# Assessment of Training Needs for Teaching at the elementary schools in Saudi Arabia

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**Introduction**

Language is a divine miracle Allah grants man as a means of communication tool, understanding, social bond and basic foundation for people's co-existence. Languages are multifaceted. Arabic Language is one of loftiest human languages for being the language of the Holy Quran, hence, the importance of the Arabic language and its position remains throughout the generations. According to Abdul Karim (2010) Arabic language is the language of faith, life, sciences, knowledge and human literature.

Arabic language has proven its ability for development and novelty as Naser (2006) asserted that the Arabic language has proved its ability throughout the history, the transfer of human thought byproduct in valuable knowledge manifested in human life politically, religiously, economically, historically, intellectually, philosophically, and scientifically which led to Arabic language fertility, vitality, growth and development.

The relevance of Arabic language and its position necessarily calls attention to its teachers because they are responsible for achieving its objectives by enabling them having skills and proficiency to keep abreast of developments and making use of them in teaching Arabic language.

Tuwaijri (2004) observes a need to train and empower Arabic language teachers scientifically, morally, professionally, and financially to ensure that they perform their duty in serving Arabic language, its culture, values and its civilization. Although the training should not stop after the Undergraduate level but must include in-service training to develop teacher's professional skills in Arabic language in accordance with modern technology in the areas of education, communication, education, and psychology.

Studies by Al-Fahimi (2001), Al-Kori (2006), Al-Nimri (2008), and Batil (2010) had confirmed a continuing need to develop Arabic language teachers' skills to

keep pace with developments on new ideas in their filed through in-service training.

If developing Arabic language teachers through in-service training becomes importance, there is a growing need to develop Arabic Language curriculum. Few years ago, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia had developed Arabic language curricula. Similarly, Arabic language curricula was holistically redesigned including reading, grammar, dictation, composition, and Arabic calligraphy in one curriculum entitled my beautiful language textbook.

Study by AL-Nimri (2008) shows the importance of training Arabic language teachers in holistic development of Arabic language curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through integration of organized reading texts in units of study including the student's textbook, activity book, and teacher's guide book. The study of Al-Zahrani (2010) points to 86 training needed by primary and intermediate school Arabic language teachers of which is (34) training need for the use in integrated portal that is designed to build my beautiful language Textbook for primary school, hence, in-service training is necessary for Arabic language teachers to effectively perform their roles in teaching the new developed modules in the required manner.

Teachers' training needs are increasingly important in light of their continuing professional development because giving them pre-service training is not sufficient to achieve the teaching objectives. The results of study conducted by Halwani(2003) show that female students' weakness in linguistics and their low linguistic achievement at the intermediate level is due primarily to a lack of special educational skills attributed to female Arab language teachers who lack teaching efficiencies as a result of the lack of training.

In this regard, several studies like the study of Al-Fahimi (2001), Al-Zahrani (2005), Al-Harithi (2004), Mahmoud (2007), al-Nimri (2008) and Batil (2010) recommend the re-designing of Arabic language teachers' training programs in light of the emerging training needs according to educational curriculum, teaching methods and strategies.

**Research Problem**

Identifying the necessary training requirements for Arabic language teachers to efficiently perform and upgrade their skills and thought in line with the trends and needs of the educational community is a challenge facing educators worldwide.

Hence, Abu Sheikhah (2001) considers training trends a starting point in the professional development program at the stage in which planning for training programs succeeds or fails.

Developing Arabic language curriculum is dependent on the developing teachers' teaching competencies and skills based on the researcher's observation while visiting some of the teachers and his communication with the educational supervisors monitoring the performance of Arabic language teachers in teaching my beautiful language Textbook at the elementary school. The researcher found that some teachers' performance neither commensurate with the nature of the developed textbook and nor match the skills that should be instilled in their students. In general picture, the researcher noted the poor performance of some Arabic language teachers in teaching my beautiful language Textbook to elementary school students as a result of the teachers' weakness in introduction to lesson, discussion, formulation of question and its diversification, students' motivation, verbal communication, diversification of teaching methods, lack of use of modern teaching strategies, as well as evaluation methods.

Therefore, the successful training is based on an accurate identification of training needs to build training programs in light of the actual needs required by the Arabic language teachers. As mentioned above, the research problem is specifically identified in training needed by Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language Textbook at the primary school in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson planning?

2. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson implementation?

3. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson evaluation?

4. Are there any significant differences between the average answers of the study sample about the training needs related to lesson plan, its implementation and its evaluation due to the years of experience and training courses?

**Significance of Study**

1. Identifying training requisites for Arabic language teachers; in light of contemporary changes, innovations and guidance of the developed curriculum in teaching Arabic language.

2. Developing Arabic language teachers' professional performance through in-service training programs to meet their actual needs.

3. Developing training program for the in-service Arabic language teachers in proportion to this period and its innovation on the one hand, and meeting their needs to the fullest on the other hand to carry out their future roles in teaching the new Arabic language developed curriculum successfully.

4. Proposing in-service activities and methods for Arabic language teachers agreeable to their differences in the number of years of experience and the number of training courses.

**Method**

In light of the nature of this study to answer its questions, descriptive approach was used to analyse the survey questionnaires distributed to a sample of (50) male and female Arabic language teachers accounted for 13% of the study population at the primary school in the city of Arar. The questionnaire consisted of three variables namely; planning, implementation and evaluation. The items of the questionnaire were (46) focusing on Arabic language teachers' training needs in teaching my beautiful language textbook.

**Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Information**

| Variable | | Number of Years of Experience | | Number of Training Courses attended | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | St. D | Mean | St. D |
| Gender | Male (25) | 12.4 | 7.5 | 3.3 | 2.6 |
| | Female(25) | 10.6 | 5.3 | 2.2 | 1.4 |

Table 1 shows that the participants of the study were 25male teachers and 25 female teachers. The average year of experience for the male teachers is 12.4 and the average year of experience for the female teachers is 10.6. The average number

of training courses the male teachers had attended is 3.3 and the average number of training courses the female teachers had attended is 2.2.

The respondents' response to training need was determined by trio arithmetic average as follows: (1) low need, (2) medium need, and (3) high need.

Therefore, trio arithmetic average for training need was explained as follows:

• 1 to 1.66 (Low need)

• 1.67 to 2.33 (Medium need)

• 2:34 to 3 (High need)

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to investigate the effect of gender, experience and number of training courses in determining the level of training need in each area.

**Results and Discussions**

The results were discussed across the research questions as follows:

1. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson planning?

**Table 2: Training needs with regards to lesson plan**

| NO. | Items | Mean | Degree of need |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lesson plan concept, its importance and benefits | 3.00 | High |
| 2 | Determining the desired leaning outcomes tallying with objectives | 2.96 | High |
| 3 | Analyzing content of my beautiful language lessons with its linguistic components | 2.88 | High |
| 4 | Putting reference point to the concepts, skills and values students must acquire | 2.62 | High |
| 5 | Planning for conducive linguistic lesson | 3.00 | High |
| 6 | Integrative approach in preparing my beautiful language lessons | 3.00 | High |
| 7 | Determining appropriate dimensions for the implementation of teaching strategies | 3.00 | High |
| 8 | Identifying students' learning requirements and previous | 2.78 | High |

| | experiences | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Planning for activities to develop students' linguistic thinking | 2.92 | High |
| 10 | Considering students' individual differences in terms of language and its acquisition | 3.00 | High |
| 11 | Planning for classroom management environment, effective organization and teamwork | 3.00 | High |
| 12 | Planning to use writing skills methods | 3.00 | High |
| 13 | Planning to use linguistic skills methods | 2.94 | High |
| 14 | Planning to use reading skills methods | 3.00 | High |
| 15 | Planning to use linguistic communication skills methods | 2.96 | High |
| 16 | Planning to use modern instructional technologies in teaching | 3.00 | High |
| 17 | Planning to evaluate students' learning using a variety of methods | 3.00 | High |
| 18 | Planning for therapeutic tasks for people with language learning difficulties | 2.94 | High |
| 19 | Planning to support high achieving students in study | 2.72 | High |
| | **Total Mean** | **2.93** | **High** |

Table 2 displays the training requirements for teachers in lesson plan, the results showed that the degree of need for training is high for all items, 10 items of the total 19 items have average of 3, the items with lowest average of 2.62 is item number four "Putting reference point to the concepts, skills and values students must acquire ", and the overall average for the items 2.93 is considered high.

The next results were shown by answering the second research questions are as follows:

2. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson implementation?

**Table 3: Training needs with regards to the lesson implementation**

| NO. | Items | Mean | Degree of need |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | Introducing topic of the lesson | 3.00 | High |
| 21 | Employing educational activities in achieving lesson | 3.00 | High |

|     |                                                                                    |      |      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
|     | objectives                                                                         |      |      |
| 22  | Asking questions related to lesson                                                 | 3.00 | High |
| 23  | Asking students questions that develop thinking                                    | 2.92 | High |
| 24  | Using appropriate timely reinforcement                                             | 3.00 | High |
| 25  | Supervising students' class activities                                             | 2.44 | High |
| 26  | Initiating active learning strategies                                              | 3.00 | High |
| 27  | Initiating decision making teaching based skills                                   | 2.96 | High |
| 28  | Introducing social interaction skills during lesson implementation                 | 3.00 | High |
| 29  | Developing writing skills methods                                                  | 3.00 | High |
| 30  | Developing language skills methods                                                 | 3.00 | High |
| 31  | Developing reading skills methods                                                  | 3.00 | High |
| 32  | Using language communication skills methods                                        | 3.00 | High |
| 33  | Employing instruction method and modern techniques to stimulate learning           | 3.00 | High |
| 34  | Implementing instructional activities for people with language learning difficulties | 2.64 | High |
|     | **Total Mean**                                                                     | **2.93** | **High** |

Table 3 displays the teachers' training requirements for lesson implementation, the results showed that the degree of need for training is high for all items, it was found that 11 items of the total 15 items have average of 3, the items with lowest average of 2.44 is item number twenty five "Supervising students' class activities ", and that the overall average 2.93 for the items is considered high.

The results for the third research question are as follows:

3. What are the training prerequisites for Arabic language teachers to teach my beautiful language textbook at the primary school in terms of lesson evaluation?

**Table 4: Training needs with regards to the lesson evaluation**

| NO. | Items | Mean | Degree of need |
|-----|-------|------|----------------|
| 35  | Initiating types of evaluation and its characteristics       | 2.98 | High |
| 36  | Linking between evaluation and objectives                    | 2.68 | High |
| 37  | Evaluating cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain       | 2.96 | High |
| 38  | Designing evaluation tools to diagnose students' learning weakness | 2.98 | High |

| 39 | Engaging students in evaluation (peer evaluation) | 2.50 | High |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 40 | Training students to use self-evaluation in identifying their needs | 2.86 | High |
| 41 | Continuous use of language evaluation to check students' progress | 3.00 | High |
| 42 | Designing language test to determine its application procedures | 3.00 | High |
| 43 | Determining appropriate activities to uncover students' creative language ability | 3.00 | High |
| 44 | Following up language activities and providing feedback | 3.00 | High |
| 45 | Analyzing test results and making use of them in learning language | 2.64 | High |
| 46 | Employing evaluation results to correct learning weakness | 2.58 | High |
| | **Total Mean** | **2.85** | **High** |

Table 4 displays the teachers' training requirements for lesson evaluation, the results showed that the degree of training need for all items is high, it was found that 4 items of the total 12 items have average of 3, the items with lowest average of 2.50 is item number thirty nine "Engaging students in evaluation (peer evaluation)", and that the overall average 2.85 for the items is considered high.

The results for the fourth research question are as follows:

4. Are there any significant differences between the average answers of the study sample about the training needs related to lesson plan, its implementation and its evaluation due to the years of experience and training courses?

**Table 5: The determinants of training need with regards to lesson plan**

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| **Model** | 0.272 | 3 | 0.091 | 27.982 | 0.000 |
| **Experience** | 0.001 | 1 | 0.001 | 0.197 | 0.659 |
| **Training courses** | 0.039 | 1 | 0.039 | 11.978 | 0.001 |
| **Gender** | 0.125 | 1 | 0.125 | 38.660 | 0.000 |
| **Error** | 0.149 | 46 | 0.003 | | |
| **Total** | **0.421** | **49** | | | |
| **Coefficient of Determination = 65%** | | | | | |

Table 5 displays the effects of experience, number of training sessions and gender on the degree of training need for lesson plan. The results showed that number of training courses and gender are statistically significant at the 0.001 and 0.000 respectively, while years pf experience was not statistically significant which means that the degree of need for training male and female teachers is high regardless of years of experience. The results also showed that female teachers are more in need to training than their male counterparts and that the increase in training need corresponds with the increase in the number of training sessions attended. Table 6 shows the determining variables for training needs with regards to lesson implementation as follows:

**Table 6: The determinants of training need with regards to lesson implementation**

| Source | Sum of Squares | fd | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model** | 0.137 | 3 | 0.046 | 24.519 | 0.000 |
| **Experience** | 0.009 | 1 | 0.009 | 5.044 | 0.030 |
| **Training courses** | 0.006 | 1 | 0.006 | 3.272 | 0.077 |
| **Gender** | 0.031 | 1 | 0.031 | 16.886 | 0.000 |
| **Error** | 0.085 | 46 | 0.002 | | |
| **Total** | **429.662** | **50** | | | |
| **Coefficient of Determination = 62%** | | | | | |

Table 6 shows the effects of the experience, number of training course attended and gender on the degree of training need for lesson implementation. The results showed that year of experience and gender are statistically significant at the 0.030 and 0.000 respectively, while the training courses are not statistically significant meaning, the degree of need for training male and female teachers is high regardless of training courses attended. The results also showed that female teachers are more in need to training than their male counterparts and the increase in training need corresponds with the increase in years of experience. Table 7 shows the determining variables for training need with regards to lesson evaluation as follows:

**Table 7: The determinants of training need with regards to lesson evaluation**

| Source | Sum of Squares | fd | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model** | 0.927 | 3 | 0.309 | 39.418 | 0.000 |
| **Experience** | 0.093 | 1 | 0.093 | 11.830 | 0.001 |
| **Training courses** | 0.025 | 1 | 0.025 | 3.234 | 0.079 |
| **Gender** | 0.148 | 1 | 0.148 | 18.934 | 0.000 |
| **Error** | 0.361 | 46 | 0.008 | | |
| **Total** | **1.287** | **49** | | | |
| **Coefficient of Determination = 72%** | | | | | |

Table 7 displays the effect of experience, number of training courses and gender on the degree of training need with regards to lessons evaluation. The results showed that years of experience and gender are statistically significant at the 0.001 and 0.000 respectively, while training courses were not statistically significant meaning, the degree of need for training male and female teachers is high regardless of number of training courses attended. The results also showed that female teachers are more in need to training than the male teachers and the increase in training need fits the increase in years of experience.

**Recommendations**

According to the results obtainable, the following recommendations were suggested;

1. Providing Arabic language teachers with skills necessary for lessons plans through the classroom visits by educational supervisors, or e-mail, and peers' visits.

2. Organizing training courses for Arabic language teachers on the use of language skills in the lesson, the use of modern educational methods and the use of modern learning strategies, especially active learning strategy.

3. Organizing training workshops for male and female teachers on the application of modern evaluative method.

4. Assessing training courses continuously after their implementation to ensure that teachers are provided with necessary teaching skills to teach my beautiful language Textbook effectively and efficiently.

5. Taking advantage of training in solving the most problems confronting teachers' training need in terms of planning and implementation skills and evaluation of my beautiful language Textbook.

## Conclusion

The study found that Arabic language teachers' training needs at the primary level to teach my beautiful language textbook with regards to lessons plan, implementation and evaluation were high from the perspective of primary school Arabic language teachers in the city of Arar, Saudi Arabia, that the degree of the need to train the teachers on the lesson implementation and evaluation was high regardless of the number of training courses, and that the female teachers are more in need of training than male teachers because the increase in need for training tallies with the increase in the number of years of experience.

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## Summary

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The study aimed to identify Arabic language teachers' training needs in teaching my beautiful language Textbook with regards to lesson plan, its implementation and evaluation in investigating the statistically significant differences in training needs related to gender differences, years of experience, and number of training courses attendance at the primary level in Arar, Saudi Arabia. The study employed descriptive statistics to describe mean scores of the samples, standard deviation and ANCOVA to determine the statistically significant differences among the respondents. The study tool consisted of (46) item which was divided into three areas namely; planning, implementation and evaluation. The samples were (25) male and (25) female primary school teachers. The study found that the degree of training need for planning, implementation and evaluation is high and the degree of training need for teachers in the implementation and evaluation of lessons is also high regardless of the number of training courses attended. Also it was found that the female teachers are in need of training more than the male teachers and that training need increases with the increase in the number of years of experience. The study recommended capitalizing on training project in solving the problem of teachers for training on the planning and implementation skills and the lesson evaluation of my beautiful language Textbook.

**Keywords:** Training Needs, Arabic language Teachers, My Beautiful Language Textbook, Primary Level.