

# **Teachers' Perceptions in Selecting Teaching Materials/ Aids for Secondary Level Classrooms: A Study Conducted with Government In-service Teachers in Southern Province, Sri Lanka**

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The process of teaching/learning demands more work than merely following textbooks and workbooks, when establishing active learning environments. Teachers need to utilise different teaching aids and materials beyond what is prescribed in the syllabi to establish such environments, where the diversity in learning/teaching can be promoted for the purposes of retention, motivation, stimulation and improved interest. Modern teaching is more effectively facilitated by the advanced technologies, resulting in improved opportunities for English Language learners and teachers to incorporate new technologies into their teaching. Although the need for teaching aids is recognised and is being practiced to some extent, their effectiveness remains a question. The research therefore addresses this problem by evaluating two aspects; the different types of teaching materials used by the teachers, and teachers' perspectives on selecting those teaching materials/aids out of other types. Fifty secondary ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience have been chosen for the study. The rationale for choosing the sample group is the assumption that they have enough experience in the practice, and that they are aware of the effective teaching methods for different learner groups. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gather qualitative data which was analysed using thematic Analysis Framework. The results indicated that out of the 50 teachers, 40 have used teaching aids/materials at some point in their teaching career. Twenty percent admitted that they have not used teaching aids at all due to time constraints in the classroom, lack of facilities and the lack of technical knowledge. Most of the teachers admitted that using teaching aids increases interest level of the students. Thus, this study concludes that using different teaching aids is perceived by the teachers as an absolute necessity in an ESL classroom.

**Keywords:** Teaching aids, Teaching materials, Effectiveness of teaching materials, Teacher perceptions on using teaching aids, Teaching aids for English Language Teaching