students				
2. Suitability of level for your students				
3. Relevance and interest of texts chosen				
4. Variety and appropriateness of task activities				
5. Staging and grading of tasks and activities				
6. Opportunities for student participation and personalisation				
7. Linguistic guidance (glossaries, exercises etc.)				
8. Cultural Aiterary/historical background provided.				
9. Clarity of instructions				
10. Layout and design				

I would/would not use this material with my students

because ....

....

* Literature and Language Teaching—G Lazar.

What do we do when we evaluate a book or material for specific purposes ?

1. We read the cover pages first. If the proves interesting we look up the pages that deal with the specific purpose we have in mind. Aslo look at the pages of content for other materials that maybe useful.

2. If the activities are appropriate for our students we have these photocopied.

3. These are then circulated among the students, who work out the tasks.

4. If the activities generate enthusiasm among students and motivate them to go for further learning, the book can be bought for recommended.

5. The price and the availability of the book in the market are causes of concern, specially if the book comes in a pack (coursebook, tape and teacher book). We need to go through many books before setting on one.

6. Peer discussions on the relative importance of a particular item/activity in aparticular book is good guidance for evaluating the material.

7. Framing a materials evaluation form and using it for evaluation will be helpful too. Questions listed below can be included in the form.

    1. Do the materials include and practise the skills our students need?

    2. Is the practice of individual skills integrated into the practice of other skills?

    3. Is the language used in the materials realistic—i.e. like real-life English?

    4. Is the subject and content of the materials relevant to the students' needs ? Are they culturally appropriate ?

    5. Are the materials interesting for the students ? Do they offer sufficient variety?

    6. Do the materials avoid harmful stereotypes of different members of society (women, policemen, elderly people etc.)

    7. Do the materials clearly state the objectives and give guidance to the teacher about how to use them to the best advantage ?

    8. Are there enough diagrams in the materials explaining different processes that students have to be taught ?

    9. Are the flow charts and pie charts used in the materials clearly printed? Do they give explicit instructions as to what the student is expected to do with them?

    10. Are the pictures used in the materials relevant to the activities ?

1.6 Unit Review Questions :

1. How many components does a student profile have ?

2. Give a description of student needs.

3. Evaluate a book using the 'quickie' evaluation sheet ?

4. Using the 'detailed' evaluation sheet write a paragraph stating why you will not recommend a particular book for your students.

5. How many times have you evaluated a particular material (e.g. a li ary text) for teaching and testing various skills ? Give details about your evaluation.

6. Frame your own materials evaluation form.

1.7 Bibliography :

1. Literature and Language Teaching—Gillian Lazer. (Cambridge University Press C.U.P.)

2. Teachers in Action—PeCerJames.

3. The Practice of English Language Teaching—Jeremy Harmer [Longman Handbooks].

4. Evaluation—P. Rea-Dickins & K. Germaine.

5. Ways of training—Jessa Woodward. Longman

1.8 Ten Characteristics of an effective questionmaire

This worksheet will help you to write an effective questionnaire.

Consider the following points before writing your questionnaire.

1. Aim The aim of the questionnaire should be as clear as possible, for example, ask yourseltfyourselves which precise question(s) you wish to answer with it. Plan carefully, ask your trainer for advice. Remember small is beautiful.

2. Ethics Explain the purpose of the questionnaire-you can also do this briefly of the top of the questionnaire and what you will do with the results. A ask the learners to respond frankly, if you think they will not respond in this way, make the questionnaire anonymous. At the end of the questionnaire, thank the respondents for cooperating and tell tham that feedback concerning the results of the questionnaire will-be available if they are interested.

3. Length The questionnaire should be short and easy to answer (one or two pages?)

4. Layout The layout-how the text is arranged on the page should be as neat professional and clear as possible (word, process the text if possible, have plenty of spaces.

5. Language Consider carefully which language to use for the instructions/ questions: the respondents' mother tongue, or English if you

think they will read and comprehend it satisfactorily. The words you use should be clear and anambiguous.

6. Response   The response method—how the learners show their opinion—e.g. by a non-linguistic response such as a tick, or circling an answer-should be very clear; give an example of the appropriate response. Such non-linguistic responses are easier. On use so-called structured questions with statements . requiring a yes/no response. Especially recommended for young children are 'happy faces' ☺ ☺. Or use, 'open questions.' For example,'''which song did you like best ? Why ?' Vary the question types in order to avoid tedium, but not too much, as this might cause the respondents too much difficulty.

7. Order   Give the respondents an easy start to the questionnaire, arousing their interest with questions eliciting personal information (date, class, age, etc.); use open questions after structured ones.

8. Pilot   Try out the questionnaire on somebody else before you use it. Perhaps a colleague could help in this respect, as he or she may be able to identify difficulties you were anaware of; modify the questionnaire accordingly. May be pilot the questionnaire with learners who are not in the class you wish to investigate.

9. Reporting   The results should be easy to analyse, collatie and report (e.g. visually with bar graphs, etc.) Will you present the results orally or use a poster ? Plan this carefully.

10. Other   Can you think of ny other characteristics of an effctive questionnaire ?

[adapted from Youngman, 1984]

From Teachers in Action—Peter James, Cambridge.

Unit 2 ❑ Planning, Preparing and Administering Tests

Structure

2.1 Objectives

This unit will enable you to :

plan your test—which kind, what skills/sub skill to test, should it be direct/indirect etc.

prepare the test—what must testers do to make the tests valid and reliable?

administer the test—what measures should be taken to'efficiently implement the test.

2.2 Introduction

Previous units have already discussed testing, features of language testing, test types and objectives, test designs item construction and item analysis. Tliis unit will be cocentrating on planning, preparing and administering tests.

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2.3. The need for a test

Language has no content like mathamatics, history or science. It is more like musical performance and sports, classing language is therefore not easy.

Whay do we need language tests ? Briefly.

- to measure language proficiencey irrespective of the courses the candidates may have followed.

- to discover how far students have achieved the objectives of a course of study.

- to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, to identify what they know and what they do not (feedback)

- to select students for promotion to more advanced studies and institutions to evaluate materials and methods.

As Tests are used for gaining information, so different kinds of tests are constructed to elecit different kinds of information like the proficiency tests, achievement/progress tests, diagnostic tests, placement tests, parallel tests, euqivalent tests and specific purpose tests. The approaches·to testing can be various too. Testing can be direct versus indirect testing discrete point versus integrative testing, non reference versus criterion referenced testing, objective versus subjective testing and communative language testing. What the test writer must keep in mind, is, that whatever test he/she is writing should keep in mind, is, that whatever test help he is writing should be **valid and reliable. a valid** test is one that infact measures what it claims to be measuring a listening test with written multiple-choice options may not be valid of the printed choices are so difficult to read that the exam actually measures reading comprehension as much as it does listening comprehension, a **reliable** test in one that produce essentially the same results consistently on different occasions when the conditions of the test remain the same.

2.3.1 Planning a test

When planning tests one has to be clear about

(1) what kind of test it is to be—proficiency achievement, diagnostic placement or what ?

(2) What skills are to be tested ? What sub-skills ?

(3) How long should the test last ?

(4) which type of marking-objective or subjective should be adopted? Should examiners be provided with scoring keys?

(5) Who are going to write the tests ? Have they been given the test specification ?

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(6) Should examiners and administrators be trained ?

(7) How costly would the tests be ?

(8) Will moderators be necessary ?

(9) Which press/printers should be entrusted the printing its ?

(10) How many tape recorders/cassette players and cassette/CDs would be needed ?

As many of the principles and procedures involved in language test construction derive from psychological testing, one might find helpful the four stages of psychological test construction as described by Anstey (1966). These may be applied to language tests too.

1. Plan the content and general layout of the test, decide on the type of text item, the length and time limit for the test in its final form, the instructions to be given and the method of scoring. This is the **planning** stage.

2. Devise at least 3 times as many items as will eventually be needed (more if 2 parallel) versions are reequired) and try the rough draft on a small group of interested people in order to obtain introspections on the general inpact of the test and identify items which are palpably unsatisfactory. This is the **pre-pilot** stage.

3. A try-out preferably two or more try-outs of successive drafts, on a large sample of the same kind of people on whom the test is to be used, in order to check test, administration and provide material for thorough item analysis and revision of the draft test. This may be called the **pilot** stage.

4. Try-out of the-test in its final form in order to obtain evidence as to its practical usefulness on validity and to obtain "norms", this is means of assessing the significance of scores in the test

This is the final **validation** stage.

Stages 2,3,4 are partly procedural and partly dependent on the success of stage 1, as this tage involves professional language knowledge of the test construction.

2.3.2 Preparation

After determining what kind of test it is to be and for what purpose, the tester will write the first draft according to test specification. (See the two examples given in testing for Language Teachers by A Hughes). The draft must have the smae pattern as that of the final test-format, content, timing, criterial level of performance and scoring procedure, (sample papers should be available to candidates who are going to take the test). For example if reading comprehension is being tested then tasks can be of various kind—multiple-choice, rhatchin,g information transfer, ordering/sequencing, editing, gap, filling, cloze procedure and short answers.

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But before the exercises/test items can be framed the tester must find appropriate texts. Not all texts lend themselves to item development. So test writers should spend time searching for texts that have promise and build up their own 'bank' of texts for future use.

When writing the draft, the tester must remember not to allow candidates too much freedom in answering the questions they have chosen. Instead of setting a question like-write an essay on friendship, it can be rewritten thus "What does friendship mean? Why do we need them? What roles do your friends play in your life? Explain who is considered man's best friend and why." The break up will elicit better performance.

Items should always be written with their meaning clear. After having drafted them subject them to the scrutiny of calleagues for alternative interpretations. Pretest the items on a group of students if possible. This will cut-down problems before the test is finally administered. All instructions should be clear and explicit, leaving no scope for misinterpretings. Colleagues too can help to weed out instructions that are unclear.

Use items that permit scoring which is as objectives as possible. Multiple choice or open-ended items can be of help.

Provide a detailed scoring marking and rating scale key. This would take care of acceptable answers and partially correct responses. But difficulties may still persist. Examiners may have to use their discretion in assigning points in such cases. But if the scorers/marking have had training the difficulties would be less insurmountable specially where scoring is subjective-e.g. composition, Scorers could sit together and agree on a response that would be final and binding on all.

All scripts should be marked at least by two independent examiners, each recording marks on separate sheets. A third examiner then compares the marks to investigate discrepancies. On adequate number of examiner will therefore have to be trained.

Training of examiners is a crucial component of any testing programme. If candidates do not have faith in the marks given to them by the examiners, the validity and reliability of the programme will be open to questions. There are two types of marking: Objective and subjective. Objective type marking is used for multiplechoice true/false, error recognition and other item types where the candidate is required to produce a response which can be marked either correct or incorrect. An answer key or mark scheme can make things easier for the marker though he/she might have to use his/her discretion how and then (often the marking of tests whioh have key is mechanical and can be carried out by non-examiners or computers.) As the item writers cannot forsee all of the responses that candidates may come up with, record should be kept by examiners of the unpredicted answers during the try-out or pretest. The training programme for examiners should give these scorers time to analyse all items carefully, write down their own responses as if they were candidates and to go through a large number of sample scripts to see if any new and acceptable responses occur that should be added to the mark scheme/key. The goal of training is to expand the mark scheme and allow examiners to reach decisions with confidence facing the unexpected.

Subjective marking is usually used for marking tests of writing or speaking. This is more complicated that the correct-incorrect decision made by the examiner than objective marking. The examiner here has to judge, to assess how will a candidate completes a given task and for this they need a rating scale. The rating scale may consist of numbers, letter or other labels (eg, good, very good) accompanied by statements describing the behaviour expected. These statements are called descriptors. B.E.C and IELTS have these descriptors.

There are two types of scales holistic and analytic. Examiners will have to be trained to use these scales effectively.

A. Sample Holistic Scale

18-20	Excellent	Natural English with minimal errors and complete realisation of the task set.
16-17	Very good	More than a collection of simple sentences with good vocabulary and structures. Some non basic errors.
12-15	Good	Simple but accurate realisation of the task set with sufficient naturalness of English and not many errors.
8-11	Pass	Reasonably correct but awkward and non-communicating OR fair and natural treatment of subject with some serious errors.
6-7	Weak	Original vocabulary and grammar both inadequate to the subject.
0-4	Very poor	Incoherent. Errors show lack of basic knowledge of English

From UCLES International Examinations in English as a Foreign Language General Handbook, 1987.

2.3.4   A Sample Analytic Scale

Relevance and Adequacy of Content

0.   The answer bears almost no relation to the task set. Totally inadequate answer.

1.   Answer of limited relevance to the task set. Possibly major gaps in treatment of topic and/or pointless repetition.

2. For the most part answers the task set, though there may be some gaps or redundant information.

3. Relevant and adequate answer to the task set.

Compostional Organisation

0. No apparent organisation of content,

1. Very little organisation of content. Underlying structures not sufficiently apparent.

2. Some organisational skills in evidence but not adequately controlled.

3. Overall shape and internal pattern clear. Organisational skills adequately controlled.

Cohesion

0. Cohesion almost totally absent writing is so fragmentary that comprehension of the intended communication is virtually impossible.

1. Unsatisfactory cohesion may cause difficulty in comprehension of most of the intended communication.

2. For the most part satisfactory cohesion though occasional deficiencies may mean that certain parts of the communication are not always effective.

3. Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare inappropriacies and/or circumlocutioa

Adequacy of Vocabulary for purpose

0. Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication.

1. Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps frequent lexical inappropriacies and/or repetitions.

2. Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps some lexical iinappropriacies and/or circumlocution.

3. Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.

Grammar

0. Almost all grammatical pattern inaccurate.

1. Frequent grammatical inaccuracies.

2. Some grammatical inaccuracies.

3. Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.

Mechanical Accuracy I (Punctuation)

0. Ignorance of conventions of punptuation.
1. Low standard of accuaracy of punctuation.
2. Some inaccuracies of punctuation.
3. Almost no inaccuracies of punctuation.

Mechanical Accuracy II (Spelling)

0. Almost all spelling inaccurate
1. Low standard of accuracy in spelling.
2. Some inaccuracies in spelling
3. Almost no inaccuracies in spelling.

From : **Test of English for Educational Purposes,** Associated Examining Board, UK 1984.

Selection of examiners of writing is extremely vital. The Board/University will have to select trained examiners of writing to maintain standard So provisions will have to be made for examination committees and standardisation meetings. The exam committee with the Chief Examiner/Head Examiner and a select group of examiners, will mark papers keeping in mind the rating scheme. The scripts should be chosen randomly and reasons should be offered for awards given. The standardisation meeting will ensure that other examiners follow the procedures laid down by the examination committee. All this of course after the test is administered. What is crucial in the preparatory stage is the forming of examination committees and planning of standarisation meetings.

In this context, one has to keep in mind that for better and impartial judgement, candidates should be identified by number and not name.

After the draft is modified by colleagues it should be sent to the moderating committee for endorsement. The next stage is to pre-test the draft paper on a select group of candidates to find out whether it tests what it is supposed to test.

If the tryout on pre-test is satisfactory, the draft on manuscript can be sent to a reliable printer, the final proof will have to be approved before a print order can be issued.

For the listening component of the testarrangement will have to be made for recording. How and where it will be done will need prior thinking. This recording can be entrusted to professionals who have expertise in the field. The quality of the tape/cassette/CD and clarity of sound must be ensured. This can be effectively done by pre-testing the listening component also on a group of candidates to note their reaction.

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For tests of speaking, both the interlocutors and the examiners need to go through live performances before they can conduct 'real' or final interviews. Live performances mean pretesting. Examiners (persons who observe the candidates being interviewed) and interlocutors (persons who winteract with the candidates using the cue cards) must be trained in paper management, the use of cue cards, time management as well as how to give instructions and bring out the best in the candidates. Even administrators need training. All these will have to be prepared before tests can be administered.

2.4 Test Administration

As earlier states, like examiners and interlocutors administrators also need training. Unless there is good administration the test may not be valid and reliable. A test must be practicable and straight-forward to administer, A tryout or pilot administration of a test can take care of many of the lapses that otherwise might have occurred.

Materials and equipment

1. Organise and keep ready question papers, answer sheets and test booklets.

2. Number all test materials consecutively so as to provide greater security.

3. Check that all equipment (tape recorders, cassette, CD players etc) is in good working condition.

Invigilators

4. Detailed instructions should be prepared for invigilators as well as examiners of speaking tests.

Candidates

5. All candidates should be issued admit cards and instructed to arrive well before the starting time of the test. They should also know what they can carry with them inside the hall and what they must do if they turn up late or have some emergencies.

Centres

6. Centres where the tests can be held should be chosen well ahead of the commencing date of the test or exam. Inspection of these premises will have to be conducted to find out whether the rooms are suitable, whether tables and chairs can be arranged with sufficient space between candidates to prevent copying, whether lighting arrangement is adequate and what scope of alternative arrangement can be made in case of electricity failure. Ideally one should have air-conditioned rooms for examinations, but taking into consideration the state of affairs that exist in our country, the last that one can do is to

ensure that fans work. Another alternative would be to hold the tests when deep are cooler.

7.   The identity of candidates should be checked.

8.   The invigilators should give clear instructions to candidates about what they are required to do. These should include information on how to get the attention of the invigilator if necessary and what they should do if they finish earlier than others. They should also be warned of the consequences that they may have to face in case of irregular behaviour.

9.   All test materials should be distributed to candidates by the invigilators before the test begins and collected by them after the test ends. Record should be kept of these.

10. The test should start on time and end on time. 'Pens down' should mean pens down. A wall clock in a strategic place will help the candidates time themselves.

11. Once the test is in progress, invigilators should unobtrusively monitor the behaviour of the candidates and deal with any irregularities as specified in their instructions.

12. Before the listening test commences examiner should once more check the microphones, the tape-recorders/cassette-CD players and the acoustic of the hall. Emergency measures should be kept in mind in case of electricity failure. Better still will be the use of batteries, so provisions for such items need to be kept in mind. Examiners should learn how to set up equipment, when and how it is to be used and what to do in case of a malfunction. They should also find but whether the test is audible to all candidates in the hall.

13. The administrators role in particularly important in tests of speaking. They should have clear written instructions telling them what to do and when to do it. Brand copies of task sheets, photos, prompts etc should be made available to the examiners and interlocutors. The administrators should also see that the rooms are ready for interviews and that all materials furniture and equipment are in place. Special care should be taken about the sitting arrangement for the examiner the interlocutor and the candidates where two/three are interviewed together. In the case of a single examiner interviewing a single candidate the sitting arrangement would need to be modified. The table between the examiner/interviewer and the candidate must be wide enough to accommodate the audio-recorder and the file of prompts and cue-cards.

14. Administrators have another important task-creation of congenial atmosphere for candidates of the speaking test. They have to be told to came at least half an hour earlier than their allotted time of interview to fill in forms and relax.

The waiting room should be large and comfortable. If possible ushers may be appointed for getting candidates into and out of the testing room in time, and for making sure that candidates who have already been assessed do not communicate with those who are waiting their turn.

2.5 Summing up

Summing up: Test and testers are not liked by anybody. Teachers, guardians and candidates mistrast both. Good testing can overcome this mistust. This unit has attempted to show that if tests are planned, prepared and administered with care, testing would causeless apprehension.

2.6 Questions

1. Why are language tests necessary ?

2. What are the four stages of testing as described by Anstey ?

3. Why must candidates look up sample papers.

4. Should examiners be trained before they start examining papers ? Why ?

5. What roles do pre-tests have in Testing ?

6. Why should detailed marking key and rating scale be given to examiners ?

7. What are the two types of rating scales examiners may use ?

8. How does standardisation meetings help examiners ?

9. When can print orders be given?

10. What roles do administrators play ? Discuss why success of a testing system depend on efficient administrators.

2.7 Bibliography

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2.8 Appendix

New Developments

Gary Buck in his article 'New Developments in U.S. K-12 Testing* discusses new thinking taking place in the USA. In 2001 the United States Congress passed a new law— No **Child Left Behind**—which profoundly affected American education. The main intent of this legislation is accountability student progress must be a measured by state and local education authorities. Additional testing will be form of this accountability. Test scores must show annual and better proficiency level of all students in subjects such as mathematics, sceince and language. States must set achievement objectives for second language learners and test them frequently to find out whether the goals are being met. The legislation contains provisions for drastic penalties against schools not meeting their goals.

Traditional language tests placed L2 learners into categories like non-English user, a limited English user, on a competent English user. Such tests did not show small annual improvements. Moreover these tests measured general social language rather than Academic English, so new tests where called for.

Ballard & Tighe, Publishers, an educational publishing company based in south California is developing a new test. English lanaguage proficiency test. The 9PT+ (Idea Proficiency Test) to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind. The new test will be based on an analysis of the language skills students need to function in mainstream classrooms at each grade level.

The IPT + is not a test, but rather a testing system. The IPT+ will :

- Be based on scientific research into what language learners actually need to be able to do to function successfully in mainstream classes.

- Be criterion referenced.

- Assess both social and academic language.

- Be based on state and national standards, and be customisable to meet individual state standards.

- Provide separate scores and designations for speaking, listening, reading writing and comprehension.

- Report scores on one standarized scale, running from kindergarten to grade 12.

- Provide empirically derived annual achievement objectives for all grades, and report that achievement on the standard scale.

- Be capable of making placement decisious, as well as providing diagnostic information.

- Provide aggregated and disaggregated data for all groups of test takers specified in the legislation

- Be quick and easy to administer, and provide rapid results.

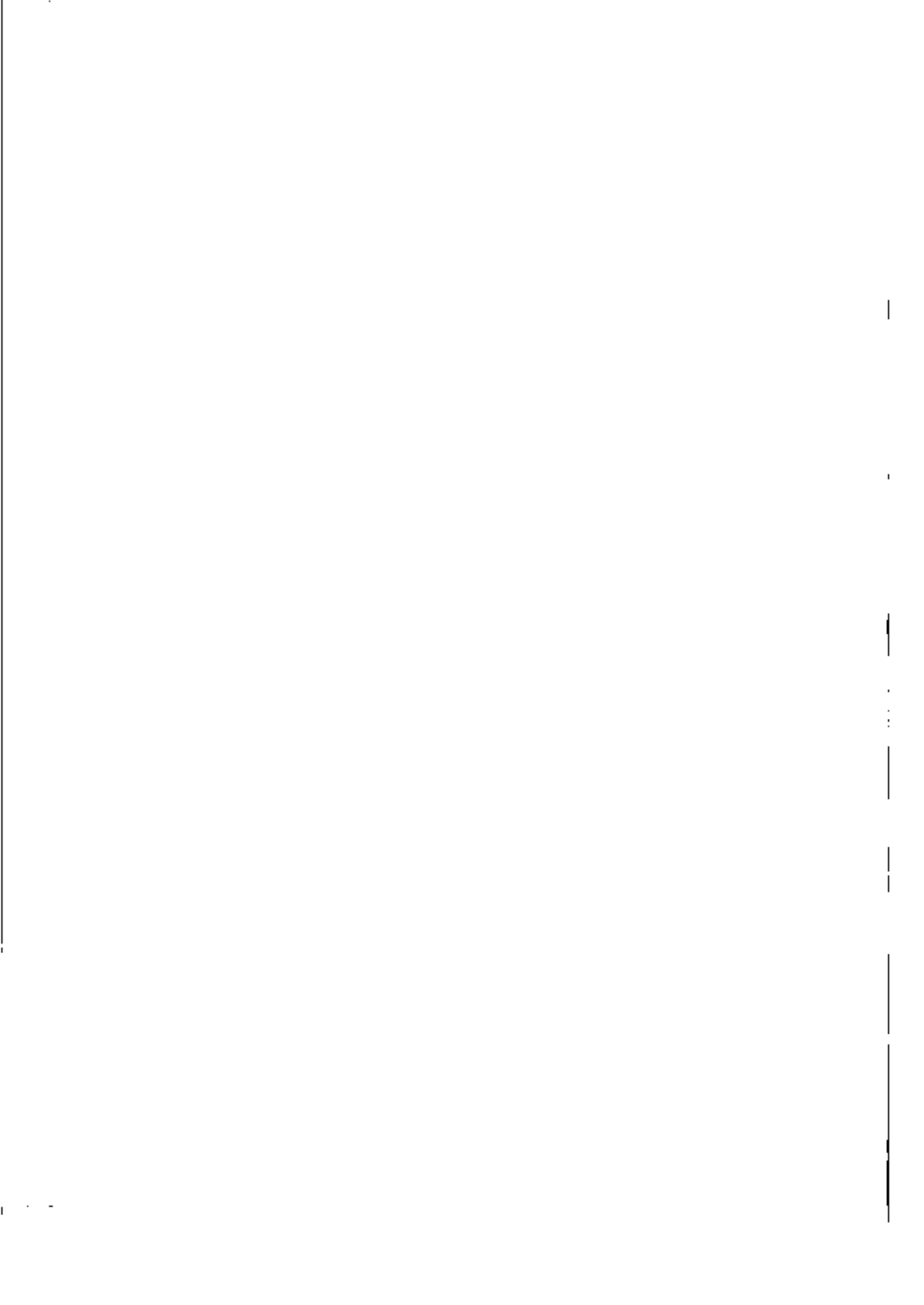The target completion date for the IPT+ is autumn 2004.

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মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

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