

EXPLORING HOW TEACHERS PERCEIVE THE NEED FOR
TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY LEVEL
EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in English

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

All the participants of the current study understood and consented to take part in the study.

The sample consent form is given in Appendix B.

Abstract

In a world where education plays a major role in the development of nations and individuals, the need for good teachers is always rising. Correspondingly, the need for good quality teacher education programs in every country is increasingly important, as teachers need specific training to master the skills of pedagogy. Bangladesh, for instance, has quite a few options for teachers' professional development, however, there is little knowledge on teachers' perspectives on these programs in Bangladesh, or teacher education in general. Whilst there are many studies on teacher education programs in Bangladesh, the current study sets out to explore how teachers choose to advance their career especially to teach secondary level learners. The findings indicate a variety of perspectives that sheds light on some of the realities of teacher's professional development in Bangladesh in the secondary level education sector.

Keywords: teacher education, secondary level education, professional development

Dedication

I am dedicating this thesis to my dear husband, without whom it would be impossible for me to come this far.

Acknowledgement

I want to sincerely thank everyone whose understanding and support has brought me this far, that includes my closest family, friends, and respected teachers, who have all helped me in being patient and resilient.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The Necessity for Teacher Education

There is substantial evidence in the world that illustrates a positive correlation between a nation's quality of education and its economical growth, such that significant investment in the former can help accelerate the latter. As Rahman et al. (2010) pointed out, a country that values high quality education can expect its citizens to be more informed about global concerns, but more importantly, they can be prepared for issues within their own nation whilst working towards its development. Bangladesh, therefore being a developing country, has a job to ensure that its education system can create influential minds in order to keep up with the pace of ongoing global advances.

In parallel to the above mentioned statements, the term 'education' is not only restricted to young learners but also teacher candidates. As Costa and Norton (2017) observed, teachers may or may not be naturally gifted when it comes to teaching, but receiving proper training allows teachers to have a better chance at enhancing their potential abilities. In other words, just as any profession requires a qualified applicant, teachers also ideally need to go through the process of teacher education and training to be qualified to teach.

In Bangladesh, all the different streams of education have adjacent training programs for new teachers. For instance, a few programs catering towards general education include Teacher Training Colleges, National Academy for Educational Management, Institution of Education and Research, Bangladesh Open University, and such (Akhter & Alam, 2016). Similarly, for a career as an EFL teacher one can attempt a Bachelors and Masters degree in TESOL or ELT that are offered in quite a few tertiary institutions in Bangladesh (Karim et al., 2019). In short, it can be said that there are adequate options available in Bangladesh to pursue a career in

education, where these programs aim to offer a number of courses or opportunities to develop necessary knowledge and skills for the particular subjects and learner levels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The desirable goal would be teachers taking the necessary steps with the help of relevant teacher education or training programs in Bangladesh to prepare themselves for practical scenarios, especially since different subjects in the secondary level may require different forms of preparation (Akhter & Alam, 2016). This is because among all the reasons for which the quality of learners in Bangladesh may vary, the right form of teacher education or training received by pre-service and in-service teachers makes significant contributions. However, for particular reasons that need to be explored, the researcher feels that it is questionable whether teachers go through the ideal processes of developing pedagogical knowledge to be prepared for the classroom. Hence, the findings of this study may help other teachers to choose more efficient routes towards learning how to teach.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main objective of current study is to explore teachers' preparation of themselves to teach secondary level learners. Hence, this is done through a few steps such as exploring the processes of how the participants became teachers, the experience they gained so far while being teachers, and finally, their perspectives of what it means to be an educator and the need for relevant teacher education programs after gaining their teaching experience.

1.4 Research Questions

To explore the main objective of this study, the researcher took help of the following research questions:

1. How do secondary teachers in Bangladesh pursue a teaching career?
2. To what extent are teachers able to cater to their learners' needs in the classroom?
3. What are the steps that teachers can take to maximize their teaching skills?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The current study is mostly relevant to the situation in Dhaka city, and the participants who were chosen for this study were also selected from different mid-tier schools in Dhaka. Furthermore, the study ended with the in-depth experience of 5 participants as the researcher reached saturation of data.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Although there are significant contributions towards investigating the options for teacher-education or training programs in Bangladesh, the case studies in this paper may help readers to understand how teachers decide to explore their options for teacher-education or training before and throughout their teaching experience. This is important because the study sheds light on some factors other than the options or quality of teacher-education in Bangladesh that can potentially affect the quality of teachers produced, and hence the quality of students. Understanding the perspectives shared in this study may assist policy makers in taking certain initiatives that contribute towards greater awareness of teacher-education in Bangladesh.

1.7 Limitations

There were a few limitations to this study. Firstly, the study concentrated mostly on the experiences of the participants as teachers, however, due to the short length of the time allocated for this thesis, it was not possible to cross-examine the teachers' classroom experiences through observation along with their verbal report. Moreover, the study was conducted during the teachers' summer vacation which is another reason why the observation of their teaching practice would not have been feasible. In addition, a few teachers were reluctant to be more elaborative with their experiences in certain areas, making it difficult for the researcher to achieve maximum interpretation.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces the readers with the focus of the study by stating the need for teacher education programs in Bangladesh. It highlights the problem, and hence the purpose that this study tries to serve. These are followed by the relevant research questions needed to conduct this study, as well as the statement of the scope, significance, and a few limitations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Teacher-education

As Scott and Teale (2010) stated, “the biggest difference that makes a difference is the teacher”. In the basic sense, teacher education programs all over the world prepare candidates to teach a certain generation of learners, and involvement in teacher education programs is necessary in the sense that they structurally guide future educators’ passion for teaching. To understand the potential of teacher education at its deepest form, one needs to take account of the variations brought by all the parties involved in the operation, and additionally, teacher education programs and new teachers must constantly adapt in order to remain updated with the ongoing changes in society. To elaborate, it is not enough to only have knowledge of a particular subject, such as Mathematics, Science, or English, but rather it is essential that educators learn the processes of how to understand and connect to their audience in order to pass on the knowledge. In this case, the audience who are the learners may come to the classroom with various challenges for the teachers that can potentially affect their learning experience if teachers are unprepared to face these variables. Furthermore, it is not just the learners who bring differences to the table, but also the teachers as well as the teacher educators. For instance, a teacher educator’s knowledge and experience can have a great effect on his or her trainees, and similarly, teacher trainees also come with their own sets of

beliefs about language and language teaching that can shape their own experience. Hence, to ensure that maximum quality of education is being delivered to learners, it is essential to have a strong teacher-education system that “enables and empowers them (teachers) to meet the professional requirements and face the challenges of society and time” (Akhter & Alam, 2016).

2.2 Teacher-education goals and challenges around the world

There are a number of existing studies done in various parts of the world where researchers have investigated and continue to explore ways to bring improvement in teacher education related to their context. Schultz et al. (2008) once pointed out in their study that “the process of learning to teach does not begin in their preparation programs” by which they further tried to convey that teachers who enter this line of profession may carry a passion for it from a young age as well as receive passive lessons from experiences with their own teachers and surroundings. Additionally, the passion that is ignited at an older stage in life needs to be nourished and guided in the right direction, for which teacher-education programs are majorly responsible. In the U.S, for instance, Scott and Teale (2010) interviewed experts taking initiatives to reform teacher education in Tennessee to learn about what it means for teachers of the current era. The interview revealed the state’s pursuit of the new program, Ready2Teach, which would provide “relevant, contextualized, and authentic” experiences for new teachers, allowing them to be more competent, have increased content and pedagogical knowledge, have the potential to teach in a contextually meaningful way whilst reflecting upon their ongoing experiences, and also promote collaborative learning. Similarly, Rinke et al. (2016), researched the impacts of having a more STEM-concentrated teacher-education planning for elementary preservice teachers who prefer to teach these subjects, and found that such an approach opposite to a traditional teacher-education method had more advantages for the educators in many areas related to STEM education. Hence, the authors proposed that

such changes be brought in the teacher-education system in their context. Another goal of teacher-education is also preparing future educators to face diversity in the classroom (such as sociocultural, economical, and more) for which Bartholomé (2004) believed there should be specific training or counseling for preservice teachers in Massachusetts to understand and change any philosophies of theirs that might have adverse effects on their teaching strategies if left unaddressed. In fact, as a result of missing inclusivity in one's teaching strategies and hence ignoring the possibility of diverse background experiences of learners, teaching outcomes may not be evenly reached by all learners. Assaf et al. (2010) shared a similar point of view, where the authors researched whether teacher-education programs in Texas incorporated inclusivity in their curricula, as a major concern with the school-education there was that most teachers were White-females while many learners came from different cultural and societal backgrounds. Hence, the authors of this research examined perspectives and beliefs of teacher-educators to investigate to what extent multicultural inclusivity is promoted by them through the teacher-education programs and they debated that different perspectives of teacher-educators are more likely to result in an inconsistency in the teacher-education program if teacher-educators do not collaborate together to pursue the approach in concern.

Several studies outside of the U.S have also shared successes and raised concerns regarding teacher education in their countries in recent years. For instance, Donaldson (2014) spoke about re-evaluation of the quality of education in Scotland, and he discussed that among all the valid areas of concern, the topic of teachers' professional development was given the highest priority. Moreover, he pointed out that the combination of a Masters degree in education encouraged by the Scottish Education Board and financial support provided by the Scottish government aimed to not only provide a higher qualification but to inspire "reflective and informed engagement with complex and authentic issues as an integral part of professional development" (2014). Nimante and Tubele (2010) reviewed the situation in

Latvia where inclusive education was still a new practice being implemented from all directions. To elaborate, inclusive education meant teachers having the preparation to teach all kinds of learners in the classroom, including those with special needs going to regular schools and bringing challenges that are different from those without special needs. This meant that the teacher education programs in Latvia had to update their curricula in order to implement inclusive education. Since then, it can be said that Latvia's situation has seen improvement, however, some other countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan where the concept of inclusive education is still new needs more time to improve their education system (Ilisko et al., 2019). In a similar study, Bartolo (2010) also reviewed the promotion of inclusive education in the light of the Maltese experience and concluded that the adaptation of this concept requires an ongoing practice with the help of all who are involved in the development of the education system of the country, especially because many teachers who are accepting of the theory are doubtful of its practicality. Moreover, Pijl (2010) provided suggestions for the same situation in the Netherlands, where he stated that despite teachers having different beliefs about teaching, and especially facing issues with learners who require special attention, teacher colleagues can collaborate with one another to tackle such challenges in a school of diverse learners, as well as the fact that policy-makers and teacher trainers need to be open to the idea of frequently revising curricula of teacher education programs in order to better prepare new teachers of tomorrow.

As many countries face similar challenges from learners and want similar goals to be set by teacher education programs, Caena and Redecker (2019) highlighted some features that should be included in a teacher competency framework along with space for updates along with ongoing changes. For instance, the main roles of a teacher competence framework according to the European Commission (2013) can be measured to “defining outcomes of teacher education, criteria for teacher recruitment and selection, and teacher professional

development needs” (as cited in Caena and Redecker, 2019). Moreover, the framework highly prioritises reflective-teaching and works towards developing the necessary knowledge and skills in teacher-trainees, hence supporting both a higher quality of inclusive education for learners and increased professional development in teachers (as cited in Caena and Redecker, 2019).

2.3 Problems and Successes with Teacher Education in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, many past and recent studies have indicated some issues within the core of the teacher education programs or with teachers’ implementation of what is taught through the programs. On one hand, for example, Karim et al. (2020) discussed the importance of the alignment of teacher beliefs with practices in the classroom, and he pointed out that research on the impact of teacher education on teacher beliefs and adjacent practices is low even though it is an essential area to explore as teacher beliefs can have a heavy impact on the quality of education in the classroom. Their research helped to identify several areas where teachers experienced a shift in their beliefs regarding learners and how to teach, such as views towards their roles in the classroom, teaching methodologies, materials for teaching, effective teaching, classroom management, and quality of a good teacher, all which were affected positively after attending TESOL programs (Karim et al. 2020). That is, the participant-teachers who attended a TESOL program and then practiced teaching again reported that they began to take different approaches in various areas especially since the main problem before attending TESOL programs was the lack of knowledge in certain aspects (Karim et al. 2020). On the other hand, some studies also explored the effectiveness of teacher education programs in Bangladesh from the perspective of pre-service teachers and found areas where they require more attention. For instance, Mullick and Sheesh (2008) addressed concerns about the average standard of primary teachers because their research found that primary teachers in Bangladesh were lacking adequate teaching skills due to both

internal issues such as the respective training program's inability to sufficiently prepare and motivate teachers, as well as external issues such as a low pay-scale which also added to primary teachers' lack of motivation. Another concerning issue regarding the education system in Bangladesh highlighted the remaining lack of introduction of ICT, both in teacher education programs as well as in primary and secondary institutions (Khan et al., 2012). For issues such as this one, the authors noted that it is a matter of collaboration among the Government, Ministry of Education, as well as the local technology businesses to take a step towards development in this area (Khan et al., 2012). Hence, otherwise it would be difficult for Bangladesh to be close to coming out of its status as a developing country in the near future. Karim et al. (2019) researched the effectiveness of teacher education programs in Bangladesh, such as BA and MA in TESOL, ELT, TESL, in the growth of the nation's next ESOL teachers, and he discovered that while the overall impact is positive, some improvements can be made. In fact, out of the few limitations he pointed out, one of them was the programs' lack of ability to create reflective teachers. Similarly, in a recent study by Nur and Short (2019), a thorough investigation of English language teacher education in Bangladesh led to the conclusion that this sector requires immediate attention in certain aspects if the quality of English education in this country is to be maintained. To be more specific, the researchers noted that the overall quality of teacher education is affected by lack of needs analysis mechanism that can form a training context according to the current trainees' needs, lack of systematic monitoring of training and post-training variables, and many inconsistencies in the quality of teacher trainers, trainees, resources, and management of the training curriculum. Overall, these researches illustrate that there are improvements which positively affect learners' educational and teachers' professional development, as well as lackings in the teacher-education system of Bangladesh which leave behind inconsistency in the quality of teachers produced by this country.

2.4 Research Gap

There have been many grounds covered through preceding studies, especially regarding the quality of teacher education in Bangladesh. The current study therefore tries to explore secondary level teachers' experiences with the pursuit of a teaching career in Bangladesh, that is how teachers come to decide which teacher education programs or training to pursue in order to advance their career in the education sector.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter illustrates the concept of teacher education, and highlights some mutual goals that all teacher education programs work towards, as well as tackling some challenges of teacher education programs by overviewing a number of past studies from various parts of the world. The focus then comes to the situation in Bangladesh, and the researcher highlights some strengths and flaws in the teacher education sector of this country whilst finally addressing the gap in research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

From the light of the above-mentioned studies and the problems identified, the current study would like to revisit the aspect of teacher education in Bangladesh to analyze the current conditions of teaching practice from the perspective of educators of secondary level education in Bangladesh. To conduct this study, the following research questions will be brought to focus:

1. How do secondary teachers in Bangladesh pursue a teaching career?
2. To what extent are teachers able to cater to their learners' needs in the classroom?

3. What are the steps that teachers can take to maximize their teaching skills?

The following sections of this chapter elaborates the methods chosen to carry out and analyze the study.

3.2 Philosophical assumptions, Research Paradigm, and Theoretical Framework

The research paradigm that this study follows is that of Interpretivism, which according to Creswell (2007) helps to understand a phenomenon through multiple perspectives. He also explained the philosophical assumptions under this paradigm, for instance, the ontological assumption asks how reality may exist, and it suggests that there can be multiple subjective realities. This can be explored through the individual points of view collected from each participant in the study. The epistemological assumption seeks to answer how these realities may be found, and this research paradigm tries to generate and interpret the realities inductively. The researcher explores an area rather than having an assumption and trying to find those results. The axiological assumption looks at the researcher's biased or unbiased involvement in the generation of the data from the participants. For this study, the researcher maintains an unbiased role by asking questions that are more general and open-ended to ensure the authenticity of the data received from the participants while they speak of their thoughts. Hence, the methodological assumption answers that the research takes a qualitative approach for an in-depth exploration in the area of study.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, the theoretical framework that this small-scale study follows is from Darling-Hammond's (2006) "Constructing 21st Century Teacher Education" where the author illustrates detailed aspects of responsibilities that should be present in an educator, as given in figure 1.

Figure 1

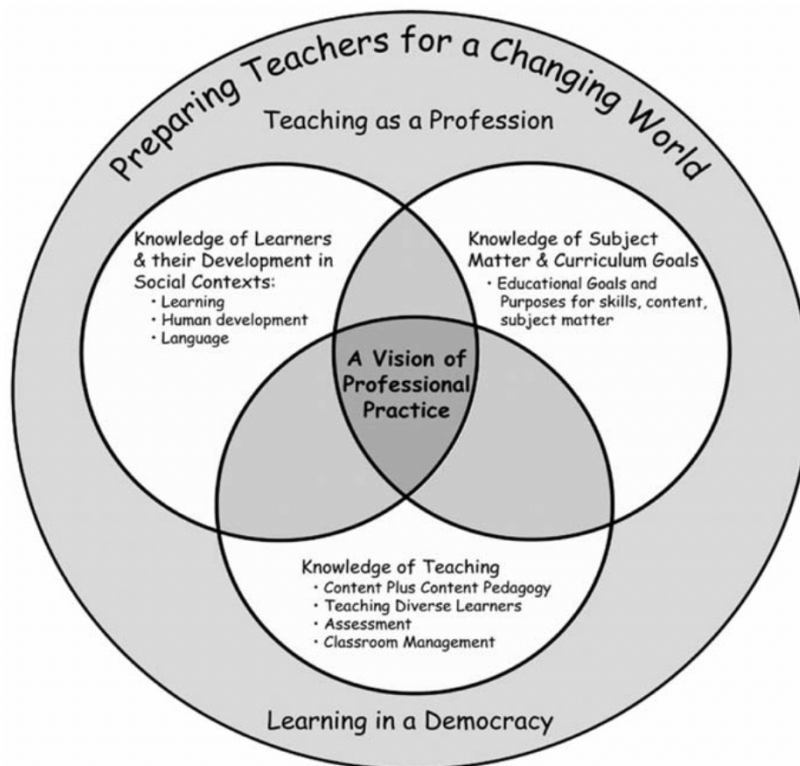


FIGURE 1: A Framework for Understanding Teaching and Learning
 SOURCE: Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005, p. 11).

In the diagram above, the stages of professional teaching practice can be identified as having clear and distinguished knowledge of what to teach, how to teach, and whom to teach, while having the potential to practice reflectivity in teaching at the same time. Following this illustration, the researcher tries to explore the experiences of secondary level teachers in this direction.

3.3 Research Design

The multiple case study approach of qualitative research is chosen for the data collection of this study. From the perspective of interpretivism, there can be “multiple perspectives and versions of truths” to a scenario (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). From this point of view, each participant acts as a case study for the researcher, and they provide the study with unique information by drawing their own experiences. Furthermore, Njie and Asimiran (2014) also

expressed similar views such as “the Case study concentrates on the experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other context” and such experience needs to be extracted strategically by the researcher.

3.4 Setting and Sampling

For this study, non-probability sampling has been preferred (Walliman, 2017). The participants are not chosen randomly as reaching enough of the representative population might be an issue for the researcher and the time frame for the study to be completed is short. Hence, the study uses snowball sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique, where one participant of the study refers to another participant who fits the criteria and so on. In this way the researcher is able to quickly reach an adequate sample population for her study, by asking one teacher to refer to their colleagues. Furthermore, the criteria set for the participants are Bangladeshi secondary level teachers of any subject, specifically practicing teaching in Dhaka city, and those who have completed Bachelor’s or Master’s degree prior to teaching.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

This study tries to follow the Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) framework as illustrated by Castillo-Montoya (2016). The framework consists of four steps. Step 1, for instance, attempts the construction of interview questions respective to the background information needed, but more importantly, the research questions that build up to the central objective of the study, Step 2 tries to ensure that the interview questions are designed in an open-ended manner with space for follow-up questions so that the researcher can carry on the interview as a conversation or as a story rather than a question-answer session, Step 3 tries to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the process and hence the interview matrix was cross checked by the researcher’s supervisor, and lastly, in step 4 the researcher sets up interviews

with potential candidates (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). On covering all grounds and proceeding towards step 4, the researcher tried to maintain a respectful and avoid a stressful environment for the interviewees by speaking to them in a friendly and cooperative manner, which resulted in most of them sharing their thoughts and experiences as much as possible in a conversational setting. The researcher also recorded all the interviews with participants' consent which were later analyzed using relevant instruments. Finally, the researcher stopped at five participants once the saturation of data was reached, which is the point where similar themes keep emerging (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative thematic analysis framework was chosen as a suitable instrument to carry on analysis of the collected data. First, themes that are generated refer to similar patterns or unique ones found among the experiences of the individuals, and second, the themes help to build an understanding of the study in a strategic and organized manner (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Hence, the researcher analyzed the data from this study through this instrument along with backing the findings with relevant information from similar and recent literature.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher proceeded with the interviews only after she received all of the participants' verbal and written consent through a consent form (Appendix). Moreover, some of the information in the study was respectfully kept anonymous to ensure participants' comfort while sharing their experience.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter specifies the method that the researcher adopted for this study along with the relevant data collection and analysis instruments. The study maintains the characteristics of a qualitative research methodology as the researcher aims to explore the central objective from a subjective point of view where multiple perspectives can be elaborately analysed and

compared. In addition, the chapter also includes where the study is set and how the researcher decides the sampling for the study, as well as highlights some ethical considerations while the study is carried out.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study. As viewed in the previous chapter, five secondary level teachers participated in the study and shared their detailed experiences as teachers of their respective schools. The initial phase of the interviews asked for all the secondary teachers' background information, such as their educational qualifications, their overall teaching experience in a school environment, and the subjects they teach, all of which are listed in table 1 below. The next part of the interviews asked open-ended questions relevant to the main objective of this study. The findings are presented in the following part of this chapter from a thematic perspective.

Table 1: Participants' Profile					
Teacher (Code names)	T1-I	T2-S	T3-D	T4-B	T5-M
Educational qualification	Bachelors in EEE	Masters in Business Administration	Masters in ELT	Masters in Literature	Bachelors in Environmental Sciences
Teaching experience	3 years	5 years	1 year	3 years	2 years
Subject	Maths, Physics	English Language	English Language	English Literature, Geography	Biology

Class	8	10	10	8	8
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4.2 Pursuing a Teaching Career in Bangladesh

4.2.1 Inspiration of Becoming an Educator

It can be said that every professional was once an amateur, but every person who aspires to be an educator develops an idea of how they want to teach and what they want to achieve, perhaps even long before he or she begins pursuing a teaching career. In addition to that, teachers' preceding ideas can always change and expand with time and experience, and especially vary from teacher to teacher.

The current study similarly explores the participants' inspiration behind the desire to become educators and finds a few different perspectives with some similarities. For instance, T1-I stated that he perceived himself as possessing higher intelligence in comparison to his classmates in his own school years, for which he would be approached numerous times to tutor other classmates who required help. T1-I added that *“it gave me a lot of gratification if I was able to help my people out”*, which was a prime source of motivation to proceed towards teaching. Moreover, before joining a school as a teacher, his teaching journey began with the practice of one-on-one tutoring where he guided students of grades below his own (with T1-I himself receiving secondary education) as at that time he felt that *“these kids really needed some guidance which they did not have at school because the school teachers were not upto the mark, and although that was a problem I never faced because I studied on my own, many students struggled in this area and I felt a sense of responsibility to take an initiative.”* T1-I found himself carrying on this source of inspiration along with his natural fondness towards teaching. Furthermore, the other participants too shared similar thoughts, for instance, T2-S believed that she can provide the younger generation with *“guidance and motivation”* and T5-M briefly expressed her admiration towards teaching children. Similarly, T3-D added that

her passion for teaching was accentuated through interaction with her students as her practical experience taught her that “*a teacher has many roles to play besides teaching in a classroom*” and she enjoys experiencing different kinds of child-psychology which adds further to her knowledge of teaching. Even though the teachers of this study speak from their teaching experience between one to five years, they shared many similarities with studies on long-serving teachers who also remain in the teaching profession due to reasons such as their admiration of their profession and their learners, the need to positively affect learners’ cognition, as well as their expertise in the subject matter (Chiong et al., 2017).

In another perspective, T4-B expressed that her motivation to teach arised from her relationships with her teachers during her student-life. She described that she received much encouragement towards teaching as she was able to grasp content-knowledge with ease and demonstrate strong skills in the delivery of the relative content, and she further quoted that, “*My professors changed the way I view and perceive life with all its joys and sorrows. I love them and look up to them. I wanted to do the same for someone else.*” Her experience indicated results similar to other studies which suggested that high teacher-student interpersonal relationships can potentially result in high motivation in learners (Maulana et al., 2013). In this case, T4-B felt motivated not only to excel as a learner, but to become an educator who provides the same kind of positive influence to her learners.

In short, the stories that these participants shared help the researcher to understand how teachers are born because understanding these causes can potentially contribute towards inspiring more young minds to pursue a teaching career, especially in Bangladesh. Moreover, these experiences may also indicate that it is not necessary for one to go through a teacher-education or training program to acquire different motivational reasons to teach, but rather one could be motivated to master the skills in teaching and hence pursue teacher-education programs.

4.2.2 Professional Steps Towards a Teaching Career

After thorough conversation with the participants, the researcher came to an overall understanding that during the recruiting process some schools in Dhaka city are less concerned by the relevancy of one's professional degree with the subject they apply for. Having any Master's degree adds advantage to a secondary level teacher's job application, but completion upto a Bachelor's degree is also accepted in some schools. For instance, some important themes emerged from the interview with T1-I. He expressed that "*my school cared more about my depth of knowledge in Mathematics and Physics, and it was an added bonus that I was previously a student of this school*". From this perspective the researcher learned a sub-theme regarding the recruiting process of the particular school where the participant's familiarity to the school established a credibility with his recruiter. Moreover, although T1-I's highest educational achievement was a Bachelor's degree in EEE from a reputed university in Dhaka, his application to the school was a success due to his practical assessment of teaching (Mathematics and Physics) and his educational background. It is true that for certain subjects such as those related to Science, the conceptual knowledge may be more important to develop in the initial stages that any relevant practical skills, however, a teacher needs to have high command in pedagogical content knowledge to be able to convey the concepts to learners rather than only presenting the information as a knowledgeable individual (Keller et al., 2017). In the light of the above-mentioned information, the researcher came to an important understanding that many mid-tier schools in Dhaka city recruit Science and Mathematics teachers primarily based on their content-knowledge, and the delivery of these contents in the classroom comes in second position including the fact that the teachers may or may not have training in pedagogical content knowledge.

Other teachers of this study also shared similar experiences in other subjects such as Biology, Geography, and English Literature. For instance, T5-M completed a Bachelor's degree in

Environmental Science, but she claimed that she showed promise in her knowledge of secondary level Biology during her recruitment. T4-B, who secured a Master's in Literature, was recruited for both English Literature and Geography because of her rich communication skills with secondary level students such as the ability to explain concepts well. T4-B added that *"after graduation, I applied to several schools. I've attended all Professional Development sessions held at work and incorporated my learning into my lessons. I always research interesting activities to do in class."* The researcher observed that T4-B showed significant understanding of developing oneself in "how to teach" rather than only "what to teach", which was not observed through the conversation with T5-M.

Many schools that search for English language teachers may prefer teachers with a Bachelor's or Master's degree in ELT or TESOL. For instance, as T3-D's goal was to enter the education sector to teach English, she proceeded to pursue a Bachelor's and Master's degree in ELT from a reputed university in Bangladesh before applying as an English teacher. Moreover, the courses that T3-D attended during her Masters' in ELT covered various topics regarding the teaching of English and, according to T3-D, they *"sharpened (her) communication skills"*. In fact, teacher education programs not only train teacher candidates to deliver hard skills, but also soft skills of which communication skills are an important part (Pachauri & Yadav, 2014). In contrast to that, T2-S shared her experience of having pursued a Master's in Business Administration, however, due to her passion in teaching, she diverted her career in this direction and chose to teach English language. In T2-S's words, she explained that *"I dedicated my knowledge and energy into the education sector because I believe that the younger generation needs to be heard, motivated, and guided, and although I did not choose to teach business-related subjects, my Master's experience did help me build the communication skills I needed to be a teacher. I definitely had to prepare for the rest as I continued being a teacher"*. Her experience shows that there are also other means of

developing communication skills such as other professional development programs. However, despite not having a prior professional degree relevant to English language teaching, T2-S illustrates a motivation to positively influence her learners. Although, as Keller et al. (2017) stated, just as teacher's own motivation can affect learners' motivation, teacher's knowledge of a subject also affects learners' access to knowledge. In this case, it is difficult to judge the relationship between the teacher's motivation and her content knowledge.

In summary, similar to the discussion in the literature review, all participants in this study have at least received a Bachelor's degree while most of them have received an additional Master's degree in their relative fields of interests. Moreover, most of the participants teach school-subjects similar to their fields of interests, however, some teachers also teach subjects outside their area of expertise, but take necessary steps in their perspectives to provide adequate quality in the classroom.

4.3 Secondary Level Teachers' Classroom Practices

4.3.1 Incorporating Learners' Needs into the Lessons

It can be said that there has been a significant evolution in the understanding of how learners learn. Earlier, in English Language Teaching for example, teaching in methods like Grammar Translation Method were the most suitable where memorisation of grammatical components and teacher-centered practices were mainly prioritised, but eventually these methods did not prove to be the most effective as they were not cognitively developing learners (Nuby et al. 2020). Classroom practices for other subjects may have also followed similar patterns in the past. However, in a general sense, a better understanding may now exist between teachers and learners, because today's education programs try to prioritise learners' needs (Nuby et al. 2020). For instance, an essential part of carrying out one's teaching practice in a classroom is being able to interpret the learning styles of various learners. On this note, Awla (2014) reviewed the relationship between learning styles and teaching styles and how one always

affects the other. She discussed that in a classroom of various learners there will be similar or different learning styles among every learner which teachers have to recognise so that they can apply the best teaching style for all students that would help them reach maximum lesson goals (Awla, 2014). In other words, a teacher with subject-knowledge may not necessarily find success in producing lessons that are effective, especially if they lack knowledge of pedagogy. Moreover, with an idea of effective learning styles, teachers can include lecture based learning, activities in groups or pairs, audio or video presentations or activities, and other forms of learning into their lesson plans so that it exposes all the learners to a variety of approaches in learning a topic.

The participants of this study were hence asked if they have any initial strategies that they adopt to know and understand the learners in their classroom, such as their strengths and weaknesses in the way they learn, and also how the teachers prefer to teach. T1-I shared that *“I get to know all my students by the first 2 months from when the term begins through the classroom interaction we have. As my classes are mostly discussion based, I ask a lot of questions in-between lectures to observe the ones who participate more and the ones who speak less.”* Later on, more teachers responded with similar answers, such as T2-S, T3-D and T5-M who are keen on observing every individual learner of their classrooms through question-answering tactics throughout their lectures. T3-D added that she maintains mental profiles of her students *“by asking them questions, observing their answer scripts, and by talking to them in general”* as it helps to improve her lessons accordingly. T4-B also incorporated similar practices as the other teachers mentioned above along with other techniques to achieve a better perception of her learners. For example, T4-B shared that *“On the first week of class, I assign a written activity where they write about themselves. They are free to write anything within their areas of interest. It is not graded and I keep it in my student anecdotal records. I always write down class observations which also helps me keep*

track of my students' mental health. Also, because I teach Literature and our classes are all discussion based, it gets quite clear on who likes what after the first few classes. Doing presentations also brings out all categories of students and their skill sets. After teaching for about a month, I have a clear idea on the strengths and weaknesses of my students."

In addition to teachers' initial attempts to analyse their learners, the researcher was interested in knowing the various kinds of tasks or activities teachers were able to combine with their lectures. Most of the participants are aware of the various options one can include in their lesson, such as T2-S suggested, a combination of *"lectures, activities, written work, videos, and class discussion"* is beneficial in the learning of English language. T3-D, who also teaches English language, added that *"I often try to assign presentation tasks because my personal experience with presentations during my Bachelor's and Master's degree has taught me to think critically while preparing for the task."* Similarly, T4-B, who takes English literature, shared that *"my classes are all discussion based where students are free to share how they interpret what they read. I also show videos very frequently as it helps them to relate with the content more. Additionally, my students do a lot of pair and group activities, dramas and skits, and presentations in any form of their choice, such as charts, slides, video, or poems"*. Moreover, T5-M, who teaches Biology and mostly carries out discussion based classes, includes relevant *"videos in the class that help learners grasp scientific concepts with ease"*. Lastly, T1-I shared that *"I try to be consistent with the way I teach mathematics which is mostly lecture-based, although with physics sometimes I use the help of videos and diagrams to help students visualise certain concepts"*.

To summarize, the participants of this study who all teach different subjects try to include various other teaching instruments to the extent of their knowledge or ability to maintain a student-centered approach from time to time. While lectures are important, teachers who try to focus on the needs of various learners understand the importance of modifying their

techniques from time to time so that the learning may be maximised (Aas, 2022). Understanding learners' needs also includes being prepared for unforeseen difficulties, that are later discussed in this chapter. Although the extent to which these techniques create a positive impact in each of their classrooms is only known through the perspective of the teachers, their awareness of the matter demonstrates a positive step towards both learners' and teachers' development.

4.3.2 Understanding Learners' Progresses

The next step that the researcher carried out was forming an idea about how teachers take necessary steps to track their learners' progress. Although there are more types of assessments, for this study the researcher only highlighted formative and summative assessments which the participants showed a clear idea of. Gaybullaevna (2021) defined summative assessment as a final form of examination that assembles and highlights learners' expertise in the term's central goals, whereas formative assessments can include "the process of teaching, observation, analysis of student achievement in learning activities" and more. It can also be said that formative assessment are means taken to promote learning in the classroom, while summative assessment is a final report on the learning achieved thus far (Skutil & Kabadayi, 2022). On one hand, summative assessments are centrally fixed by the respective schools in the form of class tests, half-yearly and final examinations. On the other hand, while students are essentially prepared for the broader goals, the researcher found that the teachers also try to maintain formative assessment in various forms. For instance, through the process of observation, all teachers of this study reported being able to differentiate among learners who make less progress than others. T1-I, for example, explained that lesson plans are made ahead of time every three months to keep precise track of the goals of the term, however, there is always room for updates if he finds that the students require more attention in certain areas. He added that "*I analyse through observation and question-answers*

whether a number of learners face the same kind of issues in a certain lesson, and if majority of them need more attention in a previously covered lecture then I go over it again, and if there are only a few students who have conceptual issues then I provide extra after-school sessions to help them out". Additionally, most of the teachers believe that quick or surprise tests are a good way to assess learners' ongoing progress, whereas some have also added a few other techniques. For instance, T2-S finds that *"creative projects are great ways to assess the learners' grasp on the lessons"* and similarly, T4-B also stated that *"I observe how they structure their response in class, the amount of effort they put into a project, and the connections they make between the content and their real lives"*.

Along with teachers solving problems where progress is low, one important aspect of learners learning effectively is teachers providing them with feedback (Dawson et al, 2021). Feedback can be provided formally, such as in written form, or informally, such as verbally during learners' classroom participation. Positive or negative feedback can encourage learners to work diligently, however, for feedback to be authentic and provide substantial support to learners' achievements, teachers need to have a strong grasp over their learners' progress (Hamed, 2021). T1-I, for instance, does not focus heavily on positive feedback as he stated that *"those who are good students already know and do not need more praise, but it is the weaker students whom I provide more advice"*. T3-D tries to mostly provide written feedback as she added *"written feedback stays permanently, but verbal feedback might be forgotten by the learners, although I sometimes provide the latter also as they are quicker to give"*. Most of the teachers reported that they try to provide both positive and corrective feedback, for instance, T4-B added that *"For group presentations, I give instant oral feedback including positives and negatives in front of the entire class. The feedback goes for all the other groups. For written activities, I always leave comments praising their efforts and drawing stars."*

Students love stars. Finally, for reluctant students, I point out areas that need to be addressed immediately, such as spelling mistakes.”

Overall, in the researcher’s opinion, most of the participants of this study showed a structured idea of providing feedback to learners that would have effective results in their perspectives. Although the level of effectiveness of their feedback is not observed in this study, these structures that teachers follow have emerged from their efforts in closely observing their students as well as learning their strengths and weaknesses.

4.3.3 Managing Difficulties in the Classroom

Another important aspect of understanding what learners need from teachers is teachers being prepared to face external difficulties, or teachers consciously trying to keep track of difficulty patterns that hinder the process of learning, and to be able to solve them in the best possible way depending on one’s classroom patterns. Problems may arise in many shapes, such as those in understanding concepts or those driven by situational causes, and teachers also need to be aware of difficulties within groups of learners or within individuals (Aas, 2022). In the beginning, T1-I spoke of the medium of instruction being a major issue as he elaborated, *“Most of the time in my classes, I feel that the reason behind why students do not understand Math is not because they are weak in Math but because they are weak in English. I know this because when I explain the same things a second time but change my language of instruction to Bengali or both Bengali and English, they seem to instantly understand better.”* In the researcher’s perspective, T1-I pointed out an important observation because it can be said that many learners in Bangladesh in any learning context face the same situation, especially in institutions where the use of English is widely encouraged in the classroom.

T2-S noted that *“One of the problems that needs more attention is the lack of teacher-student communication and I believe this can be reduced if teachers are more willing to help students whenever needed. For example, a student must be able to reach out to the teacher after*

school hours if it's actually needed. Including that, I have also personally designed a reward system in my classrooms where they are rewarded with some rest time or free time, given that they fully concentrate throughout the time of the lecture.” From a look at T2-S’s experience, we find that not only is it important for teachers to have clear communication-techniques, but also in combination with her reward-system the learners can find their teacher easily approachable when it comes to sharing lesson-related problems, and the latter also helps in managing a large class. Similarly, T3-D added that *“a large number of students is really a great problem for me because the class could easily lose control if I am not keeping things on track, and as a result we could lose a lot of class-time and have our lesson goals delayed. For this reason, I try to ensure each of my students participate through group work, presentation and by providing homework.”*

T3-D also shared another important point of view that *“the learners are not interested in learning and always focus on getting marks. They depend on memorization. Their basics are not strong which is why they do not understand many common things in their lessons. I try to motivate them and evoke their interest in learning.”* In other words, it can be said T3-D faces a similar problem as T1-I faces at times regarding the language of instruction, especially since T3-D teaches English language and refers to her learners’ inadequate proficiency for English language in the secondary education level. Moreover, many times it is a common problem that occurs out of generational habit where many believe the best approach to learning a new language is memorising grammar rules first. Nevertheless, as T3-D mentioned previously, she prefers to keep her learners engaged and motivated through interactive group work and regular formative assessment. At other times instead of learners’ focus being misled, they may lose focus altogether. For instance, T4-B shared that *“children these days cannot pay attention to long classes and tend to lose focus quite often. I tend to crack jokes quite frequently and it wakes them up from their daydreams. I also do something called an*

"Exit Card" which is spending the last 7-10 mins of class writing an answer to a question or a summary of the entire class. That way, you have listening, speaking, discussing, and writing involved in every class." In other words, T4-B tries to choose creative ways to keep her learners focused and engaged.

T4-B also set some contrastive beliefs that *"it is only logical that on some days kids will be unruly, chaotic, unwilling to participate, clumsy, and unmanageable. Some days when they are not in the mood to study, I give them a free period and we talk about movies, books, studies, and rant about things. They eventually calm down."* Similar to the approach of T4-B, there are also other ways in which lessons may not go as planned, for example, T1-I shared another experience that can arise in a classroom, which is when students start to discuss external topics in a misinformed or misleading manner. For instance he said, *"sometimes, I hear students talk about certain events in a wrongful manner, such as recent events that included mass shootings, and I feel a duty to stop the class and give my students a life-lesson so that they can be educated about these things. Young learners are very impressionable, so if they are picking up wrong life-lessons then we teachers also need to guide them."* Hence, it can be said that some issues like these are not ones that may arise frequently, but if teachers are prepared to solve them then every solution could possibly leave a genuinely positive impact on the learners.

Another recent issue that T4-B pointed out was that as these are post-pandemic times, *"some of the learners have forgotten codes of conduct in the classroom and they need to be reminded frequently. This is probably because these children spent a long time behind screens and doing other things while the lecture went on"*. Similarly, T5-M shared how she manages problematic behaviors inside the classroom, *"I like to set initial ground rules before beginning a term to build and maintain a sense of authority such as points for participation,*

not talking during lectures, showing respect to classmates and the teacher, helping one another, and more”.

In short, all the participants had some relevant experiences to share when talking about managing difficult situations in the classroom. Teachers who are consciously focused on their learners’ needs pay much attention to the difficulties learners face, academical or behavioral, and also believe in making a positive impact in their academic progress if not any in the latter (Aas, 2022).

Although there were a few similarities, all the experiences shared were unique and insightful and would be beneficial for new teachers to know.

4.4 Practicing Self-reflection

A significant process of teaching includes teachers being able to reflect upon their knowledge and approach of teaching by questioning themselves and having the eagerness to expand their knowledge on pedagogy. For example, a study by Sammaknejad and Marzban (2016) suggested that teachers with higher experience in teaching had a greater grasp on self-reflection techniques than those who were relatively new teachers. For this section, the researcher also wanted to explore how often teachers find the chance to reflect upon their methods of teaching, in what ways they think they can improve themselves, and finally, an overall point of view from each participant on the role teachers should ideally play for their learners.

All the participants of this study share a belief that teaching techniques should be revised often. For instance, T2-S stated that *“I try to change my methods every term but I believe in making small changes whenever necessary since every single batch of students have different requirements.”* In other words, the researcher believes that T2-S made an important observation regarding different types of learners needing change in techniques, such as, weaker students may benefit more from a slow paced class with the teacher providing more

one-on-one feedback, whereas faster learners may benefit more from engaging activities, hence it is always beneficial to have a mixture of both categories in one lesson plan. Similar to the previous statement, T4-B also feels that it is essential to frequently reflect on one's understanding of learners and pedagogy, and hence she added that *“at my school, we make lesson plans incorporating the latest research and classroom activities so that we can cater to our children who are growing up in a diverse world right now. I always try to do things differently than how I did the previous year.”* The researcher feels that T4-B has pointed out a crucial detail, which is that learners are always evolving in the way they learn, so it is essential for teachers to stay updated about teaching efficiently. However, the other teachers had less to say about their efforts at self-reflection, hence it can be said that lower teaching experience may play a role for some teachers in this aspect. Although, teachers with relatively longer experience but having no background of professional development in the education sector may not have an upperhand in self-reflection, such as T1-I.

At the end of this study, the researcher formed a holistic idea of the participants' perspectives on their level of preparation that they have for secondary level education in Bangladesh. On one hand, T1-I thinks that *“you do not need any fancy certificate in Bangladesh to teach at the secondary level, but if I ever decide to work in the education sector outside Bangladesh then I might consider getting a Master's in Education or something equivalent.”* In other words, T1-I is confident that the experience he gained over the years or is currently still gaining through teaching is enough to cater to the needs of secondary level learners in Bangladesh, even though he did not previously pursue any professional education degree or certificate. On the other hand, some of the other teachers feel they would want to take further steps towards professional advancement. For instance, T5-M thinks she *“needs to learn more teaching techniques”*. Similarly, T3-D who participated in a recent teacher-performance training program said more specifically that *“I think teacher training is more important and*

receiving education regarding specific sectors will add more to that.” By this, she tried to convey that although Master’s programs in education provide much content for teaching, specific teacher training programs are even more beneficial if participated in during or before one’s teaching practice as a part of improving one’s insight on the practical skills of teaching. Additionally, a sentiment that all the teachers share is that they all are passionate about watching their learners succeed, for which T2-S feels that *“I want to do a few more courses to improve my skills”* and T4-B shared that, *“I want to empower every single student so that they may grow up to be emotionally healthy individuals.”*

In Spite of having different points of views in a few areas regarding teaching secondary level learners, the participants shared their final thoughts of the kind of role teachers need to play in the lives of their learners. Just as T1-I teaches out of passion despite his end-goal not being a secondary level teacher, T2-S believes that *“the education sector needs more passionate teachers”*, and similarly T5-M emphasized that *“when teachers are caring, it impacts learners’ development positively”*. Moreover, T3-D elaborated that *“Teachers should try to motivate their students so that they can learn, not focus only on exams or getting marks. Teachers should provide such classwork or activities which makes them capable of doing things on their own”*. Finally, an insightful opinion that T4-B illustrated was that *“Treat your students the way you want to be treated by them. Life is chaotic and difficult for teenagers because the world is so diverse now. They are only beginning to explore the options the world provides them with. They need to learn to trust and respect others. Teachers can be that person they choose to trust. We need to create an open space for trust and respect between students and teachers.”*

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter brings multiple perspectives to light in the context of Bangladeshi teachers and learners, whilst answering in the order of the research questions set for this study. The

researcher tried to highlight why and how teachers began their journey of teaching, to what extent they are able to cater to the needs of learners in various contexts, and why or how they would want to pursue professional development. The section tries to compare the different ideas with the thoughts of the researcher and relevant literature to bring an overall understanding to the central objective of the study.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Contributions of the study

This study set out to primarily form an idea of teachers' awareness of teacher education programs in Bangladesh, and hence, the processes that teachers adopt to pursue a career in teaching secondary level learners and their level of preparedness while they teach. The experiences of the participants revealed some insightful details that can potentially help bring more modifications to the teacher education sector in Bangladesh. Firstly, the researcher observed that many teachers are able to teach secondary level subjects without having a prior teacher-training certificate or degree, although most of the teachers received a Masters' degree in other fields. A major reason why teachers may feel encouraged to do so is because many schools perhaps do not require teacher applicants to have a degree in education or teacher training, especially for subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Literature, and more. However, as noted from the experience of the participants, schools may give priority to teacher applicants with content knowledge or educational degrees relevant to the subjects they want to teach. In addition, it is unclear to what extent schools provide any further guidance or encourage their teachers to pursue professional development. Nevertheless, the participants of this study showed a vast understanding of the processes of teaching through their conversations with the researcher. No matter what their individual identities may be that

affect their daily approach to teaching, most teachers expressed making an effort to provide a blend of lectures, audiovisual materials, and interactive activities in their lessons to cater to the needs of all kinds of learners in their classroom. They also illustrated an understanding of the purposes of the types of assessment and feedback learners may need. Along with that, the teachers believe in keeping a keen eye on various difficulties that may arise while actively trying to work on solutions that may help their learners in the short or long term. Such efforts demonstrate that passionate teachers may find other ways to increase their pedagogical knowledge to be able to teach successfully. Even though many teachers did not initially begin teaching with a professional background in education, most of them felt motivated to pursue professional development to carry on in this sector which is integral for both teachers and learners (Mestry et al., 2009). In fact, the overall quality of education in Bangladesh depends on how responsibly teachers seek professional development. In this case, although it can be said that learners' achievement of success is subjective as the educators spoke through their personal experience, they can identify the influence good teaching can have on young learners in general.

5.2 Recommendations

As most of the teachers have shown an eagerness to pursue training programs to improve their skills, especially after gaining some experience at teaching secondary level learners, perhaps this study highlights the need for more awareness of relevant teacher education programs. To elaborate, it is possible that the knowledge of specific teacher training programs for secondary level education is less accessible to those who wish to pursue a career in teaching in this sector, hence often its importance is ignored. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further research be conducted in this area as the country can make significant differences in the quality of secondary level education. Further research can help to find whether schools and policy makers need to actively encourage teachers to advance

their pedagogical knowledge at early stages of their jobs or career, regardless of the subjects they teach, or if teachers need further awareness and guidance towards professional development. In combination with their passion for teaching, having an organised knowledge of pedagogy can contribute highly in the quality of teaching delivered by educators.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

	Background Questions	RQ1: How do secondary teachers in Bangladesh pursue a teaching career?	RQ2: To what extent are teachers able to cater to their learners' needs in the classroom?	RQ3: What are the steps that teachers can take to maximize their teaching skills?
What was your most recent educational qualification?	X			
Which school do you teach in?	X			
For how many years have you been teaching at your school?	X			
Which classes do you teach?	X			
Which subject(s) do you teach?	X			
What was your purpose behind wanting to become a teacher?		X		
In what ways did you pursue that goal of yours?		X		
In what ways do you initially get to know your students as individuals or groups?			X	
What kind of things do you try to include when you plan your lessons?			X	
How do you understand whether your planned lessons are having positive effects on your learners?			X	
In what ways do you understand your learners' progress?			X	

What forms of feedback do you provide for your learners?			X	
What kind of unexpected challenges have you faced in your teaching experiences in the classroom during your lessons?			X	
How do you prepare yourself to manage various difficult situations in the classroom?			X	
In what ways do you revise your teaching techniques according to your learners' needs?				X
Is there any way you would want to improve your teaching skills further for your career?				X
If you were to form an opinion or advice on how educators should be or what they should provide for their students, what would you say?				X

Appendix B

Consent Form

Consent to Participate in the Thesis Study

Title: Exploring how teachers perceive the need for teacher education for secondary level education in Bangladesh

Name of the Researcher: Nishat Tasnim

Dept: Department of English and Humanities, Brac University

Email: ntasnim68@gmail.com

I confirm that the researcher has informed the participant about the elements of the study.

The participant is aware that the participation is voluntary. There is no obligation to answer all the questions but the researcher may ask follow-up questions. All the procedure has been explained to the participant. Some information of the participant will remain anonymous in the findings as requested.

The participant understands and agrees to all of the above and has provided consent to proceed with data collection.

Participant Name:

Participant Sign:

Appendix C

Sample Interview Transcription

Researcher: R

Participant: T4-B

Date: 23.06.2022

Time: 3-3.30pm

Place: Zoom Call

Speaker	Q/A
R	Hi, I'll begin when you're ready.
T4-B	Yes, I'm ready.
R	Sure. Could you please tell me about your educational background?
T4-B	Yes, I have completed my Bachelor's and Master's in English Literature.
R	For how many years have you been teaching at your school?
T4-B	3 years.
R	What classes are you teaching?
T4-B	8th grade.
R	And which subject do you teach?
T4-B	English Literature and Geography
R	Okay great. I'm going to start asking some broader questions now if that's alright. Can you elaborate on whether you had any personal reason behind wanting to become a teacher?
T4-B	Ofcourse. I've always had a warm and amiable relationship with my teachers while growing up. I think, on a subconscious level, it played a crucial role. While studying Literature, my creative writing professor once told me that I can explain things well and suggested I give teaching a try. My professors changed the way I view and perceive life with all its joys and sorrows. I love them and look up to them and I wanted to do the same for someone else. So, after I graduated, I only applied to schools and for writing positions. After working as a content writer for a year, I joined this school and it has

	been eye-opening and fulfilling in ways I had never imagined. I believe I can keep teaching and enjoying it in the years to come.
R	That was helpful to know. Can you elaborate a bit more on the ways you professionally pursued that goal of yours?
T4-B	So, after graduation, I applied to several schools. I've attended all professional development sessions held at work and incorporated my learning into my lessons. I always research interesting activities to do in class. I am also planning to do a Master of Education soon.
R	Thanks. Now I would like to know a bit more about your interaction with the learners in the class. In what ways do you initially get to know your students as individuals or groups?
T4-B	In the first week of class, I assign a written activity where they write about themselves. It doesn't have a rubric. They are free to write anything within their areas of interest. It's not graded and I keep it in my student anecdotal records. I always write down class observations which also helps me keep track of my students' mental health. Also, because I teach Literature and our classes are all discussion based, it gets quite clear on who likes what after the first few classes. Then, doing presentations also brings out all categories of students and their skill sets. I would say after teaching for about a month, I have a clear idea on the strengths and weaknesses of my students.
R	Alright. Can I ask what kind of things you try to include when you plan your lessons?
T4-B	Of course. My classes are all discussion based where students are free to share how they interpret what they read. But I show videos very frequently as it helps them to relate with the content more. My students also do a lot of pair and group activities, dramas and skits, and presentations in any form of their choice like charts, slides, video, movie, poem, and others.
R	So, how do you understand whether your planned lessons are having positive effects on your learners?
T4-B	I can tell after a good lesson that it went well. When the students get very engaged in class discussions and have questions after class and try to bring back old topics in the next class, it reflects that they

	critically thought over the topic. Students these days are very outspoken and extroverted and often they directly let me know how some of my ideas influenced theirs. A student of mine even emailed me to tell me how he has always loved science classes and was never a reader but after doing my classes he has started to look at things beneath their surface level. So, I would consider this a positive effect.
R	That's good to know. So, In what other ways do you understand your learners' progress?
T4-B	I would say, the way they structure their response in class, the amount of effort they put into a project, and the connections they make between the content and their real lives.
R	What forms of feedback do you provide your learners?
T4-B	For group presentations, I give instant oral feedback including positives and negatives in front of the entire class. The feedback goes for all the other groups. For written activities, I always leave comments praising their efforts and drawing stars. Students <i>love</i> stars. For reluctant students, I point out areas that need to be addressed immediately, such as spelling mistakes.
R	What are some common problems faced by learners and how do you try to solve them?
T4-B	Children these days cannot pay attention to long classes and tend to lose focus quite often. So, I tend to crack jokes quite frequently and it wakes them up from their daydreams. I also do something called an "Exit Card" which is spending the last 7-10 mins of class writing an answer to a question or a summary of the entire class. That way, you have listening, speaking, discussing, and writing involved in every class. Sometimes I also face some problematic behavior. Because these children spent a long time behind screens and doing other things while the lecture went on, some of them have forgotten codes of conduct in the classroom. They need to be reminded frequently.
R	How do you manage other difficult situations in the classroom?
T4-B	Sometimes I just accept them. It's only logical that some days kids will be unruly, chaotic, unwilling to participate, clumsy, and unmanageable. Some days when they aren't in the mood to study, I give them a free period and we talk about movies, books, studies, and rant about things. They calm down eventually.
R	That's interesting. So, do you think about revising your teaching techniques for your learners, and if so, how often does that happen?
T4-B	Very often! At my school, we make lesson plans incorporating the

	latest research and classroom activities so that we can cater to our children who are growing up in a diverse world right now. I always try to do things differently than how I did the previous year.
R	So if you reflect on your teaching skills currently, is there any way you would want to improve them further for a career in the education sector?
T4-B	Definitely! I want to keep teaching and gain more experiences and spend more time with my students which will allow me to understand their psychology better. I want to empower every single student so that they may grow up to be emotionally healthy individuals.
R	One final thing I want to ask is that, if you were to form an opinion or advice on how teachers should be or what they should provide for their students, what would you say?
T4-B	Definitely, treat your students the way you want to be treated by them. Life is chaotic and difficult for teenagers because the world is so diverse now. They are only beginning to explore the options the world provides them with. They need to learn to trust and respect others. Teachers can be that person they choose to trust. We need to create an open space for trust and respect between students and teachers.
R	Alright. Thanks a lot for your time today. Your experience was very helpful to know.
T4-B	It was my pleasure, thanks!