

Redefining English for Legal Academic Purposes in India: With Special Reference to National Law Schools

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Abstract

This article is an attempt by the author to emphasize the necessity of conducting a needs analysis of the English language curriculum at National Law Universities of India. Such a needs analysis should incorporate the views of at least four obvious stakeholders namely: students, teachers/curriculum planners and implementers, employers as well as education policy makers. Such a thorough investigation would add to the objectivity, intellectual rigor and effectiveness of an English language syllabus of national law schools and would benefit all stakeholders. It is the need of the hour with increased professionalism in vocational courses in all fields and the legal field in particular. This writer suggests that such an undertaking would be done more efficiently with synergy between Law teachers, Language teachers, Curriculum designers, educational institutions under the aegis of the department of education/human resources. The outcome of such a systematic research would help the department in policy planning and implementation.

Key Words: *language, needs analysis, language courses, law universities, curriculum planning and implementation.*

Introduction

National Law Universities in India have established their role as significant contributors to legal education in India and the legal profession in all its aspects. However, after three decades of its existence it's time to assess its curricular framework, examine its pedagogical practices, and survey its academic structure. The purpose of carrying out such an assessment would be to modify old practices that have outgrown their utility and move towards teaching techniques and methodologies that are more in keeping with contemporary needs and requirements.

Recently a study was published by NALSAR University of Law, entitled 'A STUDY

TO CREATE EVIDENCE-BASED PROPOSALS FOR REFORM OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA - SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORMS AT THE NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES SET UP THROUGH STATE LEGISLATIONS'. Its title clearly states that legal education in India is due for necessary reforms that will make it more goal-oriented and germane to today's needs. This researcher who has been an English language instructor at Gujarat National Law University shares the concern for reform, expressed through the above-mentioned article and presents her proposal for an investigation into language syllabi, practices, teaching techniques and methodologies and more through this article.

The following article presents a blueprint or plan that will guide this researcher to conduct a study of the existing curricular structure of English language courses conducted at National law schools in India. This framework is a broad outline for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. On the basis of this analysis modifications will be suggested in existing English language courses of different National Law schools. An overhaul of curriculum would not necessarily imply a complete rejection of the old. Wisdom suggests that what was fundamentally good should be retained. The idea is to preserve the best practices but change those that do not fulfil the goals of the language curriculum, at the same time introduce new modules which may be more effective and efficient.

In order to achieve these objectives, the obvious first step would be to undertake a thorough investigation at four levels: firstly a close scrutiny of existing language curricula, secondly, an exploration of the perceived needs of students, thirdly, an appraisal of the aims, intentions and philosophies of English language instructors who also design the curriculum and fourthly but equally importantly the employers who expect their prospective employees to come equipped with certain fundamental skills along with subject

knowledge. The focus of this article is more on presenting the research strategy and a discussion of the reasons why this strategy was found to be most suitable. The data collection and analysis shall be done later and may be the subject of another article.

Motive for this study:

After World War II, globalization became a phenomenon that had gathered so much momentum that most nations found it impossible to be repel. So much so that nations such as China, which had built protective walls against such an onslaught are now reaching out to the world with state-sponsored English language programmes for its students and professionals. We are now two decades into the twenty first century. At this juncture, it is worth our while to examine whether a legal education programme in the twenty first century is comprehensive enough to cover all or most of the fundamental requirements of a law curriculum; at the same time is it rigorous enough to ensure that a student graduating with a law degree is thoroughly well trained to carry out the responsibilities that the legal profession entails. The legal profession in India is impacted by and is impacting the overall global market scenario in more ways than one. As an emerging economy with a large English-speaking, educated population, the legal profession has integrated well into the global economy and is increasingly moving towards contributing in the emergence of an erudite, skilled and sophisticated force offering legal services in a worldwide market. In such a situation, legal education in India needs to keep up with the best international standards.

Prof. C. Raj Kumar expresses it crisply in the introduction of his article: "Globalization has changed the dynamics of polity and society. These changes have, in turn, put a premium on creating people and institutions capable of operating in an increasingly complex and interdependent global environment. This is particularly true for emerging economies such as India, which have to develop new institutions and practices to deal with the host of new challenges globalization presents for its domestic society, and train individuals in both the private and public sectors who can operate in these new institutions, as well as mediate between India and the broad array of foreign entities and institutions of global governance with which India's state and civil society increasingly interact. As a result, virtually every emerging economy is striving to create world-class institutions of higher learning that can help prepare them for the knowledge economy of the twenty-first century." (pg. 606)

Legal education in India, since 1985, has become synonymous with National Law Universities. These universities offer a five-year

integrated course in law at the end of which students acquire an L.L.B. Degree along with a B. A., B.Com, B.Sc., BBA or BSW degrees, as the case may be. Other Universities that offer such five-year integrated law courses also try and follow the pattern of National Law Universities. They often replicate not only the pattern of awarding degrees but also the syllabi of National Law Universities in most subjects. It would therefore be safe to assume that what applies to National Law Universities may be extended to all varsities in India offering five-year integrated law courses.

These National Law Schools established in various States in India, follow the curricular norms set by the Bar Council of India which encourages the pedagogy of non-law subjects in the first year or first two years of a five year integrated LLB Course. Subjects such as Economics, Sociology, Political Science, History and English are taught with an underlying assumption that they shall provide an all-inclusive and rigorous professional training to law students. In practice teachers designing the curriculum of such non-legal subjects try and integrate their subject in the context of law subjects so that it not only becomes relevant to law students but provides them with an extensive knowledge base and wider professional skills.

Language courses in National Law Schools, in keeping with this inter-disciplinary approach, largely try and cover general communicative goals as well as objectives of English specific to academic and professional purposes. English language teachers attempt to accommodate language teaching goals within the broader context of legal education. Every teacher is aware that a law student studying to be a legal professional is using language as a tool for thinking, expressing, arguing, questioning, seeking, researching, studying and learning. The language teacher is also aware that a professional today not only requires knowledge in the subject but also skills to apply that knowledge regularly and routinely in various contexts in the course of her work. This awareness remains the underlying principle of most English Language courses and the goal is to enable students to do all of the above fluently, effectively and efficiently.

Linguistic backgrounds of students:

Students at National Law Universities join a five –year integrated law course after having cleared an all-India entrance test CLAT. They come from assorted backgrounds and have varied language skills. For the curriculum designer and teacher the challenge lies in arriving at a balance so that the curriculum can fulfill the need of that student with fairly advanced linguistic ability and is on one end of the spectrum; at the same time give

enough stimulus to the one who is on the other end of the spectrum and is aspiring towards better language skills.

Linguistic Needs of Law Students:

Students of Law require language skills for academic as well as professional purposes. The legal profession more than any other, requires fairly well developed language skills. By its very nature, the legal field expects its practitioners to interact with people rather frequently. All four core skills i.e. listening, reading, speaking and writing are tested each time a lawyer interacts with people. Moreover, a law student requires content knowledge as well as linguistic skills. The curriculum maker therefore, keeps in mind the concept of providing students with English as used in the real world in their specific field.

Kristen Gatehouse (2001) in her article "Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum Development" from *The internet TESL Journal* says:

"I have reached the conclusion that there are three abilities necessary for successful communication in a professional target setting. I have added a third skill or ability to Cummins' theory in order to complete the ESP picture. The first ability required in order to successfully communicate in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon characteristic of that specific occupational context. The second is the ability to use a more generalized set of academic skills, such as conducting research and responding to memoranda. ----- The third is the ability to use the language of everyday informal talk to communicate effectively, regardless of occupational context."

This observation by Gatehouse would probably apply to most professional settings including the legal. Gatehouse (2001) further says, "The task for the ESP developer is to ensure that all three of these abilities are integrated into the curriculum".

Curriculum – Making Process:

How does the teacher who is also the curriculum planner, design a language course that integrates these abilities into the syllabus in such a way that it exactly matches the needs of the learners? The first thing that the curriculum designer discovers is that there is no single source that will provide with all the answers or all the materials.

According to Stephen Krashen

"---- the best language lessons may be those in which real communication takes place, in which an acquirer understands what the speaker is trying to say. Similarly, a reading passage is appropriate for a student if he or she

understands the message. Finally, the teacher-talk that surrounds the exercises may be far more valuable than the exercise itself. We teach language best when we use it for what it was designed for: communication."(2002)

Goals and Objectives of the Curriculum:

An integration of planning processes, implementation processes as well as evaluation processes would certainly make for more evolved, dynamic and multi-dimensional content, application of content, appropriate methodologies of course delivery as well as evaluation after course delivery. The evaluation should take place at two levels: evaluation of course content as well as skill acquisition. The teacher at the end of the day assesses both the syllabus as well as the outcomes of the syllabus. This helps in the cyclical process of curriculum building.

To an instructor and curriculum planner, having to design a language course that would be useful and relevant to students studying law is a colossal challenge. BCI guidelines with respect to language instruction are rather sketchy. UGC which is an umbrella body governing Higher Education in India also does not provide much direction about the philosophy or teaching methodology of a subject. Moreover, BCI encourages faculty autonomy in the planning and execution of a subject curriculum. In the absence of clearly defined guiding principles, as to how the integration of law and language is to take place, each language teacher in a law school, creates her own course of action. This action plan usually takes the form of a curriculum with each teacher spelling out the philosophy that goes into designing a particular course.

In a general way the teacher preparing the curriculum aims to incorporate modules which will more or less aid the learner to acquire and improve language ability along with content capability. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, language teaching has evolved into a more learner-centered approach. The underlying belief in a learner-centered approach being that the teacher doesn't really teach but the learner learns. In other words the teacher creates the right environment, provides appropriate material and stimulates the learners interest, so that different learners employ varying strategies for varying skills motivated by her/his needs and interests, in an environment which tries to replicate as closely as possible in the classroom, an atmosphere close to the natural setting in which children absorb their first language. This logically leads to the most central stake-holder in this equation that is the learner. It

also leads to the equally central question of whether the teacher has a thorough understanding of learner's needs. Most teachers follow communicative language teaching strategies with the focus of the curriculum being on acquiring the four skills [reading](#), [writing](#), [speaking](#) – (including [pronunciation](#)) - and [listening](#), with an effort to try and tie these to the specific needs of undergraduate law students. Therein lies the challenge.

The norms of ESP (English for Specific Purposes):

The curriculum planner may begin by being guided by the norms of ESP [English for Specific Purposes], which have been outlined by Dudley-Evans (1998) as follows:

“Absolute characteristics:

- 1) ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners.
- 2) ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
- 3) ESP is centred on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of [grammar](#), [lexis](#), register, study skills, discourse and [genre](#).

Variable characteristics:

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level.
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students.
5. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems.”

An ESP expert according to Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) play at least five significant roles that of:

- teacher
- course designer and materials provider
- collaborator
- researcher
- evaluator.

It is appropriate that the one who teaches is the one who designs the curriculum and also evaluates students on the one hand and the curriculum plan on the other. It gives a hands-on immediacy and efficiency to the curriculum, its execution as well as its appraisal. A progressive curriculum therefore

should ideally start with an objective assessment of learner needs.

Efficacy of the Syllabus:

Curriculum design is not a onetime task as the dynamics of classroom teaching vary every day. The effectiveness of a syllabus is on test all the time and the experienced instructor learns to carefully calibrate and alter the curriculum to the changing environment.

Each batch of students has a characteristic mindset. An experienced teacher will tell you that. When a teacher figures that a particular batch has a fairly high level of skills and most students of a particular batch are receptive to challenges, then she would want to take that batch to the next level of proficiency by posing before them something slightly more tough and demanding.

The instructor's responsibility therefore becomes multifarious - to organize the course, to set learning objectives, to create an appropriate learning environment in the classroom, and equally importantly to evaluate students' progress. With very little published material available to serve as a workable manual to steer the language teacher's course of action, it may therefore seem that adequate attention has not been paid to preparing a language curriculum specifically for aspiring legal professionals. In practice however, it may be that each language teacher is struggling and striving all alone, to grapple with the problem of not only preparing but implementing a language syllabus that is relevant and meaningful to aspiring legal professionals. Moreover, it is indeed possible that in trying to contend with this perennial struggle, she may look for help outside. In India, unfortunately, very little published material is available which the language teacher in a law school can find useful. There is much research that has been done in Europe, Africa and Australia and the American Continent on language needs of law students. It is however, inconceivable to totally graft an experiment carried out abroad, whole-scale into Indian Universities. Though, the procedures and experiments carried out overseas can serve as guidelines, to carry out similar research in India. These experiments of course, need to be modified to suit the conditions unique to Indian Universities. But before looking into such procedures it would be interesting to look at how language teaching has evolved in the past few decades.

A brief historical perspective:

Language learning and teaching began to be taken seriously around the 1970s. As they evolved, language learning and language teaching philosophies drew from diverse subjects such as linguistics, sociology, history, anthropology and the cognitive sciences. Language teachers and

curriculum planners have often followed the trend in educational philosophies that were in vogue at that time. Nunan (1996) enumerates the various approaches to curriculum planning that have been followed in the past few decades. He begins with a comment on the “subject-centered view of learning” and a criticism of its belief that “curriculum planning should start with an analysis of the target language, rather than with the needs of learners” (pg.16). This belief often focused on the analysis of the linguistic content of language rather than learner needs. Nunan (1996) then mentions the “end-means model” (Nunan: 1996, pg. 16) or objectives approach to curriculum design and cites Clarke’s criticism of this model. Clarke in turn cites Stenhouse’s criticism of the end-means model. Nunan’s (1996) summary of the criticism is that it focused on the product of learning rather than the process of learning. The emphasis being on correctness of form rather than the way in which learning is processed by students.

Progressivism is the third educational ideology identified by Nunan (1996) as a “process syllabus” (pg. 17). The process syllabus focuses more on methodology than on content or output. Nunan (1996) points out that it has been advocated by scholars such as Breen and Candlin, Prabhu, Long, and Long and Crookes. The process syllabus specifies tasks and problems for learners rather than paying attention to structures, notions or functions. Nunan then turns his attention to the models prepared by two writers namely Richards and Nunan where they try to align language teaching within a broader educational context.

Richards (2001) emphasizes the importance of needs analysis, methodology and evaluation in the curriculum development process. Richards presents a curriculum model

“---in which language teaching is seen as a set of processes and procedures which are both systematic and interrelated. The essential elements in this model are needs analysis, objective setting, content and methodology, and evaluation. The raw material from which the curriculum developer creates language courses includes information about the target language, information about learners, information about the delivery system, a learning theory, a teaching theory and assessment and evaluation procedures.”

(Nunan: 1996, pg. 18)

Nunan opines however, that this model by Richards still falls within the “end-means tradition” as it continues to hold a proficiency or proficiency-oriented view of language or language use. Though his proposal that, curriculum development begins with “an analysis of learner needs rather than a linguistic analysis” is a step forward, veering away from traditional models. Moreover, Richards’s

inclusion of content, methodology and evaluation procedures makes his a more evolved syllabus model according to Nunan (pg.19).

Nunan in 1985 then presents his model of curriculum development which is alike the model proposed by Richards in many ways as it includes “needs analysis, goal identification, objective setting, materials development, learning activities, learning mode and environment and evaluation” (pg. 19). According to Nunan however, curriculum development is cyclical and interactive and is similar to the model developed by Wheeler in 1967. Nunan believes that curriculum development activities “occur during the process of teaching and learning” (pg. 19). Nunan’s model also gives importance to the role of the teacher in course design and development. The role of the teacher is significant because she is the one who executes the syllabus and should have control over the content, methodology, material as well as a deeper understanding of learner needs. Nunan also calls for a greater balance between the different elements in a curriculum model and the need for a systematic approach which is an appropriate blend of both the product-oriented end-means models as well the process-oriented or task-based approach. The first step in this complex project is to accurately assess the needs and aspirations of law students from the language course offered to them.

Role of needs analysis:

Needs assessment or needs analysis provides a clear perception of the reasons why a learner wants to learn a language. In National Law Schools, the language course may be compulsory so students have no choice in the matter. However, they may have certain expectations from the course which can be assessed. Knowing learners needs helps the teacher to determine the course content, the appropriate methodology to deliver the course content as well as the methods of evaluation. The evaluation of students serves a two-pronged purpose: an assessment of how much the student has learnt as well as how effective the course content and delivery has been.

Carrying out a needs analysis is the first step in curriculum development. Richards (2006) explains that needs analysis is

“the use of observation, surveys, interviews, situation analysis, and analysis of language samples collected in different settings – in order to determine the kinds of communication learners would need to master if they were in specific occupational or educational roles and the language features of particular settings”(pg.12).

He further elaborates that the “--- focus of needs analysis is to determine the specific characteristics of a language when it is used for

specific rather than general purposes. Such differences might include:

- Differences in vocabulary choice
- Differences in grammar
- Differences in the kinds of texts commonly occurring
- Differences in functions
- Differences in the need for particular skills. Richards (2006: pg. 12).

However, as Nunan has pointed out the focus in such an approach continues to be on the linguistic features of language for specific purposes, which is a partial understanding of the usefulness of needs analysis. A needs analysis should also provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceived needs of students who may be considered the primary stakeholders in the effective implementation of a curriculum.

Haque (2014) neatly sums up all the significant ways in which scholars have defined needs analysis thus highlighting how valuable needs analysis is to curriculum design. His table (pg.2) is as follows:

Name of linguists	Definition
Nunan, D. (1983)	“ Techniques and procedures for in syllabus design”
Richards, J. (1992)	“The process of determining the needs for which a learner or a group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities.”
Fatihi, A. R. (2003)	“ A device to know the learner’s necessities, needs and lacks”
Brindley, G. (1984)	“Learner’s wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations, lacks, constraints and requirements.”

Haque (2014) further says, “that needs analysis is a process that gathers information from learners, teachers and language courses to find out what language skills the learner’s need to develop, why they should develop those skills and how they develop those in the best ways” (pg. 2). Haque (2014) also discusses the various kinds and frameworks of needs analysis thus underlining its importance to curriculum design. Huhta (2013) et. al. also provide a very comprehensive discussion on the necessity for needs analysis and a detailed collation of the various methods and approaches to needs analysis. The framework provided by Huhta (2013) and her team encompasses not only Language for Specific Purposes (ESP) but also Language and Communication for Professional Purposes. They have presented an exhaustive profile which covers professions ranging from health care and social services to business, technology and Law. As a matter of fact, Huhta

(2013) and her teams framework is the only detailed one that this writer has come across covering the legal profession. Huhta’s team has provided a template that can be applied to any profession and has also given flexible guidelines for creating a professional profile tailored to meet one’s own requirements. Huhta (2013) et. al. say:

“ ---we would like to highlight once again the importance of needs analysis prior to course design in ESP.to plan and teach tailor-made courses, the teacher (or the organization that the teacher works for) has to make sure that he or she has a detailed background knowledge of the professional activities in question. Therefore creating a new Professional Profile might make the teacher’s job of designing a course syllabus much easier. A situation may arise in which a teacher has to teach an ESP course in a subject area with which he or she is unfamiliar. A Professional Profile provides an answer to the question of what has to be taught” (pg. 180).

A second generation needs analysis therefore according to Huhta et.al. is less language-centred and more inclined to be task-based as it gives central importance to the “professional discourse activity” (Huhta et. al. pg. 15) of learners undergoing a professional course.

They describe this task as “---a communicative task that is integral to the professional workplace context, but which is primarily fulfilled through the application of language and discourse skills (as opposed to, for example, workplace tasks that require specific technical expertise)” (Huhta et.al. pg. 15).

The purpose of needs analysis:

Needs analysis or needs assessment is a process of ascertaining and estimating the requirements of a particular community. In this case the community is that of aspiring legal professionals and their requirements and expectations from their language course. A need has been described by various people in various ways. Let us take a look at some of the descriptions:

- Witkin and Altschuld (1995) describe it as ‘A gap between “what is” and “what should be.”’
- Reviere et al (1996, p. 5) call it “A gap between real and ideal that is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change.”
- McKillip, (1987) clarifies that needs “May be different from such related concepts as wants (“something people are willing to pay for”) or demands (“something people are willing to march for”).

These descriptions make it clear that needs analysis focuses on the future, or what should be done, rather than on what was done. Conducting a needs analysis helps teachers and curriculum planners in various ways. Tarone and Yule (1989) cited in Iwai et al. (1999:pg.10) are of the opinion that “It can help teachers in understanding the local needs of the students and making decisions in pedagogy and assessment for further improvement.” [Tarone and Yule (1989) cited in Iwai et al. (1999:pg.10) further cited in Pushpanathan (2013: pg.3)]. According to Pushpanathan (2013), “Needs Analysis can provide an insight into the beliefs, opinions and views of the learners and teachers and can help in making a language programme more attuned to the needs of the learners and can also help in establishing the ownership of a change and innovation among the teachers because it is finally a response at these two levels of teachers and learners, which can determine the acceptance or rejection of any change or innovation and thus success or failure of a change or innovation.” (pg.1)

Haque (2014) quoting Nunan (1988) says, “--- information got through NA can serve the following purposes.

- a) NA can set the goals of the course and guide the selection of contents.
- b) It can be used by the teacher to modify the syllabus and methodology to minimize the gap between the teachers’ and learners’ expectation.
- c) It may be used to identify the gap between the teachers’ and learners’ expected teaching and learning approach” (pg. 4).

According to Veena (2016), “The analysis of target needs can be seen in three ways such as Necessities (What is necessary in the learner’s use of language?), Lacks (What do the learner’s lack?) and Wants (What does the learner wish to learn?)” (pg. 442). Veena (2016) also provides a table that “illustrates the three types of needs --- along with its focus and range of methods with examples (pg. 443):

Type of Need	Focus	Method	Example
Necessities	Proficiency	Self-report	Level of vocabulary knowledge
		Proficiency Testing	Level of Fluency
	Situations of use	Self-report	Analysis of texts
		Observation and Analysis	Analysis of exams and assignments
		Review of	Analysis

		previous research	of tasks
Lacks	Proficiency	Self-report testing	Vocabulary tests
	Situations of use	Self-report	Examiners report
Observations and analysis		Analysis of tasks	
Wants	Wishes	Self-report	Records of choices of activities
	Use	Observation	Teachers’ observations

Scholars such as Hutchinson & Waters, Richards (2002), Johnson (1989) and many others have succeeded in highlighting the significance of carrying out a needs assessment before planning a language curriculum. This writer is of the opinion however, that freshly enrolled students at National law universities in India are too young and inexperienced to know and identify their vocational language needs. This opinion is shared by Luczak (2010) who says,

“---very often they do not have a clear vision of what they would like to do in their future job, where they see themselves in 5 or 10 years’ time. For that reason, the heaviest burden of responsibility for structuring the language courses at universities is shifted onto the shoulders of the language educators who will base on their experience, observation, detailed knowledge of the system of tertiary education and awareness of what students might need in the future” (pg. 2). Luczak (2010) quotes Strong (2003:1) “--- they come unprepared to the study of law, since it is qualitatively different from the study of other subjects” to reinforce her point (pg. 2).

A needs analysis of first-year students of law will become meaningful if it is supplemented by a needs analysis of final-year students who have a considerably better understanding and clarity about their professional goals and needs.

The goal of professional legal education in the twenty-first century with its multi-disciplinary approach is to prepare law students to meet the ever evolving and ever shifting demands of the profession. According to Professor N. L. Mitra, former Director, National Law School of India University, Bangalore, as quoted by Dr. Justice AR. Lakshmanan: “---a legal professional must have the following qualities:

- (a) He must know where the law is and how to find it. This is the ability of intensive research.
- (b) He must be good at critically looking at facts. This is the analytical ability.

- (c) He must have the ability to bring out facts from the human resources available to him. This is the ability of client counselling.
- (d) He must have the ability of excellent communication. This is his advocacy skill.
- (e) He must have the ability to prepare himself with detailed documentation. This is his documentation and conveyancing skill.
- (f) He must be a pleasing personality, able to deal successfully with human resources. This is his negotiation skill.
- (g) He must have the ability to put forth his factual analysis and his own viewpoint. This is his court craftsmanship.
- (h) He must have in-depth and clear knowledge about court procedure and court personnel. This is his procedural skill and skill for human relations.

Lakshmanan (2014: pg. 46-47).

It is clear that the basic skill underlying all the above skills is the ability to read, comprehend, assess, evaluate, present, argue, convey and a host of abilities that presume a certain level of proficiency in reading, listening, speaking and writing. This writer would like to bring into particular focus, points numbered (d) & (e) of the above list. The law as Malinowski has said is a profession of words. Even though the teacher who is also the course planner has an instinctive understanding of the requirements of law students it is time that we start asking students themselves about their needs.

In the words of Huhta et.al. "A holistic needs analysis, then, is one which account not just of the individual, but also of how that individual interacts in the contexts and situations of his or her field of action" (pg. 15).

Multi - pronged approach:

It is therefore obvious that assessing students' needs is only one aspect of conducting a thorough needs analysis. The second important stakeholder in English for legal academic purposes is the teacher who is also the curriculum planner. For a language instructor a needs analysis is an essential first step in designing and implementing a specialized syllabus, developing authentic instructional material with content relevant to specific learner needs. The third significant stakeholder in this exercise is the employer. A needs analysis of the employers will make curriculum design more goal-oriented. It will ascertain their expectations from law graduates who have recently entered the professional world. It is understandable that employers wouldn't want

to expend time, energy and resources to train freshly employed law graduates from professional universities. It is but natural for them to expect such universities to cater to their need for a well-trained, proficient and skilled workforce. A language instructor with relevant inputs from industry would be able to develop instructional content that is tailored to the specific needs of aspiring legal professionals. Such a multi-pronged approach to needs assessment will assist curriculum planners to design a more holistic, efficient and purposeful curriculum for law students.

Moreover, besides these three obvious stakeholders the department of higher education or the ministry of human resources under which higher education is placed would also be keen to provide quality education to compete with the best at an international platform. It is therefore in everyone's interest to have a thoroughly well-planned language curriculum.

At least four stakeholders:

This writer suggests that a needs assessment about the language proficiency requirements of law students should involve a study of the needs seen from the perspective of at least four stakeholders. Namely:

- (a) Students enrolled in the five -year integrated courses of National Law Universities in India,
- (b) Language teachers engaged not only in the pedagogy but also curriculum planning in National Law Universities
- (c) Employers which includes all branches of the judiciary, corporate firms, law firms and all establishments that employ law graduates or post-graduates.
- (d) The Ministry of Human Resources which includes the Department of Education within it.

Conclusion:

Exploring the needs, requirements and expectations of all four stakeholders would give the researchers a multi-dimensional perspective towards planning a professional language curriculum. Having identified the needs the next obvious step would be to implement these needs within the curriculum tasks and modules in the most effective way. This is by no means an easy task. The teacher may have to set out the goals and philosophies of the curriculum and assess the syllabus as and when it is implemented to determine whether the English language courses are really delivering what they set out to deliver. If there are any shortcomings in terms of content, methodology or evaluation then they can be addressed and re-adjusted.

A needs analysis may also be conducted after evaluation to determine whether the course has met student's needs and goals. Deficiency in the course content or course delivery can then be addressed and rectified. Evaluation can be a two-pronged exercise. Evaluation of student proficiency before and after undergoing the course as well as evaluation of the course itself. This thorough investigation into identifying the needs of all four stakeholders would give the necessary precision, rigour and professionalism to an effective and efficient English language course required by a law student for legal academic purposes. It would also raise the general standards of pedagogy of a National Law University in India. The author also advocates a collaborative approach to the pedagogy of English for law students. Law faculty and language faculty as a joint force putting their minds together in areas of curriculum planning, instruction and evaluation would render the instruction of English for law students relevant as well as effective.

This writer believes that it is time a needs analysis research be carried out in each and every National Law School. The outcomes of this research would benefit the students, the course planners, employers as well as the education department in its general policies as well as language policies with respect to all professional courses. This writer suggests that such a project be undertaken with aid and guidance from the department of education as soon as it is feasible. It would be a small but significant step in the process of taking the Indian Legal Profession at the forefront of the global market for legal services.

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