

## DESIGNING ENGLISH TEACHERS' TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ONLINE AND HYBRID TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The need for efficient training programs for English teachers has been brought to light by the latest teaching trends, and the quick transition to online and hybrid learning environments. The particular training requirements for English teachers in adjusting to blended and virtual learning methods are examined in this study. Researchers adopted descriptive research framework to pursue this study. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and interviews with English teachers, the study pinpoints important issues such student involvement, assessment procedures, and technology literacy. The results indicate that in order to prepare English instructors to succeed in online and hybrid environments, focused professional development programs emphasizing digital tools, pedagogical tactics, and emotional support are necessary. Findings indicate that teachers both from school and college education are in stringent need of proper, effective and technology oriented training inside and outside institutions. Recommendations for creating teacher preparation programs that meet these demands are included in the study's conclusion.

**Keywords:** Teacher Training Needs (TNA); ESL teachers; Content knowledge; Pedagogical knowledge; Technology knowledge.

### INTRODUCTION

The global transition to online and hybrid teaching environments has transformed the landscape of English language teaching (ELT). Since last decade, institutions and education policy makers forced educators worldwide to adopt virtual platforms, often with little preparation or training (Dhawan, 2020). While some teachers adapted quickly, many struggled with the technological and pedagogical demands of online teaching. This study focuses on the training needs of English teachers in these new environments, aiming to identify gaps in their preparedness and propose solutions for effective professional development. Online and hybrid

teaching require a unique set of skills, including the ability to use digital tools, design engaging virtual lessons, and assess student learning remotely (Hodges et al., 2020). For English teachers, these challenges are compounded by the need to foster language acquisition and communication skills in a virtual setting.

**This research seeks to answer the following questions:**

1. What are the primary challenges faced by English teachers in online and hybrid teaching environments?

2. What specific training needs do English teachers have to address these challenges?
3. How can teacher training programs be designed to meet these needs effectively?

## 2. Literature Review

The shift to online and hybrid teaching has been widely discussed in educational research. Hodges et al. (2020) distinguish between emergency remote teaching and well-planned online learning, emphasizing the need for proper training and support for teachers. In the context of ELT, the challenges are particularly pronounced due to the interactive nature of language learning (Kohnke et al., 2021). One of the most significant challenges for English teachers in online and hybrid environments is technological literacy. Compton (2009) argues that teachers need to be proficient in using learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing tools, and digital resources. However, many teachers lack the necessary skills to use these tools effectively. For example, a study by Kohnke et al. (2021) found that 75% of English teachers reported difficulties in using digital tools, citing a lack of prior training. This highlights the need for training programs that focus on developing technological literacy.

Traditional teaching methods must be adapted for virtual environments, with a focus on interactive and collaborative activities (Hockly, 2020). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction and communication, is particularly challenging to implement online. Teachers need training in designing activities that promote interaction in virtual settings, such as breakout rooms, online discussions, and collaborative projects. Hockly (2020) suggests that teachers should be trained in using digital tools to facilitate interaction, such as online whiteboards and interactive quizzes. Maintaining student motivation and participation in online settings is a significant challenge (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). In a hybrid environment, where some students attend in person and others remotely, this challenge is even more pronounced. Teachers need training in strategies to engage students in both settings, such as using multimedia

resources, gamification, and interactive activities. Martin and Bolliger (2018) found that students are more likely to engage in online learning when they perceive the activities as relevant and interactive.

Teachers need training in designing and administering online assessments that are fair, reliable, and effective (Gikandi et al., 2011). Traditional assessment methods, such as written exams, may not be suitable for online environments. Instead, teachers need to be trained in alternative assessment methods, such as online quizzes, portfolios, and peer assessments. Gikandi et al. (2011) argue that formative assessment, which provides ongoing feedback to students, is particularly important in online learning. The emotional and psychological challenges faced by teachers in online and hybrid environments also warrant attention. Many teachers report feeling isolated and stressed, particularly when their institutions (Kohnke et al., 2021) do not adequately support them. Training programs should include modules on stress management and peer support to help teachers cope with the demands of online and hybrid teaching.

## 2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is grounded in several theoretical frameworks that inform the design and implementation of teacher training programs for online and hybrid environments.

### 2.1.1 Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

The TPACK framework, developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), emphasizes the integration of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge. In the context of ELT, this means that teachers need to be proficient in using digital tools (technological knowledge), understand how to teach language effectively (pedagogical knowledge), and have a deep understanding of the English language (content knowledge). Training programs should be designed to develop all three components of TPACK.

### 2.1.2 Community of Inquiry (CoI)

The Community of Inquiry framework, developed by Garrison et al. (2000), emphasizes the importance of social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence in online learning. In the context of ELT, this means that teachers need to create a sense of community among students (social presence), facilitate meaningful learning experiences (cognitive presence), and provide guidance and support (teaching presence). Training programs should focus on developing these three types of presence in online and hybrid environments.

### 2.1.3 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivation. In the context of ELT, this means that teachers need to create learning environments that support students' autonomy, help them develop competence in the language, and foster a sense of relatedness with their peers and teachers. Training programs should focus on strategies to support these three psychological needs in online and hybrid environments.

## 3. Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The participants of the study were chosen from the English teachers who were in practice of physical and online teaching classes to their students. The participants included 150 English teachers from schools, colleges, and universities representing diverse geographic and socioeconomic contexts. The sampling strategy adopted for this study was proportionate random sampling technique with equal numbers of teachers from schools, colleges, and universities of southern Punjab.

### Data collection was conducted in two phases:

**1. Surveys:** A structured questionnaire was distributed to assess teachers' experiences, challenges, and training needs in online and hybrid teaching.

**2. Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 teachers to gain deeper

insights into their specific needs and suggestions for training programs.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics for survey responses and thematic analysis for interview transcripts. The findings were triangulated to ensure reliability and validity.

## 4. Findings

The study revealed several critical findings related to the challenges and training needs of English teachers in online and hybrid teaching environments. These findings are categorized into five main areas: technological challenges, pedagogical adaptation, student engagement, assessment practices, and emotional support. Each finding is discussed in detail below.

### 4.1 Technological Difficulties

One of the most significant findings of the study was the widespread difficulty English teachers faced in using digital tools effectively. **75% of the surveyed teachers** reported that they lacked the necessary skills to navigate online platforms, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams), and digital resources (e.g., interactive quizzes, online whiteboards). Many teachers admitted that they had received little to no training in using these tools before transitioning to online teaching. The data explicated that 75% of teachers reported difficulties in using digital tools, 60% stated that they had no prior training in online teaching technologies, whereas, 45% expressed frustration with the frequent technical issues they encountered, such as poor internet connectivity and software glitches. One teacher commented, "I had never used Zoom before the pandemic. I struggled to set up breakout rooms and share my screen during lessons. It was overwhelming." Another teacher mentioned, "I spent more time troubleshooting technical problems than actually teaching." These findings align with Compton's (2009) argument that technological literacy is a critical component of online teaching. The lack of training in digital tools has been a recurring issue in emergency remote teaching contexts (Dhawan, 2020).

#### 4.2 Pedagogical Adaptation

The study found that English teachers struggled to adapt traditional teaching methods to online and hybrid environments. **83% of teachers** expressed a need for training in online pedagogy, particularly in designing interactive and communicative activities that align with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. A wide majority, 79% of teachers reported difficulty in adapting CLT methods to virtual settings. 85% stated that they relied heavily on lecture-based teaching because they were unsure how to facilitate interaction online. 87% expressed a desire for training in using digital tools to promote interaction, such as breakout rooms and collaborative platforms. Data collected from interviews regarding this intervention also highlighted similar issues. A teacher shared, "It's hard to get students to speak and interact in an online class. I don't know how to make it engaging." Another teacher noted, "I feel like I'm just talking at my students instead of having a conversation with them." Hockly (2020) emphasizes the importance of adapting CLT methods for online environments by incorporating interactive tools and activities. The findings of this study highlight the gap between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and the demands of online teaching.

#### 4.4 Student Engagement

Maintaining student engagement was identified as a major challenge, particularly in hybrid environments where some students attended in person and others remotely. Teachers reported that students often appeared disengaged, with low participation rates in online discussions and activities. Data shows that 84% of teachers reported difficulty in keeping students engaged in online classes. It was found that 75% stated that students were more likely to participate in face-to-face classes than in virtual ones. Data further indicated that 90% expressed a need for training in strategies to boost engagement, such as gamification and multimedia resources. Martin and Bolliger (2018) found that student engagement in online learning is closely tied to the relevance and interactivity of the activities. The

findings of this study suggest that teachers need training in designing engaging and interactive online lessons.

#### 4.4 Assessment Practices

Teachers highlighted the challenges of assessing language skills in online and hybrid environments. Many teachers reported that traditional assessment methods, such as written exams, were difficult to administer online and did not accurately measure students' language proficiency. Data indicated that 87% of teachers reported difficulty in designing effective assessments. 85% expressed concerns about academic integrity, such as cheating during exams. Data further highlighted that 93% stated that they needed training in alternative assessment methods, such as portfolios, peer assessments, and online quizzes. Data collected from interviews reflected teachers' viewpoints in variety. A teacher shared, "I don't know how to assess speaking skills online. It's hard to tell if students are really speaking or just reading from a script." Another teacher noted, "I worry that students are cheating during online exams, but I don't know how to prevent it." Gikandi et al. (2011) argue that formative assessment, which provides ongoing feedback, is particularly important in online learning. The findings of this study highlight the need for training in designing authentic and reliable online assessments.

#### 4.5 Emotional Support

The study revealed that many English teachers experienced feelings of isolation, stress, and burnout in online and hybrid teaching environments. **83% of teachers** reported that they felt unsupported by their institutions and struggled to balance the demands of teaching with their personal lives. During hybrid mode of teaching 80% of teachers reported feeling isolated and stressed, 74% stated that they lacked emotional support from their institutions, while 71% expressed a desire for training in stress management and self-care strategies. Kohnke et al. (2021) found that emotional and psychological support is critical for teachers in online and hybrid environments. The

findings of this study underscore the need for training programs to address teachers' mental health and well-being. The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted challenges

faced by English teachers in online and hybrid teaching environments. These challenges include:

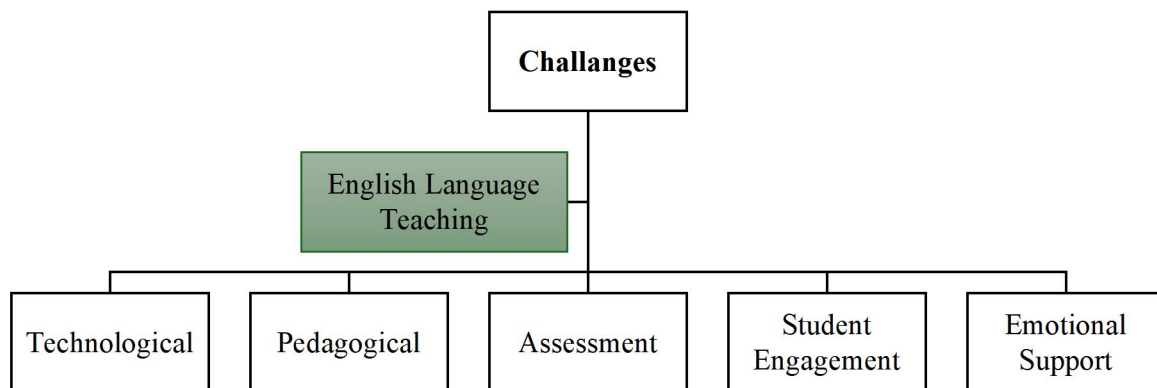


Figure 1. Challenges faced by English teachers

- i. **Technological difficulties**, such as using digital tools and troubleshooting technical issues.
- ii. **Pedagogical adaptation**, particularly in adapting CLT methods to virtual settings.
- iii. **Student engagement**, with many teachers struggling to maintain participation and motivation.
- iv. **Assessment practices**, including concerns about academic integrity and the need for alternative assessment methods.
- v. **Emotional support**, with many teachers reporting feelings of isolation and stress.

These findings underscore the need for comprehensive training programs that address both the technical and emotional needs of English teachers. By providing targeted support in these areas, training programs can empower teachers to deliver effective and engaging language instruction in online and hybrid environments.

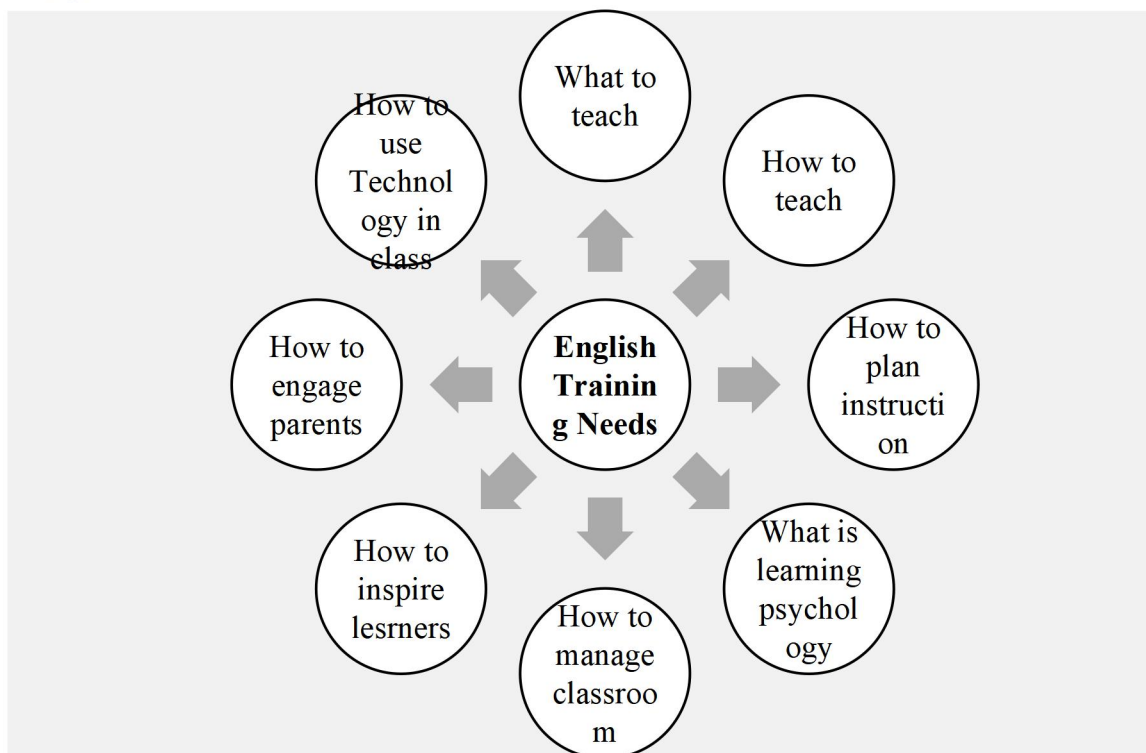
## 5. Discussion

The findings align with existing literature on the challenges of online teaching (Dhawan, 2020; Hockly, 2020) but also highlight the unique needs of English teachers. The study

underscores the importance of comprehensive training programs that address both technical and pedagogical skills. For example, training in using interactive tools like breakout rooms and online whiteboards can enhance student engagement. Similarly, workshops on designing authentic online assessments can help teachers evaluate language skills more effectively. The emotional and psychological challenges faced by teachers also warrant attention. Incorporating modules on stress management and peer support into training programs can help teachers cope with the demands of online and hybrid teaching.

Continuous professional development (CPD) plans and training programs are inevitable for the effective development and professional growth of employees. Many previous studies affirm the need and efficacy of such training opportunities for the employees working across different disciplines (Applewhite et.al. 2017; Arraya, 2017; Holden et.al. (2015); Kai et.al. 2008). Applewhite et.al. (2017) executed research on examining the teachers' viewpoints regarding professional competencies to practice social work, where they highlighted the crucial importance of in-service and out-of-job-station trainings for the educators in order to equip them and their students for social work services.





**Figure 2: English Teacher Training Needs Assessment**

Arraya et.al (2017) demonstrated different kinds and nature of various training delivery methods for the professionals. In a very similar study, Kai et. al. (2008) conducted a research in Chinese environment to discuss the human capital development approaches prevalent across the country. They explored the training needs of the professionals and their perceived beliefs about the effectiveness of those trainings in their professional lives. Accordingly, the continuous diagnostic measures, proper counselling, targeted guidance, substantial trainings, and effective rewarding mechanisms may enhance the professional's worth and performance many times more than their existence competencies. Even single gesture of acknowledging their contributions in any task will provide them a great sense of achievement, and greater sense

of responsibility (Kai et.al., 2008 & Holden et.al., 2015). During job facilitation of the employees, determine their satisfaction and self-efficacy personally, academically, and professionally.

## 6. Conclusion

The study highlights the critical need for targeted training programs to prepare English teachers for online and hybrid teaching environments. By addressing technological, pedagogical, and emotional challenges, such programs can empower teachers to deliver effective and engaging language instruction. Future research should explore the long-term impact of these training programs on teaching practices and student outcomes. The proposed teacher training program for hybrid and online learning is given as under:

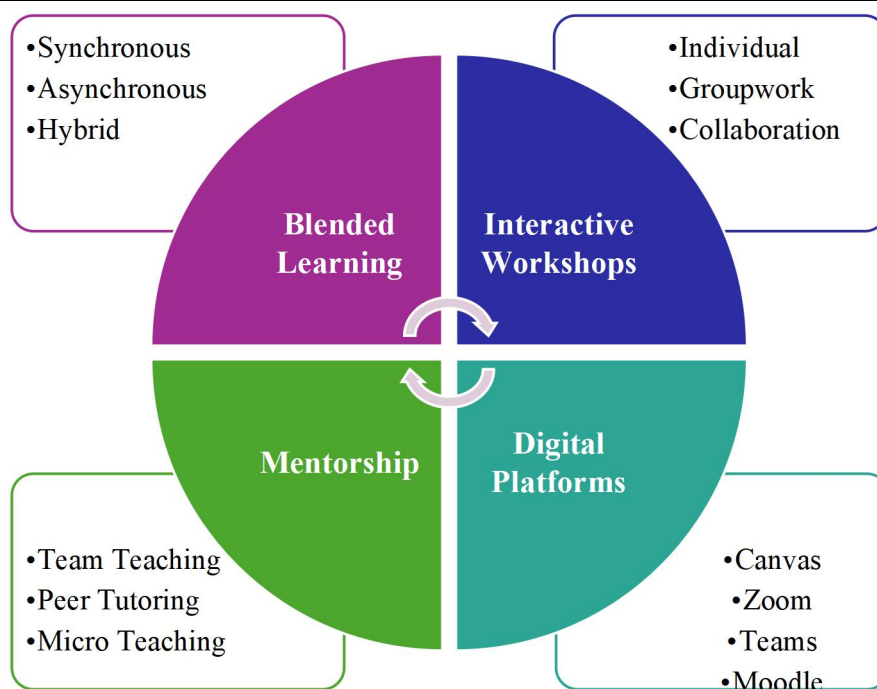


Figure 3. Training Program Delivery Methods

Table 1. Proposed Teacher Training Program for Hybrid & Online Classes

Module	Duration	Key Components	Delivery Methods
1. Program Overview	1 week	- Define program goals and learning outcomes.	- Orientation session (live or recorded).
		- Introduce the structure and expectations of the program.	- Provide a program handbook or guide.
2. Technological Literacy	2-3 weeks	- Training on LMS (e.g., Moodle, Canvas).	- Hands-on workshops (live or recorded).
		- Introduction to video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams).	- Simulated online teaching sessions.
		- Practice using interactive tools (e.g., online whiteboards, breakout rooms).	- Resource library with tutorials and FAQs.
3. Pedagogical Adaptation	3-4 weeks	- Principles of online pedagogy.	- Interactive workshops (live or recorded).
		- Designing interactive activities (e.g., breakout rooms, multimedia resources).	- Collaborative lesson planning sessions.
		- Lesson planning for online classes (synchronous vs. asynchronous).	- Peer feedback on lesson plans.
4. Student Engagement	2-3 weeks	- Understanding online learner behavior.	- Case studies and group discussions.
		- Engagement techniques (e.g., gamification, interactive activities).	- Hands-on practice with gamification tools (e.g., Kahoot, Quizizz).
		- Differentiated instruction for diverse learners.	- Role-playing scenarios to address engagement challenges.
5. Online Assessment	2-3 weeks	- Types of online assessments (formative and summative).	- Workshops on designing rubrics and using grading tools.
		- Ensuring academic integrity (e.g., randomized questions, proctoring).	- Practice creating online quizzes and assignments.

		tools).	
		- Providing constructive feedback.	- Peer review of assessment designs.
<b>6. Emotional Support</b>	1-2 weeks	- Managing stress and burnout.	- Webinars on self-care and work-life balance.
		- Building a support network (e.g., peer groups, counseling resources).	- Group discussions and sharing of best practices.
		- Fostering a positive online environment.	- Role-playing scenarios to address emotional challenges.
<b>7. Practical Application</b>	2-3 weeks	- Microteaching sessions.	- Teachers deliver short online lessons to peers.
		- Reflective practice and action planning.	- Peer and mentor feedback on teaching practices.
		- Peer collaboration and resource sharing.	- Online communities of practice (e.g., forums, social media groups).
<b>8. Program Evaluation</b>	1 week	- Pre- and post-training assessments.	- Online surveys and feedback forms.
		- Certification of completion.	- Issuance of certificates and recommendations for advanced training.

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