

## **NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article aimed to explain the effectiveness of conducting a needs analysis for English language teaching in curriculum development. The curriculum development framework aims to enhance learners' English language capabilities while ensuring alignment with their needs and motivation. This article discussed the importance of needs analysis in designing an English teaching class. Needs analysis helps to determine the suitable learning objectives and develop curriculum materials. This article compiled data solely by examining the research library for relevant literature. The curriculum can be customized to integrate learners' skills and abilities in practical applications while thoroughly assessing learners' objectives. Additionally, a needs analysis enables the design of a learning program model according to learners' characteristics. Each learner has different engagement, motivation, and demand. Educators can determine an appropriate learning design for their students by examining the learners' needs. In conclusion, a needs analysis can be an effective method for developing a curriculum tailored to educators' needs.

**Keywords:** Needs Analysis, English Teaching, Curriculum, Effectiveness

## INTRODUCTION

Designing the curriculum for English language teaching has become a crucial aspect of improving learners' English skills. As the lingua franca of the 21st century, we can no longer disregard the importance of English in our daily lives. One of the foundations for designing the curriculum for English teaching is the use of needs analysis, as this approach addresses the gap between learners' current English proficiency and their desired linguistic competencies, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Yuan, 2024).

The issue of an ever-changing curriculum cannot be solved instantly. However, creating a pathway toward a better understanding in English classes is a task that should be undertaken by educators, thus generating ideal and relevant courses for English learners. To design appropriate English courses and address learners' demands, the courses should be aligned with curriculum materials, which serve as a framework for educators. Implementing a needs analysis in the curriculum can make it possible (Maisaroh & Nirwanto, 2024). Needs analysis also ensures that the curriculum design aligns with students' real needs and the broader goals of education, making learning more relevant to both academic and future career contexts (Dewi & Qamariah, 2023).

Moreover, the dynamic nature of curriculum development requires educators to continually adapt their teaching practices to meet the changing needs of learners. By integrating needs analysis, teachers can design courses that are not only ideal and relevant but also connected to the labor market, providing learners with practical benefits upon completing their studies (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023).

Needs analysis holds a significant importance as it enables educators to recognize students' objectives, interests, and difficulties, ensuring that teaching strategies are focused on students rather than merely on the content (Dewi & Qamariah, 2023). Thus, when curriculum design aligns with students' individual goals and the needs of the job market, the educational experience becomes more significant and influential (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023). This method enables

educators to create programs that are practical and sustainable by focusing on the most essential skills and eliminating extraneous content (Maisaroh & Nirwanto, 2024).

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

### **a. Curriculum Development**

Curriculum Development is a systematic process that integrates theory, research, and pedagogical principles to design educational programs that align with learners' contexts, goals, and needs. Aprianto (2016) emphasized that curriculum development refers to both planned and unplanned curriculum efforts that aim at improving learners' knowledge, skills, and values, and also need to align with the societal context. In addition, Nation and Macalister (2022) also stated that it's crucial to integrate and make connections between research on language learning, theory, and the practice of designing lessons and courses in the curriculum development process. Brown (1995), as cited in Grewal and Manuel (2024), argues that curriculum design and evaluation are crucial to the teaching of English and other subjects, as they outline the methodologies, procedures, strategies, and activities used to teach the language and its content.

Grewal and Manuel (2024) stated that there have been various changes in designing a language course compared to past years. The curriculum design of previous or traditional curriculum models emphasizes strategies that help students acquire the content they are given. In contrast, recent curriculum design models focus on activity-based and student-centered approaches to construct students' knowledge (Grewal and Manuel, 2024). In addressing curriculum change and development to align with societal context, one of the best practices suggested by curriculum designers, such as Jerri Maning and Kathleen Graves, is to conduct a needs assessment as the initial step in developing the curriculum.

### **b. Needs Analysis for Curriculum Development in ELT**

Needs analysis is the systematic investigation of learners' necessities, lacks, and wants, serving as the foundation for curriculum development and ensuring that learning goals, materials, and methods match learners' actual requirements.

Dewi & Qamariah (2023) in JUKIM Journal describe needs analysis as *“a process that identifies knowledge and skills required for learners to achieve goals and helps align curriculum content with learner preferences”*. Furthermore, Iwai et. al. (1999) in Barghamadi (2020) refer to the needs analysis as *“the activities included in gathering data that will serve as the basis for creating a curriculum that addresses a specific group of learners’ learning needs”*.

When conducting a needs analysis, it is essential to consider multiple viewpoints and seek others’ views, as the ideology of those in control of the analysis can influence the results (Nation and Macalister, 2022). Then, Gürler and Konca (2023) note that the needs analysis results pave the way for reorganizing and revising the learning and teaching process, and can also serve as a reference for stakeholders concerned with the development process. Moreover, Wu (2012), as cited in Gürler and Konca (2023), stated that the process of needs analysis should be viewed as an ongoing and dynamic process that can be adapted to changes, social requirements, and learners’ proficiency levels. Gonzales (2022) and Gürler and Konca (2023) also stated that the needs analysis process is a crucial component in designing any language teaching curriculum, providing an essential basis for constructing a language program.

## **HUTCHINSON AND WATERS MODEL OF NEEDS ANALYSIS**

Hutchinson and Waters (1993) clarify that needs analysis focuses on two things: target needs and learning needs.

### **1. Target Needs**

It is related to what the learner needs to do in the target situation (Hutchinson & Walters, 1987). To put it simply, target needs refer to the actions learners must perform in a specific "target situation" (such as a job or academic setting). Target needs include three applicable terms: necessities, lacks, and wants.

- **Necessities**

The academic or occupational requirements for a learner to function in their target situation. This includes what they must know or be able to do. In the curriculum materials, the

necessities related to learners' capabilities or must-have abilities are according to the target situation.

- **Lacks**

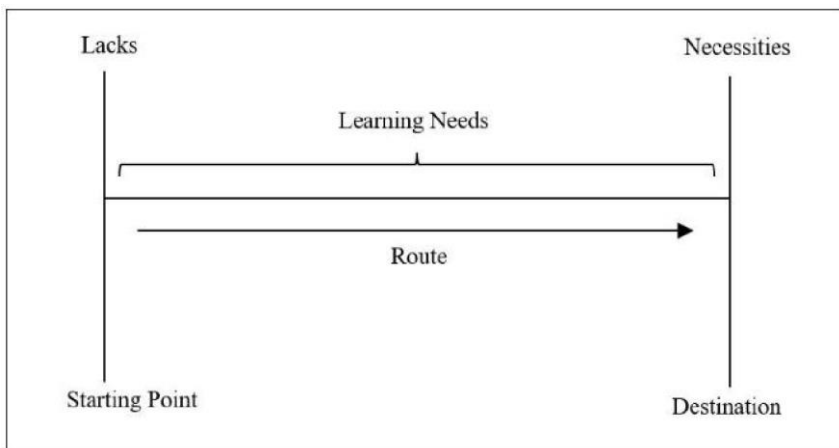
Lacks are gaps between the target proficiency and the existing proficiency of learners. In other words, a lack refers to the deficit of knowledge that learners possess and what they are missing in terms of essential information.

- **Wants**

It is related to the personal needs of learners and their expectations. Since this is a subjective issue, it may conflict with the necessities required by the course designer. Therefore, ideal wants must reflect the interests of all groups involved in implementing the target needs.

## 2. Learning Needs

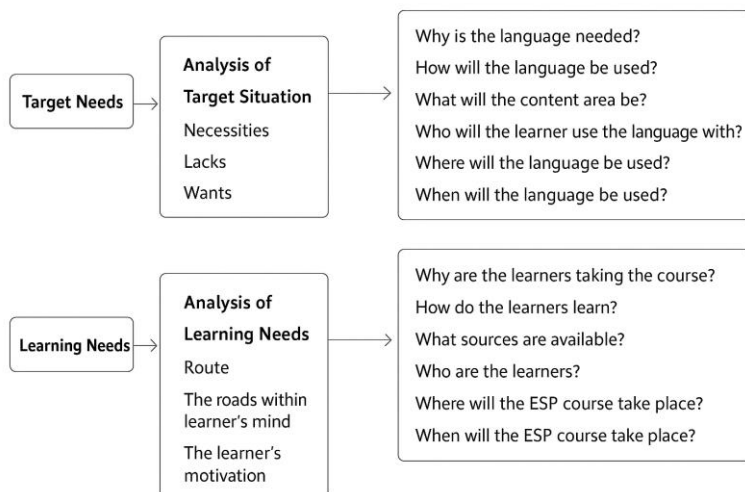
Learning needs refer to what knowledge and abilities learners will need in the target situation.



Based on the figure above, the starting point of the journey is the lacks, and the destination is the necessities. Learning needs are methods that guide learners on their journey to reach their destination. By considering the starting point as “lacks” and the destination as “necessity”, there might be some “wants” discord over what the destination should be. There is also a need to consider the “route” to understand how learners will travel from the starting point to the destination.

Below is the proposed list of questions that need to be answered in the needs assessment data collection, based on

Hutchinson and Waters (1987), as shown in Barghamadi (2020).



## IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

An ideal teaching and learning environment is the pathway that both educators and learners want to facilitate the transfer and reception of knowledge. This can be achieved by creating a curriculum that addresses these reciprocal needs. Implementing a needs analysis is one way to create such an environment in the classroom. Furthermore, designing a curriculum that aligns with learners' needs also helps them determine their path into the employment market after completing their courses. It is crucial to align the curriculum with the needs and interests of students, as well as the requirements of the labor market (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023). Implementing a needs analysis for a specific purpose in the curriculum may help learners prepare for their future occupations.

Needs analysis plays a crucial role in curriculum design as it helps ensure that the curriculum meets the specific requirements and goals of the learners and the educational context (Dewi & Qamariah, 2023). Those benefits of implementing needs analysis in the curriculum can be summarized into these categories:

### 1. Identifying Skill Gaps

By identifying these at an early stage, educators and

curriculum makers can design their learning and development program in accordance with the needs of learners, their capabilities, and their desired outcomes, thus becoming a proactive solution beforehand.

## 2. Enhancing Learners' Engagement

Tailoring the curriculum to learner preferences and proficiency levels makes the learning experience more engaging, which can lead to improved student outcomes. This phrase aligns with research by Dewi & Qamariah (2023), which suggests that by aligning curriculum development with student needs, educators can create engaging learning experiences that optimize student outcomes.

## 3. Aligning with Various Goals

The results for various courses are different from one another. A kinesthetic learner often learns by moving or doing something; therefore, educators can design suitable content for kinesthetic learners, while visual learners typically acquire their learning skills through visual presentations. Accommodating these various goals is possible by applying needs analysis through curriculum development.

## 4. Increasing Effectiveness

Implementing a needs analysis can lead to a better pedagogy by understanding learners' requirements beforehand. For example, an educator can integrate listening exercises into the curriculum to meet learners' needs and demands for their listening comprehension. The educator can also incorporate active listening courses and track the progress by gathering suggestions and advice over time.

## 5. Inform Resources Allocation

Examining demands and targets in a needs analysis may help educators avoid providing unnecessary resources and content material that learners do not desire (Maisaroh & Nirwanto, 2024). Implementing a requirements analysis can help educators prevent a lack of engagement among learners. Educators can select only relevant courses and training that learners may find engaging and interesting. Educators may also achieve a higher level of satisfaction from learners and reduce costs in undesired learning programs that did not meet the criteria outlined in the needs analysis. As a result, this may

generate an ideal learning and teaching experience that is both engaging and stimulating at the same time.

#### 6. Systematic Progression

The systematic progression ensures that the educators can create a distinct and unique learning measurement through needs analysis. This may enable learners to progress toward their desired goals and aims, which also align with a customized, targeted curriculum.

### **PROCEDURES AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING NEEDS ANALYSIS**

There are some steps to conduct a needs analysis in language teaching. According to Dewi & Yana (2016), the steps are planning, data collection, and analyzing the information. Another perspective is from Khan (2007), in his dissertation, where he mentioned that needs analysis should consider six following frameworks (adapted from Dudley-Evans & ST. John, 1998, p.125), which is gathering information about the learners, conducting situational analysis to assess the effectiveness of the existing program, collecting information on preferred learning styles or specific learning needs, determining the importance of particular skills for the learners and their preferences for learning those skills, examining the teacher-learner relationship and role expectations, and gathering information on preferences for teaching and learning activities.

To sum up, there are four (4) significant steps in conducting needs analysis as follows.

#### **1. Planning**

The planning step involves defining goals and identifying the target audience. The needs analysis is conducted to achieve specific results, thus confirming that the objectives of the courses are essential. Educators should identify learners' backgrounds and their learning targets and clearly state the course objectives.

#### **2. Data Collections**

After the plan has been implemented, the next step is to conduct data collection, which involves the following methods.



- Questionnaires

Gathering information through closed, open-ended, and scaled questions from learners about their experience, needs, and targets in English.

- Interviews

Gathering information from learners by conducting one-on-one or group discussions for an in-depth understanding of their needs in English.

- Observation

Collect data through direct observation of learners' relevant situations to understand their challenges.

- Focus Groups

Collecting data by facilitating discourse with a group of learners and gathering diverse perspectives.

- Analyze Learners' Work

Collecting data and information by reviewing learners' writing or performance, and identifying key points to be used in needs analysis.

### **3. Data Analysis**

The next step after the data collection is analyzing the data. The gathered information from data collection will be analyzed to obtain information that will be used to:

- Identify The Gaps

The information from data collection will be compared to the requirements for learners' future goals in English.

- Prioritize Needs

The collected data will be analyzed to determine which competencies and topics are most crucial for learners to achieve their objectives in English.

- Consider a Learning Setting

The collected data will be a factor in determining the learning environment, as well as the availability of time and resources.

### **4. Implementation**

After analyzing the data, educators or curriculum developers can take the next step in implementing the results into the curriculum development. This process is the final part

before the curriculum is executed.

- **Develop Course Objectives**

The analyzed data will be the basis for creating specific, measurable learning outcomes in accordance with identified needs.

- **Select Materials & Activities**

This procedure is performed to choose relevant, engaging, and practical materials and activities in accordance with needs analysis.

- **Share Findings**

The analyzed data will be communicated to stakeholders to inform the next steps in the course development process.

- **Implement & Evaluate**

Implement the new course design and evaluate its effectiveness.

## **INFLUENCE ON TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND LEARNING APPROACHES**

Needs analysis plays a critical role not just in curriculum development but also significantly impacts teaching methods and learning styles. By understanding learners' needs, educators can select teaching methods that align with learners' objectives, skill levels, and learning styles. This leads to more efficient and student-focused teaching methods.

Richards (2017) states that needs analysis enables educators to modify their teaching methods from a uniform approach to a more tailored and responsive framework. Educators can incorporate communicative, task-oriented, or project-based learning strategies tailored to meet the needs of individual students, helping them reach their goals. For example, individuals who require English for work-related communication may benefit more from task-oriented learning that focuses on genuine interactions. In contrast, students in academia may favor content-driven teaching that emphasizes reading and writing in scholarly environments.

In addition, Hyland (2019) emphasizes that needs analysis fosters reflective teaching practices, enabling teachers to assess and modify their approaches based on feedback

consistently and observed results in learning. This active engagement promotes learner independence and supports cooperative learning settings.

In terms of learning, integrating needs analysis allows students to be more engaged and motivated because the content and approaches align with their actual needs (Brown, 2016). Students tend to engage more when educational activities align with their goals and interests. As a result, the comprehensive learning method is more significant, relevant, and efficient.

In summary, a needs analysis connects curriculum objectives with classroom situations by guiding teaching methods and learning strategies that are flexible, responsive, and learner-focused.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEEDS ANALYSIS**

Needs assessments have been applied in numerous educational and professional settings to create more relevant and effective English teaching programs. In Indonesia, as well as worldwide, this strategy serves as the foundation for creating resources that align with learners' individual objectives and practical needs. Here are multiple instances of needs analysis applications.

Example in Indonesia: A significant study was conducted by Inderawati, Petrus, Eryansyah, and Meilinda (2021) at SMK Negeri 3 Palembang. The researchers examined students' requirements in the Travel Agent Competency Program to develop English reading resources that incorporate local Palembang culture and 21st-century skills. The findings indicated that students required educational resources that integrated tourism subjects, local culture, and digital learning tools, such as blogs, video calls, and voice messages, to improve participation and job preparedness. The execution led to the creation of culturally relevant English resources that adhered to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) guidelines.

A comparable research conducted by Rahamdina, Harahap, and Sofyan (2019) examined the English language requirements of students in the Tour and Travel Department at a vocational high school in Bengkulu. The results highlighted

the significance of English in Tourism, including managing guest relations and overseeing tour activities. The findings influenced the adjustment of English resources for the vocational setting.

Additional studies by Mahbub (2018) and Ratri & Puspitasari (2019) further illustrated the use of needs analysis in Indonesia. Mahbub (2018) conducted a needs assessment in various vocational schools and found that students required ESP materials tailored to the workplace. Simultaneously, Ratri and Puspitasari (2019) employed a needs analysis to develop English textbooks for primary school students that incorporate local cultural values, thereby ensuring contextual learning and cultural relevance.

## **CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS IN NEED ANALYSIS**

Despite several benefits, including identifying skill gaps, enhancing learners' engagement, aligning with various goals, increasing effectiveness, informing resource allocation, and supporting systematic progression, needs analysis also faces some challenges in implementation. Researchers have conducted several studies in the field of needs analysis to gain insights into the challenges that educators face during implementation. Based on previous studies, several challenges in implementing needs analysis are as follows:

### **1. Limited empirical validation**

Many studies on needs analysis gather data from theoretical or related literature reviews instead of collecting actual data from classroom research. This limits the availability of empirical data and may lead to unsuitable decision-making by the educators when designing the curriculum or learning material.

### **2. Learners' difficulties in expressing needs**

As stated by Umam (2016) in Dewi & Qamariyah (2023), *"Learners frequently encounter challenges in expressing their language needs and distinguishing between what they truly need, what they desire, and what they lack."* Refers to the statement that when educators conduct data collection for needs analysis, learners sometimes still do not understand what they need for their learning; therefore, educators need to

understand their own influence on practical knowledge.

### 3. Potential bias and subjectivity

West (1994), as cited in Barghamadi (2020), points out that the needs of learners in different groups and circumstances may vary from one another. Hence, it is crucial to select the appropriate instrument and method for collecting the data. An incorrect data collection method may lead to bias and subjective results in the needs analysis. Serafini et al. (2015), as cited in Barghamadi (2025), suggest that data should be collected from two or more sources and should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. This method can minimize the bias and subjectivity issues.

### 4. Diverse Stakeholders with Conflicting Expectations

In Dewi and Qamariyah (2023), stakeholders are defined as *'individuals or groups with a vested interest or involvement in the issue or programs under examination.'* Isnaniah & Haryati (2020) also argue that stakeholders may have different agendas and different output expectations from the curriculum. Therefore, teachers, curriculum designers, institutions, and learners may have other priorities, and balancing these perspectives is complex (Dewi & Qamariyah, 2023).

### 5. Complexity in practical implementation

The complexity in the practical implementation of needs analysis, as noted by Apriyanto (2016), stems from the combination of several factors. First, multiple curriculum approaches lead to different implications and cause mismatches between planned goals and actual learning outcomes. Second, the procedural complexity in collecting data for need analysis, such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, case studies, and task analysis, often requires a considerable amount of time to conduct. Educators or Curriculum developers cannot rely on a single data source, as it may result in incomplete information.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, needs analysis plays a remarkable role in developing a curriculum for English learning. It emphasizes learners' demands to meet the expected objectives set by

educators and can be designed in accordance with the employment market's requests. Aligning the curriculum with the demands of learners and the employment market provides educators with transparent material to build upon in English courses. Thus, making the needs analysis an effective method for implementing in curriculum development.

To continually improve courses, regular evaluation is still necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum in practical settings. Additionally, since the analysis can be tailored to meet the employment market's needs, it can be adjusted to respond to market demands and create ideal reciprocal conditions among educators, learners, and the employment market.

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