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South Asian Teacher Educators (SATE) fellowship - Design and Curriculum

A Multi-Modal Approach to Teacher Professional Development in Low Resource Settings

Supported By

The project, A Multimodal Approach to Teacher Professional Development in low resource settings (MATPD) was a collaborative endeavour. A South- South collaboration of higher education institutions and a global non-profit entity. The consortium aimed to address the poor quality of teacher professional development, particularly for distance teaching and learning through this project. Villa College, Maldives was the lead partner of the consortium. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) was the co-lead and knowledge partner for the proposed innovation, and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan was the third partner, implementing the project in Afghanistan. The learnings from TISS's award winning and globally recognized initiatives on TPD developed in and for under-resourced and developing contexts were adapted, implemented and researched in Afghanistan, Maldives and Nepal.

Villa College is the first and largest private higher education institution in the Maldives offering a variety of academic programmes. The teacher training programs offered by Villa Collage at the Faculty of Educational studies are known to be popular.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) has been involved in implementation of education projects that include capacity development, advocacy and service delivery since 1984. The SCA Teacher training aims at building teachers' capacities in subject knowledge and pedagogy which are geared towards teacher professional development, through short courses.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India (www.tiss.edu) is among South Asia's premier research and teaching universities in Social Sciences. The Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education (CETE), an Independent Centre on the TISS Mumbai Campus engages in teaching, research, and field action, and has multidisciplinary expertise in the use of ICT in Education for quality reform at scale. CETE envisages its role as a "Catalyst for Transformation in Teacher Education" through multiple activities. The Centre has hosted several UNESCO award-winning field action research (AR) projects including Integrated Approach to Technology in Education (ITE) and Connected Learning Initiative (CLIx). The Centre's in-service teacher education programmes and Communities of Practice have also been awarded a certificate of appreciation. The Centre has also delivered an international project - Teachers Education Master's Program (TEMP) for supporting professional development for Afghanistan's Teacher Educators in collaboration with SCA.

RESEARCH TEAM

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Ms. Reema Govil (Research Manager)
Ms. Dhwani Bafna (Consultant-Program Design and Implementation- till October 2022)
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Dr. Parul Anand (Post-doctoral Fellow)
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Introduction

South Asian Teacher Educators (SATE) fellowship was established in the MATPD project with a view to develop the capacities of the diverse stakeholders in the space of education as leaders performing the role of teacher educators while collaborating with teachers. The main facets of the fellowship that supported the capacity development were the blended courses (Integrating ICT in Teaching Meaningfully, Mentoring and Action Research) along with the in-person workshops and mentoring for action research. The main tasks for the fellows included establishing a collaboration with at least 5 teachers for conducting action research. This involves a design of TPD activities for teachers and follow-up in the classroom for implementation based on the collaborative action plan developed with the teachers.

Need for South Asian Teacher Educators (SATE) Fellowship

The need for SATE fellowship was identified based on the findings of the landscape Mapping study of Nepal, Maldives and Afghanistan as part of the MATPD project. In all three countries, there were almost no opportunities for teachers or teacher educators to work together to find contextualized solutions to educational problems. TPD was conducted mostly by teacher educators working at university/ teacher education institutions and experienced teachers and other professionals in the space of education were not considered as teacher educators. There were little opportunities for collaboration among teachers and opportunities to build communities to support the teaching learning process were therefore few. Another major issue was the low resource contexts in these three countries that constrained teachers in engaging in continuous professional development and engaging students in active learning. Considering these findings, a fellowship to develop the capacities of stakeholders was designed as an SATE fellowship and implemented in the three countries during the MATPD project.

Some specific findings of Landscape mapping study in Nepal that indicated the need for fellowship for capacity development. The LMS identifies the following gaps in supporting teacher educators and teachers' professional development in Nepal.

Policy:

The professional development of teacher educators is not a key focus area for the policymakers, as it does not find a mention in the national educational policy and educational strategic plans. There is no budgetary allocation for the same.

Practice:

There is a lack of opportunity to develop the capacity of mid-level teacher educators, who are key resource persons for training teachers. There is also a lack of opportunity for teacher educators to work with teachers and develop a contextualized knowledge of teachers' work and challenges.

The teacher professional development programs in Nepal are designed centrally through a top down approach, thus not adequately addressing the actual needs of the teachers and the classroom context. Though plans for school visits and observations are integrated into the strategic plans SSRP and SSDP, only a few trainers visit the schools to support teachers in translating training into practice. Most stakeholders considered "Monitoring" and "Mentoring" to be the same approach for TPD. There is thus a need for the system to explore collaborative modes of professional development including mentoring and coaching.

Action Research is an integral part of in-service teacher education mandated by policy guidelines. However, it rapidly falls out of practice once the training is over and teachers are back in classrooms as they merely write up action research reports to qualify for promotion. This is due to a lack of awareness on how Action Research can be an effective tool to improve classroom practice, poor/no support and follow-up by trainers/supervisors and low motivation of teachers.

NO collaboration between teacher educators and teachers. Teachers are not considered as a resource person. There is a need to support the development of research culture among teacher educators and teachers through opportunities to engage in field-based action research, identifying challenges and finding contextualized solutions. There are low levels of ICT skills and knowledge for classroom instruction and practice. ICT is used as a conduit for transmitting information and not used to provide opportunity to students for construction of knowledge and sharing their ideas.

Design of the fellowship

The fellowship program was conceptualized based on the contextualization of the CETE projects and the findings from the Landscape Mapping Study (LMS). An exhaustive desk research (106 documents) supplemented with primary data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews with 26 diverse stakeholders was carried out to understand the landscape of professional development of teachers and teacher educators in Afghanistan, Maldives and Nepal.

The SATE fellowship program aims to address these gaps and build the capacity of mid-level functionaries as professional leaders through:

- Practice-based continuous professional development opportunity for teacher educators and teachers which supports social learning from peers and experts

Addressing contextual problems through Action Research and enabling agency of teacher educators

- Enabling south-south collaboration and learning among South Asian countries.

The Fellowship Program

The SATE fellowship program, which was in a blended mode, spanned for a period of 12 months starting in May 2022 and culminating with the fellow convocation ceremony in May 2023. **The table below highlights the key fellowship activities.**

	Activities: May 2022-May 2023												
	Key Areas	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Mar-Apr	Apr-May
1	Selection of fellows	■												
2	Orientation	■												
3	Orientation (AM & FM)	■												
4	Course 1-ICT	■	■	■										
5	SCA online workshop		■											
6	F2F workshop at TISS		■	■										
7	In person meet with AM			■										
8	Enrichment sessions			■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
9	Course 2-Mentoring			■	■	■	■	■						
10	Course 3-Action Research				■	■	■	■	■	■				
11	AR Implementation			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
12	Submission of AR Report											■	■	
13	Convocation													■

SATE fellowship was designed by the faculties at the Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. TISS played the role of the Knowledge partner in the MATPD project as well as the implementation partner for Nepal. The fellowships consisted of courses designed and facilitated by TISS faculty which could be offered in blended mode. The courses are hosted on an Open Edx-based platform called TISSx. Besides the TISS faculty, faculty and teacher educators from the three participating countries i.e. Villa College, Maldives; Kathmandu University, Nepal and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Afghanistan participated in supporting the fellows as field mentors.

The fellowship started with the fellows undertaking the 1st course titled "Using Educational Technology for Constructive Teaching & Learning" where they learnt how they could meaningfully integrate ICT for the purpose of classroom teaching-learning. This was followed by a virtual and in-person workshop which gave the fellows an opportunity to meet with each other and get familiar with the course instructors, mentors and the MATPD consortium team. The workshop helped the fellows better understand the different components of the project and their role within the fellowship. They were called for a 10-day in-person workshop at TISS Mumbai, campus in June 2022. Given the socio-political situation in Afghanistan, only fellows from Nepal and Maldives could attend the face-to-face workshop. It was therefore decided that a separate 1-week virtual workshop be organized for the Afghanistan fellows. The online workshop entailed sessions on themes such as the TISSx platform, TPD context in Afghanistan, working with teachers, action research, critical thinking and writing, the well-being of teachers and teacher educators, educational resources and social inclusion in education. The workshop also entailed specific thematic sessions where the fellows could interact and discuss their action research collaboratively with their academic and field mentors. The workshop concluded with the fellows making an initial presentation regarding their research questions and action plan and getting feedback from mentors, consortium team and other fellows.

The 10-day face-to-face workshop was predominantly in-person with a few hybrid sessions for Afghanistan fellows. The sessions in the workshop were on TPD issues and challenges in Nepal and Maldives, ERC resources, action research, mentoring, well-being of teachers, toy making, designing collaborative modes of TPD, inclusive pedagogy, exploring CLIx resources, TELTA project, analysing classroom videos and institutional visit to TELTA project and Gateway School. The workshop also included focus group discussions on educational contexts in their country, daily reflection sessions, and in-person and virtual interactions with academic and field mentors. The workshop concluded with the fellows making a presentation on their draft action research proposal and receiving feedback from mentors, the consortium team and other fellows. The fellows started with the remaining two courses "Mentoring for TPD" and "Action Research", once they returned to their respective countries. In addition to the three courses, the fellows were required to carry out Action Research collaboratively with 5-10 teachers to address local educational issues in their country contexts and submit a project report at the end. They

could choose to work on any one of the prescribed six themes. (language, math, science, OERs, peace, social inclusion & gender). The 15 fellows worked with 82 teachers across 56 schools for their Action Research activity.

In this process, they were supported by a team of an academic and a field mentor for the same who guided and supported them on technical aspects of AR and contextualization of the intervention respectively.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE FELLOWS

Inception phase expectations from the Fellows include

- Attendance of orientation sessions
- Understanding the Fellowship structure by thoroughly going through the Handbook and returning the signed copy of the document indicating acceptance of the position and understanding of the expectations that need to be fulfilled
- Filling up the Google form about the profile of the Fellows and returning the participation information sheet about participating in the research
- Installing TISSx on their phone/ accessing it on a laptop and registering on the site and enrolling in the course
- Participating in the online course and attending online webinars
- Submitting the assignments of the courses using the TISSx platform.
- Installing Telegram on their smartphone and participating in the two PLCs to which they have been added. PLC should be used to ask doubts, express ideas reflect on teacher education/teaching practice and share the progress and artefacts from work done in courses.
- Responding to any other Google forms shared by MATPD consortium member before the start of the course to express their beliefs, knowledge, and skills related to aspects focused on the fellowship programme
- Participate in the interview conducted by MATPD consortium member
- Provide documents and information to facilitate the travel and stay for the face-to-face workshop

In the **face-to-face workshop,** the fellows are expected to

- develop a proposal based on the six thematic areas (Annexure 2).
- attend 11 days of all face-to-face sessions.
- meet their academic mentor personally and discuss the topic of the action research. Before the end of the face-to-face workshop, they should have identified the topic and the site of the study and fixed up the schedule for online meetings in the post-workshop phase.

In the **post-workshop** phase, the fellows are expected to

- design an action research under the guidance of assigned Academic Mentors and Field Mentors
- and implement it with at least 10 local teachers using distance teaching technologies to support constructive teaching.
- write and submit reports of action research based on their collaborative work with teachers.

Time commitment

Fellows were expected to engage with the project for 10-15 hours per week during the inception and post-workshop phase. During the inception phase, this time was spent on doing the coursework, readings, attending webinars, responding to PLCs, and completing the assignments. During the 11-day Face to face workshop, Fellows engaged 36-40 hours per week in the sessions along with enrichment sessions and cultural activities. Post-workshop phase engagement was 12-18 hours per week which involved meetings with academic and field mentors, work on the action research proposal/design of implementation plan/reporting, responding on PLCs to mentors and teachers, and working with teachers based on the implementation plan of the action research using multiple modes.

An appreciation letter was awarded to the fellows on the successful completion of all the assignments in the coursework and action research report. The description of the coursework done and the topic of the action research report will be mentioned.

SUPPORT FOR THE FELLOWS

Academic Support

Academic support was provided by the TISS faculty (along with some selected external faculty members). Each faculty member worked with 2 to 3 fellows. The academic mentor had the responsibility of guiding the fellows in selecting the problem for action research, refining the problem, coming up with an action plan, selecting the site of action research, and guidance during the execution of the plan. The academic mentors were orientated to the programme at the beginning of the programme in April-May 2022. They will have access to the fellows' reports and assignments from the course. They will have regular meetings with fellows (at least 8 hours per month to discuss the progress on action research and reflection on it. They will submit activity reports of the discussions with fellows and field mentors at the end of each month.

Field Support

Field support to the fellows was provided by the field mentors from the partner organisation. Their responsibility was to support fellows in terms of finding the right site of action research, guidance in the selection of teachers, providing inputs to the plan and execution of the plan based on their contextualised knowledge of the country context like the rules and structure of education system, timetables, and calendars of the schools, addressing challenges related to infrastructure, accessibility to technology,

resource or personnel in the system. They advised the fellows in defining and solving the problem based on their own knowledge of the country's context and the education system.

Community Support

Community support will be provided to fellows by being part of the professional learning communities on mobile chat groups. One community will have all members- fellows, mentors as well as core team members. Three communities will be formed for country-specific purposes and fellows will add the teachers with whom they are working in the community around June. Another community with core team members and mentors will be formed for reporting purposes.

COURSES

Course Descriptions

Course 1: Using Educational Technologies for Constructive Teaching and Learning

About the Course:

The goal of this course is to develop both a critical awareness and a deeper understanding of the role of technology in teaching and learning. The course will draw on contemporary concepts, models, and standards in the area of teaching and learning with technology.

Course objectives

This course aims to enable teachers and teacher educators to

- Design & implement curriculum-connected lesson plans integrating student-centred activities using technology (enabling project & problem-based learning).
- Use and integrate new technology applications for students' use in their teaching and learning process (for example- Audacity, Photostory, Scratch, etc.)
- Use various distance technologies with confidence to engage students in active & collaborative learning in online mode.
- Establish professional learning community groups (via WhatsApp, telegram, etc.) for sharing and learning of practice.

Course	Key Concepts Covered	Timeline
Using Educational Technologies for Constructive Teaching & Learning	o Constructive learning pedagogy with technology o Authentic Learning and its relevance o Hands-on experience of making technology-enabled activities for students o How to teach in blended & distance mode using technology	**Duration**: 4 weeks **Engagement**:6 hours per week

Note: Requisites for Participants:

- Access to a laptop/desktop or a smartphone with moderately stable internet connectivity for accessing course content
- Access to minimum 5-10 students from upper primary/secondary grades for the implementation of practice-based assignment
- Basic digital skills (using Office applications) and ability to conduct Internet surfing

Course 2: Mentoring for Teacher Professional Development

About the Course:

This course is for practising teachers and headteachers, who aim to be academic and pedagogic leaders and mentor their peers to adopt active pedagogies to transform their classrooms into interactive and engaging learning environments. More and more research shows that professionals learn best in a social environment where practice and work are shared, discussed, and critically examined in a collaborative professional space. This course enables participants to be capable peer mentors for the teacher's continuous professional development.

Course objectives

On completion of this course, the participants will be able to:

- Understand the processes of mentoring, and the unique characteristics of peer mentoring and apply this in the context of teacher professional development.
- Learn about teacher communities of practice and how to manage and facilitate an online or offline teacher professional learning community.
- Learn about and use tools (ICT-based and others) including observation techniques, communication methods, goal setting, study groups, local meetups, and reflection tools.

Course	Key Concepts Covered	Timeline
Mentoring for teacher professional Development	- Need for mentoring and interpreting the use of mentoring/coaching processes in teacher professional development. - Mentoring Values - Goals and objects of mentoring for TPD & complexities of teaching and school systems and pedagogical transformation - Management of Communities of Practice - Tools and Processes used in Peer Mentoring	**Duration**: 4 weeks **Engagement**:6 hours per week

Course 3: Action Research

About the course

This course is for practising educators and teachers, who aim to systematically study local educational issues, design, implement solutions and study the changes in an iterative manner to solve complex local issues related to teaching, learning and education. This course enables participants to be capable practitioner researchers and systematically inquire into local educational resources to initiate change at the school level.

Course objectives

Objectives of the course are:

- To help learners understand action research as a method of systematic inquiry and the processes of change that it is embedded in.
- To facilitate critical reflection on theories, processes, and dilemmas that are associated with action research
- To enable learners to develop the required skills of planning and conducting action research studies, specifically in the field of education and technology.

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Course	Key Concepts Covered	Timeline
Action Research	o **Introduction to Action Research -** purpose, rationale, and scope of action research o **Nature of Action Research** -action research methodology, its nature, principles, action and change, and ideas and goals of teacher inquiry. o **Process of Action Research -** processes involved in action research and understanding the cyclic nature of the action research process. o **Action Research & Pedagogies using ICT -** the frameworks and methodologies to do action research while integrating ICTs in teaching and learning processes.	11 Days of Face to Face sessions and 10-15 hours pereek during implementation

Course Modalities

The courses are offered in a blended mode.

- **Face-to-Face (F2F) Workshops and Meetups:** Fellows are required to participate in F2F workshops conducted by TISS faculty. The F2F workshops will enable fellows to socialise and interact with the course faculty and gain hands-on experience with the technology-enabled resources. Additional meetups/online meetings may be organised locally to enable Fellows to work on small activities, share their experiences and reflect on their practice to develop best practices. Webinars may be organised for Fellows to interact with peers as well as experts on specific topics of interest.
- **Online Learning:** Fellows are required to engage with the course curriculum via a learning platform. The coursework will include watching videos, reading articles, participating in quizzes, submitting assignments, and interacting and engaging with peers and experts on the platform discussion forum.
- **Classroom Practice and Implementation:** Fellows are required to implement (teach students) the assignments with students/teachers, and record and reflect on classroom practice or practices used in teacher education.
- **Self-Study:** To complete the course, Fellows will independently engage in course readings or other materials, assignments, research, project work, and group assignment work as part of the self-study component of the course.

Enrichment webinars

In addition to the coursework, TISS team members coordinated a series of enrichment webinars over the course of the fellowship. The purpose of these webinars was to provide a forum for the fellows to have synchronous interaction during the fellowship, provide the forum to share challenges faced and needs for research, and provide ongoing capacity-building opportunities to fellows based on the needs or challenges shared by them.

	Enrichment Sessions	Date
1	Using technologies for constructive teaching and learning. Sync 1	24th May 2022
2	Fact sheet	7th June 2022
3	Academic writing	7th June 2022
4	Using technologies for constructive teaching and learning. Sync 1	9th June 2022
5	Mentoring For teacher professional development	21st June 2022
6	Designing surveys, interviews and classroom observations	30th July 2022
7	Insight from Literature review and Classroom Observation	3rd August 2022
8	Analyzing advantages and limitations of a resource	10th August 2022
9	Establishing rapport with teachers	17th August 2022
10	Lesson Plan as a tool for Reflection	24th August 2022
11	Working with teachers: How to capture experiences	7th September 2022
12	Data collection, Management	2nd November 2022
13	Inclusion in Action Research	23rd November 2022
14	Action Research Report Template Discussion	30th November 2022

Annexure 1: About the TISSx platform

TISSx Platform

The MATPD programme is offered through blended pedagogy using the TISSx online platform and face-to-face interactions with TISS faculty in workshops. The courses offered in the SATE fellowship are practice-based and would require doing assignments while interacting with the field.

The online course will be conducted on the TISSx platform that is currently powered by Open edX. To become a part of the TISSx Learning Community and complete the courses offered participants mus

1. Share their personal email ID with the course team.

2. Register on the platform https://TISSx.tiss.edu

    a. Give their details using the same email ID.

    b. Make a note of the password they use to register on the site.

    c. Click on the Activate Course link sent on their email ID.

3. Enroll in the course.

4. Click on their name (top right corner) and click on the dashboard to see the course/s they are enrolled in.

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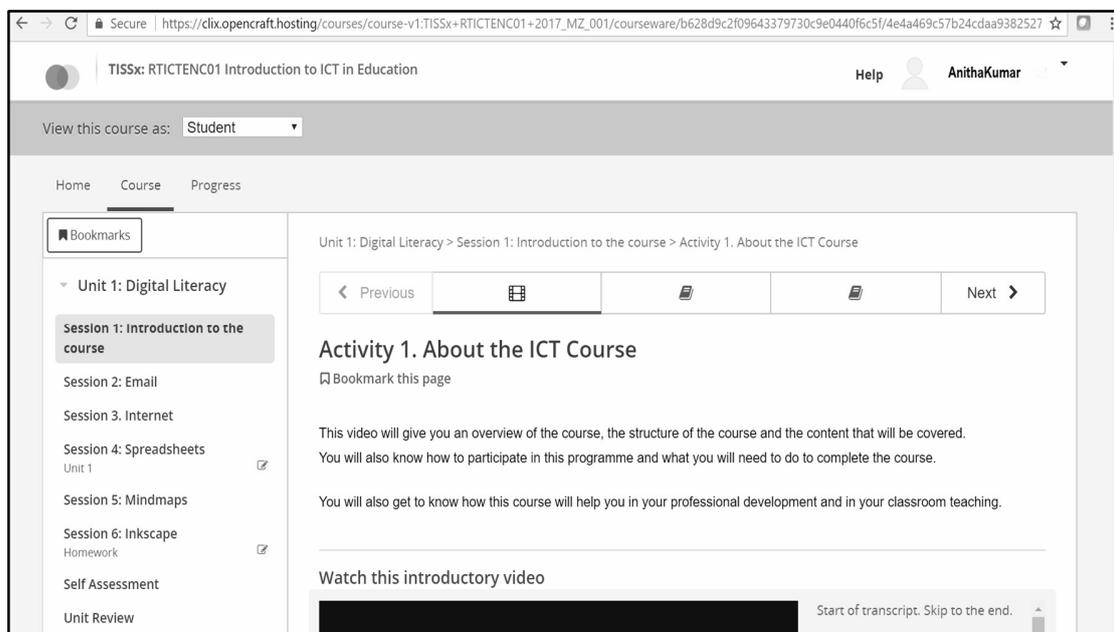
Exhibit 4 : RTICTENC01 Course on TISSx

5. Click on the course they wish to complete.

6. Click on Course, the second link on the left, to view the course details.

7. View, using the left navigation bar, the course units, and sessions.

8. View on the top navigation bar the activities within each session.

9. Open the last accessed activity when returning to a course since the platform remembers participants.

10. Click on Progress to see their grades.

An individual participant's progress through the course can be seen on the TISSx course platform. Exhibit 2 is a snapshot of how the platform will display progress in the course assignments (not a real participant).
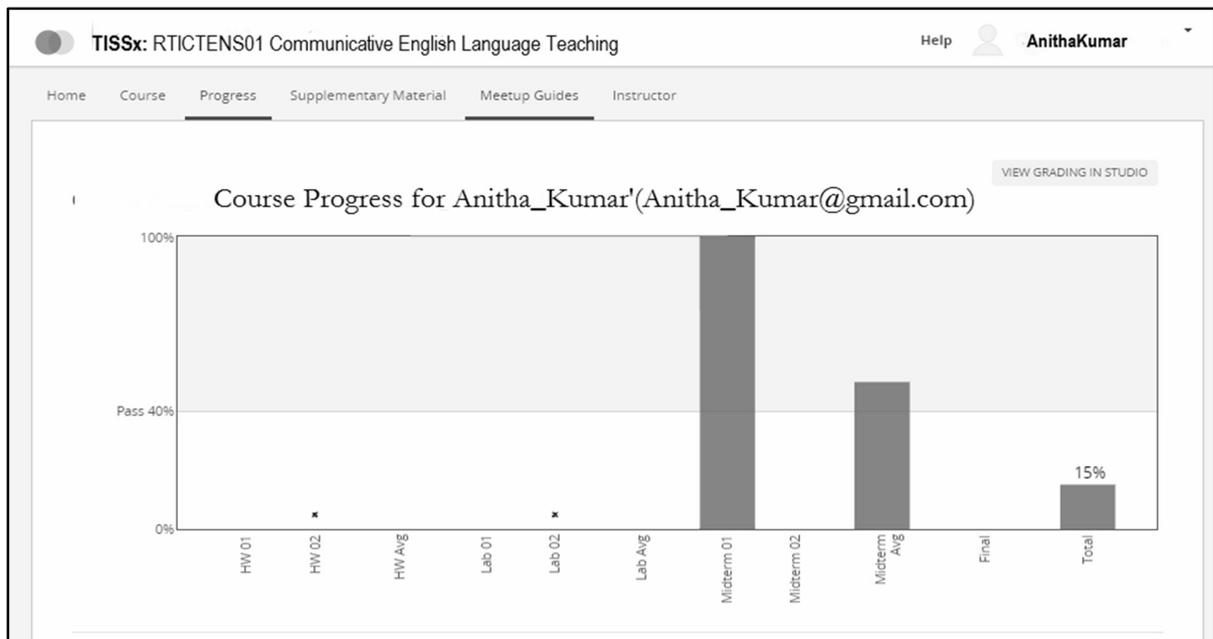

Exhibit 2: Progress on TISSx

Annexure 2: Thematics Areas of Action Research

The focus areas under Teacher Education are

Language Education (LE): Pedagogy & Practice

This theme focuses on the topics like

- Socio-cultural Impact on Language Learning Practices
- principles and best practices for language learning
- creating and sustaining a learning environment fostering learner autonomy, peer learning, and self-reflection-
- Understanding assessments in LE, comprehensive and dynamic assessment processes and reflecting on ways to integrate this

Math Education(ME): Pedagogy & Practice

This theme focuses on the topics like

- understanding core ideas in school mathematics and its processes e.g. geometric reasoning/ proportional reasoning/Algebraic reasoning
- evaluating, curating, and using the ICT based tools for teaching mathematics
- creating, executing and reflecting on ICT based teaching plan
- engagement with student thinking, their misconceptions, alternative methods for solving problems
- using contexts from students' daily lives to support mathematics learning
- developing professional learning communities of math teachers focused on discussing and analysing classroom artefacts
- Understanding assessments in ME, comprehensive and dynamic assessment processes and reflecting on ways to integrate this

Science Education(SE): Pedagogy & Practice

This theme focuses on topics like

- the role of the history of science in teaching science
- role of experimentation and reasoning in science
- making explicit views about the nature of science

- contextualising experimentation and argumentation in science pedagogy in an authentic way
- Understanding assessments in SE, comprehensive and dynamic assessment processes and reflecting on ways to integrate this.

Social Inclusion and gender

This theme focuses on topics like

- Teachers' role in supporting students to examine gendered roles in society, through a variety of institutions such as the family, caste, religion, culture
- question stereotypes, beliefs, and identity related to inclusion and gender
- contemporary and progressive perspectives on the education of children with -special needs, track the changing definitions of inclusion within the country's context
- reflect on positive practices, cultures, and policies that can support learners to move towards creating inclusive schools and education institutes

Using Open Education Resources(OERs), ICT, and Design Thinking for Education This theme focuses on topics like

- Challenging your assumptions and discovering new ways of exploring, creating, and curating digital tools and resources for addressing teaching-learning problems.
- various distance technologies and tools available for online and active learning
- understanding of how different kinds of assessments can be conducted on various distance technology platforms
- exploring open educational resources (OER) available and their duration
- analysing your own context and identifying the affordances and limitations of digital learning
- constructing and repurposing lesson plans that can be implemented/taught online using constructivist pedagogies and pedagogy content knowledge (PCK)

Peace Education

This theme focuses on topics like

- Socio-emotional Learning and Values Education
- Global Citizenship Education
- Role of Art, Performance and New Media for Peace Building
- Educational Spaces for Peacebuilding

Annexure 3: Week-wise planner

Week Wise planner of Programme for Fellows

The Fellowship is slated to take place from 20 May 2022 to 31 December 2022*

Dates	Time	Phases	Mode
	Pre Programme	Orientation + On-Boarding	Online
	Week 1-4	Using Educational Technologies for Constructive Teaching and Learning	Online + Implementation +In Person final presentation
	Week 5-8	Mentoring	Online + In-person final presentation
	Week 9-20	Action Research Coursework Implementation	In-person contact classes + Online
	Week 21-32	Enrichment Workshops and Writing	Online
	* this is tentative and may change depending on circumstances		