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# **Quality in Education Teaching and Leadership in Challenging Times**

An International Conference at Aga Khan University  
Institute for Educational Development  
February 21 - 23, 2006

## **Proceedings**

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### **Editors**

Sajid Ali

Meher Rizvi

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## Preface

Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) since its inception in 1993 has been working for improving the quality of education in all its dimensions. One of the prime foci for AKU-IED has been to develop indigenous research in the field of education to stimulate evidence based/informed discussions and policies. Conferences and policy dialogues are some of the ways AKU-IED has been trying to generate research-based scholarship around impinging educational issues. The international conference on Quality in Education: Teaching and Leadership in Challenging Times was one such initiative.

Quality in education is one of the most discussed issues around the globe among educational community. There is an emerging consensus that quality in education depends on the enabling inputs, educational processes, teachers' abilities, learners' characteristics and the specific context. It is increasingly argued that quality in education cannot simply be determined by local factors in schools, but depends on myriad social, political and economic factors that often go beyond the local context. Such were the thoughts that led to the themes of this conference.

The conference on Quality in Education was conceived as the first in a series of conferences with different foci organised over a regular period. The first conference, Teaching and Leadership in Challenging Times, continued for three days, 21-23 February, 2006, at the Aga Khan University's Stadium Road and Karimabad campuses in Karachi. About 400 participants from Pakistan, India, East Africa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Poland, United Kingdom, United States of America and Canada attended the conference.

The call for papers received tremendous response both from national and international academics and practitioners. Scholars submitted 108 abstracts for symposia, posters and individual papers. Following a peer-reviewed process, 84 abstracts were accepted. Some of the participants could not make it to the conference for multiple reasons and therefore 64 papers were actually presented. Three keynote speeches were in addition to these.

Pre-conference workshops were organised on 21st February and were extraordinarily popular among the delegates. The workshop themes and facilitators were:

1. Continuous Quality Improvement in Education: How to use the basic principles in your own context by Dr Nelofer Halai

2. Assessment of Learning by Dr Thomas Christie
3. Multigrade Teaching and Quality in Education by Drs Angela W. Little, Iffat Farah and Ms Rana Hussain
4. Action Research for Quality Education by Drs Razia Fakir Mohammad and John Retallick

The three days of the conference were filled with stimulated debate over a number of issues. The sub-themes of the conference were: quality in teacher education; leadership for quality teaching; and globalisation, teaching and learning. Following is a brief summary of the discussions that took place under each of the conference themes.

### **Theme 1: Quality in Teacher Education**

The major discussions highlighted in the papers suggest that although it is difficult to pin down the definition of quality education, it would be useful to think of it as a ‘Triad’ (harmony of tone) and not as ‘Triage’ (exclusionary). The papers largely agree that quality of education depends on the quality of teachers and therefore teachers need a high degree of professional development. This professional development should be seen as a continuing process rather than as a one-off event and also needs to be sensitive to specific contexts. The curriculum for teachers’ education should also not be limited to traditional curriculum areas—it needs to be diversified to include such cross-cutting themes as gender, citizenship and health education.

### **Theme 2: Leadership for Quality teaching**

Presenters at the conference were also in general agreement that quality in teaching and learning needs strong leadership support. At a macro level we need leadership support to produce effective policies and at schools’ level we need to encourage teacher leadership. Leadership should not be conceived as a hegemonic one-person show, rather it needs to be seen as a facilitative and conjoint process. Leadership also needs to be sensitive to gender issues.

### **Theme 3: Globalisation, Teaching & Learning**

Globalisation has influenced every aspect of our life; it also profoundly affects the education system. It is, however, very difficult to define this heavily talked about but difficult to articulate phenomenon. Two major impacts of globalisation that were raised in some of the papers were: the growing economic discourse in educational debates; and, the increasing convergence of educational concerns around the globe. Despite these emerging and arguably invasive trends,

education is still largely a locally determined area. Contributors strongly argued that global and local preferences on education should stay in dialogical relationship.

The conference proceedings present the scholarly contributions of the conference's delegates. The submitted full papers are arranged into categories of: keynote addresses, papers, symposia, and poster presentations. Where authors did not submit full papers, we have included abstracts towards the end. All contributions are arranged in alphabetical order based on the authors' names.

One of the major outcomes of the conference was the launch of Pakistan Association of Research in Education (PARE) at the conclusion of the conference. We wish PARE to stimulate and sustain a research culture in Pakistan.

## **Acknowledgments**

The conference was the outcome of the relentless dedication and commitment of the International Conference Committee, Conference Programme Committee, and Conference Secretariat along with the support of many others at AKU-IED. We would like to specially thank the members of the three committees and other related individuals:

### **International Conference Committee (ICC)**

Dr. Anjum Halai (conference chair)

Mr. Rafiq Roshan Ali

Mr. Sajid Ali

Mr. Mahmood Alwani

Mr. Rafiq Bharwani

Mr. Samir Dawoodani

Ms. Laila Jivani / Mr. Mohammed Patel

Dr. Muhammad Memon

Dr. Sadrudin Pardhan

### **Conference Programme Committee (CPC)**

Mr. Sajid Ali (chair)

Dr. Meher Rizvi (co-chair)

Mr. Rafiq Bharwani

Dr. Iffat Farah

Dr. Anjum Halai

Ms. Roshni Kumari

Dr. Muhammad Memon

Dr. Razia Fakir Mohammad

### **Conference Secretariat**

Mr. Rafiq Bharwani

Mr. Samir Dawoodani

This book would not have been possible without the hard work of our contributors. We were fortunate to have had a diverse group of students, teachers and scholars presenting at the conference. They have made an invaluable contribution to expanding and explaining the concept of quality in education. We thank each of the contributors whose work is included in this book from the bottom of our heart.

We are very grateful to the Research and Policy Studies (RAPS) office, especially Dr. Anjum Halai, Head RAPS, for taking the lead role in steering timely completion of the tasks. She gave generously of her time for conference related activities. We specially acknowledge the support of the Director AKU-IED, Professor Muhammad Memon, and Director Outreach AKU-IED, Professor Sadrudin Pardhan. This book would not have materialized without their constant encouragement.

Our gratitude also goes to the administrative service, information services, and the finance section at AKU-IED for ensuring timely availability of resources for the conference activities.

Our special gratitude goes to the publications unit, particularly Mr Rafiq Roshan Ali, who worked with us on each of the lengthy editing processes. He meticulously dealt with the editing issues and made sure that the book was properly produced.

We cannot end this acknowledgment without thanking our sponsors who very generously supported us in a variety of ways. We are particularly grateful to the

British Council, Department for International Development (DFID), European Commission (EC) and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) for their generosity.

We hope that these conference proceedings make a valuable contribution towards indigenous scholarship in the field of education.

Sajid Ali and Meher Rizvi  
AKU-IED, Karachi, Pakistan.



## **Institutional Abbreviations Used**

AKES	Aga Khan Education Services
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKU	Aga Khan University
AKU-IED	Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development
AKU-HDP	Aga Khan University Human Development Programme
EUPEC	Enhancement of Universal Primary Education and Community
NDIE	Notre Dame Institute of Education
SAP	Science Association of Pakistan
SIPRR	School Improvement Research Regional Programme
STEPS	Support to Education in Primary Schools

# Quality of Education: The Elusive Triad

*Manzoor Ahmed, Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University,  
Bangladesh*

Virginia Woolf said, “The first duty of a lecturer is to hand you after an hour’s discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece forever.”

I believe this was a tongue-in-cheek remark and I have no ambition to dispense a nugget of pure truth. I hope you have no such expectation. Not a quest for pure truth, but an exploration of meaning and understanding will do better justice to the subject at hand today.

I propose that we talk first about the concept of quality of education—its different dimensions which may have particular relevance in the fast-changing societies of South Asia—so that we are on a common wave length. Then we can try to describe in broad brush strokes the situation of primary education in South Asia which will help define the scope of the work on quality. Finally, we can attempt to develop a sense of priority and focus in carrying out the efforts to enhance quality in education.

## The Concepts

We are familiar with various dichotomies that characterize the definition of quality in education. There is an etymological meaning which refers to the essential feature or characteristic of a species or an object. There is also a comparative and a contextual meaning – whether something is better than others in the same category or something is appropriate for the time and the place. In the discourse on education quality, both a universal view and a comparative and contextual perspective are useful as long as the point of view is made explicit.

There is also a utilitarian or instrumental view of education and a broad human and personal development view of the purpose of education both of which must inform the discussion about quality in education.

The “human capital” theory articulated by the Nobel Prize winning economist Theodore Schultz, and in ascendance in recent decades through the international aid programmes of the multilateral and bilateral agencies in education, represents principally the utilitarian or instrumental view (Schultz, 1971).

When Rabindranath Tagore spoke of giving human beings the “unity of truth” as the object of education and lamented that devoting “sole attention to giving children information” breaks the harmony between “the intellectual, physical and the spiritual life”, he was asserting the importance of the autonomous development of human beings.

The conflict between the collective and social purposes of education and the aims of individual self-realization is again intertwined with the ideas of the utilitarian and the broader human development purposes of education.

The neo-liberal view of market-driven globalization added a new twist to the task of defining the purposes of education and judging its performance.

Commoditization of knowledge and the perception of the student as a product have strengthened a narrowly utilitarian view of education. The idea of education as a means of producing human capital is not new. What is new is the distortion of the value system brought about by the ideology of the market. As Professor Krisna Kumar puts it:

“the role of education as an aspect of the culture of modernity – with its emphasis on equality, dignity of the individual, and room for social justice has faced unprecedented stress during the recent phase of global history.” (Kumar, 2004)

Prof. Kumar adds that “the view of teaching as an outcome-oriented activity could squander the hard work done over decades in certain countries to popularize the constructivist paradigm of education which is derived from Piaget’s theory of knowledge” (ibid).

The point is not so much to defy the demands of the market and to deny the reality it represents, but rather to expand the scope of quality-related concerns (ibid). Certain concerns cannot be allayed within a narrow technocratic paradigm of educational reform.

This paradigm does not address the anxieties triggered by the competitive environment of today’s technocratic society, which puts a premium on children’s academic achievement only. These concerns are about the wider context of childhood itself, mental health and peace (Malkova, 1989).

The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (Inter-agency Commission, 1990) offered an “expanded vision of education” to promote human development for which appropriate policies and resources would be needed. UNESCO’s Delors

Commission Report (1996) on the vision for education in the 21st century questioned the narrow focus on economic development in education systems and drew attention to the essentials of why people learn: to know, to do, to be and to live together in harmony with others.

A multiple perspective of quality in education is clearly essential in keeping with varied purposes that a modern education system must serve. Tensions inevitably arise in determining the relative emphases and balance among these purposes that the conceptualization of quality in education must represent.

In developing regions of the world, especially in South Asia, reconciling the priorities in respect of access to education, equity in educational participation, and promoting and protecting standards in education, however these are defined, is a central concern in the consideration of quality in education.

The late J. P. Naik, the guru of educational policy-making and planning in India for decades, captured this tension in the sub-title of his Tagore lectures delivered in 1975. He described the conflicting pulls and resistances arising from the quest for equality, quality and quantity in educational policy as an ‘elusive triangle’ (Naik, 1975).

The debate about definitions and concepts of quality in education is useful and should continue. It is, however, unlikely to be contested widely that quality in education programmes is best reflected in the learning or cognitive achievement of students. It is the outcome of combined effects of a host of factors.

These include inherent soundness of programme objectives and programme designs, adequacy of resources consistent with objectives, internal operations and management of programmes, circumstances that affect learners’ ability to participate in learning effectively, and how quality indicators are defined and assessed.

Another dimension of quality is the transformative role of education, both in terms of individual learner’s creative and emotional development and in promoting society’s objectives regarding change and development. These objectives of education are contextually defined and it is difficult to determine and assess their achievement in quantitative terms (UNESCO, 2005, Ch. 1).

UNICEF’s articulation of educational quality adopts a systems approach that emphasizes five elements of quality – learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes – founded on the “rights of the whole child , and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation” (UNICEF, 2000). An

analytical distinction is not made, which is often the case in discourse on quality, between the cognitive development role and the transformative role of education in this definition.

A pragmatic and operationally useful characterization of “quality” of education cannot be detached from the question of who the learners are and what their circumstances are. A recognition of the rights of “the whole child, and all children” as a dimension of quality leaves no room for ambivalence about the link between quality and equity.

The transformative role of education and its reflection in the concept of quality further underscore the equity criterion in assessing quality. Apart from the right of citizens to benefit equitably from a public good, equity in education is intimately related to the development objectives of education including poverty alleviation and building a democratic society (Ahmed, 2005).

The idea of equality and equity in education also has to embrace the notion of quality. This is brought out sharply in relation to the concern about gender equality. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which are being taken as a benchmark for development aid, set the target of removing gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.

In South Asia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have achieved this target but this achievement itself points to the critical issue of the link between equality and quality. Gender parity in the MDGs was seen as quantitative equality in respect of access or enrolment. It did not include any aspect of quality of education and learning outcomes, which were difficult to measure and, from an empirical point of view, would have been quite unrealistic to include in the parity target for 2005. The parity target also did not require that all girls have access to education, but only that girls have access in the same proportion as boys. Parity in this sense presumably could be achieved even if the majority of the girls in a country did not participate in education (Ahmed, 2005).

Gender equality in education, as used in the EFA discourse and in contrast to the MDGs, is a more complex and demanding concept. It includes parity (in the sense of equality in access) but also embraces the indicators of outcomes; learning achievement and performance of students in school and public examinations.

The questions of balance in enrolment in different subjects, stereotyping of fields of studies appropriate for boys and girls and equality in opportunities for further learning or job opportunities related to academic qualifications, are also elements

of gender equality. Classroom practices, school environment and teacher behaviour and attitudes are also important factors in influencing equal educational outcomes. Ultimately, progress in gender equality in education must be judged by transformation in values and behaviour in relation to the dominant culture of patriarchy in society (UNESCO, 2005).

A triad is a union or group of three. Another meaning of it is in music, which refers to a chord of three tones constituting the harmonic basis of tonal music. A missing tone breaks the harmony.

A related term is triage – sorting and allocating treatment to patients, especially in a battle or disaster situation according to a system of priorities. It is a mechanism of excluding patients from treatment who are seen to have a lesser chance to survive. In defining and promoting quality of education, the harmony of the triad must be the guiding principle, not the exclusion mechanism of the triage.

## **The South Asian Context**

Attention to the triad of standards, access and equity cannot be ignored in any educational system but is particularly critical in the context of South Asia, where a large proportion of children and adults are still deprived of education.

Of 1.3 billion of the world's poor living on less than a dollar a day, almost a half live in South Asia. At the same time, half of the world's illiterate population and 40% of the world's children without primary education are also concentrated in South Asia (UNDP, 2005). The combination of these two phenomena of absolute poverty and educational deprivation is not coincidental.

The South Asian nations have made an effort to widen the reach of basic education, especially in respect of primary education for children and have made progress in the last fifteen years. However, according to the Global Monitoring Report 2005 of UNESCO on progress towards 2015 “Education for All” (EFA) goals, in primary education and literacy, none of the countries except Sri Lanka, are on track to achieve these goals (UNESCO, 2005).

The accumulated consequences of past neglect, old habits and inertia of systems persist. There is much more to be done in all the countries of the region to mobilise all segments of society and to turn the “education for all” effort into an effective national endeavour (Govinda and Biswal, 2005). There are several weaknesses that need to be overcome:

- Despite efforts to develop structures of decentralization of governance and devolution of authority, real authority and power, because of the relationship between political and social power and customs and habits, remain centralized and remote from communities and people. This general pattern is reflected in educational management. There are variations among countries and parts of countries. In Bangladesh, for instance, routine decisions regarding the remotest village primary school is often made in the capital by central authorities. This does not promote accountability or provide incentive for good performance.
- There is still great hesitation, even resistance, to the idea of true partnership of government, non-governmental development organizations and communities in the effort to expand and improve educational opportunities. There is also resistance to the idea of diversity and flexibility of approaches within a common framework of quality primary and basic education for all.
- A system of support and capacity development for quality education with equitable access linking national institutions and resource centres at district, subdistrict, community and school levels has not developed effectively. India and Sri Lanka have gone further than others in building such a network with the national, provincial and district resource centres; but the effectiveness of the network in terms of quality and responsiveness of the services in different provinces or states remains a challenge.
- The consequences of all these deficiencies are that only a little over half of those enrolled in primary school complete the five-year cycle and half of those who stay on till the end remain practically illiterate – which means that no more than a quarter of our children are assured of their right to education. More resources for education are definitely needed; as a region we even remain behind the average for developing countries. The available resources, however, are now used very poorly or wasted. It is difficult to make a case for greater resources unless these can be used to produce acceptable results.

In the mid-1970s, Naik (1975) presented an overview of India's educational performance in the first quarter-century of its independence in the following words:

[T]he pursuit of quality has often linked itself with privilege and become inimical to that of quantity; the pursuit of quantity, in its

turn, has often led to a deterioration of standards... and has been frequently hampered by the very inequalities in society which it was intended to remove. We have tried to reconcile the inevitable conflicts with little result. . . .

Has the pursuit of these goals of equality, quality and quantity in education made any impact on the social structure and rendered it less stratified and hierarchical or more egalitarian? The answer probably is that the impact of education on the basic features of the social structure has been rather limited. (Naik, 1975, p. 4)

The assessment of India's state of education, given by Naik three decades ago, has not changed much and largely applies to the other countries in South Asia (see also South Asia Human Development Report, 1998; PROBE, 1999).

## Way Forward

In understanding better the elements of the triad of quality in education and what can be done about it, I would like to draw on the analysis of the situation in Bangladesh, which can be seen as an illustration of problems faced in other parts of South Asia. *Education Watch*, an independent research group under the auspices of Campaign for Popular Education, has been carrying out annual reviews and surveys of aspects of basic education in Bangladesh since 1999. The fifth report published in 2004 was titled *Quality with Equity: The Primary Education Agenda (Education Watch 2003/4)*.

The large picture in primary education was that the majority of children, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grew up without basic skills and preparation for life.

National data from different sources showed that in the first years of the 21st century, one out of five children did not enrol in school, one out of three who started in the first grade dropped out before completing the cycle, and one out of three who completed five years remained functionally illiterate.

Based on sampling of households in 10 upazilas (sub-districts), it was found that the most pronounced differences in respect of enrolment, repetition, dropout and participation were among socio-economic categories; this delineates the magnitude and nature of the problem of deprivation in primary education. Self-rated food security status of households was taken as the proxy for socio-economic grouping.



- In the surveyed upazilas, a child from an “always in deficit” family had a 30% less chance of being enrolled in a school and seven times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a “surplus” family.
- A quarter of the never-enrolled children cited poverty as the reason for never enrolling in school. Over 40% of those who dropped out indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out.
- Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second most important reason (21% of the sampled cases) for non-enrolment. This appears to be a new phenomenon arising from increased interest in schooling generated by offer of stipends and parent’s preference for certain schools – close to home or with a “good name.”
- Children not “liking school” was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. This indicates problems about how the school functions.
- There is also an interaction between factors related to school and family and society. Social and economic disadvantage of the child and the child’s background and the school’s response to this is a key element in this interaction.

Contributing significantly to non-enrolment and dropout are child labour, the phenomenon of private tutoring, various factors related to low class attendance and problems of first generation learners. It was not one or another cause that could be identified and fixed, but *a syndrome of poverty and disadvantage* that caused deprivation.

- In the 6-14 age group of the poorest economic category, one-third of the children were non-students and were at work or unemployed, and 30% were students and working at the same time. In the “surplus” group, about the same proportion were students who worked but only 7.5% of the children were non-students, either working or without any work.
- Forty-seven percent of the mothers and 43% of the fathers of primary school children in the upazilas were without any schooling. Both parents were without education for a quarter of the children. Almost half of the children, therefore, can be regarded as “first generation learners.” Inability of parents to guide and support their children and the likely

economic disadvantage of these families, affect how the first generation learners perform in school.

- Private tutors for primary school children have become a norm. Forty three percent of the children had private tutors; they paid an average of Tk 152 per month for eight months in a year. 18 percent of the children from “deficit” families and 57 percent from “surplus” families had private tutors. Children who needed extra help with their studies received the least help from private tutoring.
- Low average school attendance, about 60 percent, encapsulated many factors related to both the operation of the school and the family situation of the child. Causes identified were children’s need to help at home either regularly or for seasonal farm work, ill health or sickness of child or a parent, acute family economic problems and falling behind in lessons with no help in catching-up from teacher or home. Without the capacity of the school and willingness or ability of teachers to help the child to catch-up, any disruption set in motion a vicious spiral of further lag, more absences and eventually dropping out.
- Children with special needs, especially those with disabilities and children of ethnic minorities whose mother tongue is not Bangla, represent a special dimension in the picture of deprivation in primary education.

Despite progress, provisions for schools, classrooms and teachers remain insufficient for equitable access; equally inadequate are the condition and environment in schools and classrooms and the availability of learning resources for ensuring an acceptable quality of education. A holistic and multi-pronged approach is needed to address the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage that characterises deprivation. The obstacles to promoting quality in the classroom included the following:

- The head teachers’ key role in ensuring effective functioning of school is recognised in government directives. However, in practice, the head teacher essentially worked as another teacher. Normal staff provision in school allowed little time for the head teacher for supervision of other teachers. Nor did the training provided or the degree of freedom granted to the head teacher support or encourage a leadership role. Leadership was due to exceptional individual initiative.
- An annual school work plan – required by authorities as an instrument for assessing school performance – consisted of a calendar of events and

ceremonial days to be observed, rather than a plan with analyses of problems and strengths, goals and objectives for the year and what was to be done to achieve the goals.

- An inflexible and uniform centrally-imposed daily school time-table fragmented the school day in very short blocks of time for up to eight separate school subjects every day, with little time for anything other than a mechanical routine in the class, even for children of grades one and two. In two shift schools, over 90 percent of all primary schools, this meant no more than twenty to twenty-five-minute learning time in a class period. Short staffing in schools often made the uniform central timetable impractical. Schools made their own adjustments, but this often meant “convenient” arrangements for reducing teacher load by combining sections, making large classes even larger, with the fragmentation left intact. There appears to be no awareness of this as a problem among teachers or supervisors and no example was found, except in non-formal schools, of effort to apply learner-centred and active teaching-learning methods with flexibility in class routine.
- A system of “proxy teachers” - the appointed teacher employing someone to serve as a substitute - was mentioned in focus group discussions and interviews. This was tolerated because the perpetrators had “connections” with influential people.
- Competency-based curriculum with the formulation of the essential learning continuum and listing of competencies to be acquired by children through primary education was introduced a decade ago. This is an important government primary education initiative, which has the potential of bringing about significant improvement in learning outcomes. However, after a decade since this initiative began, teachers and head teachers did not have sufficient understanding of the concept and its implications for their work. The teacher’s guidebook distributed several years ago was rarely consulted by teachers and has not been followed-up with sufficient in-service training and orientation of teachers and supervisors.
- Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEOs), the frontline supervisors of schools and teachers, with an average of 41 Government and Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) to supervise (and 212 schools under one AUEO in one upazila) did little more than fill out inspection forms unrelated to teachers’ classroom work. Training and preparation of the AUEO did not equip him or her (actually only 7 out of 43 in ten

upazilas were women) to become a professional guide to teachers – with some rare notable exceptions.

- Classroom observations carried out by the research team in ten schools illustrated the common weaknesses in teaching and learning, especially in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas, which served over 90 percent of the children. There were serious deficiencies in subject knowledge in such subjects as Mathematics, English and Bangla that caused students to be subjected to wrong information, explanation, examples and pronunciation. Teaching was based, with rare exceptions, on one-way communication in often large and crowded classrooms with a class timetable that did not permit carrying out a complete lesson sequence. Few learning aids were used but a stick as a tool for discipline was seen in many classes. There was little effort or opportunity to help children who lagged behind. Home tasks were assigned but teachers failed to provide sufficient feedback to students. Classes in non-formal schools with smaller classes, strong supervisory support and supply of essential learning aids were a clear contrast to an average class in the government and government-assisted primary schools and madrasas.

In considering policy and action implications of the findings, the research team decided that instead of many technical recommendations, it would offer seven action priorities aimed at moving from the business-as-usual approach and injecting a sense of urgency about fulfilling the promise of quality primary education for all children.

## **Quality with equity: Seven action priorities in primary education**

1. *Recognition of inequity and deprivation in primary education as a serious problem and a commitment to deal with it.* The first step to effective action has to be an understanding and recognition on the part of policymakers at the political level and in the education establishment that primary education remains unequal with large-scale deprivation of access and participation in the system. The commitment to removing deprivation and inequity has to be reflected in:
  - Allocation of resources and budgets for education programmes with equity and affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged as key criteria.

- Subjecting education policy and programme decisions as well as resource allocation and budgets to poverty impact analysis.
  - Applying poverty impact and consequences as a component in education programme assessment and evaluation.
  - Supporting research, experimentation and analysis of experience about how the poor can be effectively served and the programme outcomes enhanced.
  - Adopting the rights perspective to fulfil the education rights and entitlements of all children.
2. *Addressing at the school level the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage affecting student performance.* The locus of action for this effort has to be the school where the education authorities can reach the child, the parents and the teachers and work out appropriate measures responding to specific circumstances of disadvantage. The elements of this response would be:
- Identifying the disadvantaged children and their particular difficulties.
  - Extra help in studies in class or out of class to first generation and “slow” learners.
  - Providing learning materials (notebooks, workbooks, pencil, paper etc.) and elimination of all cash costs to children from the poor families.
  - Regular communication of school with the parents of the disadvantaged and designating a teacher for a group of these parents for the purpose of maintaining contact.
  - Orientation of managing committee, teachers and community about the special effort for quality provision.
  - Provision of budget to be managed by school for this purpose – perhaps redirecting stipend funds for this purpose.
3. *Effective implementation of competency-based primary education.* The promise and potential of curricula and teaching-learning based on essential learning continuum and competencies, even after a decade, have not been fulfilled. The concept remains sound and valid. A concerted effort needs to be made to implement a competency-based curriculum, classroom work, and learning assessment. The components of this effort will include:

- Critical review of “terminal” and intermediate competencies to separate out beliefs and values, which may be important but are not measurable competencies, and their sequence and gradation.
  - Using time and resources optimally to ensure student achievement in basic skills; a case in point is wasting scarce student and teacher time in the attempt to teach English from grade 1, when most teachers cannot speak English.
  - Plan and support for continuing technical work on translating competencies into classroom activities, lesson plans, learning aids and continuing assessment methods in classroom and pre-service and in-service training of teachers.
  - Continuing professional work on competency-based curriculum development, textbooks and learning materials.
  - Development and introduction of valid grade-wise and end-of-primary-level assessment.
  - Support for coordinated action research on this subject.
4. *Decentralisation, local planning and management trial.* The absence of any oversight responsibility and planning of primary education involving all service providers at the local level and lack of management authority with accountability at school level have been identified as impediments to quality and equity in primary education. At the same time, there is apprehension about the problems decentralisation may cause and the capacity and resources at the school and local level. The appropriate way to deal with this dilemma is to initiate development and trial of decentralised planning and management including personnel, resources and academic programmes in a number of districts and sub-districts. The components of the trial can include:
- Defining tasks, responsibilities, capacities and the accountability process at district, upazila and school levels.
  - Developing upazila primary education planning and school improvement plans, including technical and professional support for these.
  - Working towards a unified approach to ensure core quality standards for all primary education provisions for all children.

- Scope and method for devolving greater authority and responsibility and fund management to school managing committee and head teacher including accountability of school to community and education authorities.
  - Managing at school level, learning time and calendar, academic programme, and teacher's performance of duties.
  - Capacity-building at district, local and school level including capacity to manage and use information.
5. *Supporting development and use of professional capacity.* The management structure and decision-making process at present allow little room for development and effective use of professional capacity in primary education. The career structure in primary education does not encourage professional development and professional staff to rise to management and decision-making level. Personnel recruitment and deployment policy and practice hinder development of centres for professional and technical expertise in the sector in institutions such as the National Academy for Primary Education, National Curriculum and Textbook Board and at central and field levels of the Directorate General of Primary Education. This effort should be linked to and complemented by measures anticipated under PEDP II. The elements of this activity would be:
- Undertaking institutional and organizational analysis of primary education management required in the Second Primary Education Development Programme, 2003-8.
  - Establishment of a primary education cadre – a condition for Primary Education Development Programme donor support.
  - Development of need-based short and longer specialised training and professional development courses.
  - Rethinking and redesigning in pre-service and in-service teacher training and action research to cope with huge needs in terms of quality and quantity.
6. *A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels.* In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Openness and sharing of information and dialogue in public forums

should be the norm at school, local government and district regarding objectives, plans and progress and budgetary allocations in the school and for the local area. The process of transparency and participation of all stakeholders should include:

- Periodic sharing of information and plans, and monitoring of progress of e.g., school's annual work plan, local primary education plan and use of funds received from government and other sources and performance evaluation of schools in public forums organised for this purpose.
  - Parent Teacher Association.
  - Transparent and public selection or election of school managing committee and local education committee members.
7. *Addressing governance issues.* Political interference and undue involvement of politicians, institutionalised by government regulations about managing committees, have been identified as a major contributor to corruption, mismanagement, waste and obstacle to good management practices in general. Support is needed from political leadership to develop a consensus and adopt and abide by a policy decision to make education, especially primary education, free from political interference, which will help reduce mismanagement and corruption.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore again the importance of the school level authority and accountability in dealing with the quality triad.

A central framework of regulations and standards is necessary, which is often given prominence.

More critical is for individual institutions to become responsible and accountable for promoting and maintaining quality in all its dimensions. This aim can be supported by the government by inviting and encouraging schools to take responsibility and demonstrate their capacity to do so on the basis of agreed criteria. Once it is established by independent assessment that the schools have lived up to their obligations, these schools can be rewarded, exempted from central control and allowed to develop and follow their own higher standards. This strategy of nurturing self-regulation is likely to be an effective incentive for greater school-level responsibility with accountability. This also paves the way for the implementation of reform in pedagogy and curriculum and rethinking about learning objectives and outcomes that is necessary. .



How should one proceed? I suggest a few key elements which must be given attention.

- Recognition at the national and provincial levels that the unit that really counts is the individual school and the aim should be to shift progressively, authority with accountability including control over resources, to the school level.
- The devolution to the school cannot happen all over the country all at once. Space has to be created at various levels for supporting and nurturing this process, working first with schools that volunteer to move in this direction.
- NGOs, community organizations, and academic and research institutions should be involved in nurturing individual schools towards autonomy. Supporting the *action research* or a development and trial mode can be taken as a key strategy.
- Schools claiming autonomy should be held responsible for agreed learning outcomes rather than compliance with bureaucratic rules. The scope and zone of autonomy for individual schools can expand as they develop capacity, live up to agreements and demonstrate results.
- Independent and competent third-party assessment has to be provided if schools have lived up to their agreement. Academic and research institutions and NGOs can be the third parties.
- Transparency of decision-making, planning, budgeting, monitoring results at the school and other levels should be maintained and information made openly available to the public.
- Progress will be step-by-step and will require patience and faith in reform and learning of lessons from experience. (Ahmed, 2006)

Finally, I repeat Tagores' prayer as the embodiment of quality in education.

### **Mind without Fear**

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;*

*Where knowledge is free;*

*Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;*

*Where words come out from the depth of truth;*

*Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;*

*Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand*

*of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

- From *Gitanjali*, by Rabindranath Tagore

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# **Education & Leadership: A Rational Connection and Realistic Expectation**

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Education is one of the most effective and systematic means for leadership creation and developing the potentials for innovations, experimentation, risk taking and standing up with dignity and honesty to challenges of living and livelihood, effectively playing a defined role in building a just and peaceful civil society.

Unfortunately, education is seen as a process of learning that is structured within the walls of schools, colleges and universities, the system of learning is understood to have a combination of a well equipped schools and teaching by highly and expensively qualified and trained teachers. Further on the teachers must be qualified by renowned education experts and trained from highly reputable institutions. It is only then one feels satisfied and confident that education is taking place. Thus making education more of a business proposition and a cut-throat, competitive exercise, rather than a leadership building process that contributes towards the development of a just and peaceful, knowledgeable and enlightened civil society, and liberates the individual to think and create independently. A liberated mind cannot be subjugated. It is one of the pre-requisites of leadership. An independent mind and the awareness that humans are capable of multiple and varied skills, and diverse intelligence creates thinkers and leaders,

Education that is structured in a way, which does not leave space for experiential learning, while interacting with society as a whole and does not encourage the young people, to engage in serious discourses of community actions, is a very unfortunate waste of time and resources. Besides the waste, nations are losing great opportunities of maximizing the advantages of the age and energy of their people, who are misdirected and misguided in the assumption of gaining education or being educated.

When educational development processes open up to interact with the people at their level of reality, an inspiring energy is unleashed that creates extraordinary opportunities of leadership potentials. At the same time these educational processes challenge chronic myths regarding education in the minds of the general public and remove obstructions in the way of education especially in traditional societies. Today, in my present paper I share experiences of such leaderships emerging in educational development processes in Balochistan.

In 1992 Jan, Balochistan Primary Education Development Program launched a community support process for promoting girls education for increasing the access of girls to schools in rural Balochistan. With the help of some of the government officers of the education department and young men and women of Balochistan, a systematic process of building partnerships with the rural communities was initiated. This process developed and established extraordinary leadership in the young rural women of the villages who not only mobilized the communities but also organized the rural parents into village education committees and established their schools with community support and became the teachers in it. Thus establishing learning institutions for girls in the heart of traditional and tribal villages.

Following was the phase-wise process of building leadership.

#### Phase One: Identifying Villages with a Potential Female Teacher

1. A village applied for setting up a girl's primary school only if it had a local woman with minimum qualification of 8th grade available to be the teacher.
2. Teams of young education promoters from local NGOS visited the village as a response to the application and verified the residential status of the potential teacher.
3. Potential teachers presented their credentials and got them verified.
4. The potential teacher appeared for a community based test of her reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

In this phase the leadership principle of individual identity, ability and environmental conditions, to establish one's basic skills through which one can contribute in society, and most of all recognition that as a woman she is important because she has knowledge, skills, and willingness to take responsibility was emphasized. If the villages did not have a 8th grade pass woman who was willing to teach and was able to go through the above four steps, such villages were dropped from the list. These steps became a fundamental lesson for all in the community. The education process started with the communities, before a school as a learning space was established. It was essential to determine and establish the leadership of the education process and definitely it is the teacher who is the leader of the education in a community of children and their parents.

## Phase Two: Mobilization of the Village Parents into a Village Education Committee

5. The teacher who passed the test then took on the lead role of mobilization of the parents of the girl child. She visited each and every house in the village, took base line information of the family and children in relation to education, as well as motivated parents to help her in establishing a girl's school for their girls.
6. Once the teacher visited all the homes and met each and every parent of the girl child then with the support of the education promoter team the teacher organized women's meetings and also sat and participated in the male meetings. These meetings went into detailed discussions of schooling and education and specifically education for girls. The young teacher and the promoter team responded to all the concerns and questions.
7. Finally the meetings concluded by forming village education committees, this committee then agreed to the creating and building of space for establishing the community school, brought in material and all the needs to start the school. The community teacher took on the school establishment as her own institution; she did this as an activity around her self and maintained very good relations with the parents. No one asked for any money or remuneration of any kind. The young village women were the center of the village education system.

In this phase the potential teacher went through a process of community activism, which helped break internal blocks in closed up rural women. She brought out her abilities of communication, articulation, motivation, persuasion and mobilization of village women and men as well. She practiced with house after house on how to convince the parents for girls education, how to get herself accepted as the teacher of the schools she was setting up. In the process she also better understood her community, their expectations and fears, and their level of abilities in coping with the education process of their daughters. She also internalized and became aware of the fact that now she was in the position of a helper and counselor to the illiterate and unaware mothers. As an emerging leader the second phase transformed her into a leading position within her community. Once the Village Education Committee was formed, she played an active role in its formation and the village community was organized around her.

## Phase Three: Establishing of the Community Supported Girls Primary School

8. The schools started functioning on a testing basis to ensure the reality of the needs and commitment by the people and the teacher. This pre-empted the issue of ghosts' schools.
9. The teachers worked closely with the VEC's and with the local education departments, thus playing a major, central role in building public and private partnership for the promotion of girls' education.
10. The VEC on behalf of the parents and the DEO on behalf of the government signed an agreement about their role and responsibilities to make the school functional and support the village teacher
11. The DEO of the area monitored the school and guided the teacher and the VEC gave land free of cost to the government to construct the school building, in six months to a year the schools got government's status as girl's primary schools and the teachers became government employees. At this time the Government provided all the material.

In this third phase the activism was extended to the VEC, and the members of the VEC created temporary buildings according to their capacity. This participation from the village community created much needed confidence and credibility in the teacher. She for the first time experienced the support of men and women of her community in something that was totally non traditional in a woman's context. Many traditional and chronic myths were broken in this phase. The most striking and convincing element in enhancing the leadership of the teacher was when the government DEO started visiting the school, and helping her in its operations and management. At this stage a young leadership needs a trusting, acknowledging and appreciating environment. The process provided the support of the community and the government around the female teachers, even though the teachers were not regular government employees. The leadership of the teacher became the central point for initiating a public private partnership for the promotion of girl's education.

#### Phase Four: Teachers Training and Building for School

12. The govt. organized teachers training at the district level, as well as reduced the duration of the training from 9 months to three months.
13. The teachers became regular government schoolteachers, and supported by the VEC's and the DEO's continued to play key leadership roles in the operation and management of the schools.

Once the teacher was able to prove to the parents and the government that her school was functioning well, with the number of children and the quality of learning, the government arranged to regularize the teacher and the school as government school. The teacher started getting her salary from the Government and teachers training was organized for the CSP schools at the district level instead of in the provincial capital, Quetta. This last phase was the top level of recognition from Government for the initially unknown village women in the most traditional communities of Balochistan. She became a symbol of leadership for all the women and girls in her community. She internalized her success and the contribution of the environment around her helped her to succeed. Here it is important to understand that leadership-building process must have an outcome that is relevant to the reality and the processes adopted for it.

The above processes in four phases created trust and confidence in the teacher to lead an educational institution in the communities and not only inside the school walls.

The leadership of the rural women managed to bring a fundamental change in Balochistan's society. By 1997 with the support of 2500 rural young women as teachers the government of Balochistan was able to establish more than 1600 community supported girls primary schools, enrolling 1,89,000 girls in the schools. This major break through happened for the first time in the history of the province.

These teachers had 8th grade education and most of them were registered in boys schools while they studied at home never attending the school or attended up to third or fourth grade.

For a majority of the girls who had given up their schools due to no opportunity for work and use of their education, the female teachers became a hope, a light for women with education; they could see that jobs are there for women if they have education.

The sudden increase in girls' schools forced the government to increase the female supervisory and officer's position, and a separate directorate for primary education was established, although this building was later taken over by the I.T. University on federal ministers instructions.

Most of the graduates of Community Supported Processed (CSP) schools stood for local elections, or formed Citizens Community Boards CCB thus making their way in to local governance. The 33 percent seats for women in the elections is a great opportunity for women, it is a great gift from the present government.



The sad part is that the processes of community support and mobilization of parents by the teachers did not become part of education in the schools nor was it incorporated as part of teachers training curricula.

The curriculum of teacher's training does not include CSP example of Balochistan on how to work with the parents of the children.

The formal education system does not consider the experiences outside the schools as an educational development process; in fact schools negate all that goes on in the communities and in the lives of the ordinary people or in the isolated communities. Thus limiting all the opportunities of developing leadership opportunities through an educational process. Leadership is build by integrating with people not by isolating the educational institutions from the general people of the society.

In the end the government system keep spending millions to increase the enrolment and sustain it, reduce the drop out, but in practice it keeps working on the exclusion model. The present education system is not creating leadership in teachers how can the school education build leadership potentials in the children. Leadership is a way of life it is practiced at each and every level of learning and teaching.

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# Globalisation, Learning and Teaching

*Angela W. Little*

The theme on which I have been invited to speak is Globalisation, Learning and Teaching. Globalisation is one of those terms that is on many people's lips but very difficult to pin down. For some it means an intensification of the spread of capital, ideas, people and goods; lifestyles and ideologies around the world; for others it means the intensification of the control of capital by a few powerful countries and commercial companies. Many see globalisation as a threat; others as an opportunity. Many highlight the negative effects of globalisation; others highlight the positives. Some point to homogenisation and standardisation of economic and educational practices around the world; others to diversifications and diversity. Many point to a widening gap between the richest and the poorest; others to a narrowing gap. For many, globalisation is thought to be something new, a characteristic of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Others point to its manifestations throughout world history. The social and economic change witnessed during the last few decades, it is suggested, is but a recent and particular form.

I like to distinguish between the manifestations of globalisation and its underlying drivers (Little, 2000). Manifestations are economic, political, cultural and educational. Economic manifestations include the rising proportion of global trade and investment accounted for by transnational companies; the domination of international technology flows by transnational corporations; and the growth of international finance capital. Political manifestations include a decline in state sovereignty, the reduced control of national governments over the regulation of exchange rates, and an increase in the power of global, sometimes stateless, organisations over national organisations. Cultural manifestations include a convergence of life-style and consumer aspirations among the better off and the widespread distribution of images, information and values (Waters, 1995). Educational manifestations include increases in student mobility across national boundaries, an increased use of electronic media for learning across national boundaries, and a growth in the international education industry (Little, 2002). The common thread running in these manifestations is an intensification of the transfers across borders of capital, people, goods, knowledge and ideas across national borders.

But the manifestations of globalisation are not the same as its underlying causes or 'drivers'. Most analysts of the recent wave of globalisation point to technological advance and economic policies as the underlying drivers of all of

these manifestations, whether economic, political, cultural or educational (Wood, 1994; Wolf, 2004). Technological advance has, *inter alia*, increased the speed of communication, reduced the costs of transportation and increased enormously the speed and volume of information exchange. Since the mid 1970s economic policies have, in many countries, promoted markets as the engines of economic growth, especially global markets. Trade barriers, tariffs and financial controls between countries have been substantially liberalised. Wood (1994) for example describes the essential character of globalisation as *a reduction of obstacles to international economic transaction*. Hitherto, these obstacles have included transport and transaction costs, trade barriers, financial regulation and speed of communication. Obstacles to transactions (some call transactions exchange, others trade) in education include immigration requirements for students and staff, foreign currency controls, restrictions on direct investment by foreign education providers, nationality requirements, restrictions on recruitment of foreign teachers, government monopolies and the absence of systems of recognition of qualifications obtained abroad into national equivalents. The removal of such obstacles, underpinned by economic policies and technology, leads to a greater speed and spread of knowledge, ideas and practices in education.

In the rest of this lecture I will focus on four aspects of the globalisation process in relation to knowledge, teaching and learning. I will:

- illustrate how the transfer of knowledge across country borders and civilisations is an old, not a new, phenomenon;
- illustrate how ideas, beliefs, practices and knowledge about teaching and learning have also moved across borders historically. We might term this transfers of pedagogy;
- suggest that the diversity of current educational ideas and practices worldwide means that the transfers of pedagogies across national boundaries, from donor to host, does not lead automatically, or necessarily, to a convergence of pedagogy across countries; and
- identify new arrangements in the cross-border provision of education which appear to be driven by the market and technology.

## **Knowledge Transfers**

Conferences such as the one we attend today regularly bring together people from different countries and cultures—airline travel has reduced the obstacles to

transportation that once faced us and has intensified the amount of face-to-face communication among members of the education profession worldwide, especially those of us involved in higher education.

But it would be erroneous to conclude that communication and cross-cultural and cross-border transfer is a new or even recent phenomenon. Many point to European colonialism as a watershed in the transfer of ideas and practices in education to so-called 'indigenous' or 'traditional' systems of education. But records of the transfers of knowledge between civilisation and cultures predate the period of European colonisation by many centuries. In their collection of essays, *Knowledge across Cultures*, Hayhoe & Pan (2001) 'give voice' to scholars from many branches of higher education around the world. The dialogue encapsulated in their book involves voices that represent principally four civilisations—Chinese, Arabic, Indian and 'the West'—and four domains of knowledge—Science, Mathematics, Arts and Social Sciences and Medicine.

For someone like me, schooled, educated and socialised in the West, it is the several chapters on *Eastern Contributions to Scientific Knowledge* that were of considerable interest. In this section we are led on a fascinating journey through time and space to developments in the fields of mathematics, geometry, astronomy, cartography, optics and medicine. *Rajagopal* traces the development of the Hindu-Arabic numeral system from its published Sanskrit origin in 628 CE in India through its early Arabic and later Latin translations, to its use by European merchants in the 12th Century and integration into Western mathematics in the 15th century. *Abdus Salam*, Nobel prize-winning physicist, describes the long line of non-Western giants of science—the Egyptians, Southern Italians and ancestors of Syrians and Turks, Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Persians, Turks and Afghans. Only after 1100 CE did Western names appear. The Chinese invented printing, gunpowder and the magnetic compass. Iron-smelting was invented in Central Africa. The pre-Spanish Mayas and Aztecs invented zero and calendars, discovered the moon and Venus and quinine. Science and technology, *Abdul Salam*, asserts, are cyclical.

They are a shared heritage of all mankind. East and West, South and North have all equally participated in their creation in the past as we hope they will in future, a joint endeavour in sciences becoming one of the unifying forces among the diverse peoples on this globe. (Salam, 2001)

Conceived originally in the very early 1990s, the original chapters of the Hayhoe & Pan's collection were written before the publication of Samuel Huntington's

controversial thesis *Clash of Civilisations*. Huntington warned the West of potential threats from ‘civilisations whose influence has persisted outside of the European Enlightenment framework’ (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001). Huntington went on to urge Western universities to learn more about the religions and philosophical assumptions of these civilisations and to understand more about how the peoples of different civilisations see their interests. But these interests were, in the Huntington analysis, often presented as contrasting or threatening interests. The editors and authors of *Knowledge across Cultures* present some of these same contrasts between civilisations as ‘opportunities’ rather than ‘threats’. Working from a position of mutual respect, mutual openness and a readiness to listen to the other, knowledge about other civilisations provides an opportunity for

the mutual enrichment that might come from understanding more deeply the treasure of knowledge and institutional patterning that each civilisation had contributed to modern higher education... [and] to envision how higher education could be re-shaped to serve our global future in the 21st century’. (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001)

Rather than representing a ‘clash of civilisations’ Hayhoe & Pan promote a ‘true dialogue among ready listeners’. It is in this same spirit of dialogue that I share my ideas with you today.

## **Pedagogic Transfers**

It is not only knowledge about science, technology, medicine, arts and social sciences that crosses borders and civilisations. It is also knowledge about and practices for education. I offer two illustrations, both predating the recent wave of globalisation; one by two centuries and the other by a half century.

The first draws from the gradual expansion of educational opportunity to the poorest social groups in England, a process which started in the late 18th century. In England the processes of industrialisation and the migration of populations from rural to urban areas led to changes in attitudes to formal education and the numbers of children who participated in it. Children were widely employed in factories, worked long hours under difficult conditions and lived unhealthily. The social reformers of the Enlightenment led movements for the expansion of education to the poorest groups in society. One of the most effective, in its day, was the monitorial system. I say, *in its day*, advisedly, because few educators in today’s world would hold up its factory-like organisation of teaching and learning as a model of contemporary good practice. The monitorial system involved a single master responsible for large numbers of

learners in one large room, assisted by a team of monitors. Learners were divided into 'classes' or 'rows', each the responsibility of one monitor. Each higher class tackled subject matter of a higher order of difficulty. Efficient use of pupil time and low teacher costs were central to this system. This was affected through a division of learners into homogeneous groups, differentiated from each other in terms of achievement level, each group working under the strict supervision of a monitor, the monitors working under the strict supervision of the master. The parallel between the division of labour in the factory and in the school was clear.

In England the monitorial system was promoted by two voluntary bodies. The 'Institution for promoting the British system for the education of the labouring and manufacturing classes of society of every religious persuasion' (otherwise known as the British and Foreign Schools society), employed Joseph Lancaster to promote the monitorial system. The 'National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church' (otherwise known as the National Society) employed one Dr Andrew Bell to do likewise.

Bell is credited by many to have 'invented' the method in Madras, India where, as chaplain to five army regiments, he had perfected a method of teaching reading and writing using bright pupils as monitors. Indeed the issue of who invented the system first and in which country, fuelled the rivalry between these two bodies for many a year to come—a rivalry which, one might argue, increased the expansion of educational opportunity for the poorest.

Monitorial schools were notable for their rigid and hierarchical differentiation or grading of classes and subject matter. Meritorious performance was encouraged through praise and points, the accumulated points leading, in Lancaster's schools, to prizes of bats, balls and kites (Lancaster, 1803). Rows were differentiated by the levels of knowledge mastery of the learners rather than their age. Monitorial schools were established mainly in urban areas, mainly for boys. In some areas separate schools were established for girls.

Lancaster promoted the system in the United States, where he lived for much of his later life. So from India to the UK to the North America, South America, Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and Australia and to five other countries in Europe, the pedagogy was transferred and used extensively up to the mid nineteenth century. Its influence in England on the creation of a system for the education for the poorest was considerable. Historical records indicate the extent of its spread—what they do not indicate is how the pedagogy spread. Was it transferred wholesale? Was it transferred piecemeal? Were the pedagogic practices adopted, were they adapted, were they rejected?

My second illustration of the movement of ideas about pedagogy is more recent. It is drawn from beyond the traditional knowledge domains of literacy and numeracy. The account is drawn from a study by an anthropologist (Taniuchi, 1986) who studied what happens to pedagogy when it crosses cultural borders. Her chosen pedagogy and skill domain is the Suzuki method of learning and teaching the violin. Suzuki was a Japanese musician trained in Germany and who introduced his method in Japan. Taniuchi studies what happened to this same pedagogy when it was adopted in the United States and adapted to American cultural values. Those familiar with the method will know that Suzuki argued that if children could become fluent speakers in their native language by the age of five years then the pedagogy of language learning might be applied to other skills.

Suzuki's 'mother tongue' approach embodied five principles: the structuring of the home environment to ensure constant contact with the medium to be learned; simple initial tasks based on imitation and repetition; daily practice; the stimulation of interest by the mother; and the reward of competence through praise and affection.

When the Suzuki method was adopted by music teachers in the US a number of adaptations came to be made. Lessons started one or two years later than in Japan, the mother was less intimately involved in the teaching and learning process, more emphasis was placed on individual than on group practice and more emphasis placed on creativity than on imitation. Taniuchi traced these adaptations to differences between Japanese and American beliefs about learning. These include difference in beliefs about: (a) the role of the environment in the structuring of the child's motivation; (b) the role of effort and practice in the development of talent; and (c) the role of the group as an effective stimulus for learning (Taniuchi suggested that these were less important in the US than in Japan). Educators in each culture also expressed different beliefs about the role of: (a) heredity in the development of talent; and (b) individual personality in the development of motivation and interests (Taniuchi suggested that these were more important in the US than in Japan). While some aspects of the pedagogy were modified through cross-cultural translation, some disappeared. For example, Taniuchi noted how few American teachers or parents were aware of Suzuki's pedagogical proposition that diligent practice led to spiritual transcendence and character building. This idea, fundamental to the cluster of beliefs surrounding the pedagogy in Japan had, in America simply become 'lost in translation'.

So, the borrowing and the lending of ideas across civilisations, cultures and national borders is a process of longstanding. It is not new, nor is it specific to the processes of contemporary globalisation. The examples of the monitorial system and Suzuki's pedagogy of language illustrate how such transfers occur voluntarily and without, it would seem, the type of political coercion characteristic of education transfers under colonialism. The Suzuki example also illustrates how, when pedagogies move from one cultural and educational context to another, they are often adapted and changed. They change because the host soil into which the donor pedagogic practice has been transplanted has its own character which endures over time. And those host soils—we might call them—educational cultures—are diverse. It is to this theme I now turn.

## **The Continuing Diversity of Pedagogic Cultures**

Pedagogy is mobile—it is also enduring. Pedagogy is a term that embraces what learners learn, how they learn, what teachers teach, how they teach, the motivations of learners and teachers for education and the ways in which learning is assessed.

Many of you will be aware of a comparative study of Culture and Pedagogy undertaken by Robin Alexander in India, UK, the US, Russia and France. (Alexander, 2000) sought to define the characteristics and values of contemporary education systems in these five countries. The French system is described in terms of its centralisation and hierarchy—'one nation and one school'—with a strong emphasis in the curriculum on the understanding of disciplines, on general culture and citizenship. The Russian system is also described as centralized but in the process of devolving power to the regional and school level and a changing curriculum, from one which is less indoctrinating to one which claims to promote humanism, pluralism, democracy and individual fulfilment. Yet notions of authority 'at every level, are deeply ingrained' (Alexander, 2000, p. 532). Because of its relative youthfulness as a single nation, the decentralised system in India is described as one in which national identity, civic responsibility and patriotism are emphasized and in which national level objectives remain important. The United States system is also highly decentralized with considerable diversity in provision and practice. Notwithstanding this diversity the 'pull of national identity is strong... [and also] the intense value pluralism and volatility that go hand in hand with the American brand of democracy' (Alexander, 2000, p. 532). It is in contemporary England that Alexander finds the least clarity about the goals of education and the eclectic mix or 'morass of values in the government's National Curriculum



for the year 2000' (Alexander, 2000, p. 532). In each case Alexander traces the character of the national system of education in its country's history and culture.

These are descriptions of whole systems of education. But Alexander also provides descriptions of teaching and learning practices at the level of the classroom. He writes of the diverse ways in which classroom space is organised, how time is used, how learners are grouped for instruction and learning activities, how learners interact with each other and with the teacher. He also describes twenty-three generic activities through which learners learn (reading, writing, listening, talking etc.) and with whom (alone, in groups or the whole class). These analyses underlined two dimensions of difference between what Alexander calls the Central European and Anglo-American pedagogic traditions. In the former tradition, learners are part of a whole class most of the time; in the latter learners learn individually or in groups for much of the time.

In the first tradition the most prominent activity is structured and public talk; in the second it is seatwork, reading, writing, and relatively unstructured, informal and semi-private conversation. (Alexander, 2000, p. 536)

Patterns of student motivations for learning also vary across systems and cultures. In a multi-country study that I directed some years ago I examined the types of motivation which learners believed underpinned their learning. These perceptions seemed to revolve around three types: assessment orientation (e.g. examination success is what I have aimed for throughout my school learning); interest orientation (I do extra reading in the subjects I like); and 'significant others orientation' (e.g. I work hard to please my parents). Our research was most interested in the patterns of relationships among these perceptions. The patterns differed significantly between students in Malaysia and Japan on the one hand, and England on the other. In England those students who reported a strong orientation towards assessment also reported a strong orientation towards interest in the subject matter. Those who reported strong orientations to both reported rather weak orientations to 'significant others' such as parents, teachers and peers. In Malaysia and Japan, by contrast, an orientation to assessment was strongly related to an orientation to parents, teachers and others; while the relationship of both of these was rather weak in relation to interest. One interpretation of this difference is the greater cultural significance of assessment for the fulfilment of social expectations, in Malaysia and Japan, than among the English. In England families and others are very interested in examination success, but this is also seen as a marker of achievement of an individual rather more than the achievement of the family or social network.

One question raised by these studies concerns the enduring determination of the quality of the teaching-learning process by national histories and cultures. Clearly, history and culture matter—but is it the case that all classrooms look and feel more or less the same within a single country?

Considerable diversity in the arrangements of teaching and learning appears *within* as well as *between* countries. Sometimes this diversity arises out of necessity—local conditions are not the same all over a country and radical adjustments have to be made to teaching and learning arrangements. As some of you may know I have been directing a multi-country research programme on multigrade teaching for a number of years (Little, 2006). In multigrade teaching contexts, teachers are responsible, within the same time period, for instruction across two or more curriculum grades. By contrast, teachers engaged in monograde teaching are responsible, within the same time period, for instruction across a single curriculum grade. Multigrade teaching arises for a number of reasons, mostly concerning imbalances between the numbers of teachers and students. The number of classroom settings that require multigrade teaching is very great indeed. In England around one quarter of classes combine students from two or more grades. And recent worldwide estimates suggest that, if we are to achieve EFA around the world, some 246 million children around the world are likely to be learning in multigrade classes, some 219 million of whom are in developing countries. The national systems to which I referred in the descriptions of India, England, the US, Russia and France, are predicated on the assumption that schooling and curricula are graded into single-year classes. Curriculum development is based on this premise; so too teacher education and education supervision systems. So how do teachers manage to teach and learners to learn in multigrade settings? Some do not manage at all and try to reproduce the monograde teaching system they have been trained to expect, abandoning some children for part of each school day. Some develop strategies in which they move between grades during the same lesson, reproducing once again the monograde system. Still others develop a whole new pedagogy, in tune with the multigrade reality and based on the learner. In these situations multigrade is embraced as the pedagogy of choice rather than adopted as the pedagogy of necessity.

Some of you may be aware of the Rishi Valley programme in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The Rishi Valley elementary school programme has developed over the past fifteen years and is premised on both multigraded and multi-levelled learning.

The programme scales down the learning outputs of each class into a meaningful sequence of concrete and manageable units. Each unit is taught through a sequence of five types of activities: introductory, reinforcement, evaluation, remedial and enrichment. Work cards supported by learning aids are designed to require the child's serious involvement. Every child has to participate in each of the five types of activities. These multiple activities are gathered into units called 'milestones'... This whole learning continuum—an ascending series of milestones, with activities leading up to each milestone—is visually represented in a 'Ladder of Learning' a classroom tool used by teachers and children to track their progress on the learning continuum.(Menon & Rao, 2004)

This type of primary classroom in Andhra Pradesh is very different from the state system classrooms in India described by Alexander (2000). The example illustrates how national contexts do not necessarily determine all aspects of pedagogy at the local level. *Intra*-national as well as *inter*-national diversity in the arrangements for teaching and learning can be considerable.

## **Economic Liberalisation and Technology: the new drivers of learning and teaching**

In my final theme I return to my introductory remarks about the drivers of the recent wave of globalisation—policies of economic liberalisation and technology. Here we move a little away from our major concerns as educators and take stock of recent developments in the social and economic arrangements for teaching and learning across borders. These changes are most apparent, currently, at the secondary and higher stages of education. I focus specifically on cross-border transfers of learners, learning, teachers and teaching.

The idea of learners moving across country borders to learn with their teachers is not new. The first universities in Europe, originating from the 9th and 10th centuries were regarded as universal, rather than national or local institutions. The establishment of centres of higher learning in Europe was encouraged by the Church authorities who perceived a need for standards of learning among future clerics and administrators higher than that on offer in the monastic and cathedral schools (Lawton & Gordon, 2002). Scholars at these early universities were immune from civil courts but subject to church authority. Students at the University of Bologna in the thirteenth century came from far and wide. Classifications of students were sometimes based on mountain boundaries. Some

students came from the city of Bologna itself. Others were the *Citramontani*, Italians who came from beyond the mountains: Lombards, Tuscans, Romans. Others still, the *Ultramontani*, were non-Italians from nations beyond the mountainous Alps Mountains: France, Spain, Provence, England, Normandy, Catalonia, Poland, Germany (*A Short History*).

The idea of moving printed texts from country to country to be studied by learners at home or in local institutions, with support from their teachers provided from a distance, is also not new. For example the Federal University of London established an External System of teaching and learning as early as 1858. Today, the External system has over 34,000 students in more than 180 countries studying for 100 different programmes. This number excludes the many students linked directly with constituent parts of the Federal University such as those following the MA in Education and International Development through the Aga Khan University and Development Network and my Institute of Education. But this type of provision by a British university in the 19th century was rather unusual.

Today many Universities worldwide are transferring their courses of study across national borders and with increasing speed. Students follow courses within their country of residence which are *taught* by a university based in another country. Others follow courses within their country of residence which are *accredited* by a university in another country. Still others follow part of their courses in one country and in part in another. Other 'new' characteristics of cross border education include:

- a huge increase in the numbers of students moving across borders to gain an education. The novelty here is not the fact of study abroad—but the increasing number of students participating in it;
- the establishment by many educational providers of course and qualification arrangements, often across several borders, simultaneously;
- increased movement of teachers across borders to deliver education;
- the use of digital technology to facilitate teaching and learning in virtual space;
- the establishment of supranational bodies to promote and regulate cross-border provision (e.g. the Bologna process, Europe-wide, and the World Trade Organisation and the General Agreement of Trade in Services, world-wide); and

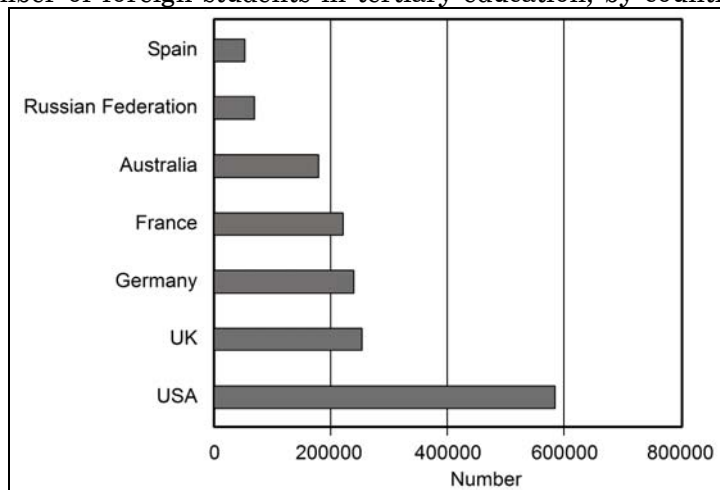
- growth in communications among educators worldwide about teaching and learning.

I have time to illustrate just two of these.

## Learners move across borders

Worldwide the flows of higher education students between countries increased 37% between 1990 and 1996 (Council for Education in the Commonwealth and UKCOSA, 2001). Currently the largest numbers of foreign students are to be found in institutions in the USA, UK, Germany, France, Australia, the Russian Federation and Spain (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of foreign students in tertiary education, by country, 2002/3



Source: UNESCO UIS data base 2005. n.b. Russian Federation figures 2001/2

The country receiving the largest number of foreign students, by far, is the USA—almost 600,000 in 2002/3. The UK, Germany and France received over 200,000 students in the same year, Australia is not far behind and catching up every year.

## Courses and qualifications move across borders

An example of a new type of cross-border provision is offered by the B.Sc. degree in Computing and Information Systems offered by a UK-based provider operating, by 2001, through nine accredited centres in seven countries: Pakistan, Egypt, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. This degree was advertised on the Internet in 2000 as a programme that ‘allows students to

study locally and achieve a degree, awarded by a prestigious UK university and recognised worldwide'. The degree was offered through a partnership between the National Computing Centre Education Services, based in Manchester, and a London-based university. The advertisement describes the learning site as 'The Global IT Campus'. The syllabus of the degree has global appeal to those seeking job opportunities in the Information and Communications business worldwide.

Students follow the first two years of their programme at an accredited training centre and then the final year of their programme either at the University in London or in an external centre but are assessed by staff of the university. This pattern of delivery, involving one and sometimes two institutions working in partnership in one country with institutions in another and sometimes several other countries, has become very common.

There are many other arrangements through which courses and qualifications move across borders. In Sri Lanka where I have worked for many years, I recently undertook a series of case studies of UK providers of courses and qualifications in Sri Lanka. I have identified at least four modes of provision of British qualifications that have developed in Sri Lanka since the introduction in Sri Lanka of policies of economic liberalisation (Little and Hettige, forthcoming).

### **Mode 1**

British provider franchises higher education course delivery to a Sri Lankan course provider; British provider controls examination and certification process.

### **Mode 2**

British provider sets examination syllabus and controls certification process; Sri Lankan provider delivers courses in line with syllabus.

### **Mode 3**

British provider delivers course 'at a distance' and controls examination and certification process. The British provider also accredits local tuition centres. Sri Lankan provider delivers tuition.

### **Mode 4**

British provider offers quality assurance and development services to Sri Lankan national qualification systems and the possibility of dual awards.

These four modes of provision underline a growing diversity in arrangements for teaching and learning across borders. You will each be aware of many more arrangements here in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan.

The growth of cross border provision of education for students based in Sri Lanka is apparent from the following table. This evidence is drawn from a study of newspaper advertisements in the English press on just one day in each of the years noted below.

Table 2: Qualification-awarding bodies, domestic and foreign, English press, numbers and percentages

	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000
Domestic	12 (80%)	27 (71%)	23 (74%)	33 (65%)	81 (53%)
Foreign	3 (20%)	11 (29%)	8 (26%)	18 (35%)	72 (47%)
Total	15 (100%)	38 (100%)	31 (100%)	51 (100%)	153 (100%)

Source: Little & Evans, 2005

Table 2 suggests that throughout the period 1965-2000 the number of qualification-awarding bodies, both foreign *and* domestic, and advertising for students has increased. Table 2 also suggests that the majority of qualifications advertised in the press have remained under domestic control. However, the proportion of qualifications whose award is under foreign control has been increasing steadily across the period, from 20% of the adverts in 1965 to 47% in 2000. A similar analysis for Pakistan would be instructive.

## Issues for the future

In this paper I have explored several aspects of the theme of globalisation, learning and teaching. I have suggested that globalisation refers essentially to an intensification of cross border transfers of capital, people, goods, services, knowledge, ideas and communications in general. I have suggested that the underlying drivers of this process in the recent past have been advances in technology and policies and practices of economic liberalisation. I have also suggested that cross-border transfers of knowledge have, historically, not been a one-way traffic from the West to the East. Indeed many of the great advances in science, historically, have travelled from East to West. I have also explored how pedagogic knowledge has moved from South to West, West to South and West to East. In the case of the pedagogic transfer of the Suzuki method of violin teaching and learning, it is also clear that the interaction between the donor pedagogic culture (Japan) and the host (U.S.) led to an adaptation of the

pedagogy in the US. Transfers do not necessarily lead to an identical and standard approach. I developed this point further by highlighting, on the one hand, the cultural and historical character of national education systems and cultures in several corners of the world and, on the other, the diversity of arrangements for teaching and learners within one country's cultural and historical context.

But alongside these transfers of knowledge and of pedagogic knowledge, I also identified a number of recent changes in the speed at which learners are crossing borders to meet their courses and qualifications on the one hand, and course and qualification providers are crossing borders to meet their learners on the other. The intensification of cross-border education—in myriad forms—is a feature of the most recent wave of globalisation. One may resist it; one may encourage it. Learners who embrace cross-border provision sometimes do so for the qualifications to which it leads and the future educational and occupational mobility they entail. But teachers who embrace it should do so for the opportunities it presents for educational innovation, especially:

- the review of curricula content and new synthesis of knowledge;
- the review and generation of new styles of learning;
- the review of the content and style of assessment procedures; and
- the nature of awards and qualifications generated through cross border provision.

These issues will always underpin our work as educators.

Thank-you.

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# Health Curriculum and School Quality: AKU-IED's Perspectives

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## Abstract

*This paper is based on the experiences of the Health Action Schools project at AKU-IED and looks at issues surrounding the definition, choice and implementation of planned content of health education for primary schools in Pakistan. The paper argues that health education is a vital component to achieving quality because it links home with school; 'needs now' with 'needs later'. Yet it proves exceptionally difficult to plan and deliver such content effectively because curriculum planning bodies are geared to work with separate subjects rather than across the curriculum, with classroom content rather than wider learning experiences in and from school, and with textbooks and examinations rather than the physical and human environment of the school community.*

*The paper asserts that there is confusion about the definition and purpose of health education and that a wide gap exists between what is planned centrally and what is actually delivered in a school. The paper also asserts the need to rethink approaches aimed at improving content, methodology, materials and evaluation strategies and raises issues of wide relevance to the planning of health education and other themes such as environmental education and inclusive education.*

## Introduction

Strengthening the quality of education has become a global agenda at all educational levels and more so at the primary level. Various international forums and declarations have pledged improvements in quality of education.

The Jomtien Declaration of 'Education for All' (1990) recognizes that education must be measured in terms of actual learning outcomes rather than on the basis of enrolment.

The Dakar Framework of Action (2000) emphasizes the importance of "Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (Article 7:vi).

The emphasis of these international initiatives on quality education has led to an increase in national commitments towards quality education especially in developing countries where most educational activities at the national level are dependent on donations from international agencies.

## **Defining Quality**

Quality influences what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. Quality of education is usually defined in terms of the learning outcomes of students and this is usually the primary concern of all stakeholders. However, Adams (1993) points out that quality should be defined in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, and social justice.

## **Definition of Quality in the Context of EFA**

The Dakar Framework of Action (2000) defines quality of education in terms of recognized and measurable learning outcomes. Suggested key measures to attain quality outcomes include:

- healthy, well-nourished and motivated students;
- adequate facilities and learning materials;
- a relevant curriculum;
- an environment that encourages learning; and,
- engagement of local communities.

This definition seeks to identify important attributes of education. Thus, it sets out four desirable characteristics of quality: *learners, processes, content* and *systems*.

## **Health Education within the Concept of School Quality**

It is now recognized globally that good health is one of the most basic features of quality education. The expanded commentary on the goals of the Dakar Framework of Action (2000) links health and education explicitly by stating that successful education programmes require healthy, well-nourished and motivated students, and healthy, safe and secure school environments that can help protect children from health hazards, abuse and exclusion.

Programmes that provide the information and skills needed to protect them from drug abuse and HIV-AIDS must be made available to the youth.

Thus, school quality does not mean the mere advancement of a student from one class to another. Stephen and Hawes (1990) define quality as:

- relevance to context, to needs and to humanity;
- efficiency in setting standards, in meeting standards set and in improving standards; and,
- something special...which goes beyond normal expectations of school.

They argue that the ‘something special’ is a programme of health promotion in the school.

## **Integrating Health Education for Quality Education**

### **National Context**

The state of basic education in Pakistan portrays a dismal picture, characterized by a high illiteracy rate, low primary and secondary school enrolment, high dropout rates (the percentage of students who drop out from school before reaching class five) and the poor quality of education delivered. Due to the persistent low level of primary enrolment, of a total of 22.33 million children in the 5-9 age group, 5.8 million children are out of school and over half of those out of school are girls. The net primary enrolment rate, which is a better measure of educational attainment, depicts an even poorer outcome. Although the primary school gross enrolment ratio is 84:100 only 50% reach grade five. One of the recognized factors for early dropout rate is the poor health of children (World Bank, 2003).

Education systems in Pakistan lack quality in service provision such as lack of access, non-functioning schools and low quality. The poor state of government schools is reflected by the fact that 15 % of them are without a building, 52% without a boundary wall, 40% without water, 71% without electricity and 57 % without a latrine (NEMIS, 2001).

In 1973, the Government of Pakistan produced a Physical Education and Health curriculum, which covered a large number of topics. In 1995, the Federal Government agreed that health education training should be included in the programmes offered by all the Teacher Training colleges. In practice, neither the

curriculum nor the training was enforced. As the subject of ‘health education’ was not to be examined, its importance was lost to the curriculum planners. Nevertheless, the Education Policy (1998-2010) assigns top priority to basic education, and within this, it does mention, although briefly, that health education is an emerging key issue that will be introduced and integrated in the school curricula. In the ten-year perspective, the development plan 2001-11, includes health and nutrition as an important aspect of poverty reduction and human development.

Despite this acknowledgement of the importance of health and health education, the present school curriculum in Pakistan makes a very limited attempt at integration of health education. An analysis of the existing Sindh primary curriculum shows that some health components, particularly personal hygiene, are covered in subjects such as Science, Social Studies, and to a lesser extent, in Islamiyat, Urdu and English; but, the focus is not on health as such. Whilst there is some emphasis in the Science and Social Studies curricula on hygiene, the environment, food, and nutrition, very little is included on safety, disease prevention, disability and mental health. The topics are focused on the individual rather than on communities. Health topics, as with other subjects, appeared to be taught in a very passive way.

### **The HAS Project: A Whole School Improvement Initiative of AKU-IED**

In 1997, AKU-IED and the Child-to-Child Trust, UK, developed an area of school health promotion within AKU-IED’s broader focus on school improvement and quality education. The Health Action Schools (HAS) initiative aims to develop schools that foster children’s holistic development, fulfilling their right to education.

The HAS project was implemented in five pilot schools to:

- develop prototypes of health-promoting schools in Pakistan;
- share lessons learned;
- introduce school health education into AKU-IED’s programmes; and,
- advocate the importance of health education in schools.

Key findings of the four-year action research project indicate that health education:

- is a ‘way-in’ to quality improvement;
- has the greatest impact on low-resourced government schools;
- leads to improved learning environments;
- improves children’s self-esteem and communication skills;
- as a model of school-based trainings for teachers, benefits the teaching of other subject areas across the curriculum; and,
- requires appropriate teaching materials.

A health-promoting school as described by the World Health Organization has three important components or branches: pupils, teachers and parents. AKU-IED attempts to include all three branches within the school through its school health initiatives. It is essential for a health-promoting school to foster good relationships amongst pupils, teachers and parents, not only within the school, but outside as well. One strategy used to achieve this has been through the development of a contextually appropriate health curriculum using the Child-to-Child approach for developing health-promoting schools in Pakistan. The HAS study has also identified the need for the development of appropriate teaching materials for the teaching of health in schools. As a result of the HAS study, AKU-IED initiated the development of a health curriculum for primary classes 1-5. However, this was not an easy task; there were many barriers to overcome.

### **Barriers to Planning and Delivering Effective Health Education in Schools in Pakistan**

The two main barriers to planning and delivering effective health education in schools in Pakistan, identified during the course of implementation of the HAS project, were conceptual barriers and operational barriers (Hawes 2000).

Our understanding and perceptions about curriculum, school, and especially health, affect our planning and delivery of effective health content. Taking health as an example, we can see that there are narrower and wider definitions of health and according to Hawes (2000), the planning of the task varies according to the definition one adopts. A school which takes a *narrow* view of health, as being about good hygiene habits, has an easier planning role than one that views

health broadly, taking into account the development of physical, emotional and social skills as different aspects of health. Therefore if a school health programme concentrates only on the health of the children in school, it poses far fewer challenges than one which also takes into account the health needs of families and communities outside it. Hawes (2000) rightly points out that a school can either *focus inward*, viewing its role as largely academic and self-contained, teaching and testing a prescribed syllabus, using textbooks and emphasizing rote learning of their content or, in addition to these, take steps to *focus outwards*, interacting with its community and seeking to become aware of the socio-economic issues within it. It is quite obvious that the latter option puts more responsibility on the head and the teachers.

Finally, the *curriculum* can be defined either, as ‘a content with attainment targets, measured by monthly tests and term exams’ (Hawes, 2000) or, as ‘all the learning planned and provided by the school, whether it takes place in a group or individually inside or outside the school’ (Kerr, 1968).

Pakistani schools, or, for that matter, most schools in developing countries, are inward looking and are hard pressed to complete the planned curriculum in time. The external life of the school is very limited. The HAS experience has also shown that including health education in the school curriculum was the most challenging task.

## **Strategies Used to Overcome Barriers in Planning and Delivering Health**

### **Curriculum**

Once such analysis is done, it becomes obvious that health education just does not fit into the narrower categories of the curriculum. For AKU-IED, planning and teaching a health curriculum was an uphill task. Schools and communities were open to ideas where a child’s individual hygiene and health practices were concerned but they were not ready to accept children’s role as health promoters especially when their own children questioned their health practices and challenged their traditional beliefs and practices.

It was found during the project period that children who gain knowledge in schools can pass that knowledge on to those who have been denied education. It also became quite evident that by focusing children’s attention on the needs of others rather than merely on their own, there is an immense improvement in the development of attitudes and values.



Intensive trainings and workshops on the Child-to-Child approach to health promotion were conducted in order to help pilot schools to understand and incorporate the broader definitions of health. Schools either allotted separate health classes within the school timetable or took up 'spare time' from unused subject allocations, or worked outside the classroom, forming health clubs. In rural areas where communities were more integrated, it was easier for schools, supported by communities, to focus outwards and include health curriculum within their school timetable.

The integration of health into the curriculum was more difficult in urban schools since communities saw the school's role as helping children pass exams with good grades and any diversion from the regular school routine was not acceptable. Teachers also found themselves hard pressed for time and were not very willing to take on any extra responsibility. Under such circumstances, the willingness of the head was seen as a point of entry because when the head appointed a health coordinator, the person took his or her responsibility more seriously and took responsibility for the effective implementation of health education in the school (HAS Yearly Report 2000).

## **Development of a Health Curriculum**

It was realized that in order to make AKU-IED's health activities sustainable and in order to expand the number of health-promoting schools, it would be important to develop a health curriculum that included contextually appropriate health issues and incorporated broader definitions of health, school and curriculum. Therefore, a health curriculum was developed based on health issues identified by the teachers, children and community. It was developed over a period of three years in order to:

- help stakeholders develop an understanding of broader definitions of health, curriculum and school;
- enhance the skills of teachers in using the Child-to-Child approach;
- help teachers acquire correct knowledge about contextually appropriate and common health issues;
- provide health materials that are simple and easy to use to help teachers promote effective methods that encourage active learning; and,
- develop materials on relevant health issues in schools in urban and rural areas of Pakistan.

The curriculum that was developed includes contextually appropriate health topics on three health themes for class 1-5:

- Hygiene and Disease Prevention.
- Environmental and Community Health.
- Family and Social Health.

## **Some Key Findings from Field Testing of the Health Curriculum**

After field testing of the material during 2003–2005, it was found that:

- Relevant health curriculum is a vehicle for health promotion in schools and school improvement.
- Planned content helps teachers in implementing new initiatives in their busy timetables.
- The Child-to-Child methodology enhanced the pedagogical skills of teachers in other subject areas too.
- A health curriculum helps in sustainability of health promotion interventions in schools, which leads to whole school improvement.
- Health curriculum contributes to holistic development of children (HAS reports, 2003–2005)

## **Recommendations**

There is a need for effective coordination of efforts between health and educational sectors at the national, provincial, district and local levels in:

- Curriculum planning.
- Development of contextually appropriate instructional material.
- Preparation of educational personnel through pre-service and in-service education.
- Improvement of school environments.

- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Research on impact of health curriculum on the quality of the school.

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# **Policies and Practices of Capacity-Building for Educational Managers: Prior To and After Decentralisation**

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## **Abstract**

*Decentralisation trends in education are consistently being followed around the world including South Asian countries (Govinda, 1997). In Pakistan, decentralisation in education came through a radical devolution policy in August, 2001, and new governing structures are currently undergoing a transition phase. Effective decentralisation requires education managers, key players in a devolved system, to acquire new knowledge and skills. In order to understand the policies and practices of capacity-building of educational managers and their impact on educational decentralisation, a research was conducted between March and November, 2005. This paper reports on the major initial findings emerging from this research which suggest that there are gaps between policies and the practices of capacity-building both prior to and after decentralisation. The papers also cites various possible causes for this gap and concludes by arguing that while there are greater training opportunities after decentralisation, the quality of training needs to be improved before expecting any substantial improvements in building capacity.*

## **Introduction**

Decentralisation in education has been one of the most important phenomena for educational planners for more than two decades. McGinn and Welsh (1999, p. 17) describe decentralisation as mainly about shifts in the location of those who govern and about transfers of authority from those in one location or level to those in another location or level. Rondidinelli et al (1984, cited in McGinn & Welsh, 1999) categorise decentralisation into four forms: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation. Deconcentration refers to shifting of authority for implementation but not for making rules. Delegation involves transfer of authority to lower ranks but that authority can be taken back at any time. The third form of decentralisation, devolution, refers to the transfer of authority to local units from where it had been taken earlier. Privatisation, as another form of decentralisation, refers to the complete handing-over of authority to a private body without much interference by government.

There have been three major reasons for recent interest in decentralisation: (a) the role of the central government has reduced as a result of market forces; (b) a favourable political-economic paradigm has emerged; and (c) new information and communication technologies have made management of a decentralized system possible (McGinn & Welsh, 1999).

Decentralisation is pursued throughout the world for political motives, funding motives, efficiency motives or a combination of these motives. The trend of decentralisation in education is consistently being followed throughout the world and in South Asian countries in particular. Govinda (1997) presents a very valuable summary of the decentralisation experiences from South Asia. In Pakistan, decentralisation in education accompanied a radical devolution policy in August 2001. District governments have been in operation since August 14, 2001 and are currently undergoing a transition phase, adjusting to new and emerging rules of business for provincial, district, tehsil and union council tiers. The Local Government Plan 2001 is designed to address issues of good governance at a systemic level. It addresses five fundamental issues for the devolution of political power: decentralisation of administrative authority, decentralisation of management functions, distribution of resources to the district level, and diffusion of the power-authority nexus. However, a coherent integration of these principles and application in various sectors is a major challenge (Government of Pakistan, 2001).

Winkler (2002) has noted that devolution of public education is 'not a response by the education authorities to widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of existing system'; rather, it is a direct result of the federal government's initiative. The purpose of reform was to dismantle the centralized education system and create a devolved system of education, ensuring a significant degree of institutional autonomy (Memon, 2003). In all provinces, education up to the higher secondary level has been devolved to the district level. In the case of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Punjab, this has been extended to the degree and post-graduate college level. This devolution plan, as designed by the National Reconstruction Board (NRB), assigns new roles and responsibilities to educational managers. The plan involves fiscal decentralisation, civil service decentralisation and expenditure decentralisation. The significantly greater responsibilities at district level require that the capacities of educational managers be developed to handle these affairs according to the envisaged policy. In fact Govinda (1997) considers capacity-building as a 'basic prerequisite for decentralisation' (p. 44).

King and Newman (2001) consider capacity-building as the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions of individuals. Explaining the notion of capacity-building from the perspective of developing schools as learning communities, Mitchell and Sackney (2000) propose a recursive model emphasising three categories of capacity which mutually influence one another. These categories of capacity are personal capacity, interpersonal capacity and organisational capacity. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) argue that growth in each category is built upon prior growth in itself and other categories, and builds a foundation of subsequent growth. Boundaries between capacities are permeable, and borders are expandable.

In the context of decentralisation in Pakistan, the development of different capacities could mean developing the personal capacity of teachers and principals as well as district educational leaders. Without adequate personal capacity, educators may not be able to question their beliefs and assumptions or have access to new ideas with which to question these. Without interpersonal capacity (collegial relations and collective practice to bind different levels of hierarchy), the socio-cultural elements in a district may override any attempt to change the status quo (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). Similarly, without organisational structures educators within a district will have little support to undertake deep reflection and analysis for sustained improvements.

Currently, in the Province of Sindh in Pakistan, there is no separate institute for the training of educational managers in the public sector. However, the Bureau of Curriculum and the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) occasionally organise training for educational managers in the province. Some foreign-funded educational projects like the Girls Primary Education Project (GPEP) have included training activities for educational managers. Recently, under the USAID-funded Education Sector Reforms Assistance (ESRA), educational managers in selected districts are being provided with some training. A research study was conducted to find out how and to what extent the capacity of educational managers is being developed to manage new responsibilities in the decentralised system and the implications this has for the effectiveness of the decentralisation policy. This paper reports on the major findings emerging from the research pertaining to the policies and practices of capacity-building prior to and after decentralisation.

In the remaining part of the paper we will first briefly describe the research design and methodology, followed by findings relevant for the purpose of this paper. The paper mainly shares findings related to policies and practices of capacity-building prior to and after decentralisation and tries to analyse if there

is any difference between the two and the implications this has for any future efforts to develop capacities under the decentralized system of educational management.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **Research question**

The main and subsidiary research questions for the overall research were as follows:

#### **Main research question**

How and to what extent is capacity-building of education managers affecting the process of decentralisation in one district of the Government education system of Pakistan?

#### **Subsidiary questions**

1. What is the capacity-building policy for educational managers at district level in the context of decentralisation in Pakistan?
2. What capacity-building is occurring at district level and how?
3. What is the effect of capacity-building at personal, interpersonal and organizational level?
4. What implications does capacity-building have for education decentralisation?

This paper mainly reports on the subsidiary research questions 1 and 2.

### **Research method**

The researchers aimed for an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions of their capacity-building for the decentralisation processes, practices, roles and responsibilities. The qualitative research paradigm was chosen for its perceived advantage in providing rich and in-depth understanding of the processes.

The openness of the qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to the complexity, to respect it in its own rights (Peshkin & Corrine, 1992, p. 9).

Specifically, the case-study approach was adopted which provided an in-depth understanding of the processes of capacity-building for decentralisation (Bassey, 1999, p. 26, citing Sturman 1994).

Case study requires identification of ‘the case’ under investigation. Here the case was the district, and the study investigated the district officials’ understandings about capacity-building for decentralisation. We sought to develop both an in-depth and holistic understanding of the officials’ views about capacity-building for decentralisation. A description of the methods of data collection and justification for the selection follows.

## **Interview**

Interviews (both individual and focus group) were used as appropriate techniques for this study as they allowed the researchers to develop a rich and in-depth understanding of the participants’ perspectives. Furthermore, interviews at different levels allowed for the triangulation of the data and thus increased validity. The use of a semi-structured interview protocol was followed which helped researchers to probe and further enrich the data by understanding participants’ perspectives (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Most of the data was collected through focus interviews. Such interviews provide a data range and personal context, and allow alternative views and underlying assumptions to emerge (Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Merchant & Ali, 2003; Stuart, 2000). Hence, focus group interviews were considered useful in this research. They provided us variety and alternative views which were debated in the group to develop a consensus. This proved a very helpful, enriched and time effective strategy that strengthened the quality of generated data.

There were six focus group interviews with ADOs, DOEs, Female HTs, Male HTs, LCS and RPs, and Supervisors. Five detailed individual interviews were also carried out with key informants. These were D-DOE Primary, DOE-HQ, EDO, DDOE-Acd&T, and DOE-Lit. Both individual and focus group interviews were carried out by two members of the research team, where one moderated the discussion and the other took notes. A gender balance was maintained in the research team as much as was possible during the field work. All the interviews were conducted in Urdu.



## **Data Analysis**

The recorded interviews were transcribed, translated and re-checked by the research team for accuracy. A grounded theory approach was used in analysis and emergent categories and themes were generated during the coding process. Regular team meetings were held to discuss the emergent issues related to coding. The use of computer based analysis through NVivo helped with complex data analysis and theory building.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The researchers took account of all ethical considerations. The informed consent of all the participants was taken. Approval to conduct the project was obtained from the EDO (Education). A consent form describing the nature of engagements and how the participant would be protected from harm, expectations from the participants and rights of the participants to withdraw from the research at any stage of the research was developed and shared with the participants to obtain their consent.

## **Research Findings and Discussion**

The research findings are divided into two major sections. The first section describes and discusses findings about policies of capacity-building and issues related to it prior to and after decentralisation. The second section talks about the practices of capacity-building, prior to and after decentralisation.

## **Policies of Capacity-building Prior to and After Decentralisation**

This section will describe the findings and discuss the policies of capacity-building prior to and after decentralisation under major themes.

### **Awareness of policy existence**

#### **Awareness prior to decentralisation**

The respondents share very little information about the policies of capacity-building prior to the decentralisation (2001). They were either totally ignorant about the existence of a policy or suggested that there were only opportunities for the teachers and managers were ignored. But none of the respondents had

seen any policy in the form of a document or official memo. Their only source of information about policy was official orders passed down to them through relevant authorities. It was also hard for many of the respondents to distinguish between the capacity-building policies for teachers and the capacity-building policies for managers.

Data depicts extremely low awareness of respondents about the capacity-building policy prior to decentralisation. On the extreme side some groups of respondents (supervisors) flatly denied knowledge of any capacity-building policy. Only 30% of the respondents could share some weak understanding about the policy.

### **Awareness after decentralisation**

The awareness about the policy appears somewhat improved after the decentralisation. Although a significant number of people did not know about the policy, many participants shared some information that showed their awareness of the policy. In order to understand the awareness of managers about capacity-building (CB) policy after decentralisation, the data is discussed under three major categories: (a) no knowledge of CB policy; (b) understanding of CB policy; and, (c) process of policy formulation.

#### *No knowledge of CB policy*

The tables that were generated through NVivo suggest that around 50% of the research participants are completely unaware of the existence of their CB policy. It is even more surprising to note that the person who is responsible for the capacity-building of teachers in the district and perhaps lower levels of educational management, i.e. D-DOE Academic and Training, does not know about any capacity-building policy. An extract from the interview highlights this:

**Question:** I would like to ask ... that is there any document in which it is written that the training and capacity-building should be organised for DDOEs? Have you read any such document as a deputy DOE?

**Answer:** I am [repetitively] telling you that I don't have access to such document yet.

In a group interview with DOE (elementary, colleges and SEMIS) they unanimously agreed that there is no policy for managers' training, though they accept that there were some initial trainings at the beginning of the devolution

plan, but not anymore. DOE literacy, who was interviewed later also showed his lack of awareness of any policy for their training.

The focus group discussion with Male HTs also suggests that they do not know about any capacity-building policy or the district development plan. They feel that the planning is not shared with them and is, instead, kept as a secret document by administrators. The supervisors also agreed that there was a lack of awareness.

One explanation for this lack of awareness is the confusion caused by the introduction of a devolution plan. The devolution plan is considered a big shift in the overall administration of the entire government bureaucracy. Such synoptic policies bring drastic changes and the initial confusion hampers an understanding of the overall picture. What concerns people the most are the immediate changes in their positions and powers. Hence they care less about the overall policy and get more concerned about the immediate affect that the policy brings for their position. Amidst this confusion, the lack of awareness about capacity-building policy among managers is understandable. The following excerpt reveals the immediate effect of the change in policy:

Actually after devolution plan firstly the system was in a very bad shape. I didn't know that at what position will I work or what will be my authority and powers. An administrator didn't know what he was supposed to do, DCO didn't know this. After the passage of four years now we are at a position that we are gradually coming to know about our job description and we have tried to adjust within our capacity in this devolution plan, decentralisation. And now when we will spend next four years then I think it would be much better from last four years. Due to this [confusing state] we haven't gone through the policies that have made [under devolution]. (Focus Group Interview with ADOs)

### *Understanding of CB policy*

Participants from half of the focus group interviews showed either detailed or fractured information about the capacity-building policy. Some of them in fact showed some awareness about the overall decentralisation policy but could not elaborate on the specific capacity-building policies for educational managers. Overall, there appear to be three groups of respondents amongst those who showed some understanding about the policy. Participants in the first group had

very general information about the education policy and could not elaborate; participants in the second group had more detailed information about some aspects of education policies; and, participants in the third group shared a comprehensive view on all aspects of policy including the capacity-building policies for educational managers and staff. We will elaborate on each of them now.

Some participants showed a vague general understanding about the educational policy but could not describe the capacity-building policy in detail. It is surprising to note that this is observed at the highest level of district educational bureaucracy i.e. EDO. Following is an excerpt from his interview to highlight this observation:

**Question:** Actually I am trying to find out that is there any written plan that can tell us who should be trained and when? Anything in black-and-white?

**Answer:** No, this is not much in black-and-white. Written plan is that everybody needs training and they must be provided training and if they have already done once then they may require refresher courses, as new changes and new techniques are coming. So according to that every person needs guidance at every stage.

Likewise a head teacher shared her general understanding about the district plan but could not explain if there were any specific plans or policies for capacity-building. It is important to note that the head teacher was going through an extensive training course at the time of interview but lacked sufficient understanding of the decentralisation process, its policies and programmes. This lack of understanding is also a reflection of the limited understanding of the trainers and the limitations of the content of training.

The participants of the second group, unlike the first group, could share not only a general overview of the educational policy for the district, but could also share some concrete examples or references regarding the district plan. Although they could elaborate a particular aspect of policy they found it difficult to describe the capacity-building policies for the district managerial staff. This excerpt from a focus group interview substantiates this observation:

**Question:** Are there some particular policies regarding manager's training?

**Answer:** The Devolution Plan states bylaws for all the managers, rules and information for them. It mentions powers and job descriptions according to the designations ... The Devolution Plan is available in all the districts, which clearly states according to designations, what are the jobs of District Education Elementary, what are the jobs of District Education Secondary and Higher Secondary, what are the jobs of DOE Colleges, what are the jobs of DOE Technical and what are the jobs of DOE SEMIS. (Focus Group Interview, DOE – elementary, colleges, SEMIS)

There were very few participants who had comprehensive knowledge and an understanding of the district plans and policies. DO-headquarter was one of those who could explain in detail, the overall district education policies, including capacity-building policies and also provide some real district plans. Below is a detailed excerpt of interview with DO-headquarter that shows his in-depth understanding and experience of planning.

**Question:** Have your department [education] prepared any development plan?

**Answer:** A plan was prepared in my tenure which was made by me. The district government had asked us to prepare a plan, I was an EDO in Nawabshah and Gothki then, so there I made a plan. [searching files] I also made a plan recently during my EDO tenure [in current district] titled Sindh Devolved Social Services Program.

**Question:** OK, in which did you also mentioned some requirements for training as well?

**Answer:** It was component wise plan, we received a list from the [federal] government that you have to work on these guidelines and there was also a training program in that. Then after that there were programs planned on district level which was under Education for All, in which the planning was to be done from 2003 to 2015 ... after that there was an education plan from 2003 to 2006 and that was also from the technical side.

Being a senior educational official, the DOE-headquarter had been involved in district development planning and also shared some real district plans. But these plans, as became evident after interviewing several officials, have not been

disseminated widely, nor have they been consulted during implementation (the issue of policy communication will be taken up in the next section).

### *Process of policy formulation*

DOE – headquarter, being the most senior person amongst the participants, said that the district policies are formulated under the guidelines of the central government; he gave the examples of planning for Education for All 2003-2015 and some other educational plans. It seems that although the planning exercise is carried out at the district level, the approach seems top-down. The same concern was raised in one of the policy dialogues organised by AKU-IED in 2003 where district officials mentioned that the districts still have to follow the priorities set by the Federal government.

Furthermore, the process of planning or policy making of any sort is not a shared process within district management. One of the ADOs stated:

We haven't gone through the policies that have been made and if there was any paperwork [policy] then it was in a closed room and four persons have made that and then they have transferred it to higher levels. DOE-HQ was showing you a plan and its purpose which was later transferred to Sindh government. After that what actions did the Sindh government take, did they make that a part of their overall policy or not, we do not know. Even as an ADO I don't know that what is in the plan. (Focus Group Interview with ADOs)

The above passage indicates two things. First, the policy making process is not shared and second, the process of central planning is unidirectional. Only few people among the district management are responsible for planning, and the viability of a plan that has not been developed as a result of widespread consultation, can be questioned. In addition the central government seems to take input from districts but does not give them feedback. As a result even higher management staff appears ignorant of any plan. It is not surprising therefore, that implementation of plans is a challenge for the government.

### **Implicit existence of Policy (prior to and after decentralisation)**

The data reveals that, generally, policies are not explicit in the district education office both prior to and after decentralisation and the capacity-building policy is not an exception. Further investigation suggests that official policies exist but

they are not properly disseminated and communicated to the officers, particularly the officers in the field. As a result a general impression from all cadres of staff is lack of awareness about policy provisions for their capacity-building.

One of the Assistant District Officers (ADOs) argued that organisations cannot run in the absence of policies. He said, ‘institutions ... cannot run without ... policy and policy is a must’. Thus, he concluded that the functioning of education department itself is a proof that the policies and procedures are established, although they may be unknown to them. The same respondent also sees a clear link of policies with administration and management and suggests that ‘administration and management are based on the ... policy’. This implies that the real policies of an organisation are embedded in its management and administrative structures, which may not be explicit but shared by the practitioners in their daily practices. He elaborated that there are criteria of promotions and rules that govern management and administration of education, which, by implication, demonstrate educational policies, including capacity-building policy.

### **Improper Communication Strategies (prior to and after decentralisation)**

Apart from the existence of policy, a general concern raised by many of the respondents is the inadequacy of the communication strategy for policies. In particular, field-based educational officials (e.g. field supervisors) who have to carry policy messages to the grass roots level are often not provided the full picture of any action. Supervisors shared their ordeals, suggesting that only senior officials had detailed information about the training programmes, their reasons and possible benefits. Supervisors are simply asked to provide the logistical support without providing detailed briefings about the action. In a focus group interview with supervisors, they stated:

We just did it and they [higher officials] send us the lists for training mentees only. But they don't give us any detail about full programme that we will do like this and this, and this would be the benefit of it. May be the EDO or the DOEs know but we don't get this information from ADO. (Focus Group Interview with Supervisors)

A great deal of implementation literature suggests that lack of communication is the single most reason for implementation failure. The interviews suggest that even basic policies related to job descriptions are not communicated properly,

which causes employees' lack of awareness of their real tasks. When people do not know what they are actually supposed to do, they can do every other thing that they may not be required to do, leaving aside the real job. In addition their supervisors can also take advantage of this lack of awareness and assign tasks that are not part of the job descriptions. This is the reason that several DOEs are not doing the job they are supposed to do. For example the DOE (Academic and Training) is not engaged in professional development trainings, which is supposed to be his responsibility. Deputy DOE Primary explained,

Actually policies are made but the concerned officers don't communicate and distribute it properly and in time that is why the person don't know about his actual job description. (Focus Group Interview with Deputy DOE primary)

One of the Deputy DOEs pointed out an interesting fact that often the actual draft of the policy does not reach the lower levels of the hierarchy because of communication barriers; however, any amendments in that draft get communicated. Although he did not elaborate, these amendments might be communicated through office orders and therefore reach all levels. Thus orders are communicated more directly compared to any policy document such as the District Development Plan.

The section below describes the awareness of educational officials about the capacity-building policy prior to the introduction of the decentralisation policy.

## **Practices of capacity-building of educational managers - prior to and after decentralisation**

### **Opportunities for Capacity-building**

The opportunities for capacity-building prior to decentralisation were mainly concentrated at the supervisory level of educational managers. The supervisors reported availing various capacity-building opportunities prior to decentralisation. These included refresher courses, workshops in Islamabad and Karachi, and formal trainings arranged by Bureau of Curriculum in Hyderabad and Khairpur. The most prominent among these is the Sindh Primary Educational Development Programme (SPEDP) . Senior teachers, head teachers and school supervisors were selected and developed as Master Trainers under SPEDP. Supervisors who had also received this training were assigned to schools that were to be developed into School Development Centres for teacher training and resource



development (Rizvi, 2003). Hence, the supervisor's role became quite important and also prominent.

For other educational managers, opportunities for capacity-building were almost non-existent. As this EDO reports, "Previously the training opportunities were almost non-existent" (EDO, 27), "If there was any training I have not heard about it, only selected people used to go. There may have been training at the upper level, we are at a lower level" (DOE-Headquarters, 135), "I did not get any opportunity for training or workshop prior to decentralisation" (D-DOE-Primary, 119).

An important point to note about the trainings at the supervisors' level is that the focus of the trainings was not primarily on supervision. Rather, the focus was on teacher training and school management. This evidence indicates that supervision was undertaken as a component of school management and teacher training in which the supervisors were taught the skills of guiding teachers, undertaking follow-up exercises, observing classes and giving feedback to the teachers.

## **Practices after Decentralisation**

Opportunities for capacity-building of the educational managers after decentralisation fall under six major categories: formal trainings, workshops, informal sharing sessions, meetings, seminars, and experiences. From the analysis of the data, formal trainings emerged as the most frequently availed form of capacity-building. This may be because most of the educational managers understood capacity-building as formal training. While the other forms of capacity-building such as workshops, informal sharing sessions and seminars have been noted by some educational managers, the evidence suggests that these have not been considered by most of the educational managers. Another explanation for this could be that opportunities for formal training in the form of refresher courses, short term trainings and long term courses have been provided to majority of the educational managers. The other forms of capacity-building are more needs-driven and context-based. For example, when deliberations on an important issue are required, a meeting with the relevant officers can be called.

The data also suggest that the main focus of the majority of capacity-building activities has been management issues. These include issues of managing a school, leadership and management, educational management, and financial management. ADOs' trainings focused on the areas of management and

accounting. For example, the main training that the Deputy Director Officer Education–Primary (DDOE-P) reported receiving was the Educational Leadership and Management Course (ELM) from Aga Khan University. Similar views were shared by DOEs–Elementary Colleges (EC), one of whom found the training held in Karachi about their powers and responsibilities extremely useful.

...since this devolution plan trainings have been organised and we the DOEs got training there in Karachi regarding DOEs’ powers and its results were great. Then we worked on the same pattern and right now we are working on the same pattern too. (DOE-EC, 37)

The main training attended by the FHTs is the one offered by the Institute for Business Administration (IBA). This training focuses on the areas of school administration and budgeting.

Since all the interviewees were in management positions, it was appropriate to conclude that the focus of the capacity-building activities is, in a general sense, job-related.

## **Discussion**

Initial findings suggest that there are differences in the capacity-building opportunities prior to and after decentralisation. Some similarities have also been noted in capacity-building opportunities. These differences and similarities in capacity-building opportunities can be explained under four broad themes: the flatter distribution of power, availability of opportunities, follow-up of the opportunities, and power structures.

Decentralisation has resulted in the flatter distribution of power at the district level in the sense that the provision of responsibilities has become the responsibility of the local governments at the ground level. Hence, people at different levels of authority are being provided with capacity-building opportunities.

Capacity-building opportunities were also provided prior to decentralisation. However, the analysis has illustrated that these were concentrated in one level of educational managers—the supervisors. The evidence demonstrates that capacity-building activities are more widely and evenly distributed after decentralisation. An EDO commented that the training opportunities had increased, particularly for the teachers and the head teachers. Previously, a senior teacher would

assume the head teachers' responsibilities without any training. Now head teachers were receiving training in matters of finance and school administration.

Educational managers highlighted follow-up of capacity-building as an important difference. They noted that since capacity-building of educational managers was the responsibility of different agencies and not of the government alone, these agencies arranged for effective follow-up exercises to make sure that their programme was successful. Previously, the follow-up systems were quite weak. Prior to decentralisation, follow-up of the capacity-building exercises was weak and that was the main reason for the limited success of most of the programmes, including SPEDP.

Educational managers have also drawn attention to the 'power structure' that has been identified as an important factor in defining the educational managers capacity-building status. Capacity was being developed through various means but the educational managers also reported that the extent to which they were able to use their capacities depended on the extent of authority or power they had. For example, ADOs believed that previous SDOs were more powerful than them (ADOS, 54). FHTs were authoritative to the extent of making and presenting a plan; however, the implementation of the plan was not in their power (FHTs, 34).

## **Conclusion and the Way Forward**

The paper argues that even though training opportunities have increased after decentralisation, the quality of trainings needs to be improved if there is to be a substantial improvement. The data suggest that qualitative improvement in any capacity-building programme depends mainly on improvements in the focus, content, duration and time period of these programmes.

Most of the educational managers have suggested improvements in the focus of capacity-building exercises. ADOs were of the view that the focus of trainings needs to shift from general to specific.

...the major portions of our roles and responsibilities include planning and management. So we really need to learn about planning in management... And another thing is financial management, and planning is linked with it. If we separate planning then financial management cannot run and without financial management planning cannot be implemented. So we need planning and financial management together. However,

capacity-building in planning is much more needed because the devolution plan has been implemented and we need a real improvement for our achievement. (ADO, 294)

Needs-based trainings, appropriate to the job descriptions of the participants, were considered important by most of the educational managers. One DOE noted:

...as far as training is concerned they should be according to the managers' and teachers' requirement.... It shouldn't be like an SS [Subject Specialist] is training for manager. An SS should be trained for SS training and a manager should be trained for manager's training. (DOE-EC, 242)

From our earlier analysis of capacity-building after decentralisation, it was quite clear that most of the capacity-building activities were focussed on the areas of 'management', both educational and financial. Yet most of the educational managers have recommended further capacity-building in the same areas. This evidence appears to imply that educational managers are not very satisfied with way capacity-building in management is currently being offered. The recommendation to change the capacity-building from general to specific is a clear indication that for educational managers who participated in the study, the focus of current capacity-building exercises is quite general. Data suggest that educational managers require capacity-building opportunities which are directly related to their specific roles and responsibilities, and which match their contextual realities. Some of the specific areas suggested by educational managers are planning in management, communication skills, budgeting with planning, school administration, field-based training, and conducting examinations.

Educational managers have also recommended changes in the content of the capacity-building opportunities. According to them, the content of the capacity-building activities should be both contextual and easily understandable by the participants so that they could take back some constructive ideas for improvement. One LC-RP gave an example of a teacher training to elaborate this point:

...unlimited amount has been spent on the training but when the objectives are checked from those who have got the training, the result comes out in zero figure. May be our teachers couldn't understand what was taught at the training or the trainings have been difficult for them or the training was not up to their levels

or according to their abilities that they could go and do something for the improvement of their schools and environment where they live. (LC-RP, 358)

Most of the educational managers also recommended a change in the time period and duration of the training. ADOs and LCs-RPs suggested that capacity-building programmes should be of short duration. This is evident in words such as, 'But the duration of training must not be long (ADO, 145),' and 'There should be short courses, not long courses (LC-RP, 392).'

In addition, improvements were also suggested in the time period of the capacity-building activities. Education managers were of the opinion that such activities should be held at a time suitable for them. For example, a FHT recommended that training for them should be arranged before promoting them to the position of head teachers. The current practice of training head teachers who had been leading schools for more than ten years was not helpful because their experiences had already trained them in a particular way.

It has also emerged clearly from the findings that there are serious gaps between the policies and practices of capacity-building prior to and after decentralisation. Although the situation has improved to some extent after decentralisation, further efforts need to be undertaken to make people aware of the policy provisions. One of the major barriers to awareness about policies is poor communication amongst educational managers about policy provisions, due to which there is general apathy toward such efforts. Hence, it is recommended that the efforts should not only be limited to improvement of policies but an equal emphasis should be placed on their communication to end-users.

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# **Externalizing Tacit Knowledge for Improving Leadership Practices: Experiences from Leadership Programmes under ESRA**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper draws upon the experiences gained from a leadership development course held at AKU-IED that included participants from 9 districts from Sind and Balochistan provinces. It describes the attempt, by the course planners, to conceptualize and deliver the course with a focus on externalizing participants' tacit knowledge. The paper shares strategies used during the course, and describes successes and challenges in this respect, and the subsequent impact on participants' learning and practices.*

*Based on the outcome of the course, the paper suggests that the design of leadership and management development courses should focus clearly on strategies that capture and build upon the tacit knowledge of participants. The paper asserts that this approach helps to add more energy and interaction to the sessions and consequently increases the chances of impacting leadership practices of participants.*

## **Two Dimensions of Knowledge: Tacit and Explicit**

The distinction of knowledge as tacit and explicit is based on Michael Polanyi's (1966) pioneering work on knowledge. This classification of knowledge has now become common in knowledge management literature (Lam, 2002 & Spiegler, 2000).

Explicit knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and can also be shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, product specifications, manuals, universal principles, and so forth. This kind of knowledge can be communicated very easily across individuals formally and systematically through explicit media.

In contrast, tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate or share with others (Brooking, 1998; Geyer, 2001; Lee & Yang, 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches fall into this category of knowledge. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is

deeply rooted in an individual’s actions and experiences, as well as in the ideals, values or emotions he or she embraces.

Tacit knowledge has two further dimensions; technical and cognitive. The technical element of tacit knowledge encompasses concrete know-how, crafts and skills. The cognitive dimension includes paradigms, perspectives, beliefs and viewpoints which help individuals to perceive and define their world (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). “the cognitive elements of tacit knowledge refer to an individual’s images of reality and vision for the future” (ibid, p. 60). However, they assert that tacit and explicit knowledge are not separate entities per se; they are mutually complementary concepts and are vital for knowledge creation. Stenmark (2000) has integrated both dimensions of tacit knowledge by arguing that they exist in people’s hands and minds and are manifested through actions. This suggests that although the technical and cognitive dimensions of tacit knowledge are useful theoretical constructs, they are hard to distinguish during practice.

### **Knowledge Creation as an Interaction of Tacit and Explicit Knowledge**

Nonaka and Takeuchi’s (1995) model of knowledge creation is a dynamic interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge in which one converts into the other e.g. tacit into explicit and vice versa. This interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge reveals four modes of knowledge conversion: socialization (from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge), combination (from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge), internalization (from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge) and externalization (from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge). The following figure shows the four modes of knowledge conversion.

		To	
		Tacit Knowledge	Explicit Knowledge
From	Tacit Knowledge	Socialization	Externalization
	Explicit Knowledge	Internalization	Combination

Figure 1: Matrix of knowledge conversion



## **Socialization (from tacit to tacit)**

Socialization includes the shared formation and communication of tacit knowledge between people. Hargreaves (1999) identified apprenticeship and on-job training as a method to generate tacit knowledge. Apprentices acquire tacit knowledge through observation, imitation and practice during apprenticeships in a subtle way (van Zolingen, Streumer, & Stooker, 2001; Tsoukas 2002). Extending this argument further, Jones & Sallis (2002) observed that the socialization process is essentially what happens in well functioning teams and among good friends. However, Nonaka (2000) asserted that socialization is a limited form of knowledge creation as neither master nor apprentice gains any systematic insight into their craft and most of the learning takes place in an unintentional way.

## **Externalization (from tacit to explicit)**

Externalization is ‘the process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts’ (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 64). Kelloway & Barling (2000) explain that articulation means making the ‘unknown’ known. However, because of its very nature, tacit knowledge is not easily converted into explicit knowledge. Tsoukas (2002) suggests that tacit knowledge can be converted into explicit knowledge through articulation in the form of concepts, models, hypothesis, metaphors and analogies. However, Hargreaves (1999) states that dialogue and collective reflections trigger the process of externalization and Kothuri (2002) notes that only some portion of tacit knowledge can be captured through conceptualization, elicitation and then articulation of knowledge.

## **Combination (from explicit to explicit)**

Combination results from the interaction of explicit knowledge with explicit knowledge. The combination of different bodies of knowledge results from systemization and elaboration of explicit knowledge by different people (Hargreaves, 1999). Combination involves the transmission of explicit knowledge between individuals and can best be illustrated by the activities that constitute formal education (Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Tsoukas, 2002). Combination can take place by exchanges between individuals, through documents, meetings, telephone conversations or electronic communications (emails, bulletin boards). Reconfiguration of knowledge may take place through the sorting, adding, combining and categorizing of explicit knowledge that can lead to new knowledge.

## **Internalization (from explicit to tacit)**

Internalization refers to the conversion of explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge when it is internalized by the persons involved (Tsoukas, 2002). In order to act on information, individuals have to understand and internalize it, thus resulting in a conversion from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge (Kothuri, 2002). The process of internalization is triggered by learning by doing or using (Nonaka, 1996; Hargreaves, 1999) and internalization develops shared mental models or technical know-how (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

## **Externalization**

From the four kinds of knowledge conversions mentioned above, externalization has received the least attention in organizational theory. For example, a number of theories about the process of socialization exist, including literature on group processes and organizational culture. Similarly, combination has its roots in information processing and internalization is connected with organizational learning.

In education the focus is primarily on those three kinds of knowledge creation. Externalization is usually ignored, even in the development and delivery of professional development programmes for educational leadership and development. Wassink, Slegers & Imants (2003) noted that the tacit knowledge of educational leaders has not received much research attention. We interviewed one of our colleagues to get some background for this paper. He was of the opinion that leadership and management development courses largely focus on theories of leadership and management, the differences between leadership and management and on different leadership styles. These courses are mostly 'reading-driven' and most readings have low relevance to the local context (Interview with AKU-IED faculty, 2006). This focus leaves little space to attend to the real issues such as perceptions and values, which are cognitive components of tacit knowledge. With an overall focus on explicit knowledge, leadership development programs either undermine or do not value tacit knowledge, especially externalization of tacit knowledge. This ignorance towards externalization of tacit knowledge and its affect on knowledge creation and subsequently on enhancing leadership skills is a common feature of most leadership development programmes that we have observed and delivered and this feeling is shared by some of the colleagues we formally interviewed.

This realization led us to reconceptualise some of the forthcoming leadership development courses by explicitly taking into account the tacit knowledge of course participants. In the remainder of this article we will share the process of reconceptualisation of the course and the strategies that were used for externalization of tacit knowledge. This will be followed by discussion, challenges and conclusion.

## **Focus on Externalization**

Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) has been engaged in designing and delivering leadership development courses for both public and private education sectors since its inception in 1993. Currently, in partnership with the Government of Pakistan, it has been engaged in the professional development component of the USAID-funded 'Education Sector Reforms Assistance' (ESRA) programme. Training programmes for educational leaders and managers was one component of this programme and was initiated in nine districts in two provinces in Pakistan (Sindh and Balochistan). This was done through the offering of field-based certificate programmes comprising three phases: (a) face-to-face teaching for three weeks; (b) a field component spread over six weeks; and (c) face-to-face teaching for three weeks.

The reflections of the teaching team after the first programme revealed that on average, our participants had more than ten years of experience in their management positions, adequate qualifications as available in the country and enough official authority to work effectively in their positions. However, they generally held narrow viewpoints and stereotypes about their work places and people higher up in the hierarchy. Some common perceptions were: parents are not interested in their children's education, formal authorities do not want to improve quality in education, resources are scarce and politicians are there just to interfere in our work. We noted that such perceptions created a feeling of 'disempowerment' and led them to behave in a reactive rather than a proactive manner in their work places. This understanding drove us to devise a different focus for the course, a focus on changing their attitudes rather than on contents to be covered. We considered demonstrating to them how much knowledge they already possessed and building on it to introduce additional concepts. We thought this would help to reduce their feeling of disempowerment.

Realizing this, we thought about strategies that could further help participants in articulating their tacit knowledge. Rowley (2000) argued that articulation of tacit knowledge makes personal knowledge available for larger use. Nonaka & Takeuchi's (1995) model for knowledge creation suggests that externalization

follows socialization. With this perspective, we reconceptualised our course for the second cohort by creating more space for socialization and introducing several strategies to externalize the tacit knowledge of the participants. We significantly moved from our framework of ‘contents to be covered’ (explicit knowledge) to the framework of perception to be broadened or modified (tacit knowledge). In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the strategies employed to externalize the tacit knowledge of the participants.

## **Writing Recipes**

A recipe is commonly understood as a set of step-by-step instructions for producing a dish. Course participants (CPs) were encouraged to develop ‘recipes’ of concepts like effective leadership, pedagogy, patience and supervision. The participants were explained the process of developing recipes, they were shown that recipes consist of two basic parts: ingredients and processes. The ingredients were explained as elements needed to make a recipe; key elements and optional elements (required to add flavour, colour and taste). Preparation processes like heating, steaming and chopping were also discussed with the participants. This proved a very powerful structure to elicit the ideas they took for granted on a variety of topics. For example, one recipe was named ‘Leadership *Biryani*’ (see figure 2). The key elements identified in this recipe were: vision, clear thinking, decision power and personal knowledge. The recipes were written in Urdu and selected recipes were included in *Qiyadat Naama*, a magazine produced by CPs. The CPs found this strategy a challenging and creative task. “It was good way to express what we already knew but were unable to articulate” (Interview with CP, 2006). The faculty member who developed this strategy stated that writing ‘recipes’ was a powerful tool to access the personal knowledge of the CPs as it combined metaphors with the concrete structures of commonly known food recipes (Collective reflections of faculty, 2005).

**”لیڈرشپ بریانی“**

**بنیادی اجزاء :**

- بھرتی پٹی کو اسی
- بھرتی پٹی بھرتی
- صاف سوچ
- ذہنی علم و تجربہ
- دو کلو
- حسب ضرورت
- قوت ارادی
- ڈیڑھ کلو

**عمومی اجزاء :**

اعتماد، رحم دلی، صبر و تحمل، دیانتداری، رہنمائی، حسب ضرورت

**ترکیب :**

- 1 سب سے پہلے بھرتی پٹی اسے تراش کے صاف سوچ کے ساتھ مل لیں
- 2 پھر قوت ارادی شامل کر کے باکساں لیں اس کے بعد ذہنی علم و تجربہ یاد کر اچھی طرح بھون لیں
- 3 اعتماد کو دیانتداری سے جوڑ لیں اس کے بعد صبر و تحمل کی آج پڑھ لیں
- 4 اب ایک تہ قوت ارادی، ذہنی علم اور تجربہ کی جھانکیں پھر اس پر دوسری تہ اعتماد، دیانتداری اور صبر و تحمل کی لگا لیں
- 5 آخر میں رہنمائی چھڑک کر دم دے دیں

لیجئے لیڈرشپ بریانی تیار ہے اعتماد کی چٹائی چٹائی کے ساتھ اسے نوش فرمائیں

(شہنازہ دوسم، سندھ)

Figure 2: Example of recipe developed by one of the course participants

## Sharing Stories and Jokes

Course participants were encouraged to share their success stories and crack jokes to explain situations and their point of view. We defined jokes as a very short story with a surprising outcome. The process of story sharing was very simple; share it as it comes to your mind. Stories are a powerful way of understanding what happened and why (Brown & Duguid, 2000; Sen, 2002). After initial encouragement and tone setting, almost all course participants narrated their stories verbally and also entered the same in their reflective journals. For example, one of the participants shared the story of one of his students who participated in a national creative writing competition and won a prize. The student attributed her success to the encouraging feedback of her teacher on a creative writing assignment, several years back. Such reflective stories were gathered and analyzed by a group of CPs with the assistance of faculty members and key messages were noted in *Qiyadat Namma*. Reflecting on the process of sharing stories, one of the CPs said that mostly the messages of stories were in his mind but he could not express them because of a lack of such opportunities (Interview with CP, 2006).

## **Developing Metaphors and Analogies**

Another strategy used to articulate the tacit knowledge of participants was the development of metaphors and analogies during the leadership development course. To facilitate the process, the faculty members shared and explained metaphors that could relate to different notions of educational leadership and management. Developing metaphors was a regular activity of the course and they provided easy access to the participants' perspective. For example, one of the participants used the metaphor of a 'water well' to describe leadership. Because of the shortage of water in his area, a well represents a rare jewel. Ambrosini & Bowman (2001) acknowledged the worth of metaphors in eliciting tacit knowledge, as metaphors help in expressing what is not easily expressible. By extending the same argument, Jones & Sallis (2002) and Sharma (2004) acknowledged the utility of metaphors and analogies in externalization. However, one colleague noted that it was difficult to 'find' and 'handle' metaphors (Interview with Faculty, 2006). Another faculty in his interview (2006) shared his experience of how a metaphor for the principal's office impacted the practices of a school principal. However, the same faculty member acknowledged that it was not an easy task for CPs to develop metaphors.

## **Cognitive Maps**

Cognitive maps are a graphical representation of cognitive processes (Wassink et al). Examples of graphical representations include sketches, cartoons and mind maps. Course participants were urged to draw sketches, cartoons and causal maps of different situations and issues. These activities were mostly done in groups and later presented to the whole class. One year after completing the course, participants referred to this set of activities as 'group work', 'chart-making and presentations' and felt that this was useful for 'information sharing', 'removing shyness' and 'developing confidence' (Interview with CPs, 2006). The concept map is also useful as a tool for capturing practical knowledge (Meijer & Zanting, 2002) and this could be seen in our course.



Figure 3: Example of cognitive map

### Skits and Other Performances

Role-plays of true situations from participants’ contexts were another feature of the course. “Role plays were instrumental in motivating the CPs as those were about real situations and were expressive of participants’ experiences and practices” (Interview with Faculty, 2006). Role plays and skits captured the way the CPs handled different situations in their own contexts. These performances helped CPs to externalize through action what was difficult to verbalize otherwise. Performances were done on how supervision is done in schools and how meetings of School Management Committees are conducted. One of the CPs commented that skits helped to bring out the ‘inner person’ from each participant (Interview with CP, 2006).

### Individual and Collective Reflections

Wassink et al. argue that tacit knowledge is usually acquired through reflection on previous experiences. Course participants were asked to write their reflective journals daily and were given feedback regularly. Collective reflections over social events were also carried out. For example, after a recreational visit the whole group reflected over the leadership and management processes observed during the visit. They also discussed their roles and issues in terms of leadership practices. Key learning was articulated and was written in the *Qiyadat Nama*. Such collective reflection can help groups externalize their tacit knowledge (Thompson, Warhurst & Callaghan, 2001). One of the faculty members felt that in general, all courses include a component on reflective practice but real reflection can only happen in a reflective environment. This environment was

provided by the faculty members in the course through socialization processes and everyone was engaged in it (Reflections by faculty, 2005). One of the graduates felt that questions for reflections were helpful in the process (Interview with CP, 2006).

## **Discussion**

Atherton (2002) has argued that the process of acquiring knowledge for mature practitioners is little understood and its relationship to formal training still remains problematic. However, Chisholm & Holifield (n.d.), have noted that current research in tacit knowledge is motivated by the acceptance that tacit knowledge is linked to professional performance. In this paper, we argue that the externalization of tacit knowledge is of critical importance to the enhancement of professional practices.

In our course, the process of externalization served two purposes: (a) At an individual level, CPs were assured of what they already knew; and (b) at a collective level, a wealth of contextually relevant knowledge was presented for discussion and reflection. This process and focus made the course very interesting and relevant for the CPs and consequently helped in improving their work performance.

The teaching team observed CPs at work during the field-based component and reflected back on the process. A faculty member stated, “It was heartening to see the motivation of the CPs for their field assignments” (Reflections of faculty, 2005). After one year of course completion, nine course participants (seven men and two women) were selected randomly to find out their views about the course and the perceived impact it had on improvement in their practices. They were interviewed telephonically. The graduates responded very warmly about the course. Interestingly, most of the graduates said that the course helped them tap their hidden potential and made them confident in their abilities. “I understood the value of other people’s point of view and my potentials became visible to me” (Interview with CP, 2006). Interestingly most of the respondents while talking about strategies employed in the course, labelled those strategies as ‘co-curricular’ activities. In all likelihood, the label of co-curricular activities symbolizes participants’ attempt to describe the tacit aspect (not explicit part) of the programme by using profession-specific terminology.

Six out of nine respondents shared that they were conducting co-curricular activities with the help of teachers and in some cases with the help of the community after their return. “Now, we have separate in-charge to conduct co-



curricular activities every month” (Interview with CP, 2006). It can be argued that broadening the curriculum base, in consultations with stakeholders, can be considered a useful initiative taken by school leaders as a result of attending the programme.

CPs also mentioned changes in their attitudes as a result of the programme in terms of increased confidence and interpersonal skills, increased willingness to share and consult with others and improved patience. These aspects were consistent with the stories they narrated about their practices. “Tacit knowledge plays a key role in the way people work, both alone and, perhaps more importantly, in collaboration with others.” (Chisholm & Holifield, n.d.; Strenberg, 2004).

Nonaka & Takeuchi’s (1995) model of organizational knowledge proposes socialization (sharing tacit knowledge) prior to externalization. Socialization provides an environment conducive to externalization. The model has also been thought to help shift the focus of knowledge creation from individual to group process (Beemish & Armistead, 2001) and for its applicability beyond business management (Hargreaves, 1999). The intention of the programme was to tap into participants’ tacit knowledge and participants felt that the programme brought about a change in their attitude and practices. Referring to the importance of an appropriate environment for externalization a faculty member said, “It [externalization] requires safe, non-threatening and non-judgmental environment. It is [a] very complex process and requires heart-to-heart relation” (Interview with Faculty, 2006). The continued interpersonal communication between CPs and faculty to date is indicative of strong bonds developed during the course and validates the presence of a non-threatening environment.

## **Challenges**

Externalization of tacit knowledge requires a threat-free and emotionally secure environment based on trust and mutual respect. Course participants came from diverse academic backgrounds and multicultural orientations and maintaining an emotionally secure environment in the face of such diversity was very challenging and required more hours and energy from facilitators. The teaching team realized that they spent a lot more hours than their official workload for the programme.

It is also important to note that a major part of the externalization strategy is the effective use and interpretation of metaphorical discourse. High order thinking ability is needed to interpret metaphors, the ability to probe and direct

discussion and the ability to synthesize and create linkages across various disciplines is needed. A colleague at AKU-IED (2006) noted in her interview that most of the leadership development courses had been 'theory-ridden' unlike this course, and she realized that those courses were easier to teach as they only dealt with explicit forms of knowledge.

The third key challenge also resulted from the use of metaphorical discourse instead of traditional academic discourse. Traditional academic discourse relies heavily on well-defined terms and reasoning through established principles of logic. In contrast, externalization of tacit knowledge involves a lot of 'fuzziness' that can distract CPs as they might assume that this kind of discourse is 'less academic'. One of the colleagues in her interview (2006) noted that it was challenging to develop a 'taste' for different discourse.

## **Conclusion**

Educational leadership and management development programmes commonly focus on explicit knowledge through transmission or combination of knowledge. In some good examples, the course design allows for socialization through recreational visits and dinners, however in most cases very little attention is given to the 'externalization' of the tacit knowledge of participants. One reason for this practice may be the difficulty in making tacit knowledge explicit. The difficulty arises because of the elusive nature of tacit knowledge. Stenmark (2000) gave two reasons for the elusiveness of tacit knowledge: (a) it is hard for us to know what we implicitly know; (b) lack of incentives for making tacit knowledge explicit.

Despite being elusive in nature, the articulation of tacit knowledge remains critical for improving practices. Therefore, we may attempt to develop strategies that can be useful in sharing and capturing tacit knowledge. Thus, it is argued in this paper that leadership and management development courses require some strategies to externalize tacit knowledge, which is very crucial in developing leadership practices. We shared the examples from a course where we employed some strategies to externalize the course participants' tacit knowledge, with the aim to improve interaction during the course and subsequently to impact their practices in their context. Those strategies were: writing recipes, sharing stories and jokes, developing metaphors and analogies, developing cognitive maps, performing activities and individual and collective reflections. The CPs found these strategies interesting and engaging, which made sessions lively and interactive and this interaction continues even after their graduation.

The strategies adopted to externalize their tacit knowledge seem to have a positive impact on the quality of their field assignments compared to the previous cohort. However, use of these strategies added to the workload of the faculty as they required more time in planning and care in execution along with other challenges mentioned in the paper. Despite these challenges, the resultant learning among course participants was immense and thus we recommend the use of such strategies more often, if not always.

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# Teaching Quality in Self-Study Research

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## Abstract

*This paper discusses how the Master of Education (MEd) students at AKU-IED are empowered to understand and monitor quality in self study research. The paper is based on the experience of teaching self study research over a period of three years. During this period, students in the Teacher Learning course in the MEd programme were asked to explore their journey of becoming teachers and teacher educators using self study research. As an end product the students were asked to write an autobiography. During these processes of self-exploration and the writing process, they were asked to follow guidelines identified by Bullough Jr. & Pinnegar (2001) in their article “Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research”, which were shared and discussed with the students. During the programme, different methods were employed to ensure that participants followed the guidelines shared with them. Despite the systematic approach to ensure quality in self study research there were a number of challenges. These challenges are discussed at the end of the paper.*

## Introduction

Over the past decade most of the autobiographical research has been conducted in the form of a self-study research (e.g. Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Loughran & Russell, 1997; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002), or SSR. SSR has been employed by many researchers to document how teachers and teacher educators develop personally and professionally. Some research studies have shown that teachers learn to teach both in their pre-job years and on-the-job. This has been identified as ‘pre-training’, ‘pre-job’ and ‘in-service’ phases of learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 1983). Many researchers (e.g. Ayers, 1993; Bashiruddin, 2003; Beattie, 1995, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Elbaz, 1983; Johnson, 1990; Mattice, 2002; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999) show that that teachers develop and change as individuals as a result of their own knowledge of teaching which they develop from their day-to-day experiences in their respective contexts.

Despite the growing interest in SSR research and publication of such research, one ongoing scholarly debates of the past quarter century is about quality in autobiographical forms of SSR. Since SSR is derived from literary conventions the most frequently asked question regarding its quality and validity has been:

When does SSR become research? This is the question posed and debated by many scholars in the area of teacher education. Mills (1959) has for long argued that personal problems are embedded in public issues and therefore should be understood in that perspective. But that the “human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life” (p. 226). He points out that Self Study (SS) becomes research only when it is supported by evidence and analysis. The issues raised in SS are related to the issue of time and place. Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) find that biography and history should be coupled in SS to make it into research as is done in other social sciences. This connection between the two, they argue, is only when “self is shown to have relationship to the bearing on the context and ethos of time, then self-study moves to research” (p. 15). There has been emphasis on the balance that is kept between self and its relationship with time and place and public issues and vice versa. Quality in SSR is to strike a balance between biography and history. As Mooney (1957) points out SSR does not focus on ‘self’ but on the space between self and the practice engaged in. It is felt that there is always a tension between these two elements i.e. self and self in relation to practice and the other characters in the setting. In this engaging debate Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) suggest that:

The balance can be struck at many times during the self-study process, but when a study is reported, the balance must be in evidence not only in what data have been gathered (from self and other) and presented, but in how they have been analyzed, in how they have been brought together in conversation. Otherwise, there is no possibility of answering the “so what” question, the question of significance, that wise readers ask and require be answered.  
(p.15)

Keeping this discussion in mind one can conclude that SSR is at the intersection of biography and history. So the questions that one need ask in doing SSR is that of self as a teacher or teacher educator in a particular context, spread over a period of time, and interaction with others. All this leads to the ultimate aim of SSR which is to interact with self and make it an educative experience for oneself and for others. Despite these definitions, the question of quality in SSR is still not easy to answer. Situated in this discussion, my paper shows how an attempt is made to teach quality in SSR.

## **Teaching of SSR**

SSR was introduced to the students of the MEd Class of 2004, 2005 and 2006 at the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development, Karachi, Pakistan. The students in the MEd programme are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Syria, and from countries in the Central Asian and East African regions. Since the MEd is an in-service teacher education programme, the students bring with them rich experiences of teaching and professional learning.

I introduced self-study research in a course called Teacher Learning. This course had four themes, one of which was called: Teachers' Lives. The aim of introducing self-study research was to enable the students to better understand their own lives as teachers.

The self study was based on my own experience of being involved in SSR which is "intentional and systematic inquiry" (Dinkelman, 2003) and places importance on the subjective understanding of an individual's life experiences (see Bashiruddin, 2002, forthcoming (a) and (b)). I designed the theme "Teachers' Lives" with the intention that students should write an autobiography. I introduced this with the following question:

Becoming a teacher is a journey with significant learning experiences. Write an autobiography in which you capture the richness of your experiences and beliefs as a teacher. Identify important people or critical incidents that have significantly influenced your understanding of professional development as a teacher. Then, critically analyze those experiences and beliefs in terms of how they have shaped you as a teacher that you have become and a learner of teaching. While constructing an autobiography keep in mind the guidelines identified by Bullough Jr. & Pinnegar in the article "Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research".

## **Following the guidelines for quality in SSR**

There were several ways employed in teaching which enabled students to ascertain quality in SSR. Below I describe the four steps used:



## **Step 1: Reading and understanding guidelines**

I gave the students the article “Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research” by Bullough Jr. & Pinnegar (2001) to read. This article was discussed with them in detail in class to make sure that they understood this method of research, its historical background, theoretical underpinnings and the question of how SS becomes research. The 14 guidelines (see Appendix A) were also discussed in detail.

While discussing the guidelines the students were asked to think of themselves as researchers and authors of their own lives. This was to acknowledge them as knowledgeable individuals and that “everyone’s voice matters and everyone has something worthy to communicate” (Wood & Lieberman, 2000, p. 260). While discussing the guidelines which indicated that “nodal moments” need to be documented, the students were asked to think of ‘critical incidents’ which they would like to make public. They were also asked to write why these critical incidents helped them to understand their professional development as teachers.

## **Step 2: Reading and analyzing quality self study research articles**

In the first MEd cohort (Class of 2004) the students were given two samples of autobiography, one, my own (Bashiruddin, A. 2002) and the other a chapter from a book by Beattie (1995). They were also given supplementary reading material that they could read in the library. For the Classes of 2005 and 2006 I also shared the writings of the students of the Class of 2004 that I had compiled in the form of an E-Book. These were examples of quality writing from the developing world.

In class we discussed the important structures and contents of the readings assigned to the students. Detailed mind maps were made on the whiteboard. These papers were also analyzed against the guidelines for quality and some indicators of quality, such as the stories and their meanings, interpretations, problems and issues, connections, truth and insights for teacher education were identified and discussed. Using these autobiographies it was also pointed out how each individual has his or her own authentic voice and how that voice is represented in scholarly writing. Through my own autobiography of becoming a teacher I could point out how character was developed by using dramatic actions.

I also introduced and gave examples of ways in which autobiographical writings could be organized. Some of the examples that I shared were the use of

metaphors, stories, poems, dialogues, paintings and sketches as a frame for autobiographies. These were ideas to help the students to think of ways of structuring and representing their stories. It was made very clear that these are some of the ways and are not the only ways and, therefore, are not mandatory to use.

### **Step 3: Process of SSR and writing**

The process of writing an autobiography began with a brainstorming activity. The students were engaged in an exercise to develop annals and chronicles.

The students were provided time to make and display their annals in the classroom and discuss them with each other. This was to provide them as much opportunity as possible to look at each others annals which were presented in different ways, some presented it as a spider web and some in a linear form. Then the students were asked to write stories representing the critical incidents that they had mentioned in the annals. This was a way to move from annal to chronicles.

While writing the students were divided into pairs and small groups to enable them to listen to their own voice, discover and see how their lives as teachers changed and developed by describing their experiences in detail. Collaboratively they shared some of their stories with each other. The peers gave oral and written feedback. The purpose was to provide support to each other in writing and to learn from each others' stories as reading others' stories may spark ideas.

Students also served as critical and supportive friends for each other because "each individual has some expertise, knowledge, or nuanced understanding with

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1 "An annal...is a line schematic of an individual's life divided into moments and segments by events, years, places, or significant memories. The construction of an annal allows researchers and participants to gain a sense of the whole of an individual's life from his or her point of view. Annals also allow individuals to represent visually something of the topography of their life experiences, the highs and the lows, the rhythms they construct around their life cycles." (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p.419).

2 After the participant has constructed an annal, we ask him or her to tell stories, to construct chronicles around the points marked on the annals. Frequently we involve participants in creating annals and chronicles as a way of scaffolding their oral histories, of beginning the process of having them re-collect their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 420)

the potential to help others” (Wood & Lieberman, 2000, p. 260). Through writing and constant collaboration with peers and reflecting on their own writings, the students were theorizing, although the process of their theorizing was not linear. It was a reflective and “dynamic interplay between description, reflection, dialogue with self and others” (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 8). While working as critical friends they were asked to help each other to see how stories were told and interpreted, how history (i.e. their past) interacted with their present and provided an improvement for their future. They were also encouraged to challenge the new perspectives they brought to issues and perspectives on established truths.

#### **Step 4: writing reflections**

Students were initially not familiar with the specific genre of writing autobiographies by employing SSR; therefore, they were given specific questions. By answering these questions they were able to understand a process of writing that I call “Reflections-on-writing”. Students were given four questions that they had to answer and share with me at various stages during their writing. These were as follows:

##### **Task 1**

How did your memory help you in writing major incidents of becoming a teacher, which you discovered from constructing an annal? How has it informed you about your professional development?

##### **Task 2**

How did reading stories and collaborative writing help you in developing your own learning?

How does reading articles help you in your professional development and in understanding your processes of becoming a teacher?

##### **Task 3**

How did it help you to understand your teaching journey as a teacher by:

- reading and responding to your own writing;
- reading and responding to the stories of your peer and

- getting feedback from your peer?

#### **Task 4**

What were your learning experiences in writing about your journey of becoming a teacher and learning to teach? How would you use this strategy of teacher learning with teachers in your context?

These tasks enabled them to look at the development of their autobiographical writing.

### **Challenges**

There were several challenges and, in this paper, I will discuss three of the most prominent ones.

The first challenge was to introduce a new form of research to the students and also make them cognizant of the aspect of quality in engaging in such research. Most of the students were sceptical in the beginning because this was the first time that they had encountered SSR in their entire career. For me as a tutor, introducing an innovation in the form of SSR, in which self-disclosure is a major ethical concern, was a challenge. Students had to be oriented to engage in SSR. “Introducing a new activity requires more time, not only in carrying out the activity itself but also in orienting and training the students to perform the new and different task” (Bashiruddin, 2003, p. 249). There were two major issues. One, to convince the students that their stories were important since mostly there is a tendency for teachers to accept knowledge from outside, that is from books and journal articles and thus devalue learning from their own experiences. It was also made clear to them that since they were the authors of their own stories they could select the pieces that they wanted to disclose. Therefore the first step that I thought was important was to share my own story of continuous professional development (Bashiruddin, 2002), which is published. This convinced many of them to overcome their anxiety. Second, they were told that during writing they would be provided with support.

The second challenge was to plan and teach in such a way that students were not only made aware of the quality in SSR but also to enable students to achieve this quality. Although various criteria exist, such as believability, credibility, consensus and coherence (Eisner 1981, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), these are difficult to measure in all forms of qualitative research. I had to constantly engage the students in discussions and in answering questions such as: so what

does this story mean? What is the truth and how do I interpret it keeping in mind my context and time? How does this story bring issues of my past to the forefront and how do I answer them in present?

My own experience as a researcher and from being involved in self-study research (see Bashiruddin, 2002) gave me confidence to plan by reflecting and recollecting the techniques that helped me in writing such as brainstorming, developing stories and then linking them and finding significance, writing individually, reading my own stories of experience and reflecting on them, sharing my stories with others and getting their feedback, and reading published SSR. I tried to incorporate all these ways of exploring and writing 'Self'.

Another challenge was to make students believe in themselves and their stories of professional development. For example, at the time of developing annals they expressed their concerns about what to write as they felt that they had nothing significant to write about. So the first step was to make them aware that each one of us is unique and we need to acknowledge that each one of our lives, beliefs and the way we developed as teachers would be different.

## **Conclusion**

The insights and understandings gained from students' questioning and reflections provided me with alternative ways of thinking about teaching SSR. Therefore I could see "my learning to be intertwined with my students' learning. They were teaching me how to be a teacher educator by expressing what they needed to learn as young professionals" (Mueller, 2003, 71). Subsequently, these alternative ways of thinking and learning helped me in teaching SSR to the next group of students; then, I incorporated changes as I learned from my experience of teaching and reflecting. This has shown me that the SSR cycle is a creative process which also brings change in self.

Teaching of SSR and also finding ways of looking after its quality has made some methodological contributions; it has inaugurated a new domain of experimentation in Pakistan. Others (e.g. Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998; Loughran & Russell, 2002) have used SSR in the West as teacher learning strategy but it was for the first time that it was introduced in a developing country (Pakistan). Thus, as a teacher educator I have contributed to the reform movement by introducing it to students at AKU-IED. The students had not been involved in this kind of self-study research, which gives priority to the teachers' voice and thus opens up a new way of understanding teachers. It was also for the first time that writing about 'self' was used as a mode of inquiry and of professional

development. Thus, such initiatives need to be taken by teacher educators to introduce new research paradigms. We as “Teacher educators need to continuously create spaces within teacher education programs that are dedicated to practicing and to discussing the crucial role of reflection with beginning professionals. Concurrently, when teacher educators engage in dialogue with their colleagues about critical learning experiences, future teachers and teacher educators are enriched personally and professionally” (Mueller, 2003, p. 82).

I have sown the seeds of teaching quality in SSR and I hope that further work in this area will be taken up. I have hopes that since all the students in the MEd program come from diverse backgrounds and countries they will take this to their own contexts and further develop and adapt as they see appropriate, which would further extend the community of researchers.

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# Appendix

## Guidelines: Autobiographical Self-Study Forms

1. Autobiographical self-studies should ring true and enable connection.
2. Self-studies should promote insight and interpretation.
3. Autobiographical self-study research must engage history forthrightly and the author must take an honest stand.
4. Biographical and autobiographical self-studies in teacher education are about the problems and issues that make someone an educator.
5. Authentic voice is a necessary but not sufficient condition for scholarly standing of a biographical self-study.
6. The autobiographical self-study researcher has an ineluctable obligation to seek to improve the learning situations not only for the self but for the other.
7. Powerful autobiographical self-studies portray character development and include dramatic action: Something genuine is at stake in the story.
8. Quality autobiographical self-studies attend carefully to persons in context and setting.
9. Quality autobiographical self-studies offer fresh perspectives on established truths.
10. Self-study that rely on correspondence should provide the reader with an inside look at participants' thinking and feeling.
11. To be scholarship, edited conversation or correspondence must not only have coherence and structure, but that coherence and structure should provide argumentation and convincing evidence.
12. Self-study that rely on correspondence bring with them the necessity to select, frame, arrange and footnote the correspondence in ways that demonstrate wholeness.
13. Interpretations made of self-study data should not only reveal but also interrogate the relationships, contradictions, and limits of views presented.
14. Effective correspondence self-studies contain complication or tension..

Source: Bullough, Jr. R.V., & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. *Educational Researcher*, 30(3), 13-2.

# **A Female PDT's Journey in the Northern Areas of Pakistan**

*Safida Begum, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

## **Abstract**

*This paper presents the learning journey of a female Professional Development Teacher (PDT) in the context of Northern Pakistan. This journey highlights difficulties for the female PDT in constructing her image as a leader or a change agent in a traditionally male dominated society. The paper explores the major challenges faced by the PDT in putting the theory of leadership into the realities of the context and describes the supporting factors that enabled her to establish herself as a leader. From her experiences, the author draws the processes and strategies for a female leader in a rural male dominated society, which could help others to learn. Based on her learning she gives recommendations to future female PDTs and other institutions that are striving to develop female leaders in the region.*

## **Introduction**

I am Safida Begum, from a place called Gojal, in the upper part of Hunza, which is near the Chinese border and happens to be one of the remotest of the Northern Areas. I was born and brought up in the area.

The Northern Areas are geographically isolated and, climatically, very cold. The Karakoram Mountain Range divides the region naturally into different valleys and makes it difficult to access information, and to communicate and interact with the other regions of Pakistan. Cold weather and snow make the place icy and freezing in winter. This delays transportation and easy movement within the region and to other parts of the country.

Access to necessities of life, particularly products from the southern parts of the country, becomes dreadful for the people in the area, especially if the Karakoram Highway is blocked and the weather remains cloudy (as seen mostly in the fall and winter). The supply of natural gas, vegetables, flour and other necessities of life becomes erratic (as the area lacks variety in production). Interestingly, the prices of other goods increase, so it creates a clash between the force of nature and human necessities; and life becomes harsh and challenging. These harsh realities have also added to the difficulties of the developmental processes in education, health and social mobility. The area is lacking in many aspects of life

such as good institutions, industries, organizations and tourism corporations, to meet the needs of the majority of the people in the region; and for promoting social, educational, health and economical development.

Females are the most affected segment of the population in terms of education with a 13% literacy rate; indoctrination from male counterparts, lack of involvement in the decision making process, treatment at home and social stigmas from the society, all contribute to this. Men make decisions and lead women in the society by providing their basic needs and requirements. Ultimately, it makes women dependent and hence they lack skills in facing real situations. They get fewer opportunities to enhance their skills and confidence by proving themselves in society. Consequently, they have a low status in the society, and they face “social stigmas” and “gender discrimination”, along with a general harsh attitude from men. Moreover, they get less attention for their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs, and so they remain underprivileged (Mian, 2000, p. 21). Discrimination starts from within the family, where females are made to eat after the males, especially in rural Pakistan. In most cases, “women are not encouraged to leave home, let alone pursue higher education” (Ali, 2005, p. 3). Research indicates that more girls than boys die in infancy. Moreover, Pakistan’s poor position internationally is seen in UNDP’s Gender-related Development Index (GDI) 2000, where Pakistan currently ranks 135 out of 174 countries.

Similar to Afghanistan, ethnicity is a critical issue and has further strengthened the controversy over female education, as respective leaderships take up various positions on this issue (Purzand, 1999, p. 90). Furthermore, the male leaders meet in *loya jirgas* (tribal councils) to debate and decide about important local and national issues and they are historically very conservative in their approach to the role of women in society.

In contrast, according to Leathwood (2005, p. 387), in other parts of the world, “The future is female and that has become a slogan of our times in the UK. Changes in the global economy, the demise of the UK manufacturing industry and the rise in service occupations have dramatically changed the nature of the labour market in this county, and opened up new opportunities for women in the workplace”.

The above indicates that there is a justified concern for the lack of female leadership roles in our society, as women are not allowed to participate in decision-making, strategic planning, leading institutions, discussing issues, resolving conflicts and solving problems. As a result, female leadership roles are neither accepted nor realized; and their skills are underestimated.

In order to begin to overcome this problem, Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) Pakistan initiated the process of sending females to different institutions. The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) is one of the major players in capacity building through its innovative MEd programme and I was selected from among a number of female candidates for admission to the university.

At the end of the two year intensive MEd programme, as a graduate of AKU-IED, I was labelled a Professional Development Teacher (PDT) and my journey starts from there.

## **Journey of a Female PDT**

### **My Turbulent Life**

The last module in the MEd, *'Re-entry'*, was very interesting although somewhat confusing, because I was closer to a destination that gave me happiness but at the same time I was not confident about implementing the new ideas and teaching strategies. It raised lots of questions for which I had to seek answers and that created turbulence in my mind.

For example, I observed great motivation among our faculty members at AKU-IED. They used phrases such as *'PDTs as change agents'*, *'problems are our friends'*, *'change is a slow process'* and *'believe in the process; not the product'*. I also observed Michel Fullan in a video—his enthusiasm and his words about change and improvement. That, and reflections on my experiences, were all confusing moments for me. It sounded as if we were all in a hurry to bring about a quick change; so, I felt something was going to happen and everything would change.

There were two other confusing factors: (1) Initiating the theory of leadership into the practices of a leader in the realities of the context; and, (2) Constructing a new image of female leadership in the traditional area.

### **Moving Towards the Destination**

When we left for the airport, each one of us had great expectations, confidence, faith and enthusiasm; but at the same time we were confused about the complexity of the task. There was a great urge to initiate change amidst the rigid and traditional leadership culture and practices of our society. But we were also excited and proud of our achievements, such as our combined initiatives. The

positive feelings got stronger when the driver said, “Dr. Baker [Director of AKU-IED] told me to drive smoothly and carefully because it is our precious group as we have spent lots of money to develop them.” This comment made us fly without wings to overcome our fear, and, as a result, we developed confidence that we were in safe hands wherever we would go. It bonded us together emotionally as a team.

## **Stepping Stones for Change**

### **Personal Life**

When we reached home, my younger daughter came to meet us. I then went to meet my eldest daughter at Aga Khan Academy, Karimabad, 35 kilometres away from where I lived. She was keen to come home, but she was not allowed to as she had to follow the rules and could only come home on weekends or holidays. She kept crying and I did not know what to do. My frustration with reality had started and I had to face facts and deal with them.

Gradually, I found I could not work in Gilgit because my family was suffering and my husband was not letting me work. So I reflected on how I could resolve this issue as a PDT? Suddenly, I remembered the PMI (Plus, Minus and Interesting) strategy. So I started to work on both options, such as working in Gulmit or Gilgit, and shared my options with my husband. He looked at me, surprised that I knew both the positives and negatives. He allowed me to take a decision about where to work—which was good—but he insisted that I not disturb the children or him and that I should stay with his relatives in Gilgit and go only on the weekends because he wanted to have his authoritative role as leader of the house.

I felt at ease, glad that the PMI had worked well; and this gave me confidence. But I also had to think about what to do next, because I was taking a risk by shifting my family. There were constraints of physical, social and emotional security. However, staying with relatives was not only problematic for the children’s education, but also for me. For instance, once I was going to Gilgit after a weekend, and I found my nine-year-old son on the road waiting for a van before me. This forced me to think about the risk of shifting my family. Eventually, it took six months to re-assemble my family; each step was hard, and I had to play an advocacy role to motivate my mother, husband, kids, relatives and other relevant people in my society.

## **Professional Life**

Coming to my professional life, I involved myself with a team of PDTs to initiate a Needs Analysis Survey (NAS). Facing different people in different circumstances; familiarizing myself with the geographical and climate conditions in different regions; and, interacting with different people in different cultures enabled me to find my way. For example, once three of us female PDTs wanted to go to Chupurson Valley, but the head of FEO would not allow us, saying, "*Wahan jana ooratoon ke bus ki bath nahey*" (going to that place is impossible for females). When we insisted, he said, "If you give me in writing, I can allow you; otherwise, I can't". So gave him a written undertaking that we are taking the risk for professional reasons. These experiences taught me about the common problems for female PDTs: taking risks for a leadership role and handling people and natural constraints. I realized that if I have to survive and make a difference, I have to play an active role.

## **Professional Concerns and Uneasiness**

The NAS made me reflective, stronger, more confident and a critical thinker. The findings gave me a real picture of the area and its educational needs. I realized that the area requires enormous attention for educational change; teachers, head teachers, heads of FEO, ADEOs (management), directors and heads of institutions, community and parents; all needed to be changed, because bringing about a difference in a classroom situation needs to be sustained. Fullan is famous for saying: "All change is not improvement but all improvement is change".

For instance, schools were working in isolation, focusing on covering the annual syllabus, passing examinations and reporting to the office and education department directors. The focus of the school visits from the management side was to identify weaknesses and to transfer staff to far flung areas as a punishment, rather than for improvement. This way of dealing with subordinates was a 'bosship' approach rather than pedagogical or transformational leadership that scrutinized their creativity and openness for cooperation and collaboration.

Though AKES Pakistan had decentralized administrative and academic power, the head of FEO still had little autonomy. This reflected gaps at the infrastructure level in the public and private sectors. Similarly, the way the head teachers dealt with the staff was disheartening and generally authoritative and status-defined. They found problems, but did not demonstrate an effective way of dealing with them, which hindered the development of human relationships and

respect at the workplace. In order to connect all these things together and bring about a real change and improvement, we needed a broader perspective of change. We needed strategic planning for quality leadership to initiate change for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. For that we needed to try out different strategies and ideas and see what works, along with why and how to influence the educational policy.

## **Institutional Role**

The first initiative taken by PDCN was a “Stakeholders’ Conference” in 1999. The head of PDCN gave us major roles in dealing with the higher authorities from government, private sector and AKES Pakistan. The friendly behaviour of the directors from AKU-IED and the head of PDCN, and how they delegated tasks and discussed issues while respecting our self-esteem, made us feel important. It gave us a leadership role in the conference, which was a hallmark in my career in terms of my motivation, interest, commitment, devotion, determination and confidence for initiating change in the real environment. So later, whenever I started taking initiatives, I forgot that I am a woman; rather I tried to work as a professional.

## **Combination of WSIP and CEM (CE:ELM)**

My prior experience as a head teacher led me to take the facilitator’s role in the Certificate in Educational Management (CEM, now titled Certificate in Education: Educational Leadership and Management or CE:ELM) programme from 2000, to work with the senior faculty of AKU-IED, Karachi. The main purpose of this programme was to develop head teachers’ “indigenous leadership and management practices”. Gradually, I took over the responsibility for coordinating the course from 2002 onwards in terms of planning, developing the handbook, implementing the programme, monitoring, following up CPs in the field, providing them further support and evaluating at the end of the year.

Similarly, I had to work for the Whole School Improvement Programme (WSIP) in schools (see Appendix A for a summary of schools I worked with). I worked with students, teachers, head teachers and parents as follows:

**Students** in the real classroom situation to demonstrate different approaches to teaching and learning;

**Teachers** on co-planning, demonstration, observation, feedback and resource development in schools;

**Head teachers** on facilitating CE:ELM, and practically helping them on their indigenous leadership and management practices, such as facilitating in conducting staff meetings, encouraging them to discuss issues in the school, managing human and physical resources, building teams, and reflecting on practices;

**Parents and communities** for mobilizing parents and communities to participate in the school development plans.

I initiated mothers/parent days, and in the evolving process we found that the children in nursery/kachi classes were the most neglected students in terms of attention to their social, moral, emotional and intellectual developmental needs. The head of PDCN provided physical support and enhanced my interest, capabilities and creativity in handling and teaching small children through the concept of 'One Class One Teacher'.

I also conducted about 25 workshops every year on general aspects of teaching (e.g. how do children learn; multiple intelligences; assessment), and subject areas such as language (English and Urdu), social studies etc.

So the combination of CE:ELM and WSIP provided me the opportunity to facilitate teacher learning and reflect on my prior practices as a head teacher. It also caused me to modify my perception and practice in the school to bring about more effectiveness in my approaches. For instance, the baseline data enabled me to identify the problems; and remaining in the school for the whole day, I involved myself with the daily routines of the school and was hence able to explore the genuine issues and take actions.

Once, I was observing a teacher and I found that a student in the classroom was not only mentally disturbed but also disturbing others. The teacher tried to deal with the child politely but he never stopped, and the class was over so she left for another period. It developed my curiosity to see what the child did in another teacher's classroom, and how that teacher dealt with it. Interestingly, I found the same issue. I wondered what could be done to improve the situation in the classroom in order to provide an enabling environment for the child. Moreover, I decided to explore why the particular child was disturbed despite that fact that he seemed quite normal physically. The teachers also seemed to be very polite as it was a private community school and physical punishment was illegal. But, when I moved to another classroom, I heard the teacher's saying loudly, "Kioon parashan kertay ho?" (Why do you disturb me?); meanwhile, I also heard the child being slapped.



I learnt the differences between teachers' beliefs and practices. I wanted to explore the issue and found that the reasons for the said practices are often related to the individuals' family, culture and attitudes. So it really required a leadership role to resolve the issue. Therefore, I had to make it one of my first priorities as it was something that would give me great satisfaction. It gave the staff, the parents and community a hope that somebody listens to their concerns and helps them. Comer et al., (2004, p. 55) rightly says, "If people have no hope, they will not even notice that the current situation can be changed". Working on the issue, the head teacher, and the staff started realizing its importance and gradually started identifying other issues related to teaching and children's learning outcomes. I worked as a critical friend, showed sensitivity to the culture, and respect for individuals' personal and professional issues and their diversified attitudes. I guided them and shared my own personal examples in overcoming their problems. So a trusting relationship developed between us and slowly I became an important member of their staff and part of the school culture. In spite of not being a staff member, I was one of the more important people in the school. This experience in the first year of WSIP and CE:ELM gradually helped me in gaining confidence and practical experience.

I also felt that I was slowly proving my abilities and capabilities to the diversified group of people, because their facial expressions and their opinion of me were gradually changing. Mothers met with me warmly, kissed my hands according to the local culture and prayed for me and my family. Similarly, the community members and BOG (Board of Governors) appreciated my commitment and motivation for change, while the staff did not hesitate in sharing their professional issues by seeking my help in planning, developing and delivering content. So I played multiple roles as teacher, guide, facilitator, initiator, problem solver, decision maker and role model among them. It developed a trusting relationship among us to be able to work together amiably. I learned to develop teams, share information, communicate effectively, manage both time and human resources, monitor the progress and critically reflect and plan accordingly.

At every step of WSIP, I learnt from the staff and their needs and tried to incorporate this in the programme. Hence I noticed creativity in my approach for working in all 32 schools.

The theoretical input and the practical work in the school provided me occasions to put theory into practice and to link practice with theory. For instance, in the CE:ELM programme we taught about conducting effective meetings, developing teams, dealing with conflicts, and planning, monitoring and evaluating progress.

I tried to facilitate the meetings with the head teachers in developing agenda, circulation of minutes in advance, and leading or facilitating; along with delegating responsibilities for notes taking, preparing reports for meetings and the decisions taken in them. Overall, I encouraged taking responsibility for actions. Then I encouraged the head teachers of the schools to play the same role, which helped them in visualizing the said and practicing it. Gradually, I let the head teachers take decisions, have meetings and share problems. That not only helped them in enhancing their participation but it also gave them empowerment and an autonomy to continue practicing and reflecting. Moreover, it changed their style of leadership from authoritarian to democratic and reduced the status quo culture in schools.

Similarly, I sat with the teachers during tea breaks or free periods to co-plan, discuss, and prepare free to low-cost materials for teaching and also reflect on the sessions. It always kept me engaged in thinking, reflecting and modifying plans to bring effectiveness in my practices. So the practice went on in a cyclical way. It not only gave me confidence in relating the ideas and practices with the literature but also motivated me in gaining knowledge, skills and modifying attitudes.

My practice in schools was focused on six areas of improvement to provide a conducive learning environment for the holistic development of children;

1. Teaching and learning,
2. Leadership, management and administration,
3. Community participation,
4. Resource development and usage,
5. Curriculum and staff development,
6. Social, emotional and moral development and children and health education

Similarly, Comer et al., (2004) also suggests, 'Six developmental pathways' (such as physical, cognitive, psychological, language, ethical) for incorporating in planning for change and improvement. So in order to develop children socially, emotionally, physically and morally, the leadership has to play a significant role to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

## **Reflective Sessions**

### **Connectivity**

The head of the PDCN visited schools and supported us in terms of demonstration, observation and feedback. Moreover, she arranged reflective sessions to discuss issues and strategies that enabled me to work, reflect, and find solutions. It also gave me realization that all of us as a team are learners, and all of us have strengths and weaknesses. For example, each one of the PDTs had different positions in schools and institutions and taught different subjects; so we were facing difficulties in teaching previously untaught subjects, along with the added issue of teaching a different level of students. That difference brought variety in our reflective sessions and we gave suggestions to each other according to our areas of interest. This experience brought us together under one umbrella. Hence, we were connected to each other; and learnt to improve ourselves.

### **Contribution for other Countries**

Learning within the realities of the school context also enabled me to facilitate Certificate in Education: Primary Education (CE:PE) programmes in Dhaka, Bangladesh and Khorog, Tajikistan through AKU-IED's platform. It gave me exposure to practice my learning in the contexts of these regions, which enabled me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses. The free to low-cost materials and my practical work exhibited a good image of leadership and facilitation in accordance with the contextual realities of the said regions.

### **International Visiting Scholar**

This richness in my experience also enabled me to obtain an International Visiting Scholarship and Fellowship Programme at a university in the United States of America. I did not face problems in accommodating myself in an advanced country. I managed to negotiate for attending masters' classes such as Staff Development and Evaluation, American Reforms, and School Finance. I visited six lower primary schools and studied some research on school leadership.

## **Challenges**

Challenges are part of life generally and professional life specifically. I faced a lot of personal and professional problems. These are documented as follows:

### **Male Dominated Leadership**

It was very difficult to change people's perception about change and improvement. People often challenged me by giving examples of failures of innovations of other institutions such as AKES Pakistan and various Government departments. Some argued for minor issues, and debated unnecessarily for useless points of view. For instance, once we conducted a workshop for the head teachers, and the heads of the FEO and the EDO, along with everybody else appreciated it. When it was time for suggesting further improvement, some CP's suggested the female PDTs should wear '*dopatta*' (head scarf).

### **Resistance**

Interestingly, different forms of resistance were visible in working with the multicultural settings. For example 'burning out' when I talked about change and improvement; 'keeping quiet' and 'ignoring'; 'giggling and 'excusing'. While some showed an interest in learning; others 'followed quietly'. In order to deal with them, I had to use diplomacy and my interpersonal skills to avoid conflicts and to find ways to move ahead.

### **High expectations**

Travelling in a white Land Rover and working under the umbrella of AKU-PDCN enhanced my status in the society. It created pride and ownership for having such an opportunity as a female, but on the other hand it also invited jealousy. For example, when I tried to motivate stakeholders, I got responses such as: "You come to school in 100,000 rupees Land Rover so you feel it is easy but actually it is not easy to change", "You have got high salary so you can afford time and resources but how could we manage as we get only — (Rs. 500 - 4000)", "You have got funds now, when it will finish you will also forget talking about change and improvement". However, these powerful comments led me to critical thinking in continuing the practices for change. Similarly, it also raised family and relatives' expectations, which were going to be difficult to fulfil. These comments always pressurized me, but I had to keep in mind the institutional

mission and my targets; so I had to listen, smile, keep quiet or persuade and advocate.

### **Higher Officials Perception for Change**

It remained a constant constraint in dealing with the higher academic managers. Their narrow vision and lack of professional understanding for the quality of teaching and learning never allowed them to take the change in a broader perspective. They always saw change on an ad-hoc basis, for instance transferring teachers and head teachers remained one of the major issues. This reflected a huge gap in the infrastructure of the school system in bringing about improvement.

### **Lack of Support**

I found it very difficult to leave behind my children. Whenever I remained on field based support or other official tasks, I remained under pressure with children after my mother's death, but my children supported me in fulfilling my tasks.

### **Financial crisis**

When I compared the amount of work with my financial needs I found little fairness. I could not afford to take my children for any outings, nor could they go to visit friends or relatives; and most of the time, it was difficult to feed them properly. So it limited their positive thinking and respect for my institution.

### **Geographical and Climate Conditions**

It remained a natural barrier on my way to improvement. I travelled for 13–20 hours to Islamabad, 6 for Skardu, 2-3 for Hunza, but the difficulty increased whenever the road was blocked or the weather changed. Schools lacking heating facilities also affected my health. Once I was observing a Kachi class for the baseline survey. The door and window were closed, and 60 students were sitting on small, locally-made individual benches, in the filthy environment. I could not interrupt because it was a baseline study. It was windy and very cold with the door open and this made me sick for three days.

## **Religious Clashes**

Believing in diversity, I always encouraged my children to behave well and make friends with other communities, but I found it very difficult when my son's friends threatened him to discontinue his relationships with other communities. Moreover, religious clashes generated political clashes and a curfew, so at the time we were stuck at home without proper food and other necessities of life.

## **Learning**

The physical appearance, social status and the natural emotional attachment with children, family and relatives leaves a woman weak for leadership in the society. This hinders her ability and confidence, but if she gets some physical and moral support, she can boost her confidence. If trusted then she is likely to give extra commitment, devotion and determination because she feels honoured and that leads her to higher motivation, positive competition and clearer vision. Once that vision develops she tries her best to transform herself and the society.

Exposure from grassroots to national and international levels enables the PDTs to initiate, internalize and sustain the change process. The exposure of MEd at IED picks them up to a different level where they get aspirations and find role models, which helps them to make linkages from theory to practice and from practice to theory, such as the realities of school in context with the literature. It always keeps their mind engaged in reflection, planning, implementation, observation, and modification of planning. So this cyclical way of reflection, on and in action, makes the PDT professionally stronger. Once the PDT grows stronger in professional life, she feels confident in leading others in that direction with her high spirits. Therefore, change and improvement becomes possible, and her image as a female leader generates change in people's notions, perspectives and social norms in society.

## **Personal Values**

Personal values also count in a leadership position because in a leadership role one has to deal with human nature. We need to learn individual differences, their attitudes and their moral values. In order to have a pedagogical leadership role, one has to show flexibility, honour colleagues, appreciate small successes, provide practical support and have a sharing and caring attitude. Moreover, showing sensitivity to the local culture, taking responsibility for oneself and delegating tasks by empowering others, enables team to make a shared decision that leads to trust being built among teams. When that happens, the door for

cooperation and collaboration never closes. It leads to an empathetic approach towards human beings—you love working with them and they love working with you. So the two-way process enhances respect for each other and creates an enjoyment for learning that leads to schools becoming learning communities.

## **Identification of Potential in Females**

I learned that the ground realities for females at home need a similar, rather than a drastic change. The current scenario, created from donor agencies and other NGOs working on gender issues, has threatened the less educated husbands. When potential is noticed in their wives, instead of providing support, they are indoctrinated to remain in their social and emotional roles, which they never ever come out from. Ultimately it hinders their abilities and skills. So in order to crystallize their abilities and to enhance human and social capital, one needs to have a critical eye and contextual knowledge, along with skills in identifying the said females for development.

## **Patience for Change**

We believe that change is a slow process. Therefore, change requires a lot of time and patience, in order to achieve organizational and personal goals. Dealing with diversified human nature is always challenging, so one has to keep that in mind for initiating change.

## **Recommendations**

Based on my individual learning as a female leader in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, I suggest that institutions and organizations that are eager to develop female leadership should consider the following;

- **Develop capacity:** develop females' professional understanding through an intensive professional course (e.g. MEd or PhD). When they return, it might be a good idea to provide them with a platform to practice their learning in order to gain practical experience. Apart from that they should also get exposure to the current educational changes through national and international conferences, and be allowed to attend seminars to re-charge their abilities and skills and to sustain their motivation.
- **Empowerment:** very few females contribute in leadership positions. It might be a good idea to give them status and position to continue their practices and to sustain their motivation, because generally females are

not considered nor accepted as leaders, making it more difficult for them to handle their status at home, workplace and in the society.

- **Fair mindedness:** male counterparts have been heading the majority of the organizations and institutions. When the donor agencies provide funds for gender equity, they also feel a threat. Therefore, I noticed that they do not tell the truth in stating that ‘there is no potential female candidate’. So it might be a good idea if PDCs encourage females in their courses to develop their professional expertise, so they may be able to take part in open competitions for admissions, rather than depending on only the institutions. This will reduce favouritism.

## Conclusion

My journey from a PDT to a professional female leader was challenging and difficult but at the same time, interesting and rewarding. Being a female from a male dominated society, I had less confidence and faith in my abilities, skills and capabilities. However, the institutional support enabled me to take risks, face challenges, integrate my learning before and during MEd, and practice the said in the correct context. This enabled me to contextualize, internalize, and institutionalize the theories and practices.

My constant reflections, critical thinking and practices made me stronger day by day and enabled me to prove myself as a female leader. The close attention, the triumphs, the encouragement from my institutions (PDCN and AKU-IED), the collective reflection and the shared decisions helped me prioritize the institutional goals and the mission. So I worked with a high spirit to translate the vision of PDCN into the realities of the school context, which not only helped me to develop myself, but also made a difference in the project’s schools of WSIP.

The combination of CE:ELM and WSIP programmes enabled me to get exposed to the current theories of leadership, and running the WSIP programme helped me to put theory into practice. Moreover, it also provided me with a vehicle to develop professional understanding, speak with confidence and give examples from literature, which depict a professional approach in the society to influence stakeholders’ thinking.

So finally, I would like to thank PDCN and AKU-IED for giving me the confidence and the faith that I have come to value as if it were a treasure. It might have been difficult for me otherwise, in the sense that the traditional



leadership approach undervalues female expertise. Without your constant encouragement, professional support and guidance, I would not have succeeded. I hope you will enable me to continue my journey to a greater destination.

I thank you.

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## Appendix

### Summary of my Contribution for WSIP Schools

No.	Systems	Numbers	WSIP year 1 /Follow up 2	Year	Duration
1	Private	01	WSIP pilot programme	1999	3 months
	Government	02			
	AKES, P	01			
2	Private	01	WSIP Year 1	2000	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	01			
3	Government	01	WSIP + follow up year 2000 school	2001	1 year
	AKES, P	01			
4	Private	01	Follow up	2002	1 year
	Government	04			
	AKES, P	02			
5	Private	01	WSIP	2003	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
6	Private	01	Follow up and support	2004	5-6 months
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
7	Private	01	Coordinating WSIP	2005	03
	Government	06			
	AKES, P	01			
	Total schools	32		1999- 2005	

# **Improving Quality of Teaching and Learning, and Speaking and Listening Skills in English for Class 5 by Developing Resources**

*Sukaina Bhojani, Fatimiyah Education Network, Pakistan*

## **Abstract**

*This paper describes a project that was carried out in a private school of Karachi in order to assist teachers in the teaching of spoken language to develop the English-speaking and listening skills of students.*

*Findings from the project disclosed that other than teachers' language skills and their pedagogical content knowledge, there were a lot of other factors involved that forced them to stay away from giving quality and equal time to the spoken language development. The outcomes of the project revealed that to develop the English-speaking language skills of the students, teachers and other stakeholders (parents and school management) would have to play an active role and that collective efforts of the stakeholders are needed for the holistic language development of the students.*

## **Introduction**

A project titled "Let's talk" was carried out in an urban school in Karachi, Pakistan. The purpose of the project was to develop the knowledge and skills of English teachers in the teaching and learning of spoken language. The project was undertaken from February 2005 to June 2005. The most appealing feature of the project was its context; the teachers in the school came from similar linguistic backgrounds. In most cases teachers lacked proficiency in spoken English and mostly used Urdu in the classrooms. Therefore, to help the teachers, a project on spoken language was developed, which was then implemented. In the course of the project journey, a lot of learning took place, such as how children learned language particularly spoken language, how should the spoken language be taught, what were the challenges in teaching spoken language and how to overcome these challenges.

The recommendations made at the end suggested that in order to implement the teaching of spoken language, apart from the teachers, the school head and management also needed to play an active role because it involved a lot of decision-making at a higher level such as changing of text books, inducting

teachers with good language proficiency and provision in the school time table for the teaching of speaking skills.

## The Project Cycle

The project cycle was divided into four stages: needs analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These stages together form the project cycle because “each stage is the logical successor of the preceding one” (Wysocki, n.d., p.26). These four stages can be diagrammatically represented as:

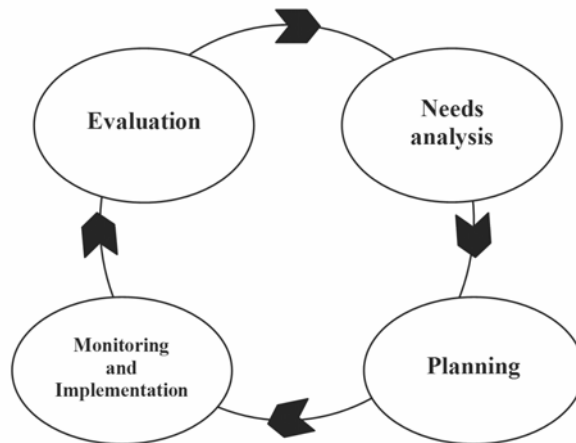


Figure 1: The Project Cycle

All four stages of the project cycle are interconnected. Needs analysis helps discover the needs of a selected context. In order to address the needs, a plan is designed that is then implemented and monitored. Evaluation is continuously done to understand the development and also at the end to evaluate the impact.

## Project Context

Vision Schools (pseudonym) is a network of community-based English medium schools, which has been established with the aim of providing quality education at an affordable cost to under-privileged sections of the community.

The school has three branches, each managed by a Principal. In order to enhance the professionalism of the teachers, the school is also affiliated with well-reputed organizations such as Teachers’ Resource Centre (TRC), Teachers’ Development Centre (TDC), and Professional Development Centre (PDC). The

school is rich in human and physical resources. There are two Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) and half the staff hold certificates in education.

The school leaders are visionary. They provide opportunities for teachers' professional development in order to achieve the schools' vision of quality teaching and learning that is shared by the senior management, principals and the teachers. The school's culture reflects collegiality, where every teacher is willing to learn to teach better.

## **An Insight into Language Teaching and Learning at Vision Schools**

Vision schools belong to a community of Gujarati speakers and cater to the needs of low-income groups. Having Gujarati as vernacular and Urdu as national language, English is considered as a foreign language. However, the school realizes the importance of English and emphasizes the need to learn and communicate in English and is exploring the benefit, both to personal and professional lives, which English can bring to the students.

The school in this regard has support from most of the parents but they cannot assist their children in learning English at home because they cannot communicate in English themselves. This hinders the students' English language learning because the opportunity of using English is restricted to the school. Students hardly hear any English other than their teachers, read any English other than textbooks, and speak English other than in the classroom (Baker and Westrup, 2003).

## **Needs Analysis**

The observation of English teaching and learning and interviews with English teachers during the needs analysis informed me that the students were not competent in English and were struggling with it.

In-depth observation gave me an insight into the teaching problem. I found that the input provided to the students for the development of speaking and listening skills was weak because the teachers mostly used Urdu as a medium of instruction in the class.

Furthermore, the teachers mainly focused on reading and writing skills. Very little input was given in spoken language and that too lacked proper teaching methods. As a result of which, spoken language could not be developed properly.

Therefore, I arrived at the conclusion that the teachers of English needed support in preparing activities and resources to improve students' spoken skills in English. The school principal and English teachers supported my finding regarding the project, stating that they too realized that the students lack speaking and listening skills and therefore the school needed to work in this area.

Keeping in view the needs of the context, I decided to develop and implement a project to enhance the teachers' knowledge and expertise in the teaching of speaking and listening skills.

## **Planning**

After gathering and analyzing the data from the needs analysis, a project design was developed where its goal, objectives, activities and monitoring tools were planned (see table 1.2). This design was based on the conceptual framework that communication is an exchange of ideas between people either orally or in writing. Oral communication is a two-way process between the speaker and the listener, where the speaker speaks and the listener gives feedback to the speaker on whether s/he understands what the speaker has said (Byrne, 1986).

According to Alwright (cited in Rao, 1996), practicing communication in the classroom is pedagogically useful because it provides a chance of "learning by doing", (Ghafoor, 1998, p. 13) which benefits the students who get more opportunities to interact with each other, thus developing communication skills. Larsen-Freeman (1986) argues that it is through interaction between the speaker and the listener that meaning becomes clear.

In the process of language acquisition, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms but they must also know how to use that knowledge and this comes from opportunities to practice language.

A number of techniques have been suggested for the development of communicative abilities of second language learners. Practical tasks that enhance communication skills and are applicable in an 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) context have been designed. These include games, role-plays, and problem solving tasks and information gap activities (Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1989; Larsen Freeman, 1986). Following is my framework for the project, based on my understanding of how spoken language is developed.

Table 1: Framework for Speaking and Listening Skills  
(In accordance with the context)

Listening Skills	Speaking Skills
<b>Prepare:</b> Before embarking on the listening task, prepare the students for it. Make sure that the language used for the task is appropriate to the students' level.	<b>Input Vs Output:</b> Consider the level of language input (listening), which should be higher than the level of output (speaking).
<b>Anticipate:</b> Present the listening task in the context of the topic of the teaching unit in order to help the students to predict the answers. Using illustrations also helps the students to guess the answers.	<b>Song, chants and poems:</b> These allow students to mimic and master sounds, rhythms, and intonations. <b>Games and information gap activities:</b> These encourage students to manipulate and experiment with the language.
<b>Concentrate:</b> Ensure that pupils' attention is totally on the listening by removing all the distractions.	<b>Authentic:</b> Present the task that is has a real reason for speaking to make the learners feel a need to speak.

Table 2: Project Design

Goal	Objectives	Activities	Monitoring and Evaluation
Improve the quality of teaching and learning, of speaking and listening skills in English for class V by developing resources.	Develop teachers' knowledge and skills to prepare activities and materials for teaching and learning of the speaking and listening skills of English language.	Four Professional Development Sessions	Observations, reflection anecdotes Checklist interviews
	Facilitate teachers to use the prepared activities and materials in the English classroom for better teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills..	Two Micro-Teaching Sessions	Observations, reflection interviews Tape recording Photography

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

The project design helped in setting a context for the execution of the plan. A number of activities were carried out at the implementation stage. These are discussed in this section.

### **Text-books Analysis**

Textbooks play an important role in the classroom, dictating the mode of instructions (Penny and Clark, 2003). A review of the grade textbook identified that of the 18 activities given in six chapters, eight activities were on reading and ten activities were on writing. However, there was none for speaking and listening. Similarly, other chapters also focused on reading and writing skills. I then learned that the school is using a textbook titled 'Focus on Language Skills' (see appendix A for the back cover of the book). If the textbook titled 'Focus on Literacy' had been used from the same series (see appendix B for the learning goals of the book), a more comprehensive textbook would have been available as a resource for language development. Text level work such as comprehension and composition, Word level work such as phonics, spelling and vocabulary, and Sentence level work such as grammar and punctuation are included in

The number of learning objectives related to speaking and listening skills in the national curriculum for English for Class V, was disappointing. These objectives will not enable schools to meet the demands for language learning from parents and management of the Vision School. For instance, one of the objectives stated that students should "identify and name seasons" (p.13), whereas the students in Vision school are exposed to this in Class I.

A review of the textbook and the National curriculum confirmed the need to conduct a project in developing resources for listening and speaking skills.

### **Planning of the Professional Development Sessions**

Needs analysis gave me a general picture and the textbook analysis provided me a clearer direction to prepare input sessions for the teachers. Therefore, keeping the needs of the teachers and the school in mind, I planned input sessions for the teachers. This was not an easy task as I had to read a lot of literature and review my course material from the M.Ed. English semester. Reading and understanding literature and then to adapt or adopt it contextually, was a big challenge.



Another challenge was to consider the existing English language proficiency of the direct stakeholders (teachers), and indirect stakeholders (students), of the Professional Development sessions. Though I was dealing directly with the teachers yet the materials that were to be used and prepared in the Professional Development sessions were for the students in the school. I considered the age of the learners, their cultural background, personal experiences and exposure (Staab, 1992; Johnson, 1995), to understand and explore their world, linguistic abilities, attitude and motivation, and their interest towards learning of spoken-language. I was aware of the fact that the activities and resources should be contextual for the students, to enable them to take an interest in and draw on their own life experience and cultural knowledge. According to Fred (1999) “foreign language learning will be effective if the activities are meaningful, relevant to the child’s need and interest and have connection with the daily life experience of the child” (p. 3).

## **Implementing Professional Development Sessions**

At the time of the needs analysis, the teachers had requested activity-based teaching of English. The Professional Development sessions helped me to understand that just giving an activity to the teachers and helping them to perform it was not enough. I realized that there is a lot more involved in activity-based teaching than just doing some activities. I learned that teachers’ competence in language, their fluency, vocabulary, and thinking skills were necessary. The kind of support that the teachers needed to provide to the learners during the activity was also important. At many points I had to make the teachers realize the difference between the kind of language they were using, while doing the activity, and the kind of language they generally expect from the students in the class. For instance, I assumed that the speaking activity where teachers were supposed to discuss similarities and differences between themselves would generate a lot of conversation. However, teachers only gave one word, for example “young, short”. Here I had to explain to the teachers that the purpose of the task is to talk. Therefore, one word answers should be avoided. I learnt that both teachers and students should be made aware of the purpose of the activity before the start of the lesson, so that more meaningful learning could happen. I also realized that speaking in a foreign language requires courage to speak without fear of making mistakes.

In another activity, ‘debate’, after providing a couple of arguments, the teachers stayed quiet. They did not raise any points to extend their argument any further. In order to break this deadlock, I had to play devil’s advocate and stimulate both sides to extend their arguments. Both the teachers and I learnt that while doing

any task, suitable time to think is needed. This time can also be called ‘thinking time’, where the teachers and students prepare for the task.

## **Issues in Executing Speaking and Listening Activities in the Classroom**

After doing the speaking and listening activities in the Professional Development sessions, I asked the teachers whether they could use these activities in their classrooms. They replied in affirmative, as they were contextual and relevant to the students’ age. However, they did foresee some possible issues that might arise in the class in the course of doing these activities. Those included completion of the syllabus prescribed by the school, time allocated (according to period and class) to the teachers to teach speaking and listening skills, teachers’ and students’ linguistic competence in handling spoken-language activities, and the time available to the teachers to monitor the students and to provide them feedback on their performances.

The teachers see the school syllabus as a sacred programme that cannot be altered or modified. In this scenario they were worried as to how they would manage activity-based teaching in the class. They had a misconception that activities needed to be done daily, in order to develop students’ skills, and therefore, did not know how to integrate the same in the existing curriculum.

I suggested that they could integrate the activities with the textbook topics. For instance, past tense is taught in grammar class. The teaching of past tense can be used to develop oral communication skills by integrating it with a speaking activity. In this case the teachers can ask the students to share the previous day’s routine with their partner and the partner has to listen to the peer and note down the verbs used. In this way both speaking and listening activities can be done. This is exactly what Staab (1992) has emphasized, “Oral skills are learned best when they are integrated into real classroom activities rather than presented in isolation” (p. 89).

Moreover, the teachers were also concerned about the language ability of other teachers in the school, which was also low. They wondered how the other teachers would help the students develop spoken-language. Furthermore they were concerned by the size of the class and the number of students. They wondered how they would pay attention to all the students, provide them with language support, given the diversity in the language ability of the students and monitor their ability on the spot, provide task assistance when needed and ensure that all the students were working effectively. As literature also suggest

“they [teachers] should remember that the challenge in teaching is not covering materials for the students, it’s uncovering the materials with the students” (Johnson and Johnson, 1994; p. 102).

## **Micro-Teaching**

First, from my experience of micro-teaching, I understood that the project participants were quite fluent in spoken-language and could display spoken skills at the students’ level. However, the manner in which they handled classroom activities, in terms of classroom arrangement and support to the learners, was an area that needed improvement. This was evident from the manner in which the teachers prepared the lesson, which wasn’t challenging for the students. The text that they selected was familiar to the students and, therefore, there was not much for the students to struggle and achieve.

Second, I noticed that the lessons were quite abstract without any props to make them interesting and real for the students. In addition, language support to the students was not provided, and where provided, the students did not know what was to be done with that language. The burning issues that emerged in the micro-teaching sessions were classroom management problems and engaging the students’ attention. Before embarking on a task the teachers did not set any ground rules, or outlined social skills to manage the class and therefore gave students the freedom to create a fuss.

As micro-teaching was the teachers’ first experience in using activities to teach speaking and listening skills, therefore they should not be expected to be perfect, as practice makes a man [sic] perfect. I asked them to reflect and give feedback on their teaching. This reflection and feedback session helped them to perform better in second micro- teaching session. Thus I learnt that teachers need continuous support till they feel comfortable to manage their new learning on their own.

## **Project Evaluation**

After every Professional Development session, evaluation was done to diagnose participants’ remedial needs. (Forsyth, Jolliffe & Stevens, 1999). Furthermore, the evaluation gave me specific information about the achievement of objectives of the Professional Development sessions. With the help of the evaluation, I also developed an insight into professional development sessions, my ability to challenge participants intellectually and my success in increasing their knowledge about speaking and listening skills.

Data for the evaluation was collected through interviews. The teachers benefited from the project as stated by a project participant, “I have learnt a lot and I think these types of training should be on regular basis.... We all need to polish our skills, even the old [senior teachers]”. The performance of the teachers during the micro-teaching session was evidence that project participants’ views and understanding of teaching of speaking and listening skills had started to change.

## **Outcomes**

### **My Learning**

The project about speaking and listening skills helped me to grow as a teacher educator and I can relate to what Mawdsley (1992) said:

Offering Professional Development learning support to others has the effect of producing the corresponding growth and development skills. (p. 90)

In the course of working with the teachers, I developed an understanding of teacher education as a “transformational process” where I grew with every step rather than over night (Polanyi cited in McNiff, 1993).

### **Learning of Project Participants**

Project participants learned about the theory, practice and assessment skills in teaching children how to speak and listen in English. They realized the importance of speaking and listening skills and deliberated on the issues pertaining to the teaching of the spoken-language. Furthermore, practicing their learning with the students gave them an idea of possible challenges that could emerge while teaching spoken-language through activity-based learning and the ways these problems could be resolved. This exercise helped them to produce contextual and meaningful resources to supplement the text-books.

### **Handbook of Activities**

At the end of the project, a handbook of activities on speaking and listening was developed, with the combined efforts of the project leader and the project participants. The handbook also had a set of Frequently Asked Questions based on the professional development sessions conducted during the research project.

## **Challenges**

Certain challenges were faced during the course of project implementation. The heavy workload of the project participants was one major challenge. Since the project was carried out during close to exam time in the school, teachers had a lot of work related to examination and revisions. Therefore, they faced difficulty in maintaining rhythm in both the activities. Furthermore, the six-week time to implement the project was inadequate as the project involved skill development, which requires a lot of time before desirable results are achieved.

## **Recommendations**

Based on my experiences of the project, first, I recommend that the project leader be well-informed about the latest research and literature in connection with the execution and development of a project. Second, the knowledge of the content and pedagogy of the specific areas that are part of professional development sessions are important for effective implementation.

In order to get maximum benefit from such a project, speaking and listening periods in the school timetable should be integrated, for example, in the reading and writing periods. This will oblige the teachers to plan for the spoken-language class. Furthermore the school should also assess speaking and listening skills. The pressure of the assessment will ensure that the teachers provide necessary input to develop students' speaking and listening skills. Textbooks, being the main teaching resource have the potential to drive teachers' practice in the classroom. The school should change its English textbooks and use one that gives equal attention to all four language skills. An alternative to this is to adapt relevant material from other textbooks for use in the classroom, in order to provide a balanced language input. To enhance the communications skills of teachers, the school should arrange English language courses. This will help in better teaching and learning of English language. The school can use its Professional Development Teachers as an internal resource to develop further knowledge and skills of the teachers. The school is a member of various teacher training organizations and it should utilize the expertise of these organizations for better teaching and learning of spoken-language. In addition, the school should also use parents as a resource, providing them guidance as to how to help their children to provide them spoken-language input.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that there is a growing awareness among the teachers and Principal for the need of spoken skills. Change is not an easy process and when the school starts taking measures to initiate teaching and learning of the spoken-language, it will face resistance from all quarters. People might not like the proposed changes and therefore might not be willing to change. The school will have to be patient and gradual and persistent efforts will prove fruitful and things will start working in the school's favor.

The project has now ended but this experience has provided me with an opportunity to understand the process of planning, implementation and evaluation. I pray and hope that the project participants are successful in changing the language skills of their students, thus serving the purpose of the project.

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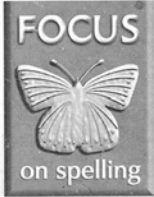
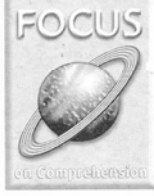
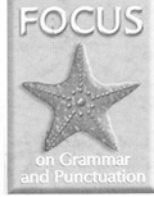
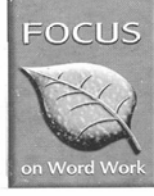
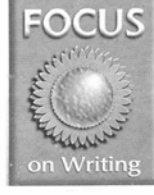
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## Appendix A: Back cover of the School Text-book

<i>Focus on language skills with</i> 	
<i>The step-by-step solution to spelling success</i>	
<i>The step-by-step solution to building comprehension skills</i>	
<i>The step-by-step solution to building grammar and punctuation skills</i>	
<i>The step-by-step solution to building spelling and vocabulary skills</i>	
<i>The step-by-step solution to building writing skills</i>	



## Appendix B: Learning Goals of the Book

### Focus on Literacy and the QCA Early Learning Goals

Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy	Unit			
	1	2 & 3	4 & 5	6
Help children to stick to the point and sensitively rephrase what they say to improve clarity and logic	•	•	•	•
Demonstrate that the contributions of children are valued, and are used to inform and shape the direction of discussions				
Ask children to tell you about what they are going to do before they do it, and ask them to suggest possible outcomes				
Ask children to give reasons, further explanations or evidence for what they say				
Take an interest in what and how children think and not just what they know	CONTINUOUS WORK			
Encourage children to explain sometimes how things work in words rather than actions				
Show interest in and build on children's own observations about letters in words				
Read children's writing so that they understand that writing is an important way of communicating				
Intervene to help children hold a pencil effectively				
Set up collaborative tasks and help children to talk and plan together about how they will begin, what parts each will play and what materials they will need		•	•	•
Foster children's enjoyment of spoken and written language in their play by providing interesting and stimulating opportunities		•	•	•
Encourage children to predict possible endings to stories and events				
Encourage children to listen to each other and allow time for thinking, and for children to frame their ideas in words	•	•	•	•
Encourage children to think about the effect of the words they use				
Model questions and explanations for children and help them expand on what they say			•	•
Model fluent, phrased reading with big books and encourage children to predict, take over the telling and re-tell favourite stories	•	•	•	•
Provide opportunities for talking for a wide range of purposes	•	•	•	•
Encourage children to experiment with words and sounds				
Encourage children to present and explain ideas to others and to expand on what they say	•	•	•	•
Provide opportunities for children to participate in meaningful speaking and listening activities	•	•	•	•
Encourage children to talk about how they feel	•			
Create a story with children, asking them to predict what will happen next				

Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy	Unit			
	1	2 & 3	4 & 5	6
Help children to identify patterns, draw conclusions, explain effect, predict and speculate			•	
Encourage children to explore and ask about the meanings of words			•	
Play interactive games to encourage children to listen for the sound at the end and then in the middle of words, and use the correct letter for the sound				
Model writing so that children can see spelling in action. Encourage children to apply their own knowledge of sounds to what they write	•	•	•	•
Sing the alphabet				
Discuss different versions of the same story				
Create group poems encouraging imaginative writing				
Model reading while children can see the text, maintaining natural intonation and observing punctuation	•	•	•	•
Create imaginary words to describe strong characters in stories and poems				
Help children identify the main events in a story. Encourage the children to enact stories and to use them as the basis for further imaginative play				
Encourage children to add to their first-hand experience of the world through the use of books, other texts, and information and communication technology (ICT)			•	•
Encourage children to use a range of reading strategies by modeling different strategies and providing varied texts through which that range can be used	•	•	•	•
Write stories, poems and non-fiction texts with children	•			•
When writing, talk about what you're doing and why, and talk through some of your decision-making, such as what to write, choice of words, order. Continually re-read the writing to provide a good model for children when they write	•	•	•	•
Encourage children to use their ability to hear the sounds at various points in their writing	•			•
Encourage children to re-read their writing as they write	•	•	•	•
Provide materials and opportunities for children to initiate the use of writing in their play, as well as creating purposes for independent and group writing	•			•
Give children extensive practice in writing letters, for example, labeling their work, making cards, writing notices	•	•	•	•
Continue writing practice in imaginative contexts	•	•	•	•
Use opportunities to help children form letters correctly, for example, when they label their paintings		•	•	•

# **Action Research: A Viable Alternative for In-service Teacher Professional Development**

*Bernadette L. Dean, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

## **Abstract**

*In this paper, the author argues for the professional development of teachers to be based upon systematic action research undertaken as a collegial activity within the culture of the school. Three case studies of action research, one each from South Asia, East Africa and Central Asia, in which Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) (MEd graduates of AKU-IED) worked with teachers to improve teaching and learning in the classroom, are presented to illustrate the possibilities and challenges of using action research for teacher professional development.*

*The author further argues that while action research for teacher professional development addresses the challenges of other forms of teacher professional development, for increased benefits partnerships with universities wishing to support schools in doing action research should be developed and schools must be better resourced and supported over longer periods of time.*

## **Introduction**

The quality of education in schools depends on the competence and commitment of teachers. Research shows that there is a decline in the quality of school education in most developing countries as a result of inadequate teacher preparation (Warwick and Reimers, 1995; Hoodbhoy; 1998; Niyozov, 2001). This realization has led to a growing emphasis on in-service teacher education. Most of in-service teacher education uses a delivery model in which new knowledge is identified and delivered to teachers who are expected to apply the same in their classrooms. Usually this knowledge is delivered in one-shot workshops held at sites remote from the classroom, with little or no follow up support for teachers (Grundy & Robinson, 2004). Thus even though in-service teacher education has increased, there remains a “fundamental persistence” in teacher-directed learning in schools, as relatively few teachers apply learning from the courses in their classrooms (Groundwater-Smith & Dadds, 2004). Many reasons have been suggested for the lack of classroom change: the transmission view of teaching that teachers have is rarely critiqued in teacher education programmes (Richardson, 1997); courses are too theoretical and neglect the practical needs of teachers (Eliot, 1981); teachers distrust academic research as it fails to account

for the differences between schools (Groundwater-Smith & Dadds, 2004); and a lack of follow up support as teachers try to develop their pedagogical practice (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins, 1998). Because of these difficulties, there is a growing emphasis on using Action Research for teacher professional development.

What is Action Research? Simply put, Action Research is a systematic inquiry into practice, with the intention of understanding and improving it. Carr and Kemmis (1983) described Action Research as “a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices; (b) their understanding of these practices; and, (c) the situations in which these practices are carried out” (p. 152). In this definition Action Research goes beyond technical solutions, and tries to obtain a commitment towards improving practices, basing the said on a critical understanding of the practice and on the situation in which the practice takes place.

In order to engage in Action Research, practitioners identify a problem of practice and formulate a strategic plan to address it using a cyclic or spiral process, which consists of planning, acting and reflecting. Reflection on the actions in one cycle informs actions in the next cycle. Alternating between action and reflection allows one to understand the situation better and to take successful actions, as well as refining methods and data and interpreting the said in the light of the understanding developed in earlier cycles.

Action Research can be used to make small improvements in individual practices and/or influence institutional change. However, institutional change seldom occurs from improvement in an individual’s practice. Thus in most of its forms, Action Research is a collaborative activity involving others as co-researchers. The co-researchers study the situation, plan actions, implement them and engage in self and collective reflection.

Action Research requires ongoing validation from an educated audience able to judge the authenticity and relevance of the research in a professional context. Initially it involves the researcher giving a true account of her/his practice and justifying it through drawing on professional knowledge available through others’ research. As it progresses, it moves on to testing the research with colleagues both within and outside the research context, and finally goes public to convince others of the validity of the claims (Lomax, 1995).

# **The Researching Practice, Practicing Research Study**

## **Background**

In the context of a deep decline in the quality of education in developing countries, Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) was established in 1993 with the aim of improving the quality of education in schools through teacher education and research. To achieve its aim, it has started to offer a two-year Masters in Education programme for in-service teachers to prepare them as exemplary teachers, teacher educators and researchers. In the Masters programme, teachers are introduced to a variety of strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Graduates of the programme (better known as Professional Development Teachers or PDTs) return to their schools to teach and provide in-house training to their colleagues. Following a few iterations of the programme the need was felt to study its impact on student learning; a number of strategies were proposed, one of which was classroom-based Action Research.

## **The Research Question**

The Researching Practice, Practicing Research Study was designed to evaluate the impact on student learning of three instructional strategies taught in the Masters programme: discussion, cooperative learning and inquiry. The research question asked, “What benefits accrue to students from teachers using student-centred instructional strategies, taught to them by the PDTs using Action Research?” There were also a number of subsidiary questions, of which this paper focuses on one: How does Action Research facilitate the professional development of teachers?

## **Research Design and Methodology**

The Action Research in this study was simultaneously conducted at three levels. The focus and outcomes expected at each level are presented in Table 1. This paper draws on findings from the Action Research conducted at levels 2 and 3.

Table 1: Focus and outcomes of Action Research at each level

Level	Who	Actions	Outcomes
1	Principal Researcher	Develop an understanding of Action Research and the instructional strategies. Facilitate research through support and challenge. Document the process.	Challenges and possibilities of Action Research for the teacher educator. Nature of impact at all levels.
2	PDTs	Teach Action Research and instructional strategies. Peer-coach teacher; facilitate critico-creative reflection. Document the process.	Possibilities of using Action Research for teacher education within their context. Changes in self, others and context. Nature of cooperation, inquiry and discussion.
3	Teachers	Learn Action Research and instructional strategies. Use Action Research to facilitate use of instructional strategies. Document the process.	Possibilities and challenges in using Action Research and strategies in their classroom. Benefits that accrue to students in terms of knowledge, dispositions, and skills.

## Research Sites and Participants

The research was carried out in six sites in five countries (Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda). Five of the sites were schools, while one was a university department preparing pre-service English language teachers.

Table 2: Research sites and participants

PDTs	Discussion Teachers	Cooperative Learning Teachers	Inquiry Teachers
Anthony Primary School Tanzania	Daniel Samuel	Daniel Samuel	Daniel Samuel
Farida Secondary School Karachi, Pakistan	Ambar Zubaida (dropped out midway)	Ambar Najma	Ambar Shaheen (joined later)
Haseeb Secondary School Gilgit, Pakistan	Alam Bibi	PDT dropped out of the study	
Anthony/Ijlal Secondary School Tajikistan	Jamila Alivuai	Gulgena Jamal	Gulzar Baktu
Roku University Kyrgyzstan	Rakia Ainagul Bermet Gulnaz	Rakia Ainagul Bermet Gulnaz	Rakia Ainagul Bermet Gulnaz
Maria Secondary School, Uganda	PDT dropped out of the study		Self Dominic

## The Conduct of the Research

The principal researcher invited six PDTs to a meeting where they discussed and agreed to the idea of the research study. Over a week, each day 2-3 hours were

spent developing a common understanding of Action Research and the instructional strategies through presentations, discussion, identifying and addressing concerns and identification of relevant literature, which the PDTs could take with them to facilitate the research.

Returning to their schools, the PDTs met with their head teacher, discussed the research proposal and obtained their consent. The PDTs then invited teachers to participate in the research. Following reconnaissance, the PDTs chose discussion as the first instructional strategy as most teachers already used some form of discussion in their teaching. Besides the instructional strategy, PDTs taught the teachers Action Research to better facilitate their understanding of the process; and to also enable them to engage in Action Research themselves in order to improve the use of the strategy in their classrooms. The teachers received PDT support until they could research their practice themselves. The same process was used for cooperative learning and inquiry.

While the PDTs supported and challenged the teachers, the principal researcher supported and challenged the PDTs through email communication, organizing small group meetings, chatting on the Internet and visiting some schools.

## **Action Research Facilitates Expansion and Elaboration of the Knowledge Base of Teaching**

One cannot simply tell teachers to teach differently. Teachers themselves must make the change. To do so, teachers must “construct a professional knowledge base that will enable them to teach students in more powerful and meaningful ways” (Borho & Putman, 1995, quoted in Bolam and McMahon, 2004, p.49). While there are questions about defining essential knowledge in teaching, given the variations in teaching situations, the work of Shulman (1987) provides a beginning. Shulman has suggested that effective teachers require knowledge in seven areas: content, pedagogy, curriculum, pedagogical content knowledge, learners and their characteristics, educational contexts and educational ends. The findings of this study indicate that Action Research was the facilitating factor for improvements in all seven knowledge bases. However, because the research focused on using pedagogies that called for active intellectual engagement of students in learning, the teachers’ and students’ understanding of pedagogy was especially enhanced.

## **Desire to enhance subject content knowledge**

As teachers used instructional strategies that required them to move away from the transmission of textbook content, their lack of subject knowledge and understanding became evident. They expressed their fear of being unable to answer the students' questions claiming that in many cases their students were better informed than they were. Reflecting on their teaching, especially the script tapes of their lessons, the teachers realized the need to improve their content knowledge and to acknowledge and draw on students' knowledge to facilitate learning. They stated,

I realized that we have to learn before we teach. We have to get information from the internet and the encyclopaedia for discussion topics as some students may ask questions which we do not know the answer to.

When students are involved in inquiry they raise difficult questions that I may not be able to answer so I updated my knowledge. I started reading articles and surfing the internet.

I realize that students are not empty vessels but have knowledge and experiences from which even the teacher can learn and draw on to facilitate learning.

In addition to acquiring content knowledge, four of the teachers enrolled in university programmes to enhance their knowledge base.

## **Improved knowledge and effective use of pedagogy**

The reconnaissance revealed that the dominant teaching strategy used by the teachers was read-explain-question. In mathematics classrooms, teachers teach and make students practice the application of an algorithm; while in English grammar classrooms, the grammar drill method is followed. The PDTs found that what teachers called discussion was really recitation (teacher questions and student answers); cooperative learning was group work in which textbook questions otherwise answered by individual students were given to a group; and inquiry consisted of giving students a topic and having them make a presentation on it. Most of the teachers acknowledged that they had been introduced to the strategies in workshops and short courses, but because of a lack of follow-up support and institutional imperatives, they had been unable to translate the said into effective classroom practices. They claimed that effective use of the instructional strategies was facilitated by the use of the Action



Research process and the support of an in-house facilitator. Action Research resulted in more effective use of the strategies and in some teachers gaining mastery. The greatest gains were made by teachers who participated in all three phases of the study, worked collaboratively and received ongoing support from the PDT.

In the process of using Action Research to implement discussion, cooperative learning and inquiry, teachers developed new knowledge, skills and dispositions, recognized limitations of past practice, and became innovative and creative in the use of the strategies. When introduced to the theory of the strategy in the training sessions, most teachers did not understand exactly what the strategy entailed. However, practice in the classroom and identification of problems in practice led them to turning to the PDT for help; and caused them to return to training materials and make requests for more information. A teacher said, "Using jigsaw was difficult for me. I thought all I had to do was divide the text among the group and tell them to learn it. After I did it today, I reflected on it and realized each student would only learn one bit of the text. I read the handout on jigsaw again. I realized that they have also to teach it to each other."

While learning the strategy of *discussion*, the first thing teachers had to learn was to frame discussion questions. After many attempts they learned to frame higher order questions (HOQ). Initial attempts to conduct classroom discussions revealed that teachers were impatient as they filled in silent moments with their own ideas or provided the right answer. They learned that HOQs required wait time for the students to think and needed to probe students' responses to check conceptual understanding or deepen thinking. A mathematics teacher stated, "If students are stuck, the teacher has to click on (probe) them; questions help them to think deeper."

Following initial use of discussion all the teachers expressed concern regarding lack of student participation as they could not ascertain if and what students were learning. To facilitate participation they encouraged fluency rather than accuracy, called on quiet students and monitored participation. Once most students were participating some teachers expressed satisfaction while others shifted their attention to the quality of students participation. These teachers found that discussion requires students to have knowledge or experience of the topic and discussion skills. Thus, prior to a discussion, the teacher had students read about the topic or provided them with the information needed. They taught and encouraged students to support their ideas, seek clarification, disagree in an agreeable manner and summarize the discussion.

In primary classrooms teachers found that students were not willing to wait for their turn, they all shouted, “Teacher!”, “Teacher!” The teachers would laugh when students’ responses were incorrect or unusual, and they either strayed from the topic or wanted to ensure all possibilities were covered before moving on. The teachers found that conducting a discussion requires great skilfulness on their part and that students had to be taught social and discussion skills, given demonstrations and be provided with many opportunities to practice before the benefits of discussion could be obtained.

In most cases the PDTs found the Learning Together model of *cooperative learning* (Johnson, Johnson & Holobec, 1991) to be a very complex strategy and decided to teach Cooperative Structures (Kagan, 1992) moving from simple to more complex ones. In using cooperative learning in their classrooms, teachers had difficulty designing challenging tasks. Most teachers had difficulty giving clear instructions. They gave many instructions at a time and when students did not understand, just repeated the same instructions. They learnt that when teaching a new cooperative structure, instructions are best given at each step and that in addition to the orally said, written instructions should also be provided.

In all of the countries where the study was conducted English is a foreign language. With the exception of the countries in East Africa, most students are not fluent in English. Cooperative learning requires students to learn with and from each other. Teachers realized that students required more time to express their thoughts, to read the materials, to understand what was read and teach each other. This meant allocating more time in Think-Pair-Share. When using Jigsaw with new material, teachers had to ensure students understood key words in the text, and were provided with more time for students to learn the material and teach their colleagues. Teachers learnt to deal with the issue of time by having students read material as homework and continued using jigsaw over two to three lessons. While the teachers all complained about time and being behind others who taught different sections of the class, they all acknowledged that cooperative learning allowed them to “discover the degree of students’ understanding and determine the areas where they needed help”.

Teaching which centres on knowledge transmission does not require teachers to know and teach a variety of skills. In *inquiry* classrooms, rather than systematically teaching students the skills, teachers would tell students what to do without teaching any of the required skills. Moreover, when they did teach the skills, they expected students to immediately demonstrate an effective use of them. When starting with the teaching of inquiry, teachers told students to frame inquiry questions. Most students framed lower order questions requiring

the identification of a fact. For example, after teaching students how to frame inquiry questions, a teacher reflecting on her lesson wrote, “When I taught how to make inquiry questions not all students were able to do it. I realize I have to explain it again”. She also wondered if her emphasis on “grammatical accuracy in framing the questions could have hindered framing inquiry questions.” With so much emphasis on the ‘one right answer’, both teachers and students had difficulty understanding the concept of hypothesizing. A teacher reflecting on her lesson wrote,

When I asked students to hypothesize, they took out their textbooks to look for correct answers. When a group presented their hypothesis other groups corrected them. I explained many times it’s OK if you are wrong.

When it came to information locating, gathering and processing skills, teachers initially had students generate a list of information sources, and as in the past, sent the students to gather information. Gradually they moved to choosing a source of information and systematically teaching students how to locate, gather and process information. In many cases, however, processing information was still an issue for both teachers and students. After a number of iterations at the end of the inquiry process a teacher observed,

I didn’t have any knowledge or skills which could have helped me in using inquiry. There were several weaknesses in my teaching. I did not know ways of locating information from different sources or different ways of presenting information, now I have learnt and taught my students how to collect information from the community, make notes of their readings and summarize the information.

As the teachers learnt new instructional strategies, they became quite creative in their lesson planning. They planned lessons using a variety of cooperative structures and integrated discussion into them. They also discussed putting cooperative learning into inquiry. Furthermore, on learning to use an instructional strategy in one subject area, teachers were quick to note, “we can use this method in other subjects as well” and in some cases they actually did.

### **Increased understanding and use of subject specific pedagogy**

Teachers found that all the three instructional strategies facilitated the learning of English. In English language classrooms, they moved away from the grammar

drill method to the communicative approach. In using the communicative approach, teachers recognized that they had to encourage fluency before accuracy; therefore, instead of immediately correcting students' mistakes, they noted them down or audio recorded them and had students identify and correct them. A teacher reported,

When students made mistakes, I wrote them in my notebook and at the end of the lesson I read them out and asked the students to identify the mistakes and correct them. I also began to record the discussion and asked students to listen to it and correct the mistakes which they made. Sometimes they corrected their mistakes themselves.

The teachers became conscious of the fact that while each strategy helped to develop particular skills, adaptations had resulted in the development of all the four language skills. Discussion facilitated the skills of listening and speaking, but when teachers had students prepare for a discussion, it involved reading for understanding and making notes. Inquiry required reading and writing, but presentations of findings called for speaking and listening. Most cooperative learning structures required the use of at least two skills but Jigsaw, on the other hand, required the use of all four.

Only one teacher used discussion to teach English literature. She found it particularly useful as students analyzed the topic and presented their own interpretations. However with topics such as "love at first sight" perceived as taboo in the society only a few students were willing to share their views.

Social studies and science teachers found all the three strategies were applicable in their subjects. In one school where science and social studies teachers were engaged in the study, the science teacher recognized the similarity between inquiry and investigations in science, and applied it more systematically than before. The social studies teacher, however, had to be encouraged to use it in social studies because he thought it was only suitable for science. Both social studies and science teachers found knowledge inquiries useful, as it allowed them to cover the prescribed syllabus, as well as extending students knowledge beyond the textbook. In one school, social studies and science teachers were encouraged to conduct issue-based inquiries. Besides facilitating understanding of the issues, the teachers found that the said resulted in attitude change as well. On conclusion of the inquiry a teacher wrote

For a teacher it is always more worthwhile to notice improvements in students' behaviour rather than mere written assessment results.

In addition, science and social studies teachers found discussions particularly useful in finding out how well students understood a topic, and also in addressing misconceptions. Both subject teachers found cooperative learning useful to further their understanding of concepts taught and also found that it helped in content review.

Teachers found it difficult to conduct whole class discussions in the mathematics classroom. One teacher dropped out of the study as she felt, "Teaching mathematics is about knowing the correct way to solve the problems and come up with the correct answers." In mathematics classrooms, teachers usually work out problems on the blackboard and then have students solve similar problems individually. Even though many students have difficulty solving the problems, they are reluctant to ask the teacher. The teachers found small group discussions a good intermediate step, allowing students to engage in mathematical talk, which facilitated the understanding of what was required to solve the problem. Teachers found that listening in to the mathematical talk and analyzing the strategies students were using helped them to see students thinking, and also helped in identifying and dealing with misconceptions. Teachers found that the formation of cooperative learning groups, teaching of social skills and group processing increased the effectiveness of the groups.

### **Increased knowledge of students' characteristics and how they learn**

As the teachers used strategies that called for active participation from their students, observing their students at work and reflections on their teaching, they became more knowledgeable about their students. They became more conscious of students' varying personality characteristics, abilities and how they learn. They also found that societal biases and prejudices are reflected in their classrooms, and that students' behaviour and opinions are influenced by their gender, race and social class.

Initially teachers were quick to categorize all students into binary opposites of active/passive or bright/dull, with the first adjective generally meaning intelligent. However, in response to the concern of limited student participation during discussion, teachers encouraged all students to participate. When they called on the 'passive' students to contribute to the discussion, they found that

they made appropriate contributions, challenging their perception that students who did not volunteer contributions were dull. A teacher stated,

Now I know that Nazira, Kanykei and Dinara prefer to answer only when they are asked to but when you don't ask them they will sit quietly and will not raise their hands.

Following cooperative group, work teachers expressed surprise when 'passive' students volunteered answers and made presentations on behalf of the group. When students were engaged in inquiry, a teacher observed that some students are self-motivated while others have to be motivated to learn. The teacher stated,

20-30% of my students are eager to learn and do work on their own, the rest wait for the teacher, the teacher has to motivate them.

In addition to learning about students' characteristics, teachers also became conscious of factors that facilitate and hinder student learning. Teachers learned that if a topic is interesting and meaningful to the students then they are motivated to learn. They also learnt that encouraging and praising students' contributions during discussion raises their self-esteem and has positive effects on students learning in other subjects as well. Correcting students' mistakes hinders participation in discussion. A teacher said

I learnt much from this project. It helped me to use different kinds of activities so that my lessons varied and students found the lessons interesting. It was the use of these different activities which helped students to learn better. I have won the students respect. They wrote in their journals, 'You are so creative'.

Teachers learned that there are a variety of ways in which students learn and that they should use these to promote student learning. Discussion in the class facilitates mastering the subject matter, and improving upon perspective recognition and communication skills. Cooperative learning improves student learning as well as working with others. Teachers stated

I have learned that cooperative learning is an interesting and effective way to learn a language. It develops students' English language skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking. It also helps students to think independently and work with others sharing their opinions, ideas and encouraging each other to participate.

I agree with the theorists, that students learn better by working together in cooperative groups. Students discuss the material to be learned with one another, help and assist one another to work hard.

All the teachers expressed surprise at what students are capable of achieving when the teacher actively engages them in learning and allows them to think for themselves. Following a cooperative learning task in which students demonstrated how well they understood the material and could teach it to others, a teacher said, "I was surprised at how well the students taught each other. They teach better than us. I never knew that."

I was very impressed when during a discussion a student explained, 'in order to subtract a fraction from a whole, a whole must first be divided into equal parts' (SO 2003).

Teachers found that students do not like to work with 'weak' students; in East Africa students prefer to work with students belonging to their own racial group; and in co-education classrooms student are reluctant to work with the opposite sex. Following use of cooperative learning groups, teachers found a decrease in this reluctance. Observing students' discussions in co-education classrooms, teachers found gender differences in their behaviours and opinions.

I have more male than female students in my class. Mostly I observe male students dominating the discussion. They give less opportunity for females to talk. For instance, today, only one female student spoke, the rest kept silent. Also topics which are related to business, money and mechanics are not of interest to girls.

An instructor following a discussion on "Making a career: Is it for women?" observed:

For some time the girls became so emotional and aggressive in defending their view that women should make careers whereas boys preferred their future wives to sit at home and care for their family. Boys made one group and girls another. Both seemed to genuinely support their position. I found it so difficult to make any suggestions being a female teacher.

## **Knowledge of educational ends, the curriculum and the context**

Teaching does not take place in a vacuum. Improvements in teaching practice need to take an account of educational ends, the curriculum and the context of practice. Two of the sites in the study are in countries transitioning from soviet style education to more democratic styles. However, an OSI-ESP 2002 study concluded, “current curricula still pays tribute to curriculum practice dating back to Soviet time: they are still excessively encyclopaedic, knowledge, content and information cantered, instead of aiming at developing students’ critical thinking skills, self-reliance and attitude of *learning to learn*” (p. 14).

Schools have tried to make education more democratic by training teachers in a variety of strategies that could help students develop the skills and attitudes required to learn how to learn, but as an analysis of one of the schools reveals, “Although many teachers are using child cantered methods such as group work...around 70% of teachers have not internalized the basic rationale for using these methods. Most use them as rhetoric and are not well aware of the impact of these methods; they possess superficial acquaintance with these methods”. In this same school there is an emphasis on more democratic forms of teaching. The PDT working with social studies teachers encouraged them to understand the purpose of social studies and how inquiry could help realize it. In Kyrgyzstan, the growing importance of English made teachers want to improve their teaching of the language so that their students could become more fluent in the language. Action Research helped teachers create more democratic classrooms, enrich the curriculum based on the emergent needs and interests of the students, and develop students’ disposition for participation, cooperation and learning to learn.

In the university department in which the project was conducted, it is a common practice to separate fee paying and scholarship students. Because scholarship students win places on merit they tend to be better students. However, teachers found that when they used the instructional strategies the results were the same in both classes and as a result they challenged the separation. In the same department when one of the participating teachers became chairperson of the department, she endeavoured to institutionalise the instructional strategies she had learnt.

In Pakistani schools, the curriculum is the textbook, and the teachers focus on completion of the textbook. The PDTs accepted this reality, but helped teachers to see how skills and values sadly lacking in the textbooks could be developed through the said strategies. When the academic session 2004-2005 was extended



from March to May, and teachers had the freedom to add new topics in the syllabus, the PDT used it to encourage them to add the study of social issues to the science and social studies curriculum. Teachers who engaged in social issue inquiry came to view education as more than just exam results, and started viewing it as students acting on knowledge gained from the inquiry; this demonstrated positive changes in their attitudes.

## **Acquiring the Dispositions and Skills to Continue Professional Development**

Action Research helped teachers acquire the dispositions and skills necessary to continue their own professional development.

### **Reflective practitioners**

The most powerful part of the Action Research process is reflection, as it helps teachers in carefully considering the practices, beliefs and assumptions that influence their practice. As a result teachers gain insight into their practice, their students and the context in which the practice is carried out. In order to promote reflection, the PDTs taught teachers the importance of reflection and encouraged them to reflect on their practice in a reflective journal. As most of the teachers had never systematically reflected on their practice, they had difficulty with a number of factors; such as, what to reflect on, how to write their reflections and also finding the time to write. A teacher expressed these concerns, "To reflect is difficult for a teacher. I did not know what was effective, I could not provide evidence. I did not know how to write. I paid more attention to writing than reflecting." This led to the PDTs using reflective conversations during which they demonstrated reflection, asked questions and showed teachers how to review field notes to identify strengths and weaknesses; and subsequently find ways to improve. With the exception of the school in Karachi, these conversations were conducted collaboratively. As teachers learnt the art of reflection they were able to engage in self-reflection and put their reflections down in writing.

Initial attempts at reflection were judgmental statements in which teachers blamed students. Following a discussion lesson a teacher stated,

During the discussion I observed five students out of twelve discussing the topic with each other. They shared their views and gave some more information. They were active. I observed two

students not talking at all. They were passive. They were not interested in the discussion. They don't like to study at all.

Rather than uncovering the reasons for the observed behaviour and what she could do to address it, the teacher put it down to naturally inherent characteristics of the students.

Another common practice was for teachers to defend their present practice. When reflecting on lessons where it was indicated that the teacher was dominating the discussion, the teacher justified this practice, claiming.

I have to tell students some things which they do not know... I have to summarize the discussion myself as they can not do it.

As the teachers continued reflecting they became more aware of limitations in their practice and how it affected student learning. Besides greater awareness of practice, reflection facilitated teachers in questioning their professional beliefs and values, and recognizing the difficulty in changing practice. When this practice continued she reflected,

I know the process of class discussion and the importance of giving students' freedom to speak and involving them more. But it is difficult to change oneself; as a teacher I am used to being at the centre of everything in the class.

It also resulted in teachers seeing new possibilities and coming to hold new beliefs and values. Gradually she moved from centre to side observing,

This time I tried to speak less than my students although it was difficult not to participate in the discussion. I was really surprised that I sat among the students and only answered when they asked me a question. The conclusion was also done by the students...I have learned to observe the students and have found that the students have become more responsible for their own learning and learn from each other. I have begun to change my old attitude...I learnt that I do not have to be the centre of attention all the time.

As teachers became more skilful at reflecting on their practice, their reflections deepened and they were more disposed to reflect on themselves, on others and within their in their own contexts.

## **Inquirers**

Action Research facilitated the development of the disposition of inquiry. Teachers developed this disposition by using the Action Research process of defining a problem of practice, developing an action plan to address it, implementing the plan, recording what happened and reflecting on data to identify ways to improve. As they planned, acted and reflected, their practices improved. This helped them to see the value of being inquirers. The teachers claimed

It (Action Research) helped to change my teaching, to overcome some difficulties in class. I never thought of such problems, but after conducting Action Research I began to notice problems which I had in teaching. I learned to gather evidence and work on the improvements of my classes by working on the questions. This I did not do before.

It was very good to use Action Research in my classroom as it makes you confident about resolve your own issues in the classroom;

To tell the truth, I did not know what Action Research was before. But gradually I learned it. I liked to use it to work on problems that I had. I used data collection tools which helped me to collect evidence and improve my practice...Not only problems in implementing class discussion can be solved through Action Research but problems in teaching in general.

In order to become effective inquirers, teachers require a number of skills: these include the ability to identify problem of practice, collect relevant data, to analyse it and to take actions to improve. Teachers found that collaborative reflection facilitated identification of the issues of practices, and observations an effective means of data collection. They learnt to write field notes, make checklists and tally sheets. They also collected students work, and less frequently audio or video recorded their teaching. The teachers noted,

I observed and noted down students' grammar mistakes...Observation of students action, reaction and attitude helped me to see how students learnt. I also learnt to observe if the activity was effective or not, what steps or action should be taken to improve students learning.

Besides learning to gather data around a question of practice, teachers learnt how to analyse the data to see whether change had occurred. Teachers wrote in their journals,

I was working on the problem of lack of participation. I put a check each time a student participated. Seeing the results of the previous discussion and this I came to know that this time students' participation increased. The results pleased me.

I compared the two groups: focus group and control group. In the focus group students could express their ideas freely and openly. They listened to others and respected each other (RD, 2003).

While one can undertake an inquiry to learn for oneself, most often an inquiry is undertaken to share learning with others. In order to share their learning with others, the teachers were encouraged to write end of phase reports. From very general descriptions of practice, teachers' reports became focused on describing a lesson, identifying an issue and on ways for addressing it. Moreover, many teachers developed papers to present at conferences and for publication.

## **Cooperative and collaborative learners**

The PDTs and teachers found that engaging in collaborative Action Research made them more cooperative and collaborative learners. With the exception of Karachi, the teachers in each area worked as a group. They engaged in joint planning and collective reflection. In Central Asia, teachers also had the opportunity to observe each other whilst teaching. These practices provided opportunities for teachers to share successes, along with discussing problems and learning from each other. Collaboration helped teachers to see that they were not alone in their efforts to improve, and gave them the opportunity to take risks that they might not have taken otherwise. Let me share a few examples: during a collective reflection session a teacher shared how she prepared students for discussion in her English language class. She stated that she made the students do some exercises to make them understand the key words in the topic. She had them pronounce the words accurately, explain their meaning and use them in sentences. The other teachers recognized the value of the strategy and used similar strategies in their classrooms. In another site, teachers reported learning from the observations of each other's teaching. Teachers learned to use colour coded cards to form heterogeneous groups, to record observations of students engaged in group work, and to use these to assess students learning. It also allowed for demonstrations, rather than simply telling students to perform a

task. Teachers subsequently used the learning from the observations in their own classroom.

As the teachers' practice improved, they encouraged other teachers to become part of the learning community. A teacher approached the PDT asking to be included in the project as she had learned about discussion from her colleague, who had made her realize that what she was doing was not discussion. The teacher wanted to learn how to conduct effective discussions. She said,

Rakia told me about the process of conducting discussion. I don't think I am conducting discussion in my classroom, as the students do not interact with each other, but only answer to me. Will you involve me in the project so I can learn how to do class discussions?

### **Increased professional efficacy and passion for teaching**

Professional efficacy is defined as the belief in one's ability to bring about desired outcomes as a result of teaching and professional commitment; whilst maintaining a willingness to try a variety of approaches. As the research progressed, teachers developed a greater understanding of their practice, becoming more adept at the use of the instructional strategies, more conscious of their students and how they learn; their teaching moved on from just implementing others' ideas and repeating pre-designed performances; to making decisions regarding what and how to teach, engaging in thoughtful planning, taking informed actions and on reflecting on what they taught. Teachers designed more complex lessons; combining and integrating the instructional strategies to demonstrate the art of teaching. For instance, a social studies teacher began her lesson by asking students to do a Think-Pair-Share to identify all the Mughal rulers. She then had students in their cooperative learning groups do a Round-Robin to suggest all the qualities that should be present in a leader. She followed this by having students read a handout about the rule of Akbar and Humayun to decide the better ruler, ensuring that the students had underlying evidence for their choice. .

As teachers provided students with greater opportunities to participate in the teaching and learning process, the relationship between them and their students began to change. The authoritative teacher was replaced with the more democratic teacher, subsequently improving the relationship between teachers and students. A teacher wrote in her journal

Before this, we did not have real life communication in the class. The students and the teachers spoke according to the grammar structure being taught. Now I myself have begun to communicate with my students in a real life manner. I have become more sociable with them.

The challenging and independent work created a passion for teaching. The research study helped many of the teachers recognize that teaching was far more intellectually demanding and challenging.

## **The Challenges of Using Action Research for Teacher Professional Development**

### **The Understanding of the work of teachers**

The findings also indicate that improving practices with respect to the work of teachers and the understanding of teaching and learning in developing countries, forms a massive challenge for Action Research. In most schools, teachers have never seen the curriculum. For them, the textbook is the curriculum and the goal of teaching is completing the textbook. The syllabus for each term is determined by dividing the textbook contents and all the teachers are expected to complete the syllabus at the same time. A teacher observed, “The system does not allow us to work deeply on a topic because of the scheme of work, which is made before the new academic year begins”. As the textbooks contain factual information, teachers have come to see teaching as the transmission of textbook facts and learning as successful memorization of the facts. Besides classroom teaching, great emphasis is placed on teachers correcting students’ copies to ensure the correct information has been recorded. As most classrooms are large almost all non-teaching time is spent in corrections, leaving no time for planning or reflection on teaching. The teachers complained,

A teacher has to do too many things. It’s not only teaching in the classroom, correction is also there. Most of our time out of the classroom is spent in corrections. There is no time for planning or implementation of new strategies.

Thus, a major concern that emerged and remained throughout the study was that of time. Teachers felt that the instructional strategies required them to spend more time on a topic, taking away time that was required to complete the syllabus. Most teachers are used to transmitting considerable amounts of content

knowledge in the 35-40 minutes of class time. However, when it comes to teaching students to find answers to questions themselves, teaching a skill or developing an attitude; it must be taught systematically and consistently over time. In addition, learning something new usually takes more time. The teachers had to spend time planning, teaching and they required time for reflection as well. However, no adjustments, were made in the teachers' timetables, and thus they were expected to learn a new strategy, engage in Action Research as they implemented it and complete their regular assignments.

The teachers in the study recognized the potential of the strategies to facilitate student learning. A teacher observed

Although I had difficulty covering the syllabus while using whole class discussion, the learning which the students gained in the process was durable.

But rather than challenge the conception of the work of teachers, she decided to find a way to work within the system. The teacher continued,

I will not be able to use this approach daily; I can deliver one or two successful lessons a week as it needs more hard work and thinking to plan these lessons.

Furthermore, teaching as knowledge transmission and learning as rote memorization is perceived to be unalterable, as exams are based on the textbook. The fact, however, is that board exams are held only for higher classes, in which case completion of the prescribed syllabus is critical. In the lower classes the teachers themselves decide the syllabus and set the exams. Refutably the system is so entrenched that most teachers, do not see that change, even when they teach lower classes.

## **Understandings of teacher education**

Like teaching and learning, there is little understanding of the process of teacher education in schools. In most private schools in East Africa and Pakistan, teachers are appointed on the basis of their academic qualifications. Most schools therefore offer in-service teacher training, which generally consists of one-shot workshops conducted on Saturdays; or of specially allocated teacher professional development days while a few are sent for award bearing courses. Teachers feel that both strategies do not facilitate the use of learning in the real classroom, as they are too theoretical and because there is no support to facilitate implementation. A teacher said:

We teachers spend so much time doing courses, workshops, etc., but in the real classroom the learning from these courses cannot be implemented as they are not practical.

A teacher education strategy like Action Research, which is more effective, is not well understood and rarely supported. One of the benefits of Action Research is the fact that practitioners can engage in research. A good amount of literature indicates the possibility of teachers using Action Research to improve their practices, as many of the skills required by Action Researchers are also effective teaching skills, and thus are easily transferable. However, this is generally not the case in the contexts in which this study was conducted, as most teachers had no prior teacher training. The teachers had to learn new instructional strategies; as well as developing the skills for data gathering, analysis, reflection and report writing. To undertake this task, teachers required a lighter teaching load until they could use the skills effectively. However, when the PDTs were given permission to conduct the Action Research, the permission did not contain the conditions for providing teachers with the opportunity to learn the strategies and conduct the research. Both PDTs and teachers were expected to continue with their regular assignments and also to do the research. Most felt overburdened and pressured to successfully complete both tasks. What kept the research going was their interest, commitment and ingenuity and the facilitative support of the PDTs.

Action Research requires teachers to better understand and find ways to address problems of practice in the literature. PDTs and teachers found little, if any, reading material on Action Research, on the instructional strategies and on subject specific literature. The PDTs who were aware of the lack of literature in their contexts, had taken along some literature with them, but it was in English and teachers found some of it too difficult to read. Literature could be accessed from the internet but in Tajikistan and rural Pakistan there is limited access and the cost of accessing the internet in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is prohibitive to its use. Furthermore, there was also a lack of basic equipment (cassette recorders, transcribers) to facilitate research at all sites except Tanzania. Even basic stationery like paper and markers were inaccessible in Tajikistan.

## **Implications of Using Action Research As A Strategy for In-Service Teacher Professional Development**

There is no doubt that Action Research is a powerful tool for in-service teacher professional development. If the benefits that can accrue as demonstrated in this study are to be achieved and further enhanced, then the work of teachers must



be reconceptualized; and necessary changes in institutional structure and practices must be made. These efforts could be enhanced through the development of school-university partnerships.

## **Reconceptualizing the work of teachers as professionals**

In discussing how the work of teachers is presently conceptualized, I have shown how teachers have been deskilled, and how their work has been reduced to just textbook coverage and correction of students work. If we want to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools then teachers must come to be seen as professionals who are able to exercise some degree of autonomy. I suggest some degree of autonomy as, unlike other professionals, giving the teachers the ability to be able to work together as a community so they can improve the quality of education in a school. In this study teachers became curriculum leaders: enriching content, choosing instructional strategies and recognizing the limitation of present assessment practices. Like professionals they reflected on their practice, inquired into issues of practice and individually and collectively sought ways to improve it. In order to do this within present understandings of teaching and school practices, they had to make enormous personal commitments in terms of time and energy. Changes like this are not sustainable as they depend on teachers' willingness to volunteer and on high motivation. Action Research needs to be used for institutional change, and for changes in the structure and practices of schools to enable teachers to make quality improvements at the classroom and school level.

The research project was conceived 'out of school'. A better option would be for schools to engage in a joint visioning exercise to determine the changes required, determining how to train teachers and on using Action Research supported by an in-house expert to institutionalize the change. Research has shown that innovations, especially complex ones require at least two to three years to become institutionalized (Fullan, 1991; Johnson and Johnson, 1994). It further suggests that during early implementation it would be preferable to have ongoing support through a trainer or an in-house expert who will assist implementation and provide access to expert advice. School based professional development aimed at implementation of an innovation will require time for teachers to learn, to engage in joint planning, to observe each others' teaching and to reflect on practice. Structures of school must be changed to provide time for teachers to learn the innovation and engage Action Research. Time for the self and collective learning could be provided by time-tabling individual reflection, and half a day in each week for teachers to come together to engage in joint reflection and planning. Alternatively, the setting aside of a professional development day for

teachers once a month, has also proved to be very useful. These strategies will require schools to explain to parents the need for teachers to have this time and seek their support in such efforts. Moreover, if schools are to become sites of teacher education, then schools must be adequately resourced for continuing teacher education. In urban areas teachers could look to access universities or public libraries, and even a few computers with internet connections could become a valuable resource for teachers. In areas where internet connections are not available, material can be downloaded on CDs and made available to schools. The teaching and learning resource centres can provide access to conventional and, where possible, internet facilities. Mobile libraries for teachers could also be developed. Furthermore, successful use of Action Research will require school leaders to not only generate time and resources for staff development, but also to provide ongoing expert support to assist with the implementation. In addition, school leaders must become familiar with the existing knowledge base to ensure implementation and study learning outcomes.

### **University-school partnerships**

Unlike many Action Research projects that are conducted by university professors in schools, in this case the university professor only supported novice teacher educators as they worked with the teachers in their own schools to improve their teaching practice. Because the teacher educators and teachers belong to the same school, it offers possibilities for the institutionalization of Action Research for in-service teacher professional development in schools. However, to realize the possibilities of Action Research for teacher and institutional development, universities must contribute to the preparation of teachers for their role as Action Researchers by ensuring that Action Research is a part of teacher professional development programs. Teacher educators at the university must model Action Research processes that are rigorous, successfully designed and complete; in order to encourage their students to do the same. They must also see it in their interest to support novice teacher educators as they begin their work with teachers in school so that successes can be celebrated, new problems addressed in time and self-confidence in new roles acquired.

### **Conclusion**

This study indicates that Action Research is a powerful tool for in-service teacher professional development. It provides teachers an opportunity to think about their practice, try out new ideas to improve it and promote student learning in the given context. Action Research also serves to create a culture of inquiry in

which teachers are learners, critically reflecting on their practices to improve them. When undertaken collaboratively and supported by an-in-house facilitator, it has greater potential in bringing about change in one-self, in others and within the context in which it is carried out.

Teachers are not viewed as professionals and schools are presently neither conducive to, nor as organized as places of teacher professional learning. In order to facilitate the use of Action Research for in-service professional development, schools will have to provide time, resources and expert support for teacher learning. When schools become learning institutions for all, they will be revitalized and learning will be a deeply engaging and satisfying process for teachers and students.

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# Defining Quality in Early Childhood Settings: Experiences from the Field

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## Abstract

*“The successful education of the child during her/his years of schooling and the participation of that child in society as an adult, depends to a greater degree upon the foundation laid during the early years” (Evans, Myers and Ifield, 2000, p.7). Research indicates that learning is crucial to development whereby knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are developed.*

*Research from disciplines such as physiology, nutrition, health, sociology, psychology and education provide evidence indicating that the early years are crucial in terms of developing intelligence, personality and social behaviour of children. If children are not provided opportunities to communicate, learn and develop they will not attain the optimal level of development and therefore will not thrive.*

*It is therefore imperative that people working with young children understand the multifaceted aspects of children’s development within the context in which they grow, think and learn.*

*Children spend a major part of their day in schools ‘learning’ and in interacting with other children and the adult/s (teacher/s). This implies that the role of the adult and significant others in the children’s life play a crucial role in providing opportunities for optimal development which include an emotionally safe and healthy environment, supportive interactions and relationships, stimulation and time. These are all important and integral aspects of quality in early childhood settings. Furthermore, research conducted in the area of early childhood in the UK and US indicate that the determinants of quality are a stimulating physical environment, staff knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, knowledge of how young children learn, adult skill in supporting children and helping parents to support children’s learning at home. (EPPE project, UK, 1999 to date). Katz, (1991) also indicates similar characteristics of quality.*

*The quality standards that the Certificate in Education: Early Childhood Education Development (CE:ECED) programme at AKU-IED is based on the High/Scope quality determinants which include a stimulating physical environment, consistent*

*daily routines catering both to child-initiated and adult-initiated experiences, positive and sustained interactions between the adult and the child and positive relationships between other adults working with and for the children.*

*This paper will present the findings that have emerged from our observations and work in a variety of early childhood settings as a part of the support we extend to the course participants of the CE:ECED programme and have been derived from our work over a period of four years (2001-2005). The data has been collected through systematic classroom observations including field notes, photographs, videos, children's work and conferencing with teachers and children.*

*Findings from the data reveal that teachers' perception of their sense of efficacy and capabilities, their understanding of curriculum, prior knowledge of how young children think and develop, the school infrastructure, the parental partnerships, leadership and the administrative and academic organization are some of the major factors that effect quality of teaching and learning in early childhood settings. This paper will define quality in teaching and learning as have emerged from our findings.*

## **Introduction**

Concerns for quality has become important in the present day debate in education with concepts such as quality assurance, quality control, quality time, quality supervision, which brings to mind different connotations about quality depending upon one's experiences and specific contexts in which one works. This suggests that quality cannot be easily defined. According to Harvey and Green (1993) "definitions of quality vary that to some extent reflect different perceptions of the individuals and society... there is no single definition of quality" (p. 28).

A similar concept of quality is presented in an Australian Report (1987) cited in Zajda et al (1995), which states that quality is "a relative construct, meaningful only from the perspective of those judging it at the time and against some particular standard or purpose" (p. iii).

Bacchus (1995) argues that the concept of quality is multidimensional with a range of definitions and with differing weight given to its various components by its different actors in the educational process.

Thus it becomes clear that there is no common agreement on a definition of what constitutes quality particularly in the context of education which is not only

a complex field embedded in political, cultural and economic context. But also includes several dimensions such as teacher education, educational programs, schools and schooling, higher education, curriculum and pedagogy. And within each dimension there are several discrete aspects which need to be deliberated when we talk about education. Therefore, defining quality in education in its entirety would not be possible within the scope of this paper.

Despite the arguments presented above 'quality' is an essential concept that must be addressed when considering different aspects of education particularly when considering programme options and for devising systematic evaluation procedures to ensure their effectiveness, excellence and distinctiveness.

One of the arguments that is presented in literature is that since no single definition of quality is possible then an appropriate approach to assess the quality of the education process or program is to construct contextually appropriate observable indicators or criteria which are valued, by those whose needs the institution is seeking to meet. One such set of criteria / framework is presented by Berquist and Armstrong (1986, cited in Bacchus, 1995). They offer seven observable criteria to ensure a 'high quality' academic program which states that the programme should be attractive and should be able to bring people to it; it should be beneficial to the individuals and the community involved in it; it should be congruent ensuring that it does what it says it will do; it should be distinctive in that it responds to the unique characteristics of the institution and is an asset to its people; it is effective and demonstrates this to others; it is functional and provides learners what they need to perform successfully and finally that it is growth-producing and enhances growth in important directions of learning.

A more recent set of criteria / framework for quality in education is suggested by Colby, 2000 who points out the importance of the quality of learners; the quality of learning environments; the quality of content or curricula; the quality of processes and the quality of outcomes.

Having discussed the importance of quality in education in general and the issues in defining quality the paper will now focus on why quality is important in early childhood and what constitutes quality in early childhood.

## **Why Quality in Early Childhood**

Quality has become the watchword for early childhood especially in the last few decades since research in brain studies has demonstrated that early years

experiences have a decisive influence on the wiring of the brain thus affecting on the nature and extent of childrens' later capacities. Recent neuroscience findings provide additional important evidence about the influence of quality interactions during the first few years on the growth of children's neural pathways. Mustard (2002) clearly states that, "the weight of the evidence shows that the quality of the experiences an infant, toddler and young child is exposed to during the preschool phase of development affects learning capacity in the school system as well as behaviour."

Ramphale (2002 cited in Young, 2002) claims that the stimulation that a child receives in the early years and the development of the child's brain will affect his/her, "...physical and mental health, capacity to learn, and behavior throughout childhood and adult life." The evidence that is emerging in recent years from brain studies points out that the early years are the key to laying the foundations for life long learning.

Early childhood educators point out that investing in quality early childhood programmes is instrumental for the future of any country and its effects are both social as well as economical (Van der Gaag, 1997). Young (2002) argues that besides the economic returns to investing in children being high, early interventions can help children escape poverty. Weikart (1988) adds that the cost-benefit analysis of the High/Scope programme of 15 years showed a positive value to taxpayers.

Several studies (High/Scope, Effective Provision of Pre-School Education [EPPE], Abecedarian, Head Start) indicate how quality early years programmes positively affects children's learning and behaviour. The findings from High/Scope Perry Preschool project reveal that the benefits of attending the programme were present 27 years later. In a longitudinal study of the children attending this programme the effects that were noted were higher social responsibility, higher earnings and economic status, higher educational performance among other benefits (Hohmann and Weikart, 2002). Weikart (1988) stresses on the fact that it is not every early childhood programme that has positive effects on children, rather it is only high quality child development programmes that have positive effects.

Likewise research on the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE, 2004) study reveal that children who attend pre-school have improved cognitive development, and have better social behavior such as independence, concentration, cooperation, conformity and relationships with other children (peer sociability). Findings from the study also reveal that the benefit of pre-school is especially greater for children who are disadvantaged and 'at risk'.



“EPPE shows that one in three children were ‘at risk’ of developing learning difficulties at the start of the pre-school. However, this proportion fell to one to five by the time they started primary school.” (p. 2)

Other projects such as the Abercadian project and the Head start programme mirror similar findings regarding children benefiting from quality programmes. The research findings presented above is valid evidence that the early years are critical in the formation of intelligence, personality, social behaviour and physical development. The fact that cannot be over emphasized is the benefits of quality ECED programme has not only for the child and the family but also over time in terms of the child ability to contribute to society. “If children are to benefit socially and educationally from their early learning experiences, these must be of high quality-second best simply won’t do.” Botham & Scott (n.d.)

## **What Constitutes Quality in an Early Childhood Programme**

There exist several opinions regarding the elements that constitute quality in early childhood programmes. For most early childhood service providers this is determined by the social and cultural context in which they are situated and on the focus of the services they provide. What constitutes quality in one setting may be different in other settings. Myers (2001) cites Ball 1994; Moss and Pence 1995; Scheweinhart 1995; NAEYC 1986; Basili 1994 and they associate elements of quality with effectiveness in early education programmes. They include elements such as:

- presence of sensitive, healthy, knowledgeable, responsible adults who interact in a respectful and supportive manner;
- a curriculum that takes into account a holistic view of children’s development, is stimulating and encourages play, exploration, initiation of activities by the children and caters to individual differences; integrates care and education and fosters self esteem and positive relationship with others
- a safe and clean physical environment which is stimulating and provides sufficient space for children to work and play in.
- a ratio of children to adults that allows for frequent interaction and personal attention
- training of staff on the job and provision of support to continued professional development

- strong leadership
- parental and community participation
- sufficient resources in terms of financial as well as material resources

Among the indicators to monitor quality in ECCD Myers (2001) discusses the number of children per teacher/caregiver; teacher qualification; physical environment; and curriculum and interaction as indicators affecting quality. He states that in many countries it is assumed that fewer children per teacher is preferable as this allows the adult to give individual attention to the child, this in turn is presumed to promote better learning. Like wise if teachers are highly qualified they provide better attention to children. The physical environment based on amount of available space for children, the safety precautions, availability of clean drinking water and facilities for sanitation is a quality indicator. He claims that the best indicator of quality is the curriculum, especially the quality of interaction between the adult and children as well as the variety and types of opportunities and activities that children are offered and the way groups are structured; as well as whether the activities are child initiated or adult initiated will effect quality.

Research on quality programmes in early childhood confirm the importance of the above mentioned indicators and reveal that quality settings are ones where the staff are highly qualified, where there are warm and interactive relationships between the adult and children, where educational and social development are seen to be complementary and of equal importance and where there is effective pedagogy with a balance between teaching and providing opportunities for provisions for children to learn and where children's thinking is extended in the process (EPPE, 2004).

The indicators of quality that have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs clearly indicate that there are not only many commonalities across the views presented by different early childhood educators mentioned above but also imply that all views place children's development, care and education at the centre of all thinking, provisions and actions.

Having discussed the importance of quality in education in general and early childhood in particular, the paper will now describe what we mean by early childhood settings, what some of the connotations attached to early childhood are and how quality is defined in early childhood settings in our context.

## Early Childhood Settings

In this paper we describe early childhood settings as educational programs provided in formal environments such as schools (pre and early primary) for children of ages 3 – 8 years. This definition of educational settings stems from our work with teachers teaching this age group. In our work in varying setting we have come across several connotations in early childhood such as ECCD, ECD, ECED and ECE, while the beneficiaries are always the same-the young child and his/her family, the focus of the programme/services will be different. For example ECCD focuses on early childhood care and development, ECD connotes early childhood development, ECED emphasizes on education and development while ECE focuses on early childhood education.

In Pakistan there are several service providers focusing on different aspects of early childhood education. The public sector has focused on formalizing early childhood education. As a result 'katchi' classes have been established in schools as a first step for achieving the 'Education for All' goal which emphasizes the expansion of early childhood care and educational programmes. Since Pakistan is a signatory of the World Declaration on Education for All it has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving expansion and improvement of the quality of comprehensive early childhood care and education specially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The private sector too is active in providing services to enhance the quality of early childhood in Pakistan by improving the quality of classroom teachers and their practices. One such programme that the Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) offers is the Certificate in Education: Early Childhood Education and Development (CE: ECED) Programme which is a six month field based programme which aims at developing participants' understanding of early childhood education and development within their indigenous contexts and enhancing the quality of children's learning through implementing active learning. In the CE: ECED programme the development component signifies care, health and nutrition and parental partnerships within the parameters of the National Early Childhood Curriculum and policies of schools it serves.

The programme draws on the High/Scope approach which is in line with the National Framework on Early Childhood Education by the Ministry of Education. This curriculum framework calls for implementing active learning in the classrooms where children construct their own knowledge and understanding by "acting on objects and interacting with people, ideas and events..." (Hohmann

and Weikart, 2002, p.17) and from activities they plan and carry out themselves (Weikart, 1988). The National Curriculum states, “Children are actively learning when they are given opportunities to handle materials” (p.11). Learning areas or goshas are introduced in the classroom. These include areas such as Language area, Home or Domestic play area, Mathematics area, Block/Construction area, Music and Movement and Artistic Development area and Science area. This approach uses both small and large group activities and at the heart of this approach is the plan do review which places greater responsibility upon children for planning and executing their own activities (Curtis, 1998). In the process of planning and executing their own activities, children feel powerful and confident about their views. which is a necessary precursor for their future learning.

## **Quality as Defined by us in the CE: ECED Programme at AKU-IED**

The quality standards that the CE: ECED programme adheres to is based on the Programme Implementation Profile Summary Score Sheet developed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. And is aligned with the quality elements described by Myers (2001), NAEYC (1986) and Curtis (1995). The elements include a stimulating physical environment, consistent daily routines; developmentally appropriate learning opportunities, positive and sustained interactions between the adult and the child and positive relationships between the adults working with and for the children. However, based on our work over a period of four years in a range of school settings embedded in a variety of social and cultural context, we have observed that there are several other important factors that affect the quality of teaching and learning in the early childhood setting which are discussed in the following section on ‘Findings’.

## **Findings**

The findings have emerged from our observations and work in a variety of early childhood settings as a part of the support we extend to the course participants of the CE: ECED programme and have been derived from our work over a period of four years (2001-2005). The data has been collected through systematic classroom observations including field notes, photographs, CPs reflective journal, videos, children’s work and conferencing with teachers and children. The data was mainly analyzed using the Programme Implementation Profile Summary Score Sheet.

Although we are discussing the determinants that affect the quality of teaching and learning under discrete headings, we are mindful that each of these headings is an important concept in itself, inextricably interlinked with each other. For the purpose of this paper we have clustered the determinants of quality under four major headings which include teachers, leaders, parents and facilities.

## Teachers

### Teachers' Understanding of Child Development, Curriculum and Pedagogy

Early childhood thinkers and educators view children as rich in potential, strong, powerful and competent (Maloguzzi cited in Riley 2003). Children are considered active negotiators in their own learning as well as partners in co-construction of knowledge.

Early childhood educators and thinkers further describe children as “learners engaging actively with the world, who are born well equipped to interrogate the world (Riley, 2003; p. 15-16). Donaldson (1993) believes that children are highly active and efficient learners, competent inquirers, and eager to understand.

However, our observations of teachers working with children reveal that they often underestimate children’s potential and do not take into account children’s natural urge to question and observe. They perceive children as incapable of thinking sensibly and logically. As a result they disregard and discourage children’s views about the world and this is reflected in the way they teach. One such example is presented in vignette 1.

#### Classroom Vignette 1

In a classrooms of children aged 3-4 years a teacher was teaching geometrical shapes to children:



A girl asks: “Aunty<sup>1</sup> has Allah made any shapes?”

Teacher: (does not respond)

Girl: “has He made any shapes?”

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<sup>1</sup> Children in some school address the teacher as Aunty.

Teacher: "Asma, repeat the names of the shapes- square, circle, triangle"

Girl: Square, circle, triangle"

ECED facilitator to the girl: "Have you seen any shapes created by Allah?"

Girl: (thinks for a moment and says) 'Yes, stars, moon, and sun'.

ECED facilitator: "what is the shape of the moon?"

Girl: (gestures by pointing to the circle drawn on the board).

Her thinking could not be further probed as the teacher had announced 'tidy up time'.

As a result the curricula followed is limited to teaching alphabets and numbers and the pedagogy used is linear and mainly aimed at mastery of alphabet and numbers.

The three main conditions presented in literature i.e. "careful planning and development of the child's experience, 'sensitive and appropriate interventions by the educators' and 'the nurturing of an eagerness to learn' (DES 1990 cited in Rodger, 1994, p. 14) is found to be lacking.

In schools in Pakistan teachers display a minimal understanding of curriculum and pedagogy and this stems from teachers own limited experience of teaching and learning in a traditional teacher directed approach. These prior experiences and understandings become so ingrained in their practice that it is not easy for them to deconstruct their already espoused theories about teaching and learning and reconstruct understandings needed for the holistic development of children.

Teachers are unaware of the existence of a curriculum in early childhood as is reflected in their responses at the CE: ECED selection interview when they are asked what constitutes the ECE curriculum in Pakistan. Most teachers are unsure of what a curriculum is and the purposes it serves. A few say they have heard about it but have little understanding of what it contains or the way it is used. The teachers who have heard about it are generally the ones who hold leadership positions in their respective schools (they are either heads or ECE/D Learning Area coordinators). Majority of the teachers admit that they follow a syllabus and plan themes or topics decided and given to them by their management. However, they are unsure of the reasons for the choice of the themes and topics they teach. They are also unsure about the links between the themes they teach and how it links with children's learning in the different domains of development, its continuity; progression; relationship to the interest and daily experience of the children.

The majority of private schools follow their own syllabus that generally includes teaching of numbers, the alphabet, names of animals, vegetables, fruits etc.

At the onset of the field work the facilitators will often observe teachers teaching in a linear and isolated fashion, often one letter of the alphabet per day. The teacher will write the letter on the board and get children to repeat the letter several times. A few teachers will allow children to name objects which begin with the letter. This done, the children will then be provided a worksheet and will be asked to practice tracing the letter several times and then to colour the pictures of objects beginning with the letter that is drawn on the worksheet. For most teachers the completion of the given syllabus within a specified time frame takes a central role. As a result the daily routines are structured and followed rigidly within the school timetable putting 'academic pressure on children' as is evident in classroom vignette 2.

### **Classroom Vignette 2**

During small group time, a group of children aged 4 were given a task to color a template of a tortoise made by the teacher, and later to add to the picture, a sun, sand, stones and eggs. A boy picked up a yellow crayon and started drawing the sun while the girl sitting besides him chose an orange color to draw the sun.

Boy: "the sun is yellow and not orange"

Girl: (continues drawing the sun using the orange color and tells the boy) "I have seen an orange and a red sun".

The boy uncertain about his own understanding reports to the teacher: "Saima is making an orange sun" and very emphatically states, "but the sun is yellow".

Girl confidently replies: "but the sun is different".

Before she could even verbalize her complete thoughts, the teacher very casually says: 'Saima draw the sun yellow. Hurry up and finish your work'.

The above vignette reflects teacher's limited understanding of what constitutes an early childhood curriculum and the pedagogy involved in addressing it, as well as the principles that it should be based on, the nature of learning experiences and opportunities and fields of knowledge and dispositions that are worth while for young children's holistic development.

The pre requisite skills and abilities, taking an interest; being involved; persisting with difficulty; communicating with others; and taking responsibilities, the main aspects of early years curriculum and pedagogy (Carr, 2001, cited in Riley, 2003) are found lacking.

As a result of embarking on the CE: ECED programme we have observed that when teachers are provided on the job intensive classroom support through coaching and modeling not only is a positive shift noticeable in teacher's thinking and practice but more importantly they are able to try out the same strategies with more confidence. In the case of the teacher mentioned in vignette 1 when we modeled adult child interaction involving open ended questions to extend children's thinking – she reported “Today I took the risk of asking children to name some of the colors they know.... I was surprised to learn that they knew almost all the colors I was to teach them in this month... now I don't know what I will teach in the next two weeks... can you tell me ... what I should do now, my children have covered everything and are ahead of the other sections.” Two very important factors affecting quality in teaching and learning have surfaced in this teacher's quote which was commonly observed among other teachers as well, this is their uncertainty and inadequacy in dealing with the given curriculum and in extending children's learning and teacher's own perception of their sense of efficacy and capabilities.

### **Teacher's Perceptions of their Sense of Efficacy & Capabilities**

This is a critical issue that has direct implications on teacher's beliefs about how children will learn, the opportunities and experiences they will provide, the learning context or environment they will set up, and the relationships they will have with the children, their colleagues, parents and heads.

Many teachers, despite having high academic qualifications—Masters degrees in some cases—and many years of teaching experience, have been observed to have a sense of inadequacy and demonstrate incapability in thinking for themselves, making decision and in taking initiatives appropriate to children's needs and abilities. The teachers in our context were also seen to demonstrate a sense of dependency both on the school management, and their colleagues in superior positions and during the programme on the facilitators (mentors). This could stem from the fact that most schools in Pakistan have an authoritarian style of leadership and as such do not empower teachers to make decisions. However, by being encouraged to ‘take risks’ in an environment where all are learning and sharing experiences during the ECED sessions and trying out different ‘innovations’ in their respective classrooms, the teachers were seen to become open minded and confident in sharing their inadequacies by putting their

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· The practice followed in this school was to teach one particular topic over a period of three weeks. In this case the teacher would teach the names of colours over a period of one month.



practice under scrutiny of others. This in turn motivated teachers to improve their practice which in turn raised their self esteem and perceptions of themselves and their efficacies. As is evident in the following teachers' reflections:

Yesterday, I enjoyed musical instrument preparing session because it was a low cost, no cost material. These materials are available; we just need to be creative. (Teachers' Reflection, July 2, 2004)

Yesterday, the sessions on English Language was very interesting, in particular, the Phonic method was really good. The activity that was done, I can do that in my class too. Through this children become active themselves and are able to develop their speaking and reading skills. The more we give children chances the more they themselves will try to make sentences. (Teachers' Reflection, July 7, 2004).

### **Professional Development of Teachers**

Teachers are largely responsible for many elements of quality that have been mentioned above. Therefore the professional development of teachers should be of serious concern not only in curriculum training but also in leadership and empowering roles. Sadly, in Pakistan the general perception is that anyone can teach young children. The status of early childhood teachers and the salary he/she receives is lesser than that at any other level of teaching. This in turn does not attract creative and committed people into the profession which in turn adversely affects quality in early childhood classrooms. Our experience of working with preschools shows that schools that provide on the job professional development opportunities for their teachers which include co-planning, reflection, team teaching, observing each others practice and providing feedback and reflection demonstrate better practice. For e.g. there were instances when the CPs from CE: ECED after graduation were seen as a resource for the school to conduct professional development sessions for other ECED teachers. In contrast to this practice teachers who are left alone to fend for themselves tend to feel isolated. In the government schools we find that support mechanisms for teachers are lacking as a result teachers feel 'alone' and complain that they do not have any support either from teacher colleagues or from the administration. A course participant from a government school stated, "*Agar aap log yeh support programme ke baad nahi deingey to main yeh sab kaam bachon sey karwana chod dongi phir mujhey na kehna ke teaching ek moral act hai.*" (Saturday Seminar,

November 2005) During the CE: ECED programme they have reported that they look forward to the weekly visits by the facilitators and the Saturday seminars as they feel 'supported'. Besides providing intensive classroom support through modeling, coaching, mentoring and pre and post lesson conferencing, the CE: ECED programme also engages teachers in on going reflections on their actions. The following quote taken from a teachers' reflective journal exemplifies this stance.

I just want to share my view that as a teacher I didn't want to give much time to my children regarding the preparation of activities and all the time I wanted to be a traditional teacher. But now I realize that I should find out different ways of teaching and should give more time to my children. (Teachers' Reflection, July 8, 2004)

In order to continue teachers' professional development the CE: ECED programme continues to provide 'follow up support' even after the completion of the programme. This 'follow up support' includes a monthly visit to the CPs classroom by the facilitator and group meetings at AKU-IED where CPs share the challenges they face and/identify strategies to address collectively those areas.

## **Leaders**

### **School Leadership**

The school leadership is instrumental in determining the quality of teaching and learning. Schools where the head teacher understands how children grow and develop and are aware of child development will have policies that are developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive and which keep the child at the center of all decisions. Very often because the head teachers may not have any background in early childhood they may not understand why certain things pertaining to the child is important. An example of this is regarding the notion of play. Initially, the early childhood team had to struggle to advocate the role of play in children's learning and the benefits that are derived if a child is allowed to explore and play in contrast to very formal teaching in the early childhood

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· During the CE: ECED programme CPs are required to keep reflective journals throughout the six months of the programme. Written feedback and discussions between the course facilitators and CPs takes place on a weekly basis.

setting. The heads thought that play was a waste of time and that the time could be utilized in more formal teaching. Another example that demonstrate the heads' limited understanding of child development is reflected in the teachers quote:

In yesterday's session I liked various activities for e.g. shadow puppet ets. Regarding physical education, I would like to say that I found It challenging as in our school, we have a limited number of staff members thus we do not have a physical training (P.T) period and do not take the children out of class. Our headmistress also tells us to keep the children in class due to fewer staff members. (Teachers' Reflection, July 1, 2004)

The above quote reflects the scenario in many schools in Pakistan where children's basic developmental needs are not kept in the forefront due to administrative constraints. In this case the childrens' need to engage in out door activity and their physical development is overlooked. In order to advocate developmentally appropriate practices in the early years as a part of the CE: ECED programme the head teachers are invited to participate in workshops for heads where they are acquainted with how young children learn and develop and the need to have developmentally appropriate policies and practices in the school.

## **Parents**

### **Parental Participation**

Parental participation in their children's learning plays a vital role in the education of the young child. Findings from the EPPE study (2004) reveal that the 'Home Learning Environment' influences attainment at age 3 as well as at the start of primary school. Parental involvement in activities such as reading to the child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, playing with letters and numbers, painting and drawing etc positively influence attainment and also has positive effects on children's cognitive progress. Based on these findings preschool settings are recommended to encourage parental participation and to employ active parenting strategies as these can, "...help to promote young children's cognitive progress as well as positive social/ behavioural outcomes" (p.25). In our experience majority of schools in Pakistan do not capitalize on the parent's as people who are knowledgeable of their children and their development. In many schools we have observed that parents are discouraged to come to school and to

engage in any kind of communication with teachers. If at all they are allowed in the school, it is only at specific times and for specific purposes.

During the CE: ECED programme, the course participants are encouraged to work closely with parents. CPs are asked to organize at least one parent orientation/parental meeting to acquaint parents with the pedagogy used for engaging children in active learning in the course of the four months field work. Many schools hesitate to do so. However, many schools do have a very effective parental involvement programme where parents are regularly invited for sessions which address some aspect of child development and share strategies of working with children, child care etc..

In at least two schools that we have worked with parents are invited to be part of the library period and to come to school on a weekly basis and read with their child and to help the child choose their library books. Another school sends out a 'menu of activities' schedule that parents can participate in during school hours. This includes coming in to help out in the reading class, to facilitate other curricular and co curricular activities, talking to children regarding their professions etc.

In addition inviting grand parents to talk about the past and the changes they have seen. We have found that schools that encourage parental participation have parents who are more involved in their children's learning and children who are active and engaged in learning. For example children who are read to regularly at home have been seen to demonstrate a comparatively well developed vocabulary and are seen to have some knowledge of how language works. We have observed such children to actively engage in co-constructing stories and developing these into books with their language teachers.

## **Facilities**

### **Resources and Facilities**

The High/Scope approach emphasizes the importance of the physical environment and the use of provisions for effective teaching and learning. According to this philosophy the space in the classroom should be arranged so as to provide opportunities for active learning to take place. The spaces should be inviting to children and it should incorporate specific places for children to carry out different activities in the pace and time set by them.

Materials provided should be plentiful and well labeled. The organization of the learning environment and the provisions allocated has positive effects on children in that it engages children in active learning and allows children to take initiative (Hohmann and Weikart, 2002).

In majority of the schools that we work with there is limited classroom space in relation to the class size and a minimal amount of provisions available. Teachers of the CE: ECED programme are therefore encouraged to use a variety of low cost materials developed from their local environments.

While literature supports the fact that ideally smaller group sizes and a fewer children per adult are the hallmark of quality programmes (Schweinhart, 1997) we find the reality in our settings very different with class sizes that can be anywhere between 40:1 and even 60:1 and limited spaces available.

In such settings our findings reveal that the teacher becomes instrumental in determining the learning that will accrue. Much depends on how the teacher uses the learning spaces effectively and how he/she groups the children for optimal learning to take place.

In addition, the tasks planned, the rules negotiated with the children prior to group activities and the degree to which children are given responsibility and held accountable for their actions is at large a determining factor.

In some of the schools where we have worked despite the limited available spaces and a larger class sizes (1:35 in this case) the teachers have planned and organized their classrooms so effectively that children have engaged in a much more sustained manner in learning. This confirms what Bottini and Grossman (2005) state that the manner in which the classroom is organized can greatly affect the way in which children grow and learn.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion above provides evidence that there are certain essential elements which constitute a framework for quality in early childhood settings. These include knowledge about teaching, knowledge about learning and knowledge about knowledge.

Some of the quality determinants that have emerged from our findings and is supported by literature state that in order to achieve quality in early childhood settings the following is required:

- Teachers with an understanding of child development, how young children learn, an understanding of early childhood curriculum and developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive pedagogy.
- Teachers who perceive themselves as efficient and capable.
- Sustained intensive classroom support including coaching and modelling.
- Teacher's continued on-job professional development.
- Parents as partners in policy decisions as well as in their children's learning.
- Leadership that views early childhood as an important stage in it self and recognizes the importance of early childhood education and development.
- School infrastructure including facilities and resources (both human as well financial).
- A ratio of children to adult that is appropriate to optimize children's learning and to carry out meaningful interaction.

The above mentioned quality determinants pinpoint the importance of the adult working with children, their beliefs of children and themselves, their own knowledge base and continued professional development and their need for support from the leadership and parents and the facilities they are provided in order to support children to optimize learning and develop to their utmost potential.

If we believe that learning is a social act where children learn together with others we need to ensure that children are supported well and the teacher who is closely associated with children are also supported well.

For us the above mentioned quality determinants have implications at two levels: for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in early childhood settings and for evaluation and design of early childhood teacher education programmes..

If quality is to be achieved in early childhood settings the above mentioned quality determinants need to be present. In addition, these quality determinants can be used as a framework to guide programme design to monitor and evaluate early childhood settings and design teacher education programmes in early childhood in Pakistan.

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# Reforming Public Education in Developing Countries: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

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## Abstract

*This paper tries to respond to a basic question: “Can public education (or some aspects of it) be reformed?” The authors’ response to this question is, “Yes, public education can be reformed, if contextual possibilities are exploited efficiently.”*

*Although a straight forward and simplistic response to the question, this was felt necessary to counter an unfavourable bias towards public education sector without recognizing the challenges that it faces, and without recognizing the potential of many of the public teachers who continuously strive to change these negative perceptions. This paper recognizes the potential of public sector education and shares a relatively successful example of improving competencies among public teachers to support the response.*

## Introduction

Pakistan’s primary education system is ranked as one of the world’s least effective. Pakistan spends less than 2% of its GNP on education and this stands amongst the world’s 12 lowest education budgets. The World Bank reports that the average Pakistani boy receives only five years of schooling, while the average girl receives just 2.5 years. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) claims that only 2/3rds of Pakistani children aged 5-9 years are ever enrolled in school and only 1/3rd among them complete the third grade. The studies conducted on students’ competency (BRIDGES, 1989; Mirza & Hameed, 1995; and Pervez, 1995 cited in Mirza, 2003) indicate a low level of competency among students. Students’ outputs are dependent on the type of inputs received. Unfortunately there is a dismal situation on almost every aspect of input towards students’ learning, About 11% of schools are located in rural areas, nearly 1/6th of the primary schools are shelter-less, average number of teachers is 2.35, copies of curriculum are not provided at schools and to add further difficulties resource materials are not available. In addition to low availability of teachers, the quality of teachers’ is also questionable. Generally Matriculates, Higher Secondary Certificate holders, along with the professional qualifications of PTC

or CT are appointed as teachers in public sector schools. The teachers hardly have any opportunity for systematic and continuous professional development.

The importance of teachers as the focal point in the improvement of the education process has always been recognized (Cochran-Smith, 2001), and therefore the professional development of these teachers is crucial to the overall improvement of education. Recognising the importance of the quality of professional development for improving education, the countries of the world vowed to 'enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers' (The Dakar framework for Action, 26-28 April, 2000, Article 8-ix). The current education policy of Pakistan also stresses upon the quality of teachers as the crucial factor in implementing educational reforms at the grassroots level (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 1998).

Several inputs through various donor-driven projects have been made available to try to address the above-mentioned issues; yet, there is very little improvement observed. Against this backdrop a recent initiative is the launch of Education Sector Reform in Pakistan that is assisted by USAID. This involves a five year, \$100 million bilateral agreement signed in August 2002 to increase access to quality education throughout Pakistan, with an emphasis on Sindh and Balochistan provinces.

## **The ESRA Project**

To respond to educational needs, Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) initiated a program to train the government school teachers in selected districts of Sindh and Balochistan, with technical assistance from the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and funding support from USAID. In this endeavour Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) has been called upon as one of the national partners to implement RTI-ESRA initiatives. AKU-IED has conceived this as a field-based teacher development program, based on its previous experiences of a similar program launched in Balochistan during 1997-1999, which has been referred to as Balochistan Mentoring Model. The program intends to develop mentoring capacities at nine selected districts of Sindh and Balochistan, which will benefit 8100 teachers. A critical mass of 320 mentors drawn from the nine districts is trained at AKU-IED through a 10 weeks' training program called *Certificate in Primary Education (Mentoring Focus)*. After completion, these teachers are awarded a certificate in mentoring that qualifies them to mentor teachers in their clusters. The cluster-based mentoring program draws 20-25 teachers from nearby schools. The model of the cluster-based mentoring program consists of 4 workshops along with 9 hours of

field follow up in a month. Through this model, teachers complete 300 contact hours of which 192 hours are taught through workshops, while 108 hours are covered through follow up activities like co-planning, observations conferencing, meetings and observing students' work.

This paper is developed to share the successes of the professional development activities conducted for the Public sector in Pakistan and the reasons for them. The paper will also highlight some of the challenges faced while implementing the program, and will raise questions for sustainability and replication of the model of training used. The paper draws upon the rich experiences gathered during the implementation of a teacher development program to argue that reforms in public sector education system are challenging but possible.

In order to get the message across in a swift way, the paper is structured into four major sections. The first section mainly describes the processes employed prior to the commencement of the course; it explains the selection process of the teachers and looks at the reasons for which these teachers chose an AKU-IED course compared to other options. The second section represents the bulk of the paper; it elaborates the training program and its uniqueness in terms of contents and processes of teaching and learning. The third section describes the post-training support provided to the mentors and its importance in the fruitfulness of the program. The last section discusses the basic question highlighted in the paper, such as whether public sector education itself or some aspects of it can be reformed.

## **Prior to Training**

The success of any training program depends on the quality of both trainers and trainees. The biggest challenge in dealing with the public sector is to ensure that deserving and enthusiastic candidates are selected for the training, rather than non-willing people. This section tries to explain the selection process and the reasons why the candidates opted for AKU-IED's course rather than the other options available to them.

## **Selection Process of the Trainees**

A major key to success for any professional development program for teacher education is the competence of the trainees who are selected to go through the process of developing their own expertise; along with their existing commitment and willingness to develop others later. The professional development model under discussion is a *Cluster-Based Mentoring Program Model*. The selection and

training of individuals to serve as Mentors is crucial to the model; the mentor-in-making must possess willingness to nurture another person; and should be people-oriented, open-minded, flexible, empathetic and collaborative. A team from the teaching faculty interviewed the nominated candidates and checked their content and pedagogical knowledge through questioning and quizzes. While the trainees were being developed as teachers and teacher educators, the training program demanded from them the learning of communication skills, active listening techniques, effective teaching, supervision and coaching, problem-solving and conflict resolution; along with skills of reflection and learning how to learn. Therefore, only those candidates were carefully selected who showed a promise for the tall order mentioned above. It was quite a surprise for those teachers who had qualifications and a number of years of experience and still could not make it to specific trainings. It was very challenging for the selection team to convince the education department and other teachers about selection criteria, and such situations had to be handled very carefully.

### **Raised Self Esteem for being inducted in a Higher Education Institution**

Being students of the university raised the self esteem of selected teachers. Teaching is usually seen as the least popular professional choice in Pakistan, and teaching primary children is further looked down upon by the teaching force. The current program raised the teachers' status, as they were selected to study at an institution of international standard, and were getting education amidst MEd and PhD students. This aspect boosted their morale and raised expectations for them to perform. Although students encountered adjustment problems like interacting with international students in a new social area, living in a hotel with the general public for 8 weeks and meeting the set norms of time and work commitments; yet all students appreciated the residential nature of the program. Students opted to join AKU-IED program because of this enriching contextual change and social learning. They forego the Travel Allowance and Daily Allowance (TA/DA) which was an option available to them through receiving training from the other partner training institutions along with AKU-IED. This decision made by the learners contradicts a popular stigma on public teachers that they only come to training for TA/DA.

### **During Training**

The success of training depends on the content and technique of the teaching learning processes employed by the trainers. Selection of the appropriate

content, which is required for being a good primary teacher as well as a teacher educator, and proper training processes such as learning by doing and preparing materials for teaching other teachers, were a few necessary ingredients for attaining the desired outputs. Traditionally teacher learning processes are imbedded in delivery modes and are teacher centred, hence lecturing and information giving through talks and texts are some common processes. The model for professional development being discussed emphasised on learning how to learn. Different subjects of the primary curriculum were explored by the course participants through workshop planning, micro teaching, and inquiry approach. We will describe briefly about the content of the program and elaborate in detail the teaching and learning processes followed during the training program.

## **Content of the Program**

Professional development programs are generally designed on generic themes like developing new and innovative teaching methods, managing classrooms and curriculum designs and practices. However, the most effective programs place the content of the core subjects at the centre. The mentoring focus program was built around the content and teaching of languages, maths, science and social studies. Contents were presented for reflection rather than retention.

Broader aspects like questioning, cooperative learning, inquiry assessment and classroom organization were covered in the context of content learning. This approach to teacher learning addressed two major concerns with regards to the quality of teaching: lack of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, as well as the collaborative nature of learning from peers. The real credibility of any mentor can best be established through his/her expertise and knowledge in specific content areas and the contextually relevant pedagogical expertise. Hence this focus helped mentors achieve that edge.

In addition to revisiting the subjects and pedagogy, teachers were also engaged in understating the concept of adult learning, peer coaching, mentoring, and designing instructional materials for their fellow colleagues in the identified clusters. This section of the program empowered teachers as they were aided in the setting of their goals and expectations for and from the cluster-based mentoring program. In each group, the course participants developed a one year plan for activities, timelines, the administration and the financial details of a weekly session with their cluster teachers.

# **Processes of Teaching and Learning for Teachers' Development**

## **Relating Information to Prior Knowledge**

The ability to relate new information with prior knowledge was critical for learning. The tutors would begin a topic with reviewing the participants' previous understanding about it. All information shared by the learners was treated as an alternative framework rather than a misconception. Activation of prior knowledge helped the Course Participants (CPs) in understanding and learning new concepts. The safe and non-threatening environment created in the classroom allowed the CPs to share honestly what they knew and admit safely to what they didn't know. The confidence building was shared by one of the CPs in his reflective journal, *'I have become aware, that I don't know the answer to this problem, but more important for me is to be able to now understand how to learn'*.

## **Learning Requires the Active, Constructive Involvement of Learner**

Course participants were provided hands on activities such as experiments, project work and making low cost material. They were encouraged to partake in discussions and they also went outside the classroom for learning in the field. This active and constructive mode of learning helped the CPs to grow immensely.

## **Motivation to Learn**

At the time of selection, course participants were made to realise the expectations of their work pre-program and post-program. The biggest motivation for teachers was to have an immediate role, which was different from their existing role. This role was also provided with support structures, in the form of follow-up field visits by tutors, professional allowances and resource centres. This complete package of putting theories into practice was a novel experience, and the CPs were highly motivated and excited to be a part of the Mentoring Focus Certificate program. They wanted to ensure that a cluster comprising of nearby schools with teachers is identified, so that they can be selected for that cluster. They would also go and talk to the nearby schools' teachers about their mentoring roles, and commit them to be present at the said schools for professional learning. In addition, they would work towards getting all administrative tasks completed; such as getting approval from the district officers to help conduct programs in their clusters, getting relieve letters to come to Karachi for a period of eight weeks and also negotiate a venue in a central school to convert it into a Learning Resource Centre (LRC).

## **Engaging in Self-Regulations and being Reflective**

CPs were encouraged to monitor their own learning and to understand when they lack certain skills, knowledge and attitudes. They were also asked to gain an understanding into how to acquire the said. Self-regulation requires reflection, which were developed through discussions in the classrooms, by expressing ones opinion in writing and through sharing a closely related situation to the one being discussed.

## **Effective Domain Captivated along with Cognitive Domain**

Most teacher education programs are conceived around content knowledge, skills and educational theories. Emphasis on cognitive aspects is deemed important for developing knowledge and skills; and hence is necessary. However, despite all the emphasis, the required results are not very visible in the outcome of the courses. Therefore, it is felt necessary that the emotional and attitudinal aspects, which have long been neglected in teacher education program, should be attended to seriously. The course at AKU-IED was designed not only to look at the cognitive aspects, but also to take care of the effective and emotional domains, so that a comprehensive change can be brought in the attitudes of the future mentors. Teachers in the current model appreciated these aspects and almost all of them recognized the observable change within themselves and their colleagues. Some of these changes occurred due to the residential nature of the training program, whereby for eight weeks participants were experiencing group living and were also observing a culture of collaboration, togetherness and a family-like setting at the university. Almost all of them admitted to learning from the role models of the AKU-IED family, which helped them to alter their attitudes towards their responsibilities.

## **Multiple Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

Teacher centred approaches like teacher talk, lectures and teacher questioning were accompanied by student centred learning approaches such as group interaction and discussion, peer tutoring, project works, inquiry methods, field excursions and problem based learning. These multiple approaches were employed as they helped the learners develop necessary skills needed for good and independent learning. These included study skills, thinking and problem solving skills, co-operative learning skills and other most vital skills of mentoring.

## **Conducive and Social Learning Environment**

At AKU-IED, when the CPs were exposed to a humane culture, they became inspired by the uniqueness as well as by the social environment that they found around them. In all their reflections they spoke very highly of how the conducive learning surroundings had transformed them as individuals; observing queues without distinction of hierarchies, every person engaged in their own tasks and willing to respond to queries and above all punctuality, attendance, cleanliness and promptness were some values that they had experienced at the institution which in turn encouraged them to comply with. All participants turned out to be punctual, followed the set rules and fulfilled the expectations of the course. The establishment of a fruitful collaborative and cooperative atmosphere boosted the CPs' achievement. Though they represented diverse settings and genders, it was an amazing social collaboration that encouraged learning and happy living. Course participants also brought some of their task to their hotels; and the hotel management subsequently reported their late sittings in each other's rooms, corridors and their enjoying collaborative learning.

## **After Training**

As mentioned earlier, the training program required the trainees to go back into the field and be mentor teachers for their cluster schools' teachers. Thus during the last week of the program, trainees were helped in the planning of instructional material for a one year cluster-based mentoring program, along with the necessary details of administrative and financial records. After the training the mentors met the District Coordinators and the government officials in their respective districts, and shared the laid out plans with them, ensuring that teachers from their clusters are relieved to attend a weekly workshop in the central schools. They also negotiated with the school head teacher to use a room in the central school, and use it as Learning Resource Centre (LRC). All this work was accomplished voluntarily and gave mentors an opportunity to take a leadership role.

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· An AKU-IED appointed tutor based in the district to provide academic and logistical support to the mentors during the cluster based program.



## **Field Support**

As mentioned earlier, each mentor is required to work with a group of teachers in the clusters and conduct 48 workshops, as well as to carry out follow up activities. These mentors were supported by the two District Coordinators placed in each District (one AKU-IED employed and the other government employed). At times the co-coordinators would visit mentors' work place (LRCs or their schools), and at times mentors visited the Coordinators' offices. The Mentors were performing multiple tasks, such as sharing of their weekly plans, getting academic support and collecting finances; as well as distributing the finances and managing the accounts with the support from the coordinators. All of these tasks actually provided an opportunity to the teacher mentors to put their leadership potentials into practice, and many of them grew immensely as a result of these trainings.

## **Discussion**

We began this paper describing the condition of the education in the public sector. We shared some successful and some not so successful studies of donor driven initiatives followed by another initiative to support a locally originated proposal of reforming primary education, that is the ESRA. In this context, we described the model of reforming public schools which was used by AKU-IED and highlighted the content, context and processes involved in developing teachers. The current section would now ask the difficult question of how such efforts and successes are retained. The section will also raise an important question about the political will of donors, and the public systems of education in Pakistan and will try to ascertain why there is constant resource deployment towards the chronic problem of the said failing system. Is this a result of not knowing the cause or is it a matter of maintaining the status quo?

As the co-ordinator of the ESRA program who has been involved in various activities, such as teaching and writing about the Reform of Professional Development in ESRA, I am convinced that the reform has brought positive changes in both professional development and school improvement. However, to make the reform sustainable, greater attention must be put on the continuity; and especially on the follow-up of the mentoring activities and on the utilization of resources made available in Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) and Tehsil Resource Centres (TRCs). The District education should regularize the position of the newly developed critical mass in the districts, namely the mentors, educational leaders and teacher educators. An effective monitoring system through the district officials is a must in this case. The district budgets should

be re-planned in a manner where in-service education becomes a regular feature, so that the teachers can be continuously developed as life long learners.

It is also important to understand the role of teacher mentors and appreciate their transformation. In the words of Paulo Friere, these teachers were constantly engaged in a process of Praxis. Their training at AKU-IED helped them think about themselves as critical and conscious human beings. They were constantly reminded about and made to change their behaviours from passivity and compliance, to active and self determined. They were trained not to find excuses for things not happening, but to make things happen. A few examples may illuminate: when the release of teachers requires paper work, the mentors ensured that they prepared letters, met the teachers, went to the concerned authorities and got the letters signed; they also helped the teachers understand the value of professional growth. Another observable behaviour was their well defined intentions for the tasks, for example when the monitoring team would visit them in the field and ask them about their plans, they could explain as to why they were teaching in a certain manner, and how they think that the use of a certain strategy is better in a given situation. They could also explain their follow up model with alternate examples.

In many cases it was observed that mentors were creatively designing activities and were not willing to go with a straight jacket approach. For example, in a tehsil where children had no place to stock or display their work, the mentors used the trunk of tree as a display board, and hung their resources on strings tied to the adjoining tree trunks. In another learning resource centre when the parents wanted their children to continue teaching on the teachers' day, the mentors brought senior people from the community to work as semi-professionals.

In conclusion, ESRA professional development component is a success case study with lessons to learn for replication in other districts of the provinces. The key is proper selection of teacher educators, appreciating contextual realities and preparing materials with relevant content. Teachers are valuable and key resources in education, and high quality performance in teaching is an essential ingredient of any reform or educational improvement. There is a need to recognise teachers as potential learners, who when provided with the right context, relevant content and research based learning processes, can transform themselves as intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). Some conditions are necessary for them to continue as Transformational leaders. How the model ensured those conditions are mentioned here

- Teachers were provided a continuous time for learning, which was not during long summer or winter holidays, rather it was during weekly workshops. This was criticised by many at the outset but proved more effective later. Our experience during ESRA training attests to and recommends this alternative.
- A supportive structure was built around the training program. Hence it is recommended that the structures and human resources that have been developed during the project should be regularised and further nourished. It is also the responsibility of the graduates of mentoring programs to effect policies for their professional and continuous growth. The networking among the like-minded is very crucial for such improvements.
- Deep learning depends on three elements: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise and reflective thinking. The AKU-IED program focused on all these aspects, and it is recommended that any training program should focus on all of these aspects together.

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# Redefining Emotional Intelligence: A Case Study of the Malaysian Teachers' Perspective

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## Abstract

*Recent disturbing behaviours of Malaysian teachers reported in the country's daily newspaper, have suggested that the teaching population in Malaysia is experiencing "emotional fallout". Although, incidents related to the problem seem isolated, however, over the years, it increases in number, which could suggest a number of factors including the teachers' inability to maintain a stable emotion when encountered with challenging situations in the teaching profession. This study tries to redefine emotional intelligence from the Malaysian teachers' perspective. Specifically, the study aims: (1) to understand the concept of emotional intelligent from the Malaysian teachers' perspective, (2) to seek patterns that could explain factors which contribute to the development of Malaysian teachers' emotional intelligence, (3) to describe factors that lead to emotional instability among the teachers, and (4) to explain how these teachers develop and maintain their emotional intelligence. The study used a case study design, and 36 teachers teaching in various schools participated in the study. The ages of these teachers were between 30 to 45 years old. An in-depth interview protocol was developed based on emotional intelligent framework suggested by Goleman (1995). Using in-depth interview process, the teachers were asked a number of semi-structured questions pertaining to the concept of emotional intelligent, the factors that contribute towards the development of healthy emotion, factors that lead to emotional instability, and strategies that the teachers used to help develop and maintain healthy emotion, and thereby, increasing their emotional intelligence. Data collected from the interview was managed using NVIVO software, and cross-case analysis was conducted to examine patterns relating to the issues being studied. Although, the findings emulate the conceptual framework suggested by Goleman, the study was able to identify from the themes that emerged, other factors and sub factors (not mentioned by Goleman) that could lead to the development of healthy emotion, and therefore, higher emotional intelligence among the Malaysian teachers. Participants in the study were also able to describe elements that elicit unhealthy emotion, and suggested strategies that could help them eliminate those emotion.*

## Introduction

Emotional intelligence has been the topic of research interest, in recent years, among psychologists, educationists, and management researchers from as far as Europe, United States and Asia (Brown & Moshavi, 2005; Morris, Urbanski & Fuller, 2005; Noriah, Siti Rahayah & Zuria 2005; Perrone & Vickers, 2004; Sy & Cote, 2004, Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005; Wong, Law & Wong, 2004). The construct has its roots in the concept identified by Thorndike (1920) as “social intelligence” which explains the ability to understand, and manage others and to act wisely in human relations. It also provides a way of understanding individual personality and social behaviors. Thorndike’s idea of social intelligence was translated by Gardner (1993) through his inter- and intrapersonal intelligences. Interpersonal intelligence explains one’s intelligence in dealing with others, and is the ability to “notice, and make distinctions among other individuals and, in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions”, while intrapersonal intelligence relates to one’s intelligence in dealing with oneself, and is the ability to “symbolize complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings” (p. 239).

Gordon (1990), conversely, posits that emotion is a complex, multifaceted human compound which arises, sociologically speaking, in a variety of socio-relational contexts, including fundamental processes of management, differentiation and change linking larger social structures with the emotional experiences and expressions of embodied individuals. Reeve (2005) who suggests that emotion is multidimensional, and they exist as subjective, biological, purposive and social phenomena supports Gordon’s statement. Consequently, emotional intelligence is best understood within its social context, which has both the person and his or her environments interacting incessantly.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) first coined the term emotional intelligence, to represent people’s ability to deal with their emotions. They defined emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions. Goleman (1995) and Bar-On and Parker (2000) later developed numerous definitions. Nonetheless, Goleman (1996) brought the term to its greater height through his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Matters More Than IQ*, which focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence and success at work. Goleman posits that (1995, p.28), “emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work”. He argued that emotional intelligence determines one’s potential for learning the

practical skills that are based on two competencies; personal and social competencies.

Although the concept and its related roots has been in existence more than half a century, debate about the conceptual definition (as well as its empirical measures) has been on a continuous and arduous affair. The two sides of argument on emotional intelligent has always been to determine whether the concept meet the criteria of scientific legitimacy, and whether the construct is measurable. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), Mayer and Stevens (1994), Mayer and Salovey (1997) have argued strongly that emotional intelligence should be defined as a set of abilities related to emotions, while Goleman's (1985, 1995, 1998, 2000) upbeat and broader definition include a whole range of constructs that include self-motivation. However, none of the emotional intelligent proponents have ever discussed emotional intelligent from the cultural context. According to Alon and Higgins (2005) today's leader has to be culturally and emotionally sensitive, and they should be able to respond to different interpersonal work situations. They also suggested that one's emotion has to be moderated by one's culture. This is in agreement with the epitome of emotional intelligence, which has its roots sociologically, and is known at its infancy as social intelligence. Therefore, it is pertinent that emotional intelligent be understood from within the society, and one's cultural definition might not help explain emotional intelligent of person from another culture.

Concomitantly, this paper will present how Malaysian teachers perceive emotional intelligence. Specifically, the study aims: (1) to understand the concept of emotional intelligent from the Malaysian teachers' perspective, (2) to seek patterns that could explain factors which contribute to the development of Malaysian teachers' emotional intelligence, (3) to describe factors that lead to emotional instability among the teachers, and (4) to explain how these teachers develop and maintain their emotional intelligence

## **Problem Statement**

Teachers are employees of educational organization with direct impact on the mental health of the society. They function in a very complex educational system that arose from the needs of the society. The system constantly challenges the teachers' ability to function professionally by demanding them to change according to the needs of the present society, and this can create hazardous situations among teachers who lack the skills to cope with the challenges present by the era of globalization.

Recent disturbing behaviors of Malaysian teachers reported in the country's daily newspaper, suggested that the teaching population is unable to cope with the challenges in their profession. Behaviors such as ranting and raving among colleagues in front of students, anger amounting to rage, aggressive behaviors directed towards the students, inconsiderate punishments on students, verbal abuse among colleagues, and increase in attrition rate among teaching professionals, is indicative of "emotional fallout" experienced by the teachers. Inconclusively, it could also suggest that the teachers are having problem developing and maintaining their emotional intelligence. Although, incidents related to the problem seem isolated, however, over the years, the incidents increase in number. The phenomena could suggest a number of factors including the teachers' inability to maintain stable emotion when encountered with challenging situations in the teaching profession. To understand such phenomena, one must understand the origin of emotional intelligence within the cultural boundaries, how people in the society define attitudes, and behaviors that emulate high emotional intelligence, and the factors that lead to emotional instability among the members. Understanding the patterns that summarized the phenomena is pertinent to building intervention that could help teacher educators produce quality teachers.

## **Emotional Intelligence: The Present Concept**

Emotional intelligence is synonymous to emotional quotient or emotional literacy. Weisinger (1998) defined emotional intelligence as the intelligent use of emotion. He suggested four basic domains as the building blocks of emotional intelligence. The first is the ability to accurately perceived, appraise and express emotion. The second involves the ability to access or generate feelings on demand. The third is the ability to understand emotion and the knowledge that derives from them, and the forth is the ability to regulate emotions, and to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence is not a trait, but can be natured, developed, and augmented. Subsequently, emotional intelligent can be increased by learning and practicing the competencies that endorse the construct.

Goleman (1999) on the other hand define emotional intelligence as a set of competencies that play a role in establishing and maintaining relationship. According to Goleman (1995, p.28), "emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work". He argued that emotional intelligence determines ones potential for learning the practical skills that are based on two competencies; personal and social competencies. Personal competency has three domains; self-

awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation, while the social competency comprised of two domains, namely; empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness describes one's ability to know one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. It has three sub-domains: emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. The second domain, self-regulation is marked by one's ability to manage one's internal states, impulses and resources. The indicators that depict this ability are self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation. The third domain, self-motivation, illustrates emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. Its indicators are; achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism.

Social competency illustrates how one determines his or her ability to handle relationship (personal as well as professional). This competency has two domains: empathy and social skills. Empathy explains awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. It is the skill of perceiving accurately the experience and behavior of another person. The five sub domains that made up this cluster are; understand others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity and political awareness. Although, Holm (1997) sees communication as part of empathy, Goleman (1998) suggested that it is actually one of the components of social skills, which reveal one's ability to induce desirable responses in others. The eight sub-domains that explain social skills are; influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaborating and cooperation and team capabilities. Even though, a number of theoretical frameworks can explain emotional intelligence, the framework suggested by Goleman (1995) guides this study. The framework is comprehensive enough, yet the sub-domains remain inconclusive when elucidating emotional intelligence among the Asian population.

## **Methodology**

The present exploratory study is part of a bigger study to examine emotional intelligence profile of Malaysian workforce. This paper focuses on findings from the first phase of the study, which was conducted using the qualitative approach to research method. The research design chosen was the case study design (multi-case, multi-site), and the data was collected using in-depth interview. The researchers felt that this is the most appropriate design since it allows the emergence of new patterns of emotional intelligence among members in the population. According to Yin (1994) case study design, enable the researcher to answer the question of how and what about a phenomena. Therefore, case study



design is the most appropriate design to answer the two basic research questions this study tried to answer.

## **Participants of the Study**

Thirty-six daily secondary schools teachers were asked to participate in the study (male = 10, female = 26). The teachers' age range was 25 to 45, and the years of service were between 5 to 15 years. The teachers were selected from the three main ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese, and Indian) found among the Malaysian teaching population. Purposive sampling was conducted on the teachers teaching in the Malaysian secondary school system, spread within three separate zones (northern, middle and southern part of West Malaysia).

## **Data Analysis**

Data collected through in-depth interviews were managed using NVivo and analyzed using searching techniques provided by the software. Two methods of searches (Boolean and Matrix Intersection) were used to help the researchers examine patterns developed between the cases (cross case analysis). Data collected was put into different processes: transcription, reduction, coding, analysis via search tools, and data display.

## **Instrumentation**

An in-depth interview protocol was used to explore factors that could explain emotional intelligence. The in-depth interview protocol has 28 questions that enable interviewers to explore the participants' ideas about emotional intelligence, factors that contribute towards development of healthy emotion, factors that leads to emotional instability, and discussion on coping strategies that could heighten emotional intelligence among the participants. The questions were semi structured, and interviewers were asked to provide a number of cues to help ease interviewee developed their responses to the questions. To developed consistency in the interviewing process, the researchers conducted interviewing workshop to the interviewers prior to the actual interview.

Data from the first phase of the study was validated using several methods suggested by Yin (1994). The methods used were: (a) peer review (construct validity), (b) pattern matching (internal validity), (e) replication logic (external validity), and (f) Calculating the Kappa value (reliability). The value was found to be 0.93, which suggests high consistency in the coding process.

# Results

## Defining Emotional Intelligence

Malaysian teachers' perspective of the emotional intelligent concept does not seem to diverge from the present definition. However, the concept was viewed from a broader perspective. Regardless of gender, work experience, religious background, and ethnic groups, the teachers under study mentioned various definition of emotional intelligence. The definitions range from talking about intensity of feelings, developing spectrum of emotions, and balancing between positive and negative emotions. The teachers also suggest that emotional intelligence consists of some specific skills, behaviors, and attitudes that can be learned, applied, or even modeled from others, and it interact actively with one's environment.

A male senior teacher provided the researchers with one of the most interesting (and maybe comprehensive) definitions. According to him:

Development of Emotional Intelligent can be considered as a process of personal capacity building, like building your endurance in whatever you do. If you can stand the challenges, then you are OK with your emotional intelligence. If not you could go crazy. But ask me to define (EQ) I would say it is ability, maybe sets of them, and you are not born with it. You learn through your interaction with your environment. It goes beyond human-to-human interaction; interestingly it gets better with time. You can improve your EQ as you become wiser in life.

Many interviewees posit that their ability to do work increases when their emotion becomes more stable. These leads to more rewarding working experiences, brings work satisfaction, and they enjoy their assignments more.

Other excerpts that suggest less comprehensive but similar definition mentioned by many of the teachers are:

It is an abstract concept. I don't know if we can measure it, like IQ. But I think it is personal competencies that you gained by learning through life experiences.

I will define emotional intelligence as sets of abilities to balance between good and bad emotions, and they are not something you are born with.

“Emotional intelligence is your ability to use your emotions (that was set by many interactions) when making decisions and when you struggle to overcome your predicaments.

To summarize the interviewees’ definitions, the researchers conclude that emotional intelligence is a set of abilities or competencies that one develops through environments and life interactions. It is not a trait or a disposition but learned sets of behaviors and attitudes that affect the emotion in a positive or negative manner. Persons with more positive emotions, has the ability to touch their emotions deeply. They will have higher emotional intelligence as compared to individuals with higher negative emotions. Emotionally intelligent persons will also know how to balance their positive and negative emotions when dealing with their predicaments, and has the ability to reach beyond human-to-human interaction, while practice the intelligent use of their life experiences.

## **Patterns of Emotional Intelligence**

Many interviewees posit that emotional intelligence represents a set of abilities. The abilities are developed from one’s ability to explore what is inside their emotions in response to their environments. These sets of abilities are described as follows:

- to develop awareness about one’s own feelings
- to regulate one’s own feelings
- to motive oneself to a greater height
- to empathized with others
- to socially interact with others from different background
- to develop spiritual connection
- to use past experiences to overcome present life challenges (develop maturity).

Majority of the interviewees suggest not only the intrapersonal interaction is important, but also how people manage their relationship and interact socially with their peers play a vital role in maintaining stable emotion, and thereby, increase their emotional intelligence. They also proposed that strong spiritual

connection and the ability to use their past working experience effectively laid a foundation for emotional stability.

When asked to suggest the abilities, the interviewee uttered the following:

You must know who you are because then you can control your emotion (negative or positive). Then only you can work with other people, have peace with god and learn from your own experiences. Having had all these then, you have high EQ.

... such as doing self-reflection, ability to adjust to new environment (teaching environment can be a silent killer..) and of course, your spiritual ability. I think pious people are calmer than most of us who are always busy with worldly activities.

I think it is about how you look at your strengths and weaknesses, controlling your anger, getting along with others.

Regardless of ethnic groups, many of the interviewees refer to the importance of spiritual connection and the ability to use past working experience to develop stable emotion as the following excerpts suggest:

Looking deeply into myself is important, but connecting to god when I am upset seems to work very well.. doa and prayer help calm me down when things did not look good.

When I am confused of what to do, it makes me angry.. upset ... then I looked back, at what I have done in similar situation, I could have done better with this situations. This give me a peace of mind, I am more calm, and able to complete the work successfully.

EQ is equal to SQ, spiritual quotient. If you can't pray to God, seek his forgiveness, than don't talk about feeling calm when you have many issues with God. Then you go to understanding yourself, and other people. Look around you.. ask what you have learned, and to use those knowledge wisely. You know these things can help build high Emotional Intelligence.

... I look back to my life. Think of what I have done, right or wrong, what I can learn... and, yes getting along with your God ... is very important.

The interviewees also suggest that IQ alone does not create success in life, particularly at work, but having stable emotion ameliorate better achievement. With reference to his own example, one of the interviewee articulated that although, he is a third class honest graduate, he has been nominated by his department as excellent teachers the third time in five years. He attributed this to a number of abilities: to remain vigilant towards the quality of his work, to work collaboratively with his colleague, to stay connected spiritually, to develop clear conscience, and to use his past work experiences effectively. These are elements needed to develop high emotional intelligence.

The diagram in Appendix A explicitly shows teachers' view of emotional intelligence. As shown by the diagram, emotional intelligence encompasses a multitude of factors, which build upon each other like a building block. The foundation is personal competency, followed by social competency, spiritual awareness and life maturity. The first competency has two aspects; self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation. The second competency has two component; empathy and social skills. The last two are seen holistically as two separate entities that contribute towards development of healthy emotions, and their status are considered as having higher hierarchy than the first two competencies. Emotional intelligence is viewed as the collective sum of all these components or competencies.

Each competency was also examined microscopically to see if similar patterns (as suggested by Goleman) that explained emotional intelligent emerged from the participants stories. Cross-case analysis conducted between cases of in-depth interviewees suggests additional factors and sub-factors. Table 1 shows the additional factors and sub-factors mentioned by the interviewees. The additional sub-factors are: intent, interest, caring, helping others, and cooperation.

## **Factors That Lead To Emotional Instability**

It is very clear that the teachers felt the present working conditions/environments is not helping them towards developing healthy emotion. They were concerned about the rippling effects of their negative feelings towards teaching and learning on their students' mental health. One junior male teacher remarked that:

Every time I reached the school, and see the students, my blood just shot up. They are just so rude. By the time I reached the class, I was all angry. How can I teach like this? When I get

angry, I shouted all the time. I am tired and the students are not happy. No learning takes place.

Similar predicament was relayed by another teacher who were just in her fifth year of teaching. Her remarked was:

I don't know, I don't like too many changes. We have to use the computer, the principals are not helping at all, I can't take a leave when I need one, my friends always talk about promotion, being super teacher etc., and these make me angry (even sad). When I am angry, my students are unhappy. I can see it from their face. I wish I can teach in a better mood and not being so disturbed by some students, or unhappy administrators, or even colleagues that always think they are better than you.

Yet, another male teacher (who is teaching mathematics in English for the first time) blames the authority for not preparing him for the arduous task of teaching Mathematics using a foreign language. He felt melancholic most of the time because of not being able to do his job properly and help his students. He contemplated on resigning, and search for another job, which is less stressful.

In summary, the teachers suggest a number of factors that contribute towards their emotional instability:

- Stiff competition among co-workers for promotion
- Feeling overwhelmed by workloads
- Upset by policies that constrict teaching and learning process
- Inability to cope with students' disruptive behavior
- Financial constraints (due to low wages)
- Inability to cope with technology (and no training was provided for the technologically illiterate teachers)
- Upset over lack of coping mechanism
- Ineffective communication skills
- Insensitive leaders (e.g. school principles, head departments etc.)

Table 1: Sub-factors of Emotional Intelligence

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Sub-Factors Similar Goleman</b>	<b>New Sub-Factors</b>
Self-Awareness	Emotional Awareness Accurate self assessment Self-confidence	Intent
Self-regulation	Self Control Trustworthiness Responsibility towards self Adaptability Innovation	
Self-Motivation	Achievement drive Commitment Initiative Optimist	Interest
Empathy	Understanding Others Developing Others Potential Service Oriented Leveraging Diversity Political Awareness	Caring Helping Others
Social Skills	Influence Managing Conflict Leadership Team Capabilities Change Catalyst Building Bonds Communication	Cooperation
Spiritual Awareness (Additional Factor)		No Sub-Factor Found
Maturity (Additional Factor)		No Sub-Factor Found

## **Developing and Maintaining Emotional Intelligence**

Many interviewees (particularly the less experience teachers) have very vague ideas of how to develop or maintain high emotional intelligent. Many mentioned about controlling their anger, yet uncertain on how to do it. However, a number of senior teachers agreed that they have learned to develop emotion that is more positive by having the right attitude and behaviors, and the ability to endure constant curriculum changes brought about by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

The senior teachers also suggested a number of steps that the younger counterparts could take in order to have stable emotion. Their advice centered on doing daily self-reflection, particularly, after each teaching process, take time out when feeling incapacitated or overwhelmed by workload, and learn to take charge or control of situations. A number of the senior teachers talked about building intrinsic motivation and the right attitude: "Motivation to work must come from within, the pay is low, monetary reward is not so good, so if you want to stay in the teaching line, you must like the job and all the things that come with it."

One female teacher commented on the use of effective communication: "learn to communicate effectively; it helps you get your messages across. No misunderstanding." The teacher emphasized that in general, teachers must learn to be good listener, and communicate the right non-verbal responses because "students will not confused with how we (the teachers) feel that particular day. Then teaching and learning can take place." On similar notes, many of the interviewees also concur that effective social skills is important for healthy interpersonal interaction: "You must learn how to response to others ... so that they like you, when you are upset, you need a friend to cry on.. so learn how to be good friend."

Regardless of religious beliefs, many teachers talk about making daily spiritual connection to help them ease the work pressure. Pray, reading their Holy book (Quran, Bible etc.) and going for religious discussion are some of the activities cited by the teachers. Muslim teachers in particular, seems to use their spiritual activities to gain internal strengths, pacify their nervousness (due to uncertainty in changes), and create a more confident self.

Others talk introspectively about the need to self-reflect daily on their experiences:



Think what you have done in similar situations, weight the failure and success of doing the same thing now. You will learn something from those experiences.

I am less nervous when I know that I have done it sometimes back. It gives me confidence; I am more motivated and feel better ... of course (I) work better too.

Yet, others talk about going for seminar, conferences, workshop, watching related movies or even reading motivational book to gain some ideas on how to manage their emotional outburst.

In general, teachers have their ways of developing and maintaining high emotional intelligent. The methods vary from personal to social. Nevertheless, none of the teachers is able to propose comprehensive ideas of how to develop or maintain stable emotion. The approaches suggested by the teachers are fragmented, with no continuity from one activity to the other. The teachers are not able to see holistically, the importance of learning the activities that could promote high emotional intelligence, least engaging in the activities as part of their daily rituals (e.g. learning how to communicate, self-reflect, building new behaviors, attitudes etc.). Although, many of the interviewees have some ideas of what to do, they cannot imagine (on their part) that the acquisition of new skills need active engagement of the individuals in the learning process (similar to what they had hope to do with their students). The teachers' lack of ideas on the subject matter seems to affect their effectiveness in functioning as efficient teachers in school. Nonetheless, many senior teachers who participated in this study seem to cope better with their emotional instability and were more attune with their own feelings.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Emotions are a major part of one's personal experience (Nelson & Low, 2003) and it influences one's ability to view things clearly. Goleman (1998) suggested that emotional competence is a learned capability that results in outstanding performance at work. Present demands of teaching profession necessitate teachers to seek techniques, tools or coping strategies that will ensure their existence in the teaching profession throughout their professional endeavor. The present scenario happening among Malaysian teachers are representative of emotional instability that will threaten the teachers' very existence in their own profession. Therefore, it is timely that this paper discusses the concept of

emotional intelligence among teachers in enhancing their work performance in the present challenging teaching profession.

Findings from the current case study suggested some similarity in defining the concept as suggested by Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Mayer (1990). The findings also confirmed two of Gardner's (1993) intelligences that help in building emotional intelligence (inter- and intrapersonal). However, additional factors (spiritual awareness and maturity) were never mentioned in any of their writings (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000; Mayer & Stevens, 1994; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1985; Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2000; Goleman, 1995). Findings from this study suggest that these two factors play very important roles in balancing between positive and negative emotions and developing higher emotional intelligence. The new factors and sub-factors found in this study insinuate that emotional competencies needs revision when is viewed from another culture. Since many studies conducted on emotional intelligence have either been European or North American based, and the present definitions have been representative of the people from those regions, consequently, a revise definition is needed to give the construct a universal understanding, applicable to people regardless of ethnic groups, religious orientation or locality.

The present challenge would be to provide the appropriate curriculum to help pre-service and in-service teachers develop high emotional intelligent. Nelson and Low (2003) posit that learning and improving emotional intelligence requires a process that is highly personal, practical, easily understood and engaging. Therefore, the curriculum developed should use personal approach within the social context. The development also requires acquisition of new knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviors. Given that emotional intelligent is greatly influenced by the demands and present challenging educational working environments, therefore, two different sets of curriculum is needed for both groups. The earlier group should be provided with continuous but short in-service training (to accommodate their tight schedule), while the later, a curriculum embedded in the present teacher education syllabus. The curriculum should include measurement of emotional intelligent, to help the teachers gauge their emotional stability.

Development and maintenance of high emotional intelligence also requires a continuous process. Therefore, the curriculum should reflect life long learning process, which inevitably, will help the teachers to be independent when searching for the most appropriate strategies to deal with their emotional outburst. Emotional intelligent curriculum for both groups should allow active engagement in self-reflection, building awareness of their own strengths and

weaknesses, development of inner motivation, and the capacity to develop person-people skills. Finally yet importantly, elements of spiritual awareness, and acquirement of skills to evaluate and use experiences to foster higher emotional intelligence should be imbedded into the curriculum. Although, these two factors seem pertinent to only teachers within the Asian population, however, both factors have universal meanings for every other population (probably with different intensity).

The present study is among few studies conducted on the area of emotional intelligence within Asian population. Such studies are very few and far in between, and more studies are needed to understand emotional outburst phenomena that occurs amid Asian population, particularly, the Asian educators. The researchers' strongly believe that quality teachers beget quality students, and promotion of emotionally healthy students can only be achieved if the teachers are themselves emotionally stable. A study on profile of emotional intelligence of the teachers will give interested parties an overview of the teachers' emotional stability. A longitudinal study can be conducted to examine the ebb and flow in emotional intelligence among the teachers throughout their professional career. Such findings can help interested parties developed intervention strategies to help the teachers sustain their positive emotion (and lessen the negative emotion). It is also necessary to study the best practice of measuring emotional intelligence, and to provide empirical evidence (e.g. reliability and validity) of such psychometric instruments. That this will help academicians who developed the instruments not only improve on their psychometric measurements, but also provide information to the publics or user, on the most appropriate instrument to be used to measure emotional intelligence among the population in their culture.

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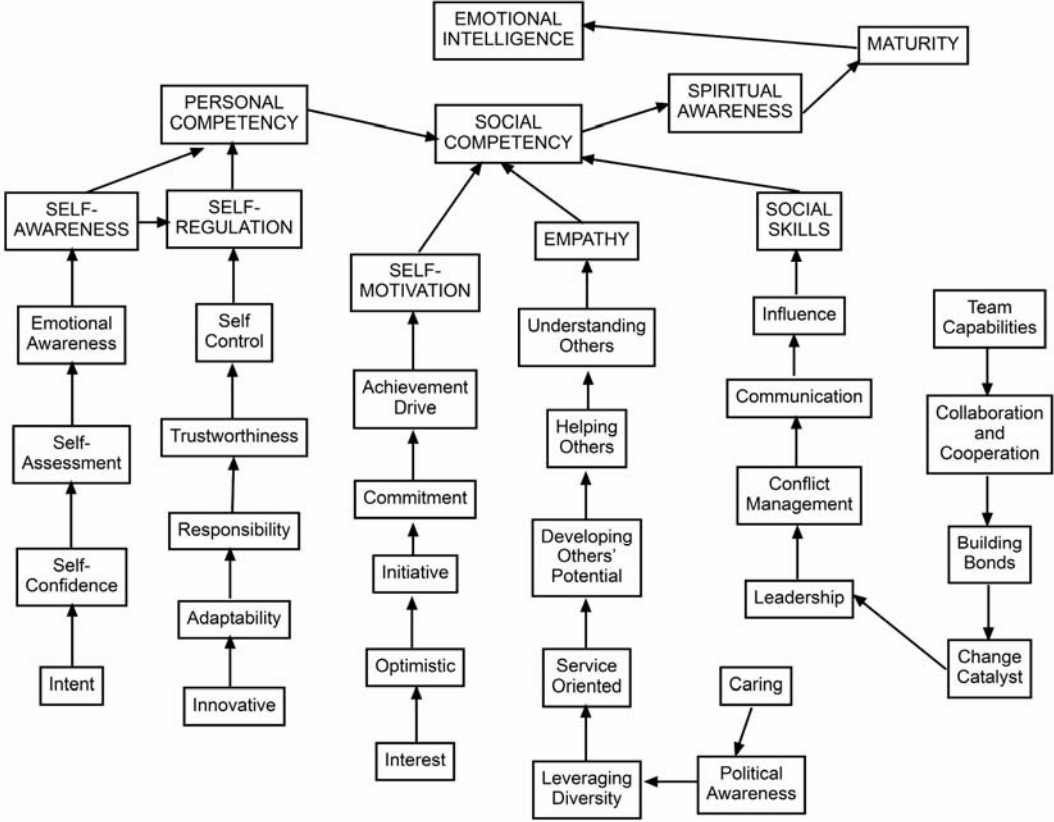
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# Appendix A

## Factors and Sub-Factors of Emotional Intelligence



# Effective School Leadership: Can it Lead to Quality Education?

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the role of effective leaders in bringing about quality in teaching and learning in schools. It is based on my doctoral empirical research undertaken during 2000-2005 under the auspices of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE/UT), Canada. My study explores the roles, beliefs and behaviors of three reputationally effective secondary school headteachers in Karachi, Pakistan, in three types of schools – government, community and independent, assuming that contextual factors will influence the nature of leadership.*

*The findings reveal that all three heads' beliefs and practices show similarity in a vision of providing quality education, balanced between Islamic teachings and values, and modern, secular content and skills. As managers and leaders, the heads focused on building an environment conducive to better teaching and learning, enabling teacher development, and fostering productive relations within and outside their schools. They differed, however, in their rationale, strategies and application of these strategies, due largely to differences in their personal histories, specific beliefs and values, and organizational settings.*

## Introduction

The importance of the role of headteachers in making schools better for teaching and learning has been fairly established by a wide array of studies all over the world. “Scratch the surface of an excellent school”, say Leithwood and Riehl (2003), “and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school, and you will find weak leadership” (p. 1). Reviewing the leadership literature, Barth (1990) sums up his conclusions in the dictum, “Show me a good school, and I'll show you a good principal” (p. 64).

Though scant, yet the school improvement literature in the developing world also suggests that the role of heads is significant in improving schools (Abdualishoev, 2000; Bacchus, 2001; Simkins, T. Garrett, V. Memon, M., & Nazirali, R., 1998; Memon, 2000; Halai, 2002; Shafa, 2003; Wheeler et al. 2001; Yusufi, 1998). Shafa's 2003 study in the context of developing countries (such as Pakistan)

argues that efforts to bring about a change in teaching practice are often stalled by a “lack of appreciation and commitment from the headteachers” (p. 14). My own experience of school improvement efforts at the Aga Khan University’s Institute for Educational Development

(AKU-IED), supports the evidence that the role of school heads is important for any meaningful school improvement (Simkins, T., Charles, S., Memon, M., & Khaki, J. A., 2001).

This study is a step towards the direction of providing further insights to developing theories about headteachers’ practices. This is critical because theories of leadership or models drawn from the industrialized societies cannot be automatically applied in developing countries, because of inherent differences in many factors, such as school management, administration practices, ideologies, curriculum orientations, and so on. Many of the researchers from the West warn against generalizing their findings to the contexts of the developing world (Bajunid, 1994; Berrel & Gloet, 1999; Chapman, 2002; Duke, 1991; Sapre, 2000).

My study, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap by looking at school leadership in developing countries to help construct a robust knowledge-base, which would be utilized to improve both practices and policies regarding school leadership.

## **Methodology of the Study**

This paper studied three head teachers from public, community and independent secondary schools in Karachi, who were reputed to be effective in the public’s eye. The rationale was to gain deeper insights about the nature of these heads’ roles; their beliefs and behaviors; as well as the factors that influence them. In order to explore these dimensions, multiple data sources were used, including interviews, observations and relevant documents. Three weeks were intensively spent with each school’s head, as well as interacting with the school staff during the school year. Various occasions and events of the school life were also attended in order to obtain further data from multiple observations.

The study explored the headteachers’ behaviors in their actual settings by observation, interviews and gathering data from other individuals, such as fellow teachers, students, parents, and school governing members. Individuals, like these heads, can hardly be studied without looking at their relationship with those who work with them. The study therefore, attempted not only to understand the heads, but also some of the “significant others” (teachers,



students and officials). Data was also gathered from other sources, including school records, heads' reflective journals, and other documents, which provided insights about the beliefs and behaviors of the heads under study.

Before discussing the findings, a brief description is given of the heads and their schools, in order to provide a sense of context.

## **Research Participants and the Context**

The study selected one school head, named in the study as Naz Sahib, from a government secondary school. The school had a population of around 490 students and around 35 teachers. Naz Sahib had served this school for three years at the start of the study. This was his first tenure as a secondary school head. His career spanned over three decades serving different schools and different positions. He was also serving as an Assistant Sub Divisional Education Officer (SDEO), in the Department of Education. Being an SDEO, he looks after around 80 primary schools, as the chief of several supervisors in a single school district in Karachi. He had been appointed by the Education Department in the school, as he was seen as a “tough person” to handle the socio-political issues of the area within which the school is situated. The staff reported that the said is regarded as a “top” school in the Karachi Central District.

The other headteacher, named in the study as “Fatima Apa”, served an English medium community school, comprising of three major branches of schools, having around 1680 students and 108 teachers altogether. The school is part of a larger chain of schools run by the community. When the study was started with her, she was promoted to become the head of the entire school network, having previously served in the Boys' Branch for around 10 years as its founder-head.

The third research participant is named “Khadija Apa”, serving what is described as a “New Age School”. The name of the school represents the spirit of the school which is meant for the coming generations. Khadija Apa comes from a military and religious background (her father served in the Pakistan army). She studied medicine and worked as a doctor for some time overseas. Due to some critical incident, Khadija Apa's family decided to come back to Pakistan and establish a school to teach “Islamic values”. In 1990, she established her own “value-based school”, the New Age School, with the vision of providing “quality education through academic excellence based on values resulting in leadership qualities” by creating “a happy place to learn”.

Thus, the research participants came from different backgrounds in terms of their family, schooling, and training. Their schools also differed largely in terms of student intake, their orientation and emphasis in their curriculum.

We now move on to the findings and their analysis, in terms of what was common and what was different among the three heads. The thematic analysis has led to the categorization of the findings under five major headings which are briefly discussed below.

## **Key Findings and Discussion**

In the beginning of the study, the question was raised: What are the prevailing roles, beliefs and behaviors of effective headteachers in government and private urban secondary schools in Karachi, Pakistan? This question assumed that successful and effective head teachers play roles in entertaining beliefs and exhibiting behaviors that tend to make them “different” from many a “typical” head teacher. This assumption led to two more questions: What are the socio-cultural factors that inform and/or influence heads’ beliefs and behaviors? How do the key stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents and school-related district officials/governors) view effective headteachers?

To investigate these questions, the study explored the beliefs and behaviors of three reputedly “effective” heads in Karachi in three types of schools (public, community and independent). The three heads for the study were selected on the basis of their reputed “effectiveness”, generally because their schools achieved high pass rates in the Matriculation Board and O levels exams, and the already mentioned fact that the said heads were reputed to be highly “effective” by various stakeholders.

The findings regarding the three heads’ roles, beliefs, behaviors, and influencing factors in the three different types of schools in Pakistan, reflect many commonalties and individualities. The comparative analysis of the data led to five key findings about the roles, beliefs and behaviors that the three heads have in common:

1. Having a passionate vision to develop their schools;
2. Making efforts to balance religious and secular education, leading to a prophetic professional role;
3. Developing their schools as conducive places for teaching and learning;

4. Developing teachers as part of school development and delegating responsibilities to them to help encourage leadership; and
5. Fostering collaborative relations within and productive relations outside their schools.

These five major areas of effectiveness are briefly explained below:

## **A Passionate Vision to Develop Schools**

All three heads – Naz Sahib, Fatima Apa and Khadija Apa – have some common and some differing visions for their schools.

All three heads' visions focus on developing students as moral beings while providing them with good secular education, through building their schools as enabling places of teaching and learning, and achieving success by creating teacher leadership. However, they differ in their rationale, strategies and aims for achieving their visions.

Naz Sahib has a vision of learning that makes sure his students develop morally and achieve a high pass rate in the Board exams, creating many successors and improving his school's conditions. He has focused on these priorities since he joined Gharibnawaz School. He has a relatively stronger sense of performance-efficacy than his peer public school heads, believing that he can make a difference in his students' lives. He thinks that all his students should and can succeed and go to the next stage of their education. He also emphasizes character building by providing many extra-curricular and curricular activities, meant to engender Islamic religio-moral qualities. He also struggles to make a difference by improving the school environment physically and socially so that teachers can teach and students can learn in a proper atmosphere.

Fatima Apa's vision centers on her belief in creating, in her words, a "leader-full" school, and her desire to develop students faithful to their "Jamat" yet capable of living in the modern world with skills such as English language, critical thinking and computer literacy. She is optimistic that she would be able to achieve her vision within a couple of years through her teacher-education programs within and outside the school. Fatima Apa is struggling on two fronts: First, she is trying to develop teacher leadership by giving the teachers her personal encouragement, appreciating their work and providing leadership opportunities; secondly, she struggles to convince the Board to raise the compensation package for teachers in order to retain the good teachers who otherwise would leave due to monetary dissatisfaction.

Khadija Apa's main vision rotates around the axis of Islamic-values-based education, coupled with the best possible secular education. She shares a strong desire with the other two heads, making sure her students achieve a very high pass rate in the final (O level) exams. Moreover, her vision is to develop students in such a way that they make a difference in the world. Her vision for her school is to develop it as a highly competitive organization underpinned by the religious-moral values, trying to balance the sacred and secular.

## **Balance Between Religious and Secular Education**

All three heads are committed to providing a balanced and integrated religious and secular education, which the government and their stakeholders also expect. In actual practice, this means that all three schools emphasize moral and religious education besides secular subjects like Science and Math. All three heads encourage Islamic values and character building through curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities, though they relate to these values in different ways and to different degrees. These religious values include belief in one God, in God's communication to human beings through the channel of prophecy, in the Divine Books, in equality of humanity, in balance between reason and faith, in respect for human dignity, in moral virtues like respect for teachers and parents, in the Day of Judgment, and in the importance of prayer. These general, key concepts are explicitly or implicitly repeated in the curricular, extra-curricular and informal experiences, which all these secondary schools provide to their students. These values are explicitly emphasized in assemblies, Islamiat courses and texts, and heads' addresses given in their ceremonial capacities.

Fatima Apa is mindful of her community's values and traditions; she attempts to integrate and balance the community's traditions, general Islamic education and at another level, secular education. This integration takes place at two levels: curricular and the extra curricular. A substantial chunk of curricular lessons involve Islamic concepts, and examples, which are supplemented through extra-curricular experiences like celebrations of community's sacred historic personalities, festivals, and prayers. Khadija Apa's vision is particularly underlined by her desire to impart religious values and the purpose of life to her students and stakeholders. She does this by trying to create a balance between Islamic teachings and modern, Western secular subjects like computer skills, critical thinking and English language skills.

## **Developing Schools as Conducive Places for Teaching and Learning**

Although their school contexts differ in their school structures and cultures, all three heads focus on creating enabling environments for better teaching and learning. Naz Sahib, despite limited resources, struggles to provide a decent environment for his teachers and students by providing basic physical facilities.

On the other hand, many public and private school heads would envy the resources that both Fatima Apa's and Khadija Apa's schools provide, with their modern computers, libraries and other well-structured facilities. These heads focus on maintaining, upgrading and adjusting their facilities as new needs arise and as their priorities change with time.

Fatima Apa's Board primarily ensures structural adjustments like maintaining the buildings, but she looks after the existing facilities, adjusting them to her teachers' and students' needs. She also adds or builds on the existing facilities; for instance, adding teaching material in the classrooms, buying audio-visual materials, adding curricular materials, restructuring her office or re-designing spaces like the Social Area.

Khadija Apa has to think about the whole structure of buildings, facilities and resources as the owner of the school. She has a custom-made school building and keeps on adding or improving facilities, for example, building or expanding library facilities or computer rooms.

Though differing in emphasis, all three heads focus their attention on their schools' environments in order to ensure that their schools are safe and socially conducive places for teaching and learning.

These measures tend to add to the attraction and reputation of their schools.

## **Developing Teachers and Delegating Responsibilities**

Teacher development to encourage teacher leadership is common to all three heads, though with different aims and priorities. Fatima Apa and Khadija Apa have more or less the same goal: to develop teachers professionally, as part of their organizational philosophy; they equate teacher development with school development.

Both encourage teachers to engage in inside- and outside-school professional development, for which they provide support by giving them leaves or letting

them use their school time to attend courses. Both heads themselves also attend professional development programs in order to develop themselves, as well as to provide an example for their teachers.

Naz Sahib faces a different situation: his District Office selects teachers for professional development courses. As a result, he focuses on teacher development through assigning school responsibilities within the school through committees to create what he calls his “successors”. He argues that he wishes to develop teachers in such a way that even if he were to be removed from the school, his school improvement efforts would not be undone and that no vacuum would be created in his school after his departure.

All three heads delegate various levels of responsibilities to their teachers for different purposes. While Naz Sahib delegates partly to create his successors, and partly to help the school run smoothly, particularly in his absence.

Fatima Apa and Khadija Apa delegate because they need support to manage their large schools, and also because they want to develop their teachers’ leadership abilities. Fatima Apa wants to create a “leader-full” school.

Khadija Apa wants her teachers to provide an example of Islamic values and to simultaneously provide quality education. The essence of all the three heads’ intention is to develop their teachers in making their schools as effective as possible.

## **Fostering Relations Within and Outside School**

All three heads share the idea of building relations inside and outside the school, but their methods differ. They try to develop collegial and collaborative relationships among their staff by appointing committees, groups and teams for different purposes. Naz Sahib has constituted many committees like the Discipline Committee and the Literary Committee.

These work informally and usually meet when the need arises. Fatima Apa and Khadija Apa also appoint committees and societies to work, but on an ongoing basis and not just sporadically as in Naz Sahib’s case. Their committees work mostly on curricular, pedagogical and other extra-curricular activities to design and implement changes.

In all three schools, teachers have varying levels of collegiality and collaboration. While Khadija Apa’s school leads in this respect; Fatima Apa falls in the middle, and Naz Sahib at the other end of the spectrum. These variances stem largely

from the nature of the curricular approaches and the pedagogical perspectives adopted for implementing the curriculum.

All in all, the findings show that the heads focus on five key areas: vision building, teacher development, providing an enabling school environment and emphasis on relations building; along with a balanced education both inside and outside school.

These are the major key areas these heads focus on. They have some common strategies for fulfilling these objectives, yet they take different approaches, largely due to their organizational needs and their own approaches to school development.

## **Conclusion**

If leadership is about leading people to goal fulfillment, these heads do just that. All three heads - Naz Sahib, Fatima Apa and Khadija Apa – strive to invest their lives into making the world of the young a little better or happier. They want to give their students something to stand on in life, whether a good career (Naz Sahib), life skills with tools of communication (Fatima Apa) or a bedrock of values (Khadija Apa).

These heads lead their schools with a singularity of mind, a totality of heart, and a missionary spirit. They have made their schools a success story in a difficult world. Each head tells us a unique story of struggle and leadership. They tell us that a high vision can motivate people to accomplish things generally seen as difficult. Naz Sahib makes a difference in his school, despite the stereotype of public school heads as mere administrators.

Fatima Apa shows that a head can lead a community by providing committed leadership to its schools. Khadija Apa demonstrates the importance of seeing dreams and working towards them. The commitment of all three heads to their individual beliefs and their missionary spirit to serve their communities as prophetic professionals in a country, which desperately needs such dedication, teaches us a lot.

All three heads have shown that struggle gives meaning to life and that success can eventually come, if struggle is authentic, honest, and persistent. Their efforts to raise the quality of education through their preferred roles and practices are a lesson to learn for many headteachers and teachers who are striving to do the same.

## Future Research

The heads with whom we worked have strong ideas about Islam and Islamic values, which guide their notions of management and leadership. Future studies could focus on this area and investigate in depth how the heads see the role of religion in their management practices in many ways.

The consequences of heads' actions on students' learning and on teacher motivation offer a second area of exploration; it has to be remembered that influences on, not of, the heads' beliefs and behaviours were explored in this paper.

Third, as this study is limited in scope, future studies need to examine how a larger sample of heads manage and lead their schools, in order to be able to generalize the conclusions of this study and at the same time develop a larger knowledge base on school leadership in Pakistan.

The exploration of the role of the assistant heads or vice-principals affords yet another area of study. These middle-level managers play, after the heads, a major role in all three schools that were studied. Sandwiched between the heads and the teachers, they play a major bridging role between the two power bases. Exploration of their management practices may be a rewarding exercise.

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# **Performance Management for Organizational Development: An Evaluation of the Teacher Appraisal System at Kinnaird College, Lahore**

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## **Abstract**

*The concept of continuing professional development is closely related to teacher appraisal and it is the responsibility of the management to create an environment which encourages continuous development. Therefore, an effective and well rounded staff appraisal system can help identify and improve both areas of weakness and strength, thereby promoting teacher development.*

*It is the intention of this project to examine an existing staff appraisal system in Pakistan and in light of the needs of the organization and its staff members, to develop a practical, non-threatening and successful appraisal system.*

*This research highlights the deplorable condition of the performance management system at Kinnaird College, Lahore through an in-depth analysis of the system as it exists.*

*Through interviews with the management personnel, questionnaire forms filled out by the teachers and document analysis it has been concluded that in the Pakistani institution under study, the performance management and teacher appraisal process is considered a threat to the professional autonomy of the teacher, as it is viewed as a tool for fault-finding rather than professional development: as whenever the results of the appraisal indicate any area of weakness, the concerned teacher is reprimanded, and in some cases even fired. This, is a situation that needs to be remedied as soon as possible.*

*In light of the findings of the research, a realistic, non-threatening, and progressive teacher appraisal system has been recommended for implementation at Kinnaird College. In short, this supportive and developmental performance management system will bridge the gap between individual and organizational goals and objectives.*

*Consequently, the research hopes to raise awareness that effective performance management in an educational institution is imperative to its short as well as long-term development and success. The smooth operation of the human resource of an*

*organization ensures that the students are receiving the type of instruction that they need, thereby, ensuring that they achieve their academic goals and reach their optimal potential.*

*Thus, performance management is viewed as a tool for professional and organizational development and can allow for the generation of a co-operative and mutually beneficial relationship between the organization, its staff and its students.*

## **Introduction**

Performance management is a means of promoting the organizations ability to accomplish its mission of maintaining or improving what it provides while at the same time seeking to maintain or enhance staff satisfaction and development. (Armstrong, 1999, p.23)

Performance management is about monitoring performance against targets or key results areas in order to identify opportunities for improvement and thus helping to deliver organizational change. (Cole, 1997, p.247)

A well-organised performance management system can only be an asset to an organisation (Reeves et al, 2002). Therefore, it has been a growing area of interest for specialists in the human resource field over the last few decades.

Teacher appraisal has been an area of neglect in Pakistani institutions offering Higher Education, as stated in the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research. Poor human resource management has been a problem in the past and very little has been done on this front over the last few years. As a result, the performance management scenario is considered a threat to the professional autonomy of the teacher and viewed as a fault- finding weapon.

## **The Aims of the Research**

The focal point of the research project is the evaluation and analysis of the performance management system and the appraisal policies and practices at the Centre of Applied Language Studies, Kinnaird College Lahore Pakistan, (offering courses in English Language, Applied Linguistics and ELT) and the development of an effective and practical teacher appraisal system for organizational growth and professional development.

## **Literature Review**

Every organization, “whether it’s a multinational conglomerate, a small business, a religious institution, or an educational service, depends on people” (Tyson & York, 2001, p.32). Human resource management decisions and methods are critical to ensuring that the organization hires and keeps the right personnel, as HRM is “a comprehensive, integrated system for effectively managing the work force in the effort to achieve organizational goals” (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1994, p.123).

## **Performance Management**

a performance management system is an HRM process of establishing performance standards and evaluating performance in order to arrive at objective human resource decisions and to provide documentation to support personnel actions. (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2001, p.199)

A performance management system functions by first establishing shared understanding between managers and their staff about what is to be achieved and then by managing and developing people in a way which increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term.

One of the fundamental features of performance management is the emphasis on future performance planning and improvement, rather than on retrospective performance appraisal; as supported by Armstrong (1999, p.112). There is emphasis on coaching and counselling on the part of the manager and on self development on the part of the individual.

## **Performance Appraisal**

Jones and Mathias (1995) describe appraisal as an activity, which is central to the effective management of the teaching or learning situation. Appraisal is seen as a right of all teachers, something that is done with people rather than, to them. It is therefore important that both appraisee and appraiser are actively involved in the process. Rather than adding to the already considerable pressures faced by teachers, the appraisal of performance is to enhance and maximize the educational opportunities of pupils through the professional development of teachers, thus leading to both institutional and individual growth.

## Approaches To and Models of Appraisal

Seven types of appraisal models have been documented, yet no one model can be considered as the best. What can be said, is that one of these types, broadly speaking, represents the appraisal style that is being adopted by a particular organisation, although it may borrow from any of the other types, some aspects that it finds suited to its conditions or requirements. Poster & Poster (1993, p.9) have identified seven types of appraisal models, presented below:

Table 1: Highlights of the Various Appraisal Models (adapted from Poster, 1990)

<p><b>Developmental Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assumes professional, collegial and collective authority to lie within the profession.</li> <li>• has as its main concerns truth, accuracy, the maintenance of moral, ethical and professional values.</li> <li>• works through peer appraisal of colleagues.</li> <li>• has a bipartite approach towards enabling self-improvement.</li> <li>• seeks to produce agreed programme with shared responsibility for the achievement of objectives.</li> <li>• is concerned with longer-term professional development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Managerial Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assumes right to manages hierarchical position confirms authority.</li> <li>• is concerned with doing and achieving, with efficiency and effectiveness.</li> <li>• appraises through line management.</li> <li>• makes strong use of incentives and praise and reproach from superior.</li> <li>• sets targets in order to maximise organisational objectives.</li> <li>• is concerned with shorter term-assessment of performance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Laissez-faire Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognises the importance of self-development.</li> <li>• allows managerial abdication from responsibility.</li> <li>• encourages subordinates to raise issues.</li> <li>• demonstrates a lack of focus, direction and purpose.</li> <li>• has a belief in the importance of self-motivation.</li> <li>• Allows appraise to decide on the need for follow up.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Judgmental Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses appraisal to maintain social control.</li> <li>• assumes managerial authority to make judgements.</li> <li>• collects data for the assessment of the subordinate.</li> <li>• rates individuals against one another.</li> <li>• assumes the necessity of extrinsic motivation.</li> <li>• uses system for merit rating and performance-related pay.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Control Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• external accountability (externally imposed).</li> <li>• trainer / development roles.</li> <li>• subordinates receive appraisal.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Growth Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal accountability.</li> <li>• collegiate approach.</li> <li>• related to current performance.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• failure means dismissal.</li> <li>• related to rewards.</li> <li>• appraisal by results.</li> <li>• hierarchical.</li> <li>• top down.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stress on professional development.</li> <li>• weaknesses worked on.</li> <li>• targets negotiated.</li> <li>• continuous appraisal.</li> <li>• two way appraisal.</li> <li>• bottom up.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continuous Development Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integration of learning with work.</li> <li>• self-directed learning.</li> <li>• a process, not a technique.</li> <li>• an attitude, not a way of tackling work.</li> <li>• simultaneous improvement in the performance of employees and organization.</li> <li>• work place learning and self development.</li> <li>• stress on performance improvement.</li> </ul>	

There are clear strengths and weaknesses in all seven models and some overlapping can also be observed; nevertheless, these models are very helpful when designing performance appraisal schemes.

## Methods of Appraisal

Given below are a few common appraisal methods in use today.

**Rating Scales:** each employee trait or characteristic is rated on a bipolar scale that usually has several points ranging from poor to excellent.

**Essay Method:** the appraiser prepares a written statement describing specific strengths & weaknesses about the employee being appraised.

**Result Method (MBO) (management by objectives):** the method seeks to measure employee performance by examining the extent to which predetermined objectives have been met.

**Critical Incidents:** the appraiser is required to record incidents of employees' positive and negative behaviour during a given period.

**360 Degree Feedback:** the peers, direct reports, the customers and the appraisee himself /herself evaluate the appraisee's performance on a set of core competencies and behaviours considered important by the organization.

## **The Appraisal Process**

Horne & Pierce (1996) mention four components of the appraisal process and have devised a four point cyclic and continuous plan of:

- **Preparation:** A preliminary meeting ensues where the purpose and focus of appraisal is determined and set. A review of the job description and person specification follows to provide a focus for the classroom observations and the self-appraisal, and to develop a performance criteria checklist.
- **Collection of Data:** Data is collected in numerous ways; namely, through classroom observations, student evaluation, peer review, and self-appraisal reports.
- **The Appraisal Interview:** The interview provides an opportunity for reflection on previous work with the aim of agreeing plans for the future.
- **Follow- up (Target Setting and Monitoring):** Targets are set at the end of the appraisal dialogue and the appraiser and the appraisee, both share the responsibility for their achievement. The appraisee is required to follow the action plan while the appraiser, to give support and help.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Methods and Procedures**

For the purpose of analyzing the performance management system at the Centre of Applied Language Studies, Kinnaird College, Lahore, multiple data collection methods were employed to present corroborative evidence across methods, and data sources.

The research required the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Data was collected from both, the teachers using closed-ended questionnaires and from the management personnel at the institution, using semi-structured interviews. In addition, a document analysis, i.e. a review of the appraisal policies and forms was carried out to present a complete and well-rounded picture of the field situation.



## Profile of the Subjects

### Profile of the Teachers:

Total number of teachers: 50

Sample size for the research project: 30

Nationality: all Pakistani

Gender	
Male	Female
4	26

Educational Qualifications		
BA/BED	MA/MED	PHD/EdD
5	10	15

Age Range				
20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+
5	5	7	8	5

Work experience (years)				
1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
4	6	9	7	4

### Profile of the Management Personnel:

Total number of management personnel: 15

Sample size for the research project: 6

Nationality: all Pakistani

Gender	
Male	Female
2	4

Educational Qualifications	
BCom/BSc	MA/ MBA
3	3

Age Range		
25-30	31-35	36-40
1	3	2

Work experience (years)		
1-5	6-10	11-15
1	3	2

## **Findings: Analysis & Discussion**

The responses given in the questionnaires and interviews all pointed in one direction; that of the appraisal process being a fault-finding tool, designed to inculcate fear in the teachers. Most of the time the teachers were appraised by their students and through classroom observations, where the ACR was the primary document being used. The teachers indicated that appraisal was not a regular activity in the organization, but took place randomly and unexpectedly, without any notification.

The teachers felt that the purpose of the appraisal exercise was just to gauge their performance in order to find faults. It had no developmental purposes and lead towards sudden termination of services. Moreover, the appraisal process was seen as a threatening phenomena and one that promotes favouritism in the institution.

Nearly 98% of the managers interviewed, claimed that the “teachers do not need to be told of the appraisal result until and unless there is some problem”.

A majority of the interviewees (97%) stated that the appraisal process was usually a one day exercise, which begins with evaluation questionnaires to be filled in by the students, followed by a “surprise” classroom observation in order to fill in the ACR. There is no preparatory stage to the entire process and similarly no appraisal interview.

The responses to the questionnaires further indicated that the teachers did not have access to their job descriptions and had never been presented with their performance criteria.

When asked to indicate which appraisal method the teachers prefer, 98% of the responses were in favour of self-monitoring and planned classroom observation.

Finally, the teachers expressed that they would like to see an appraisal system in place that would lead to opportunities for betterment of teaching skills, and would promote professional development. In addition, the teachers wished to link appraisal results with salary increments where appropriate.

## **Findings from the Document Analysis**

The ACR was analysed in order to shed light on the nature of the appraisal process at Kinnaird College. The ACR is divided into 8 sections, each one to be filled in by the appraiser.

The first section deals with the appraisee's personal information and mentions the job description, which is ironic as none of the teachers are ever presented with one at the onset of their jobs. The second sections analyses the personal qualities of the appraisee, for example, intelligence, emotional stability etc. Section three deals with the teacher's attitudes towards students, religion, supervisors etc, and section four measures the proficiency level of the appraisee in his/her field. Section five is highly subjective in nature, where the appraiser comments on the weaknesses and strengths of the teacher. In section six, the appraisee is compared and contrasted with colleagues and labelled as either, 'fit for promotion' or 'unfit for promotion'. Section seven and eight are to be filled in by a countersigning officer, who is to evaluate the appraisee without even having observed him/her.

On the whole, the ACR is used as a deciding tool for the employees promotion or termination. It is meant as a tool that requires no classroom observation, or appraisal interview to complement it.

The student evaluation forms were also analysed. These consisted of eleven items to be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5. All items were judgement markers about the classroom performance of the teacher, and dealt with his/her teaching ability and behaviour.

## **Recommendations**

An analysis of the findings has already revealed that the appraisal system of Kinnaird College leaves much to be desired. Following is a list of recommendations that could make the system more effective:

- the motive, purpose, time and venue of appraisal should be clarified to the teacher
- stress on classroom observation, self appraisal and post-observation interview.
- appraisal should be developmental in nature.

- provision of job descriptions should be a must
- all results and reports must be shared with the appraisee.

After careful evaluation of the existing model and the results of the study, a progressive teacher appraisal model has been recommended for use at Kinnaird College.

## **The Progressive Teacher Appraisal Model**

The Progressive Teacher Appraisal Model is a combination of the Accountability and Developmental model of appraisal, however it stresses the features of the Developmental model greatly and its operation seems to be an extension of it. (Wragg, 1997).

### **Principles Of PTAM**

The following principles of PTAM have been adapted from various sources:

- Consultation with the teachers is a prerequisite for the development of an appraisal system acceptable to all.
- Equal opportunities are provided for all staff irrespective of gender, race, colour, religion, social and cultural background, marital status, age or disability.
- Appraisal information will not be used as part of any disciplinary or dismissal procedure.
- The job description for the teacher will be taken as the starting point for each appraisal.
- Trust is an essential prerequisite of a successful relationship between appraiser and appraisee. The appraisal process will be conducted in a sensitive and objective manner so as to minimise stress on either party.

### **What will be Evaluated?**

The PTAM will look into five basic domains of teaching performance:

- Commitment to Students and Student Learning
- Professional Knowledge

- Teaching Practice
- Leadership and Community
- Ongoing Professional Learning

(Adapted from Wragg, 1987)

### **Rating Scale To Be Employed**

**Exemplary:** Performance that exceeds the expectations for the set of five domains.

**Good:** Performance that consistently meets with the expectations for the set of domains.

**Satisfactory:** Performance that does not always meet expectations for the set of domains. Performance should be improved.

**Unsatisfactory:** Performance that does not meet expectations for the set of domains. Performance "must" be improved.

### **How Will Parents & Students have Input into the Process**

- Every appraiser must develop an annual written parent survey and student survey to gather information about all teachers.
- The parent survey must ask for the parent's level of satisfaction with communication between the parent and the teacher about the child's learning and progress.
- The student survey, must ask about the communication with their teachers and whether each teacher effectively promotes student learning or not.
- The input received from parents and students cannot be the sole factor in a teacher receiving an unsatisfactory rating or for the recommendation that a teacher's employment be terminated.

### **The Recommended Appraisal Procedure**

**Notification to the teacher:** The teachers should be notified of the appraisal procedure and the tools of evaluation. They should be provided with

opportunities for self appraisal, peer review system, and mentoring; that will help them with the upcoming appraisal procedure.

**Selecting Performance Targets (objectives):** The appraisal need not include each area nor be limited to the teaching criteria suggested. The selection of specific targets is a cooperative task of the teacher and the appraiser.

**Self Appraisal:** Each appraisee should carefully appraise himself/herself in relation to the institutions criteria. This self-appraisal will serve as the basis for the teacher's contribution to the formal appraisal conference.

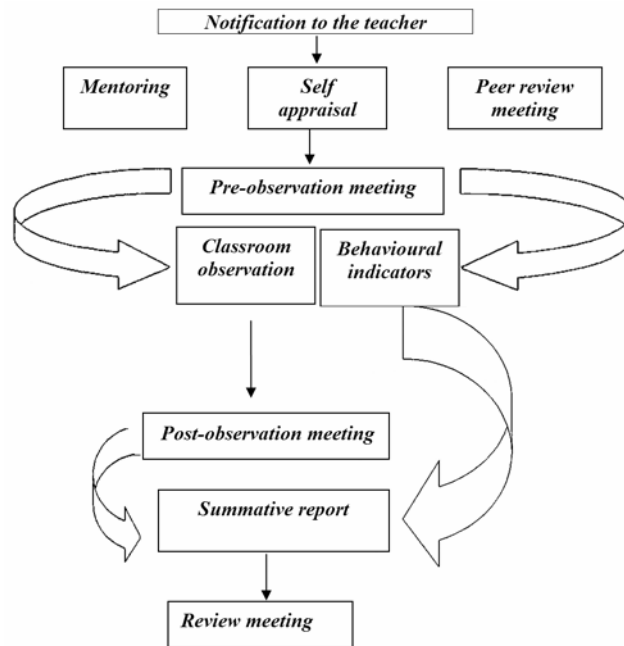


Figure 1. Progressive Teacher Appraisal Model (Source: adapted from Wragg, 1987; West, 1990; Webb, 1994)

**Pre-Observation Meeting:** A pre-observation meeting will be held to prepare for the classroom observation part of the appraisal. A Pre-observation Meeting Form will be provided to the appraiser and the appraisee. The checklist for evaluation will include all the elements in the above mentioned five domains of teaching performance.

The pre-observation meeting will also inform the teachers about the evaluation of indicators of observable behaviour, i.e. Behavioural indicators

- Input from students and parents.

- Input from colleagues, peers and other teachers.
- Input from management.

The appraisers will be required to make the process of observation very clear to the teacher. The appraiser should also be able to exactly identify what is expected during the lesson to be observed, and the teacher should provide her teaching plan for the classroom observation.

**Classroom Observation:** Each performance appraisal must include at least one classroom observation. Much, but not all, of the evidence for assessment will be gathered during the observation. (Refer to Appendix C for a sample of the recommended classroom observation sheet).

**Post Observation Meeting:** The appraiser and teacher must have a post-observation meeting to review the results of the classroom observation and to complete the Post -Observation Meeting Form. The teacher must be given an opportunity to review that input and to respond to it if he/she so desires. The appraiser must complete the Summative Report Form that will contain comments on each competency and an overall summary rating. The summative report will include the following:

- The appraiser's evaluation of the teacher.
- The appraiser's overall performance rating of the teacher.
- The appraiser's explanation for the rating.

**Review Meeting:** After the summative report, a review meeting will be arranged that will provide the appraiser and the teacher a chance to elaborate on the report and its implications. This meeting must include other information relevant to evaluation of the teacher's competency, including the parental student input to the teacher's performance, input from other teachers, colleagues, peers and input from management.

An overall performance of the teacher will be discussed, their positive contributions will be appreciated and guidance for rectification of any flaws will be offered. The overall performance will be compared with the performance of the last two years and the comparison will indicate the direction of the professional development of the teacher, finally leading to career development and career planning.

The suggested Progressive Teacher Appraisal Model encompasses all aspects of teacher appraisal and ensures it to be a process that is regular, transparent, structured and professional. It caters to the betterment of all the participants of the educational scene, i.e. the teachers, students, parents and management. The PTAM stresses the need for the appraiser and the appraisee to know the importance of the appraisal system at all stages and their outcomes. The model very clearly indicates the direction of professional progress and contributes positively to career planning and development. It provides help to the teachers having difficulties with their performance through appropriate guidance, counselling and in-service training. It informs those responsible for providing references for teachers in relation to appointments and enhances the overall management of the institution.

## **Conclusion**

Effective performance management in an educational institution is imperative to its short as well as long-term development and success. The smooth operation of the human resource of an organization ensures that the students are receiving the type of instruction that they need, thereby, ensuring that they achieve their academic goals and reach their optimal potential.

Appraising the teachers and identifying areas for improvement should be the main aim of any performance management process. In order to conduct appraisal effectively it is necessary that the appraisers must drive the method in such a way that it should lead towards the development of teachers otherwise it would not leave any impact on teachers' performance.

Beare et al (1989, p.15) state that every school

...has a particular culture, determined by the individual values and experiences which each person brings to it, the ways in which people act and interact and the footprints they leave behind them.

This school culture can be viewed as a reflection of the society's orientation and its cultural values. The differences in organisational climate and culture will both determine and be determined by the processes used to integrate the individual into the organisation. It follows therefore, that appraisal will be concerned with assessing the extent of the individual's conformity to the organisational ethos and with meeting targets with the development of initiative, self-development and goal achievement.



There may well be some variation between the wants of the individual and the climate of the organisation. The dynamic organisation may seek to accommodate the individual's wants within the climate of the institution. It will be prepared to study suggestions and criticisms, make them available to wider discussion, and absorb them into its culture, if this can be done with profit. The organisation, which is rigid in its unwillingness to explore any mismatch between the individual and the institution, will create a climate of intense frustration, demotivation, low effectiveness and adaptability, poor morale, low job satisfaction, high staff turnover and the rest of the ills that beset a sick organisation. In short, a supportive and developmental performance management system will bridge the gap between individual and organizational goals and objectives.

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# Appendix A

Sample of the Teachers Questionnaire

**All information here will be treated as confidential. Tick any of the choices that apply:**

- 1) You are appraised by:**
  - a) The students
  - b) A member of the administration (e.g., the Head of the Department)
  - c) An outside appraiser
  - d) Any two of the options given above. (a and b)
  
- 2) The tool employed for appraisal is:**
  - a) Classroom observation
  - b) Annual Confidential Report (ACR)
  - c) Peer Monitoring
  - d) Shadowing (seeking guidance from a senior member of the staff)
  
- 3) Which of the following personal development appraisal models would you prefer:**
  - a) Classroom Observation
  - b) Peer Observation
  - c) Shadowing
  - d) Mentoring
  - e) Self-monitoring (analyzing your own way of teaching for personal development)
  
- 4) You are appraised for the purpose of:**
  - a) Development and Training
  - b) Giving Increments
  - c) Gauging your Performance
  - d) Promotion
  - e) None of the above
  
- 5) Would you like appraisal to be linked to.**
  - a) Your pay in form of increment
  - b) promotion
  - c) Personal development opportunities through training
  - d) Your own satisfaction

- 6) You are motivated by**
- a) Positive Competition
  - b) Opportunities for personal development
  - c) Better Performance
  - d) Incentive schemes
- 7) Extrinsic motivation, through enhanced pay and increments leads to**
- a) Increased output through motivation
  - b) Adversely effects quality
  - c) Ensnare a cut-throat competition
  - d) One person working more than anybody else.
- 8) You believe:**
- a) Non-financial rewards like influence, acknowledgement, gratitude are ample return for your services
  - b) That increments and promotion would motivate members of the staff more.
  - c) Nothing, as you are being paid for your services already.
- 9) You are appraised:**
- a) Every 6 months
  - b) Once a year
  - c) Every once in a while
- 10) You are told of the appraisal:**
- a) A week in advance
  - b) The appraiser enters the class and you realize you are being appraised
  - c) A clerk comes in and gets the forms filled, you are told by your students that you have been appraised
- 11) You are:**
- a) Shown you ACR after it has been filled by the supervisor
  - b) Not shown the ACR and it is filed
  - c) Given an opportunity to discuss and have the ACR filed by mutual consent
- 12) An unbiased appraisal is assured through:**
- a) A trained observer
  - b) An outside appraiser
  - c) A trusted in house appraiser
- 13) What would make you score high on an appraisal:**
- a) Actual classroom teaching
  - b) Relationship with co-workers

- c) Examination results
- d) Lesson planning

**14) If a teacher is found lacking in any aspect of teaching, what measures are taken for improvement:**

- a) Workshops
- b) Guidance by senior teacher
- c) Let to experiment and learn

**15) Appraisal is followed by:**

- a) An interview with the appraiser to sort matters out
- b) Professional development
- c) Resumption of old duties

**16) In case you are not in your appraiser's good books, appraisal is:**

- a) A chance for your supervision to get back at you
- b) An opportunity to give the appraiser fair hearing despite differences
- c) A moment to show approval for your courage

**17) In case of differences with your immediate supervisor (line manager) who do you turn to:**

- a) The principal to complain
- b) The Head Department to sort the matter out
- c) Complain and crib to other colleagues

**18) How is the appraisal information used:**

- a) As a threat
- b) As a means of personal development
- c) For management (for keeping records)
- d) For comparing against other teachers

**19) Repercussions of a bad appraisal:**

- a) Fired
- b) Promotion delayed
- c) Contract not renewed
- d) Verbal reprimanding e) Mentoring and refresher courses

**20) The need for confidentiality:**

- a) Your ACR is flayed and made public.
- b) is treated as a confidential document
- c) Is accessible to a selected few

**21) As a consequence of appraisal**

- a) You are provided equal opportunities for further development
- b) People are chosen at random for courses and workshops
- c) Your boss chooses his favourites and only they go for further training

**22) Regarding job description**

- a) You are given job description in documented form at the time of interview
- b) You are kept in the dark as to the duties you'll be required to perform
- c) Given a hazy idea of the duties you'll be required to perform
- d) Told to handle responsibilities as they come up.

**23) You feel that the appraisal system of your college:**

- a) Points to flaws but does nothing to remedy them
- b) Is lopsided
- c) Doesn't motivate the teacher in improving performance
- d) Is balanced and effective

**24) The appraisal system reflects the culture of the school in being:**

- a) threatening
- b) developmental
- c) friendly and supportive
- d) inclined towards favouritism

## Appendix B

Interview questions for the management.

- 1) Do you follow a specific procedure for appraising your teachers? If yes could you explain it. If no, then why not?
- 2) Do you think it is important to follow a set procedure for appraisal?
- 3) Do you inform the teacher about the purpose of appraisal before actually going into her / his class?
- 4) Do you use appraisal as a way of judging a teachers performance so that you can decide if she needs training, or in order to find faults with her teaching?
- 5) Are you satisfied with the ACR?
- 6) Do you believe students should appraise their teacher? Why?
- 7) Do you share the results of the classroom observation with the appraisee?
- 8) What, if anything, would you like to change about the appraisal system at your institution?

## Appendix C

Sample of the Teacher Observation Sheet

### DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

EE = emerging expectations; ME = meeting expectation; EX = exceeding expectations

ELEMENT	EE	ME	EX
<i>1a) Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy</i>			
Knowledge of content			
Knowledge of pre-requisite relationships			
Knowledge of content related pedagogy			
<i>1b) Demonstrating knowledge of students</i>			
Knowledge of characteristics of age-group			
Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning			
Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge			
Knowledge of students interests and cultural heritage			
<i>1c) Selecting instructional goals</i>			
Value			
Clarity			
Suitability for diverse students			
Balance			



<i>1d) Demonstrating knowledge of resources</i>			
Resources for teaching			
Resources for students			
<i>1e) Designing coherent instruction</i>			
Learning activities			
Instructional materials and resources			
Instructional groups			
Lesson and unit structure			
<i>1f) Assessing student learning</i>			
Congruence with instructional goals			
Criteria with standards			
Use for planning			

## DOMAIN 2: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

EE = emerging expectations; ME = meeting expectation; EX = exceeding expectations

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>EE</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>EX</b>
<i>2a) Creating and environment of respect and rapport</i>			
Teacher interaction with students			
Student interaction			
<i>2b) Establishing a culture for learning</i>			
Importance of the content			
Student pride in work			
Expectations for learning and achievement			

<i>2c) Managing classroom procedures</i>			
Management of instructional groups			
Management of transitions			
Management of materials and supplies			
Performance of non-instructional duties			
<i>2d) Managing student behaviour</i>			
Expectations			
Monitoring of student behaviour			
Response to misbehaviour			
<i>2e) Organizing physical space</i>			
Safety and arrangement of furniture			
Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources			

### DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION

EE = emerging expectations; ME = meeting expectation; EX = exceeding expectations

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>EE</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>EX</b>
<i>3a) Communicating clearly and accurately</i>			
Directions and procedure			
Oral and written language			
<i>3b) Using questioning and discussion techniques</i>			
Quality of questions			
Discussion techniques			
Student participation			

<i>3c) Engaging students in learning</i>			
Representation of content			
Activities and assignments			
Grouping and pacing			
<i>3d) Providing feedback to students</i>			
Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive and specific			
Timelines			
<i>3e) Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</i>			
Lesson adjustment			
Response to students			
Persistence			

#### **DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

EE = emerging expectations; ME = meeting expectation; EX = exceeding expectations

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>EE</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>EX</b>
<i>4a) Reflecting on teaching</i>			
Accuracy			
Use in future teaching			
<i>4b) Maintaining accurate records</i>			
Student completion of assignments			
Student progress in learning			
Non-instructional records			

<i>4c) Communicating with families</i>			
Information about the instructional programme			
Information about individual students			
Engagement of families in the instructional programme			
<i>4d) Contributing to the school and district</i>			
Relationship with colleagues			
Service to the school			
Participation in the school and district projects			
<i>4e) Growing and developing professionally</i>			
Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill			
Service to the profession			
<i>4f) Showing professionalism</i>			
Service to students			
Advocacy			
Decision making			

# **Striving for Quality Improvement in Teacher Education: An Experience from the Teacher Training College Shughnan, Afghanistan**

*Muhammad Khaliq, Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan*

## **Abstract**

*This paper specifically looks at the ways that Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan Rural Education Support programme sought to improve the quality of education through its work in the teacher training college Shughnan, Badakhshan. This paper presents an overview of the initiatives taken and the impact these have had both on the quality of education that the college now offers, and how these initiatives and results have positively impacted on schools.*

*This study shows that quality in education of an institution is linked to: the quality of physical facilities; opportunities for learning; staff encouragement and support mechanism; type of quality improvement initiatives; quality of planning, level of practicing knowledge and skills gained and time management. This study also suggests that the level of understanding and commitment of staff of vision, mission and goal of the institution also affects the quality of educational institution.*

## **Introduction**

The education system in Afghanistan has been greatly disrupted over the past twenty five years because of various internal conflicts. As a result, neither the teachers have had an opportunity to improve their professional knowledge and skills, nor has the government had the opportunities to develop a comprehensive curriculum and training programme to improve the existing crisis in education. The Afghan Government and international agencies have also declared teaching training as high priority (Spink, J. 2004). Therefore it would be reasonable to suggest that quality of teacher education is at a critical point nationally.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has been one of the NGOs who has responded to this crisis, and started work in 2003 in the areas of teacher training, material supply to schools and teacher training for colleges; and to a certain extent in the constructions of schools. The main focus of AKF Education is “to improve the quality of education in Afghanistan by strengthening the key institutions” (Aga Khan Development Network Afghanistan Education support programme: Five year proposal document, p. 10).

Aga Khan Foundation, through its Rural Education Support Programme (RESP), supports 129 schools in three provinces: Badakhshan, Baghlan and Bamyán; along with two teacher training colleges in Baghlan and Badakhshan.

## **Background**

The Teacher Training College (TTC) Shughnan is situated in a village called Bashor, which is at an altitude of 2312 metres above sea level and is located in the Shughnan district of Badakhshan Province. The TTC Shughnan opened as a teacher education institution in 1996 (1375 H.) in a partially ruined and abandoned clinic. It began with only two academic staff.

AKF started supporting the TTC Shughnan in 2003. The support has been in the form of building quality infrastructure, capacity building of management staff, provision of teaching learning resources and technical support.

In the early stage of AKF's support of the college, a needs assessment was carried out (Khaliq, 2004). It was not difficult to assess the infrastructure challenges facing the college, such as the lack of an adequate building or sufficient furnishings. However, equally pressing were the lack of any teaching and learning resources, which meant that teachers' had to rely on their own very limited resources to teach. In addition, the college did not have any structured syllabus for any subject area. The faculty would plan their courses by following the list of topics provided by the Afghan Ministry of Education for different subject areas.

The method of teaching at the TTC was purely by transmission; partly because of a lack of a viable alternative and partly because this was what the faculty believed in. Teachers would dictate notes from their notebooks, which they had been written during the time they were students. Sometimes these notes were almost 25 years old. Students were asked to learn the notes by heart and rewrite the notes at home. There was no opportunity in class for students to express themselves, nor was there any alternative teaching method used. Because of this transmission mode of teaching, students were passive and shy. During the classroom observation made by the TTC Advisor at the beginning of the academic year, it was noticed that students lacked the courage to answer questions posed by the TTC lecturers or the TTC Advisor himself.

Amongst the TTC lecturers, there also seemed to be a lack of clarity about their role as teacher educators. There generally seemed to be a belief that the role of the lecturer was simply to impart knowledge in a particular subject area, rather

than relate to the students' studies for their future careers as teachers (Khaliq, 2004). In this sense, the TTC Shughnan was only performing the function of a higher education institution, rather than preparing students for a vocation. For example, although school experience (teaching practice) was a part of the college curriculum, it had never been offered to students.

Aside from the apparent issues at the said college, there was also a noticeable lack of monitoring support from the Ministry of Education or the Provincial Education Department. In essence, in the nine years of its operation, there had been no contact with these departments, aside from receiving any official curriculum documents or guidelines.

## **Interventions by Aga Khan Foundation-Rural Education Support Programme**

To address these issues a comprehensive improvement plan was developed and implemented in 2005. These initiatives are outlined, and their impact on the quality of education in the Teacher Training College and beyond is discussed.

### **Construction of the TTC building and Hostel**

The construction of the two college buildings started in 2003 and was completed in September 2005. In mid October 2005, the TTC lecturers and students formally started using the building for teaching purposes. Once the building was operational, staff used the staff room to plan and discuss professional issues, something which was not done prior to this. The staff was also making good use of the library. Both the Director and the TTC lecturers have directly attributed the building to the subsequent change in their professional behavior.

The TTC Director said, "Walah, a good teaching environment is very important. I can see that a 100 percent change has occurred in the teaching approaches of our lecturers." (Elchi Bek, Director TTC Shughnan, November 15, 2005). One lecturer said, "Before, while I was teaching my lesson, my attention use to be on the poor teaching conditions, but now I focus on my teaching" (Syed Gohar, lecturer Geography Department, October 20, 2005). The experience of the TTC administration and lecturers are not new, several educationist and researchers have previously reached the same result. For example empirical studies by Edwards (1991), and Evans, G. W., Kliever, W. & Martin, J. (1991) have proven that there is a close relationship between teacher performance and school environments. McGuffey (1982) has found through his research that there is an

explicit relationship between physical characteristics of educational building and educational outcomes. Lackney (1999) believes that “school buildings are of critical importance to the teaching and learning process” (p.1).

## **Trainings and Workshops for the Faculty**

To address the issues of teaching skills and knowledge to the TTC lecturers, a series of different workshops were organized.

The first of these was aimed at setting up a management and teaching routine in the college. This was a six day workshop which covered topics such as learning theories, lesson planning, teaching methods, scheme of work, action plan and student assessment. In this workshop, a scheme of work and action plan for the TTC were developed for the first time, and implemented throughout the academic year.

Changes were noticed after the workshop in the teaching and management approach of the TTC. The TTC lecturers converted their teaching approach of lecturing and note dictation to a more student centered approach. They started to plan their lessons and would prepare teaching aids from the charts and other resources provided to them by Rural Education Support Programme. The TTC lecturers also started involving students in the lesson by posing questions to them for asking them to explain certain points.

The TTC lecturers developed and followed a scheme of work and covered the syllabus. The management developed and implemented an action plan.

The second workshop organized, was for the TTC management and administration staff.

In this Leadership and Management workshop, the staff was introduced to up to date management skills, such as making developmental plans, time management and conflict management skills; and analysis and understanding of issues.

One immediately noticeable impact of this workshop was that administration staff became more punctual. Management also commented that the workshop had helped in the clarification of their roles.

Professional development workshops were conducted each month. These workshops were run over three to four days, and faculty members regularly participated. These workshops sessions were on different teaching learning topics, including questioning techniques, teaching strategies, use of teaching and



learning resources in a classroom, student motivation, needs of slow bloomers, and types of lesson plans.

During lesson observations, the TTC Advisor and Director found that the TTC lecturers are using the ideas, methods and knowledge from the workshops in their lessons. For example the lecturers in the geography class encouraged students to locate certain places on the map; in science class students were encouraged to give examples from their daily life, and in Dari classes lecturers encouraged students to compose poems and write stories. Such teaching approaches were not part of practice of the lecturers before.

## **School Experience**

School experience is considered an essential part of teacher training (Jones, 2005).

Though school experience is part of the Afghan teacher training college curriculum, it was not properly implemented or practiced by the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) because of the uncertain situation caused by war in the country (Spink, 2004). In the case of TTC Shughnan the school experience was new, so the faculty and students were hesitant to initiate it.

The school experience was piloted by female student teachers in year 13 and 14 in the school experience process. So the year-13 Biology students, which were 30 in number, and 48 year-14 Dari Literature students took part. The school experience was initiated after a detailed meeting with the MoE official.

As the task was new, separate workshops for the TTC faculty; reference school principals, headteachers and teachers (who worked as mentors); and for the TTC students were organized. The workshop with the TTC Faculty focused on preparing lecturers for their roles and responsibilities in the school experience module, whereas the workshop with school heads and teachers focused on how they could facilitate and mentor the student teachers in their school during the school experience process. Student teachers were also given information about their responsibilities in the school experience, and introduced to the assignment tasks related to the model. All the workshops were run in a participatory way and gave participants an opportunity to discuss their experiences and concerns. It was also hoped that the workshops would also be run in such a way that it would enable the TTC lecturers to understand and later on carry out the school experience independently.

Certainly it did appear that although the TTC Advisor guided and mentored the TTC lecturers during planning and carrying out the school experience, the TTC lecturers conducted out the exercise very effectively.

School experience gave an opportunity for the students of the TTC to work in a school environment and provided an opportunity for the TTC lecturers to check their students' caliber and to also improve the areas which needed improvement. School experience also linked the schools with the TTC in the sense that it provided an opportunity for lecturers to interact with the school staff and students. It is widely accepted among the educational researchers that school experience enable student-teachers to learn to a great extent (Canizales, A., Greybeck, B, & Villa, L., 2001). In the context of Afghanistan it is more important, as student-teachers get little or no opportunity to relate the knowledge discussed at the college with classroom reality within the domain of the Afghanistan Teacher Education Project, 2004). Besides getting practical experience from the school experience, the said also provides an opportunity for student-teachers to conceptualize the role of a teacher, and for the college lecturers to re-conceptualize the role of a teacher educator. From the teaching practice (school experience), teacher educators learn to a great extent about "facilitation, mentoring, tutoring and counseling; in addition to teaching and instructing" (Lugton, 2000, p.6).

In June 2005, the Badakhshan RESP team identified 10 schools as 'reference schools' for TTC Shughnan to work with. These schools were selected to be laboratory schools for the TTC Shughnan, with the idea that these schools will provide teaching practice space for the TTC students. In reward the lecturers from the TTC provide technical support to the TTC in terms of teacher trainings. The ten reference schools are all situated in Shughnan within walking distance or a maximum of one hour drive from the TTC.

The basic purpose of linking reference schools to the Teacher Training College is two fold; firstly, the faculty of TTC Shughnan (with the technical support of AKF) can mentor (supervise) the teachers in teaching methodology and subject knowledge, in order to improve the teaching and learning standards of the schools; secondly, schools in turn will "provide teaching practice locations for subsequent groups of teachers being trained at TTC(s)" (Jones, 2005) draft working paper 5, p.4).

To fulfill this aim and to understand the needs of these schools, a needs assessment study (Khaliq, May 2005) was conducted. This study also aimed to suggest strategies for improving the quality of education by involving TTC Shughnan faculty in the input process.

With the technical support of RESP team, the TTC faculty organized and conducted a 13 day workshop in December 2005. It involved 179 teachers from 11 reference schools. The workshop covered pedagogy and subject content for six subject areas. 64% of the participants were women.

During the workshop, participants were exposed to some contemporary teaching theories, and they were encouraged to compare their personal practices with those theories and through reflection bring about changes in their teaching methods, wherever needed. They were also introduced to current teaching methodology, and related this to its theoretical base.

Teachers also had the opportunity to look more closely at the content of their subject areas, and discuss areas where they felt they lacked knowledge. They were also encouraged to relate the content of their subject to appropriate teaching methodology. Appropriate assessment methods were also discussed.

To link the workshop with their classroom situation, participants were given a chance to indulge in micro-teaching practice in their respective classrooms. Each participant delivered a lesson while their colleagues and facilitators observed and gave feedback to them. They were encouraged to link their learning from the workshop to the classroom-need, and use that knowledge to improve students' learning.

This workshop created a strong link between the TTC and reference schools, as well as providing opportunities for the TTC faculty to improve their instructional skill and practice their knowledge. During the pedagogy and content improvement workshop, improvement in the teaching skill of the TTC lectures was visible. It became apparent through the said workshop, that if we want to significantly improve the quality of education, considerable time and effort in planning and practice for teachers are important.

## **Orientation Workshop of Certificate in Primary Education Course**

In August 2005, an eight day orientation workshop of the Certificate in Primary Education was held in Shughnan, facilitated by Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) faculty. 17 TTC lecturers, two Master School Community Educators, and one person from the Provincial Education Department in Badakhshan attended the workshop.

This workshop was also a good opportunity for TTC lecturers to learn from the experience and knowledge of the faculty of AKU-IED. In later teaching, the TTC

lecturers used many of the techniques learnt from the workshop. For example, some of the lecturers started writing reflective diaries. Most of the lecturers assess their students through test at the completion of each teaching unit.

### **Liaison with Ministry of Education, Provincial Education Department, and District Education Offices**

As mentioned earlier in this paper, one of the major issues for the quality of education at the TTC was the lack of monitoring and support system within the Afghan Teacher Training Department. With the TTC Shughnan being situated in a remote area, the officials from Afghan Ministry of Education and Provincial Education Department (because of their lack of means of transportation and remoteness of the TTC) could not visit the TTC. To address this issue, the Rural Education Support Programme team maintained close links with the Afghan Education Department. At the Kabul level, the Rural Education Support Programme staff visited Ministry of Education officials in Kabul, and briefed them about the RESP activities in the TTCs and in Rural Education Programme supported schools. They also motivated and encouraged the officials to visit and monitor TTCs. In August 2005, Ministry of Education and Provincial Education Department personnel were facilitated to visit the TTC Shughnan.

A visit by MoE officials has had a positive effect on the TTC administration and teaching staff. Pending activities such as School Experience were initiated. Moreover, Ministry of Education staff set certain targets for the TTC staff, such as completion of documents (graduation record of students, employment record of the TTC staff and so on) and teaching skill improvement; such as writing daily lesson plans and completing courses. After the visit of the Ministry staff, the TTC staff worked hard to cover the set targets. From this experience one can derive a lesson that establishing monitoring and support systems can also affect the function of an organization.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- Quality of teacher education is related to the quality of facilities and environment available for the teachers and students of the institutions in which they study.
- Opportunities for learning, encouragement and support, along with practical demonstrations, help to improve the quality of teacher education.

- Quality of teacher education also depends on the quality of planning, and opportunity of practice.
- To bring about change in quality of teacher education, multiple interventions are necessary
- Clarity and understanding of goals, vision and a mission statement of an educational institution, is important in terms of improving the quality of education.
- For quality improvement of an educational organization, regular monitoring and strong support systems is crucial.

## Conclusion

The TTC Shughnan's experience gives hope to the very disrupted and under-resourced education system in Afghanistan. It shows that the quality of teacher education can be improved by setting clear goals, having a comprehensible vision and setting targets for the college. In addition, multi initiatives, organizational support and a proper monitoring system are critical. In the case of the Teacher Training College in Shughnan, educational initiatives have been established. The progress and quality improvement now rely on the continuation of these initiatives. Hopefully, the pace of progress will match the enthusiasm of the TTC lecturers and management staff.

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# Understanding a Novice Teacher's Learning to Teach in a Private School for Girls in Karachi, Pakistan

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## Abstract

*This paper reports the findings of a qualitative case study conducted in order to understand the learning experiences of a novice primary school teacher, Sajda (pseudonym), who was teaching in a private Community-Based English-Medium School in Karachi. During her appointment as a teacher she had an intermediate level academic qualification and had no exposure to any professional training course.*

*The research question for the study was: How does a novice teacher experience her learning to teach in a private sector school in Karachi, Pakistan? Data for the study was collected through semi-structured interviews and field notes and was analyzed through NVivo, which is a systematic software to analyze qualitative data.*

*Findings of the study show that when Sajda entered the teaching profession she faced different types of experiences in the process of learning to teach. She felt pride and happiness at the time of her appointment as a teacher.*

*Prior to experiencing in the classroom she thought of teaching to be an easy job and that everyone could do that, but as soon as she entered her classroom, she came across a very different situation. She experienced both frustration and shocks. These experiences thus prove to be very different from what she was expecting initially.*

*Data shows that preparations for her classroom teaching, collaborative school environment and professional development courses gave her confidence and encouraged her to overcome the challenges in the classroom. After taking all of this into account, the paper concludes with recommendations and implications for supporting novice teachers in the schools.*

## Background and Rationale of the Study

It was mid nineties when I became a teacher in a private high school in Northern Areas of Pakistan With lots of hopes and expectations I entered my classroom, but the experience I had on the first day in the school was very

different than that of my expectations and hopes. I found myself in a miserable condition in my classroom.

Class control and management, dealing with individual students and teaching to the large class were some of the dominant challenges of my classroom. Thus, I perceived myself as a victim of the classroom realities and I needed someone who I could trust to share my frustrations and worries, and get support. However, I continued my routine teaching while practicing and trying out things in my classroom. I call it a “solitaire action” and a practice through trial and error.

This is not a single story of mine, but general experiences of all those young teachers who step into the teaching profession every year. They experience more or less the same as I had in my classroom. Therefore, keeping all the facts in mind the focus of this particular study was to get a deeper understanding of a novice teacher’s experiences of ‘learning to teach’ in the first year of her career as a teacher.

## **Review of Literature on Novice Teachers’ Experiences in Learning to Teach**

Learning to teach begins with the beginning of one’s schooling. It is a complex and never-ending journey with excitements and challenges (Carre, 1993; Arends, 1994). This learning process keeps on in pre and in-service as well as classroom based practices.

A very basic question here arises is that what novice teachers need to learn. Kennedy (2000) studied her own learning to teach in the first year of teaching in a new context. According to her realizing one’s own assumptions, developing understanding of both the subject and the learners, revising one’s own initial thinking and reframing them according to the new context and learning to including learners in the learning process were the things that she needed to learn during her first year.

Teachers’ knowledge is a vast area of knowledge (Shulman, 1987) and learning to teach is a long and continues process which comprise of pleasant as well as frustrating experiences.

During the first year of their teaching beginning teachers come across ‘reality shock’ (Koetsier & Wubbels, 1995; Chubbuck, Clift, Allard & Quinland, 2001; Shamatov, 2005) when they face demands of teaching practices and see gaps



between their ideas and the classroom realities. Beginning teachers usually experience frustration, anxiety, and doubt during the first year of their teaching. Some logistical problems such as; classroom discipline, classroom management issues and dealing with the individual differences of the students are also the issues that beginning teachers experience in their classrooms (Carre, 1993). However, these challenges differ from context to context, from school to school and from person to person (Shamatov, 2005).

Arends (1994) talks about two basic models of teacher learning and development in her book *“Learning to Teach”*. One of them is Fuller’s (1969) model and the other is Feiman-Nemser’s (1983) stages of teacher development.

The gist of both of the two models is that in the beginning years teachers start thinking about their own survival in the schools and with the passage of time they start thinking about their classroom related issues such as controlling the students and classroom management and organization. In this stage they also get some repertoire of skills for teaching and learning. In the third and final stage their thinking shifts from thinking about themselves and classroom control to thinking about students’ learning as a whole. They give priority to students’ learning and become confident in selecting learning activities and techniques from a variety of methods.

A question arise here is that “what do we need to ease the reality shock of teachers in the first year of their teaching?” Cortese’s (2005) study identifies three aspects which support learning to teaching. They are the desire to use one’s experiences, the encouraging school environment and dealing with a small number of the students rather than a large class. The motivation of using one’s own experiences give opportunities to act and reflect up on one’s experiences and learn from them.

Secondly, a good educational organization provides a healthy, unthreatening, encouraging, conducive and an engaging environment to the novice teachers to continue their learning.

Thirdly, if teachers are exposed to teach a smaller group of students rather than a large class then it helps them to overcome the classroom management issues and other related issues and get acquaintance with teaching. It can be a good strategy for induction; however, managing such arrangements may create difficulties in schools which lack teachers and extra classroom facilities. Nevertheless, it can be an effective approach to use in various types of teacher training courses.

Moreover, it is a fact that all teachers are adults and adults learn well in an environment that minimizes anxieties and encourages freedom to experiment new things (Smith, 1990). In this way a school culture puts a strong impact on teachers' learning and behaviors (Joyce, Bennett & Rotheiser-Bennett, 1990; Deal and Peterson, 1999). It is the culture that comprises of the fundamental social meanings that shape beliefs and behaviors of the teachers over time (Deal & Peterson 1999). Thus a collaborative school culture encourages a smooth teacher learning and an individualistic approach results in frustrations and disheartens for novice teachers.

Likewise, Shamatov (2005) favors professional support for beginning teachers and argues that it makes the beginning teachers' experiences less traumatic and more positive and encourages them to develop their teaching skills overtime. He advocates the notion that beginning teachers may be able to resolve challenges in more effective ways and bring positive changes in their practices when they get sufficient and systematic support from the school management and administration and from other experienced teachers.

Similarly, Lee & Dimmock (1999) argue that principals play their roles in communication, resource provision, extending instructional support, and insuring their presence among teachers in various school-wide activities. Their characteristics such as; being an effective manger, listener, less hierarchical and care giver (MacBeath, 1998) make school principals to be effective leaders for teachers and encourage teacher learning in the schools.

## **The Study**

I adopted a qualitative case study approach for the study where I was seeking answers to my question in the real world. One of the characteristics of the qualitative study is that it allows the researcher to go into a deeper level of understanding rather than just gathering data at the surface level. I gathered what I saw, heard and read from my research participant and from the context (Rossman & Rallis 1998) and the knowledge was socially constructed on the basis of the interaction between the researcher (myself) and the research participant. It is a study of a particular teacher in a particular school context and it may not represent the experiences of all the novice teachers' experiences in learning to teach in Pakistan.

I developed the following research questions in order to do the study. "How does a novice teacher experience learning to teach in a private sector school in

Karachi, Pakistan?” Moreover, the subsidiary questions, given below, helped me to get answers to the main research question.

1. What factors (positive or negative) affect her learning to teach in the school?
2. How does she experience those factors?
3. What implications for the educational institutions (if any) do the study come up with?

In order to seek answer to the main research question I selected a novice teacher, Sajda who was in her first year of teaching in a private English medium school in Karachi and studied her experiences in learning to teach.

## **The Data**

I used an interview guide as a major tool for data collection which involved open-ended questions followed by requests for explanations. Likewise, my own field notes that I had developed in the field during the school visits and document analysis (in terms of looking at the participant’s lesson plans, worksheets and reference materials) were part of the data. I did three interviews - two from the research participant and one from the Principal of the school.

The initial interview with the research participant aimed at getting understanding of the research participant’s educational and professional background, her perception of teaching and becoming teacher and her way of learning during her own school age as well as after becoming a teacher.

The second was a follow up interview that I did after analyzing the first interview. It strengthened my understanding and interpretation of her experiences in learning to teach. On the other hand, as that particular school was a new place for me and thus I needed to know some basic information about the school in terms of its vision, mission and how it perceived teaching and learning in the school therefore I also interviewed the principal of the school.

The interview with the head teacher also helped me in getting some understanding of the overall school culture. Without understanding basic information about the school I would not be able to understand the learning experiences of the research participant.

I transcribed all the three interviews in computer. The interview of the Principal was in English; however, both the interviews of the research participants were in

Urdu therefore, it was a challenging task for me to translate it from Urdu into English without changing the meanings of the actual terms.

For example, I could not find any parallel word for the term *KUCH NA KUCH* (Urdu) in English, however, I translated it as 'something' which is not a perfect translation of the word. Likewise, Sajda also used some English words in her interview like 'deal', 'class control', 'activities' and 'management'. Although these terms come from English, yet Sajda used them frequently in her interviews. Halai (2005) also came across such issues in her study which she names as '*minglish*' which is about the terms which come from English but frequently used in Urdu or in any local languages. Hence, having some know how in both the languages (Urdu and English) I was able to understand what the research participant was saying.

I used two approaches to analyze the data. One which is called an 'open coding' by Fielding and Lee (1998) which involved reading through the data several times and then writing marginal notes to categorize the data into sections. Secondly, using the NVivo software I categorized the data into further sub sections. This helped me to have all the data in a place pertaining to one theme. I printed out the node reports and then started going through them and writing analytical memos which later on took the shape of this research report.

## **Ethical Considerations of the Study**

The study was about understanding the experiences of a novice teacher in learning to teach. It seemed to be a sensitive issue. For example, the research participant might not want to share her experiences with me because of the fear of her job and associations with the school.

Therefore, I, as a researcher, needed to take the research participant in confidence. Hence, it was important for me to share an informed consent (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). For this purpose, I shared the information about the study in written as well in oral form with the research participant and with the principal.

The participation of the research participant was voluntary. She accepted my request and agreed to give time for the study. As for as the confidentiality of the study is concerned, I have used pseudonyms for the research participant and for the school as well. Moreover, I have tried not to give any clue that could lead the readers to identify the school in general and the research participant in particular.

## **Findings of the Study**

This section sheds light on the findings of the study in terms of Sajda's experiences in learning to teach in her school. Sajda had mixed types of experiences in her class; a) she experienced pleasure as a teacher and b) she experienced some frustrations and shocks in her classroom. The section also sheds light on the factors that helped Sajda to ease those frustrations and shocks. Initially, I will present the finding about Sajda and her school. It will provide a background to see the experiences of Sajda in relation with who she is and where she works.

### **Sajda as a Teacher**

Sajda is a young female teacher in her early twenties and has been teaching in the primary section of the school for the last nine months. She has studied science in her secondary level, comes in intermediate level and currently doing her bachelor degree in the same subject area.

She usually teaches mathematics in the primary section and enjoys teaching it. She has attended some workshops at the Professional development Center PDC in the same subject area.

Sajda became a teacher on her own interests. She had been inspired by one of her teachers when she was in the school as a student. As a learner, Sajda is enthusiastic, eager and open to learn more. She sees herself as an effective and experienced teacher in future.

Sajda teaches in the Community Secondary School for girls in Karachi. It is a charity based school community school and was established in 1992 in an urban area of Karachi, Pakistan. The vision of the school is to develop students to become responsible and confident citizens with higher moral values.

In connection with the teachers' professional development the school has affiliations with AKU-IED, Notre dame Institution, Teacher Resource Center (TRC) and Professional Development Center (PDC) of their own system. Moreover, in-house professional development programs are also carried out in

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1 The school has affiliations with a larger organization that runs a PDC for its cooperating schools.

the school by teachers, subject coordinators, vice principal and the principal herself. Talking about the notion of teacher learning the Principal said that

If teachers are learners then they can cope up with the new challenges of schooling and thus can become better and effective teachers who can guide the students in the changing world. They need to know what is happening around and where the world is heading to. Therefore, they need to be learners themselves so that they can make the children as effective and creative learners.  
(Principal's interview)

There are computers, libraries, and laboratories in the school which are used by the students and teachers to facilitate learning in the school. Similarly, moral and logistical support is provided to teachers, in the school for using innovations in their classrooms.

## **Experiencing Pride and Happiness**

When Sajda became a teacher she had a kind of happiness and a sense of pride. There were several reasons for this feeling. The first thing was getting respect from the students. She felt pleasure whenever she got respect from the students. she said "at that time I felt very happy that I had become a teacher and the students were giving respect to me saying 'teacher' 'teacher'. 'Ms' 'Ms' and I was feeling good at that time" (interview 1).

As Sajda had joined teaching profession when she was a student she had completed her intermediate and was studying in bachelor level she joined the school. Hence there was a shift in her position from a student to a teacher. Therefore, she felt pride and happiness when she got respect from the students and when she saw herself as a teacher. This realization of respect and honor encouraged Sajda for further development as a teacher and a love towards teaching profession.

A second reason for this pride and happiness was that Sajda felt good to be with the children. Talking about her experience she said "I liked to deal with the children. I liked handling children doing different things. (Interview 1). This example shows Sajda's nature of loving children. By nature she liked to be with the small children; therefore, once when she became a teacher she got opportunity to be with the young children and work with them which gave her pleasure and happiness.

Thirdly, Sajda got encouragement from her parents, her parents and family members were pleased with her when she became a teacher. Her parents perceived teaching to be a respectable job and suitable for their daughter. She said in her interview that “My parents also felt pleasure when I became a teacher. They thought that it was an honorable job and good for me. Now I feel comfortable that my parents are also happy with my job” (interview 1). Sajda’s words show that her parents intension was also a factor that made her feel pride and good as a teacher.

Sajda thinks that the profession she had adopted was liked by her parents as well. In other words, her decision to become a teacher was what her parents wanted for her and it was an ideal profession for her and for her parents well. Therefore, this was one of the factors that made Sajda to feel pride and happiness.

Sajda’s parents’ wanting her to be a teacher raises certain questions such as why did her parents like teaching as an appropriate profession for their daughter? Is it a general trend in the country or a specific case? In other words, do all the parents prefer teaching to other professions for their daughters? And if it is a general trend then finding the background reasons for such trends would be an interesting study to do.

Besides feeling pride and happiness Sajda also has been experiencing fears and shocks. The following section presents Sajda’s experiences in this regard.

## **Experiencing Frustrations and Shocks**

Sajda has been experiencing frustrations, fears and shocks in her class while learning to teach. Classroom control and management, dealing with students’ individual needs and lack of command on the content knowledge were some of the factors that resulted in fears and frustrations for Sajda. For example, talking about her initial issues and problems in her class Sajda said

My initial problems in the class were handling the children. For example, whenever I was entering the classroom, I could see some of the children moving around. As they were small children, they were not mature. They did not think that they needed to sit down and be disciplined if a teacher was entering the classroom.... Hence, there used to be a bit problem for me in controlling and managing the class which I did not like. (Interview 1)

This quotation shows Sajda's prior conception of classroom teaching. She might have perceptions about the students to be calm and quiet and listen to her whatever she says. When she started teaching she came across different types of classroom realities in terms of controlling the students and managing the class.

As this reality was opposite to what she deemed; therefore, she was facing problems to cope up with the situations. Thus, there was an encounter between Sajda's prior beliefs about teaching and the reality of the classroom she faced. This encounter caused frustrations and fears of being incompetent to teach to the children.

Sharing her experiences of fears Sajda said:

I used to have fears. I was thinking what would happen if I commit mistakes while teaching to the children. Once it happened that I was explaining something to the students and the children corrected me of my mistake. So, when the children caught my mistake, I felt very embarrassing and I still remember that. At that time, I was obviously shocked. You know, it made me work hard then. (Interview 1)

Here Sajda has expressed her fears of committing errors in front of the students. She seems to perceive teachers to be perfect who do not commit mistakes. She thought that she might lose her dignity among the students in case of committing mistakes. All this resulted experiencing of being shocked and frustrated and she felt discomfort in being seen less than perfect.

Her last sentence in the above example shows that because of the fear of committing mistakes in her classrooms Sajda used to work hard to prepare lessons. For this purpose she consulted reference books, peers and her principal. Sharing of her experiences on working hard Sajda said,

It is good to work hard, to consult books; to browse the net and also to consult your seniors for preparing things. In this way I personally think that I am learning much. If you only use this book (refers to a textbook) then you are limiting yourself. Therefore, it is good to consult many books that is better not only for the students but also for us. Initially, it was a difficult work for me; because, it was a new thing for me, but you know, latter on I learnt working this way. (Interview 2)



In the above quote Sajda talks about two things; one, her beliefs of consultation of many books is better for both the students' and teachers' learning. On the other hand, she also labels it to be a challenging task that she had never experienced before.

However, with the passage of time she was able to overcome the initial fears and frustrations. The following sections highlights the factors that were supportive for her in this regard.

### **Factors Supporting Sajda's Learning in the School**

There are many factors that have positively influenced Sajda's learning to teach in her school and classroom. Firstly, it is evident in the findings that Sajda's preparation for her classroom teaching boosted up her confidence to play well in her classroom. For example she said

I usually enjoy most in my class if I am prepared well before the class. You know, if you prepare activities for the students then they involve in the lesson with great interest and if I see my students working like that I enjoy it (interview 2).

Here Sajda has talked about two things: firstly; she enjoyed teaching whenever she was prepared well and equipped with activities for the students. This also shows her sensitivity towards everyday teaching in the classroom and a kind of fear of facing problems and challenges in case if could not prepare well for the lessons.

Secondly, if she was well equipped with a variety of activities then she could control the students in her class while involving them in different activities. Thus, preparation of activities has been a strategy for her to maintain the classroom routine and to control the class.

Secondly, professional development courses provided learning opportunities for Sajda overcome the challenges in her classrooms and to come out of the frustrations and shocks. For example, Sajda said,

When I did a course from the PDC, it was very helpful for me. There I learnt how to handle the children, how to help them and how to behave with them in the class. In case if I face problems in using the new learning in my class, I contact my facilitators. They come to school on regular basis in case if I inform them about my problems. (Interview 1).

This shows that the course she attended at the PDC was supportive for her. The good thing about the course was that there was a mechanism of follow up support in case if Sajda had problems in implementing innovations in her classroom.

Likewise, the following extract from one of her interview shows that becoming familiar with the children and the school context was also supportive to lessen her frustrations and challenges.

One of the reasons is that I got settled; I adjusted myself with the situation. Now I know why children make noises and how to control them. We need to understand why they are behaving in certain way. Then we can solve the issues in our classrooms.  
(Interview 1)

Thirdly, another factor that she mentioned was the collaborative and encouraging school culture. The school culture for Sajda was non-threatening and a kind of collaborative one where the principal and the Subject Heads were not there just to evaluate what she did not do, but to work with her as a supportive friend to enhance her learning as a teacher.

Sajda further shared her experiences regarding the importance of the school culture as;

The school also encourages us do the things like that, but it is not the case that if you do not do certain thing they will penalize you. For example, our principal helped me out and guided me in preparing some of the worksheets and models. She did not order me, but she was with me in doing that which I like very much.  
(Interview 2)

This quotation from Sajda shows the importance of an effective leadership in the school. It portrays the quality of the principal who works with the teachers rather than asking them to do (Khaki, 2005). This characteristic of the principal has encouraged Sajda to learn as a teacher in the school and to overcome her frustrations.

Many themes have emerged so far in the above story regarding Sajda's experiences of learning to teach. Therefore, I will discuss them briefly in the section given below.

## Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study show Sajda's experiences in two ways. Firstly, she felt pride and pleasure because of becoming a teacher. One of the reasons for feeling happiness and pride were that had interest in teaching. Literature also shows that teachers' own desire and interest play vital role in learning to teach and encourages them to face the challenges (Cortese, 2005). Secondly, she had good experiences whenever she had prepared well for her lessons.

Studies have shown that teachers struggle hard to overcome the content and logistical issues in the first year of their teaching (Koetsier & Wubbels, 1995; Ball, 2000) therefore, whenever Sajda had prepared well, she could control and manage the class and thus her experiences were good in class. Thirdly, Sajda's parent wanted her to be a teacher which she did. Therefore, when she became a teacher she thought that she had done the thing that her parents wanted and she also got encouragement from her parents. All these factors made her to feel pleasure when became a teacher.

Likewise, she felt fears and shocks in her classroom as well. These challenges were due to her classroom realities. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, she did not have any pre-service course or experience of teaching in a school. Although she had a long term experience of observing her own teacher in the class when she was a student (Arends 1994), yet she did not have any experience of teaching in the real classrooms.

Secondly, as she had a particular frame of mind pertaining to her classroom, but when she saw the reality different than that of her perception, she felt frustrated and shocked (Koetsier & Wubbels 1995, Chubbuck, Clift, Allard & Quinland 2001; Shamatov, 2005).

Moreover, struggling with the classroom management issues, controlling the children, dealing with the individual children (Carre 1993; Shamatov, 2005), struggling to overcome the subject matter issues (Ball 2000, Shulman 1987; Feiman- Nemser & Parker, 1990) and thinking about teaching well to the students (Arends, 1994) were some of the reasons for Sajda's fears and shocks in her classrooms. The personal interest, professional development course, peer and supervisor support, collaborative school culture, encouraging and supportive leadership and availability of resources have been facilitating factors (Cartese 2005) in easing the fears and reality shocks and encouraging Sajda to tackle the situations properly.

## Implications and Recommendations

- The study has shown that in the first year of their teaching novice teachers come across many challenges in their classroom that result in frustrations and shocks; therefore, it would be helpful if schools could develop a mechanism for teacher induction so that the teachers may not suffer alone in their classrooms.
- The study also shows that novice teachers usually struggle to overcome logistical and content-related issues more often; therefore, a mechanism of mentoring (Gray and Gray 1985) or peer coaching (Watson & Kilcher, 1990) for them would help them solve these issues. However, developing mentoring and peer coaching in schools has also implications and questions. Whether or not schools would be able to adopt these strategies. Would the schools be able to carry out mentoring and peer coaching approaches in the schools? What type of structural change would they need? How will they manage time, space and resources to initiate such innovations in schools?
- It would be helpful if an orientation type of course could be designed for those novice teachers who do not have any teaching experiences or pre-service courses. It will give them some idea about the school, the children and the teaching and learning in general.
- The findings also have implications for teacher development courses in the country. The professional development organizations and institutions need to design their courses to address the classroom reality issues of the teachers. Developing follow-up mechanisms in schools may be one of the strategies; however, the feasibility of this raises questions of whether the institutions could be able to do so. Therefore, how to address the classroom realities through the pre and in-service training courses is a question for all the stakeholders.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a qualitative study of understanding a novice teacher's (Sajda) experiences in learning to teach in a private school in an urban area of Karachi. The findings of the study show that Sajda had mixed types of experiences in the first year of her teaching.

Firstly, she felt pride and honoured with her enhanced status when she became a teacher and also enjoyed the sessions where she had prepared well.

Secondly, she experienced a kind of fears and shocks when came across different issues in her classrooms. Factors such as the reality being different than what she deemed, lack of content knowledge, and managing and controlling the students in the classroom were prominent challenges for Sajda which resulted in fears and shocks for her. Sajda's own interest, the collaborative school culture and the in-house professional development course help her ease these issues.

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# **School Improvement in Multi-grade Situation (SIMS): An Innovation of the PDCC**

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## **Abstract**

*Professional Development Center, Chitral (PDCC), since its establishment in Chitral, is committed to work with its partner education providers for the improvement of quality of teaching and learning in schools. PDCC believes that effective teaching and learning in primary, acts as a foundation stone for higher education, but currently it does not happen in majority of our primary schools. Multi-grade situation in primary schools is one of the many reasons of low quality education. School Improvement in Multi-grade Situation (SIMS) was piloted in five schools aiming to improve the current Multi-grade Teaching (MGT) situation in schools. This study intended to explore some of the successes, challenges and lessons learned as a result of the SIMS intervention.*

*The focus of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the in multi-grade situation. For gathering information a number of inquiry tools were used. For example, ongoing assessment of teachers during workshop, field visit reports(field notes) of the Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) who facilitated the teachers of pilot schools, classroom observations of teaching and learning, formal (interviews) and informal discussion with students and teachers, and teacher reflective journals. The collected data was brought together in order to develop themes. Through the comparison of the data collected from various sources, it was found that SIMS creates better teaching and learning environment in the classroom, makes school happy place for the students to be in and provides opportunity of sharing resources. However, MGT demands for both the capacity and will of all the stakeholders especially the teachers.*

## **Introduction**

This paper gives a short history of developing and implementing a school improvement model called, “School Improvement in Multi-grade Situation SIMS”. It also briefly discusses the main components of the SIMS model. At the same time it highlights some of the success stories, as well as pointing out some of the challenges in the way of effective teaching and learning in Multi-grade situations as a result of the SIMS intervention in one of the primary schools. The paper



further shares some recommendations for the effective implementation of the SIMS model in schools where there is a multi-grade situation exists.

## **Background**

Since the establishment of the Professional Development Center in Chitral (PDCC), it has been committed to working with its partner education providers such as the AKES, P Chitral, Government Educational Department and the Private Educational Sector. The objective of the PDCC is improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools through the professional development of teachers, head-teachers and other stakeholders.

Aiming to meet some of the professional training needs of teachers in Chitral, the PDCC conducts short as well as longer certificate courses for teachers, head-teachers and managers from time to time. Besides the short courses, it is intended to develop some sort of school improvement models that could be replicable and would work towards the long term objectives of overcoming the educational impediments in Chitral.

A multi-grade situation in primary schools is one impediment in quality education. It arose during our need analysis survey, as well as during the stakeholders' conference. Most of the schools both in the AKES and the Government Education System and the major partners of the PDCC in Chitral have a multi-grade setting. Some surveys conducted in Chitral and Northern Area show that although in some schools students' learning achievements were better than some of the mono-grade schools, no effective learning was reported in the majority of the multi-grade settings. As reflected in the report on MGT by professional development team of AKES, P Chitral, July 2003, "No worthwhile tasks are given to the students who are not focused during MGT. As a result, students sit idle and hence, no effective learning takes place" Similarly, a teacher of a government primary school mentioned, "No teaching and learning takes place if one of us is absent, as one teacher can only control the students". By control he meant keeping the students quiet so that they would not misbehave. Approximately 90% of both the AKES and government primary schools are running in a multi-grade situation. Two to three teachers teach six classes having an overall enrollment from a minimum of 70 students to 180 students in a primary school (Annual Report AKES, P. 2003)

## **Aim of the SIMS Model Developed by PDCC**

SIMS aims to improve the current multi-grade teaching situation in schools through enhancing teachers' content knowledge and improving their pedagogical skills especially in multi-grade teaching. It also aims to enhance students' learning achievements and create awareness among communities regarding their roles and responsibilities in child education.

## **The Model**

School Improvement in Multi-grade Situation is embedded in four major components;

1. Negotiation with the partner organizations;
2. Professional development of primary school teachers;
3. Providing support to the teachers for the implementation of learning from the workshop in their actual classroom situation;
4. Exploring ways for on going support mechanism through their respective school management/parent Teacher Associations for the sustainability of the changes and for further improvement.

## **The SIMS Intervention**

After negotiation with our partner organizations, that is the first component of the model, SIMS was piloted in five schools, which included 2 government schools, 2 AKES - P and 1 private school. The reason of taking the five schools was that they represented our partner organizations and were easily accessible to PDCC. Each of these schools had a different setup and culture, but had a multi-grade setting/situation. The teachers went through an intensive workshop before starting MGT in the schools. After getting training at PDCC, the teachers went back to their respective schools where they were followed up by the PDTs from time to time as a part of the third and fourth component of the model.

The focus of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. For the data gathering, a number of inquiry tools were used. For example, on going assessment of teachers during workshop, field visit reports(field notes) of the (PDTs) who worked with the teachers, classroom observations, formal

(interviews) and informal discussion with students and teachers, and teacher reflective journals.

## **Tamer-e-Sirat Model School (TMS) Seen, Chitral**

### **School Profile**

The TMS is an English medium school situated at a distance of about eight kilometers from PDCC. Textbooks of Afaq publishers, which are in English, are used in the schools. There are four classrooms surrounded by a small boundary wall and a small assembly court where the students assemble for morning assembly and play during short break. There are five classes (Nursery, K-G, I, II & V), and grades III & IV are missing. Nursery and K-G classes are made sit in one room; while classes I, II & V have separate rooms prior to the SIMS intervention. Three classrooms were carpeted while there were desks and benches in one of the classrooms. There were four teachers to teach eighty two students.

### **Class-wise enrolment**

<b>Classes</b>	Nursery	KG	I	II	V
<b>Enrolment</b>	13	11	18	24	16

Though Nursery class and K-G would sit in one room, no Multi-grade Teaching (MGT) was happening. Teachers were found busy with one class without engaging the other class in meaningful learning.

The school used a time table that allocated periods of thirty-five to forty minutes for each lesson and observed a total of five to five-and-half hours of teaching a day. No time was allocated for Arts & Craft or for physical education in the daily timetable. Although TMS is an English medium school, most of the teaching is done in Khowar (mother tongue). Student-student interaction was almost all in Khowar.

Teachers used more or less activity based teaching. The students seemed to be confident enough, and they would try to answer the questions asked in Urdu but would hardly ask any questions.

# **SIMS Intervention and Achievement Analysis**

## **Professional Development of Teachers**

In the first phase of the SIMS Model, a four week workshop was organized for the teachers during summer vacations in order to save the students' learning time. Before conducting the workshop, a need analysis survey was conducted in some of the schools. This survey report helped the workshop facilitators to work with the teachers rather than working for them. Although the blue print of the workshop plan was developed, the process followed the constructivist approach looking at the emerging issues from the classroom. It started with elicitation of teachers' current practices in their respective schools. The facilitators tried to build on teachers' own current practices and linked it with different concepts and models of MGT.

## **Improvement in Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

At the beginning of the workshop the participants came out with the understanding of Multi-grade Teaching as teaching of more than two grades one by one. "Teaching more than one classes by one teacher is MGT", (composite quote, group work presentation). The facilitators tried to add to the previous understanding of the CPs of MGT, and shared Miller's model of Multi-grade Teaching with the CPs. As a result of the discussions on MGT, they came out with different understandings of MGT. One of the CPs mentioned in their reflection, "Keeping more than one classes in meaningful learning activities at one time by a single teacher is MGT and is very challenging". These types of discussions led to the discussing of different strategies regarding MGT. For example, reframing class-wise timetable, putting concepts in a sequential order, and developing unit plans were some strategies discussed by the CPs. Discussions on the mentioned strategies and techniques resulted in getting insight on both the positive and challenging aspects of MGT. A CP reflected, "Now I can teach easily in a multi-grade situation as unit planning and putting concepts into sequential order have helped me a lot". Another CP mentioned her views, "To me MGT seemed to be impossible, now although it still challenging, it's no more impossible".

Re-organization of the curriculum, especially putting concepts given in the textbooks in a sequential order (concept blocks) was one of the major components of the SIMS teacher workshop. The CPs found the activity very helpful. They reflected, "Now we understand how these concepts that are to be

taught at different level are interrelated. Now we can easily teach using concept blocks” (composite quote, reflective journals of CPs)

### **Improvement in Teachers’ Subject Content Knowledge**

Content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are clearly linked. One can hardly know how to teach a subject with ignorance of content. Miller, K (1997) also argues that just knowing the subject matter is not sufficient for teaching it. In order to enhance the CPs’ content knowledge and improve their pedagogical skills, a number of new ways of teaching were introduced during the workshop. Most of them shared their reflections saying, “We enjoyed working in groups. It is not only a good way of learning but also develops our confidence especially when we present our work” (composite quote, reflective journals of CPs). Their beliefs about teaching of different subject were changed as a CP shared her reflection, “I got the idea that science can be taught with simple things which are available everywhere in the environment”. “Now I know that science is not a boring subject. It is we the teachers who can make it either boring by teaching it the way we are teaching or choose to make it interesting by teaching it in a better way” (composite quote, reflective journals of CPs). Similarly, reflecting on the teaching of Social Studies in a primary school, a CP said, “Now I realize how important it to teach social studies in primary classes”. Reflecting on their own learning of mathematics and then their current teaching practices with regards to the subject, they perceived mathematics as a boring, difficult and dry subject both for students and teachers. During the workshop when they were introduced to some thinking activities like pattern seeking, problem solving, magic squares they said, “The boring math is becoming interesting” (composite quote, CPs informal discussion). Reflecting on language games and story telling in language teaching, especially in a multi-grade classroom, the CPs mentioned, “Story telling plays a vital role in the teaching of Language”, (composite quote, reflection of CPs)

### **Improvement as a Result of Changes Brought at School Level**

The teachers have initiated the following changes after receiving MGT training with the help of the PDTs during their visit to the school. They helped and guided the teachers in framing the changes in even more appropriate ways during the field visits to the school. Some of the visible changes and their results are discussed as under.

## **Structural Arrangements**

The teachers made Nursery class and K-G sit in one room and Class I & II in another room. This structural change allowed the teachers to teach four classes in a Multi-grade Situation (MGS). As a result, two teachers remained busy at a time, while one teacher was free to check home tasks of the students, lesson preparation and or to help teachers if there was any need. Another benefit of the changed seating arrangement was that one room was spared to be developed into a resource room and library. They also replaced the small classroom of grade V with a bigger one for MGS. This replacement made the classroom movement of students and the teachers easier. Now teachers could reach every student for guidance and facilitation. Since two classes sit in the same room, they helped each other. A student mentioned, “We are learning from our seniors”.

A new one hour timetable instead of the 40 minute time-table was introduced without disturbing the total school hours. The teachers found this new timetable helpful in doing sufficient activities in the classroom for effective learning. It became possible for the teachers to get sufficient time for giving individual attention to the students of both the classes in MGT situation. “40 minutes timetable was not appropriate to perform activity based teaching” (interview of the head-teacher)

Each teacher started developing unit planning based on concept blocks developed by the teachers. It was a challenging task, but the teachers seemed to be enthusiastic and they sat for late hours to develop such type of activities. “At the beginning we had to sit after school but it made our teaching easy. We put the similar concept of both the classes in a sequence. It helped us in planning lessons effectively” (Composite quote, informal discussion).

The school had no library and the students did not have access to reading materials other than textbooks before the SIMS intervention, and the introduction of mobile library service. A student said very enthusiastically, “Thank you very much for story books”. The students were not only reading story books, but also reproduced them in their own words both verbally and in writing. A student produced the story in pictorial form after reading the text.

## **Positive Attitude towards Teaching and Learning**

Answering to a question about what changes the students were noticing regarding the attitude of teachers after the SIMS workshop, one of the students did a role play showing how the teacher entered their classroom before and after the SIMS workshop and this was quite interesting. “Now, we feel shame

reflecting on our act of using stick”, said the teachers. Teachers were sharing the comments of the students saying, “Miss! What happened to you? You are now laughing and not beating us if we misbehave” This type of attitude not only lowered the absenteeism rate, but also developed a visible confidence among the students. Practice of basic social skills in school also improved students’ attitude towards learning. Sometimes students misbehave due to a lack of social skills and they have very little idea how to interact appropriately with their classmates.

### **Enhanced Teaching and Learning**

The students seemed to be more confident and motivated to learn. This appeared during the classroom teaching and learning observation by the PDTs, “Students were more interactive and took interest in activities. The students now perform better in weekly and monthly tests given to them. They do home tasks regularly,” (document analysis). Answering a question about the comparison before and after the SIMS intervention, the students mentioned, “We enjoy learning as teachers are now friendly and give us books to read, tell us stories, and allow us to play.” Students work-displays in the classroom, talking about the displays, writing on the notebooks and answering simple questions; are also a testament to the positive impact of the SIMS on students’ learning. Another student mentioned, “We are learning from our senior friends”.

Using low cost/no cost teaching material is an essential component of the SIMS model. Alvi (1992, p.2) sees the use of teaching material from the local environment as, “Low cost, no cost materials or in other words, teacher made materials should play a very important role in education”. Teachers have initiated improvising and using low cost/ no cost teaching materials. For example, they were making charts, drawing maps, making thermometers from plastic bottles, making card badges etc. “We enjoy drawing, coloring and making story using wall pocket-board (teachers have developed pocket board from cloth. They use picture cards, number cards, word cards for different purposes and it leads to student self learning facilitation)” (informal discussion with the students).

The introduction of a wall magazine made from old magazines, newspapers collected by the students and teachers has had a great impact not only on students’ learning, but also on the developing of healthy competition among the students and the subsequent sharing of information. Hoyle (1994) argues that a classroom that works for equality in which pupils and teachers are working together enable the learning process to occur successfully.

Student work-displays in the classroom received less importance before the intervention of the SIMS. Similarly, there was no time allocated for Art & craft (A&C) in the weekly timetable. With the inclusion of a 40 minute A&C class for each grade in the weekly timetable, numerous creative works were produced by the students. The students not only took interest in making dolls, animals from old pieces of cloths and mud, but also presented their work with confidence. Students could draw, color the drawings and display them and feel proud to do so. “I never thought that young children could do such creative work”, noted in the reflective journal of a teacher.

## **Challenges**

Although a number of improvements were observed, there were challenges with the SIMS model and some of them are highlighted.

“Iss MGT nay nak Mey dam kar dia”, reflection of a teacher. (It is too difficult to continue). This was the initial feeling of the teacher but it changed at later stage, “this MGT is becoming interesting as students enjoy it, taking interest in learning and coming to school happily”.

## **Lacking Pedagogical Skills with Reference to Multi-grade Teaching**

Teachers found the professional training given not sufficient to be skillful in putting concepts into sequential order, developing scheme of work, framing meaningful unit planning and being skillful to involve parents in students’ learning. To keep the students in meaningful learning activities, teachers need to plan challenging activities. This planning demands for skills, commitment and time which is no doubt challenging. Vincent, S. (1999) also argues that it is true that a multi-grade classroom requires more planning, collaboration, and professional development than mono-graded classroom.

## **Coming out from Routine Practice and Sustainability**

The teachers have been trained as a mono-grade teacher and were practicing it for a long time before the SIMS intervention. So, sometimes teachers remain under the pull of gravitational force of switching to comfort zone (Siddiqui, March 2003). There is need to support the teachers against the said in order to sustain the positive change.



## Lessons learned

We believe that the model can work even more effectively if the following factors are taken into consideration:

- Teachers' pedagogical skills with especial reference to Multi-grade Teaching would be enhanced through intensive workshops.
- There is need of sustainable support to the teachers at school.
- Appreciation of teachers' hard work, commitment and capabilities by management.
- There is also need for top-down pressure and for bottom-up initiatives by relevant stakeholders.
- Effective parental involvement in child learning would play a crucial role in better teaching and learning.
- There is need to enhance basic health & hygiene and physical education activities in schools.

## Conclusion

It is concluded that students are enjoying school and learning more than they did before. The teachers are more motivated and skilful and learning new methods of teaching. There are some contributing factors observed with these achievements which are worth mentioning. For example, teachers play a central role in MGT that involves commitment and motivation. Hargreaves (1995) argues that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. Sitting and working/planning after school, for school activities witness the commitment of the teachers. However, teachers need to be skillful to meet the requirements of creating learning friendly environment in multi-grade situation. The teacher must also be skillful to compete against the hindrances and the factors that force the teachers to switch back to they way they have been teaching for long time. So it becomes the responsibility of the school management to provide the teachers with professional development facilities to enhance and update their knowledge as well as skills in general, and with reference to MGT in particular. While concluding, it should be said that for implementing multi-grade programmes, it must be taken into account both the capacity and the will of all of the stakeholders, especially the teachers, for encouraging greater depth in children's social, academic, and intellectual

development. Keeping in mind the said factors, SIMS can be replicated effectively in schools where there is a multi-grade situation.

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# Teachers Professional Development for Quality Education

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## Abstract

Quality is at the heart of education and teachers play crucial role to provide quality education. This belief encourages us to state that the quality in education depends on teachers' role, which set scenario for the students. Every teacher has his / her own impact on his / her students. But what is it that enables the teachers to have the greatest impact? In this context there are several professional development programmes offered for the teachers in different parts of the world to build capacity of teachers so they can better serve the needs of the growing population.

This paper attempts to share some of the experiences, acquired during implementation and monitoring the programme. The data provides evidences as how professional development cropped up as a result of these courses through mentors' reflective journals, portfolios, classroom observations, group work, discussions and presentations. This paper specifically highlights the changes that took place in the school culture and pedagogical content knowledge due to the continuous guidance and support from the tutors and District Co-coordinators (DCs) through follow-up process and close monitoring system.

## Introduction

Teachers are always recognized as key players in the education system and therefore professional development of these teachers is crucial if the quality of education is to be enhanced. Since these teachers are responsible for providing quality education to students, there is need for quality professional development programmes.

The worth of professional development of teachers is recognized in all educational policies since the independence of Pakistan. The current education policy also highlights the teacher's role in implementing educational reforms at the grass root level (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 1998).

This paper discusses a field-based professional development programme for Primary School teachers with a strong mentoring component. It also highlights how participants of this programme enhanced their pedagogical content knowledge while engaged in face-to-face sessions and in the field.

From the Course Participants' (CPs) reflections on the programme, their reflective journals, facilitators' experiences and observations of this programme, it appears that this programme has developed the teachers professionally, which is the basic element for improving quality of education.

## **Background**

AKU-IED is a national partner in the implementation of 'Education Sector Reform Assistance' (ESRA) initiatives funded by USAID. Fundamentally, ESRA is about two things: school improvement and the ways and means by which key stakeholders throughout the system can continuously identify and solve their own problems regarding school improvement. AKU-IED focuses on improving the performance of teachers and other stakeholders by offering a variety of professional development opportunities leading to school improvement. In order to build upon the capacity at grassroots level, AKU -IED plans to offer the programme: Certificate in Primary Education (Mentoring Focus) for Primary school teachers, Supervisors in Primary Educations (SPEs), Learning Coordinators (LCs), Resource Persons (RPs) and Senior Stakeholders.

The Certificate in Education: Primary Education Programme (Mentoring Focus) is a field - based programme for Mentors from the nine selected District of Balochistan and Sindh under the Education Sector Reform Assistance to the Government of Pakistan by USAID through Research Triangle Institute - Education Sector Reform Assistance (RTI-ESRA).

The programme specifically focuses on developing the participants' 'Mentoring Skills' that can allow them to establish professional relationships to be boosted up between individuals based on their needs, aspiration, abilities, and the available resources. Therefore, throughout the programme participants will get ample opportunities to explore mentoring skills in order to work effectively and help their colleagues for professional growth. Furthermore, 'critical thinking' and 'reflective practice' will be the common themes, which will be embedded in the programme. Whilst throughout the programme they would be encouraged to develop abilities to question their own beliefs and practices, analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend options, make comparisons, draw inferences,

evaluate arguments and come with alternatives to minimize professional challenges.

## **Structure of the Programme**

The programme has been developed as a field-based programme comprising three phases of 300 contact hours, spread over a period of three months.

### **Phase – I (AKU-IED)**

During this phase at AKU – IED, the Course Participants (CPs) will be encouraged to rethink their existing beliefs, attitudes and practices towards the children and teaching/learning processes. After completion of this phase CPs are expected to

- Develop their skills to reflect upon their existing teaching practices and their role for curriculum enrichment,
- Enhanced their content knowledge in the core subject areas of primary education
- Prepare low – cost and high thought instructional material in the concerned areas.
- Developing mentoring skills
- Plan and test newly learnt ideas during the phase – I for performing proactive role as a teacher and as a mentor.

### **Phase - II (Field based)**

During this phase the CPs are expected to practice their newly acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in their respective contexts. Conduct and evaluate a workshop for their cluster school teachers (mentees). In order to help the CPs in their professional talks, the professional development team and the District Coordinator (DC) of that district will provide follow-up support during the field work. As a teacher the CPs will also Co-plan and Co- teach with mentees in the classrooms? They will share their experiences the facilitator regarding classroom teaching and prepare a teaching portfolio.

## **Phase - III**

This is a face-to-face phase at AKU – IED, the CPs are expected to share their field experiences with the facilitators. More specifically the phase focuses on:

- Disseminate learning experiences amongst themselves and reflect critically on maximum utilization of their expertise to minimize their challenges.
- Continue enhancement of core subject areas
- Develop an action plan of 300 contact hours programme (192 hours face-to-face and 108 hours field-based component) for cluster school teachers.

## **Theoretical Framework**

- Professional development
- Mentoring and cluster based mentoring programme

## **Professional Development**

Professional development is a broad term that can refer to a variety of education, training, and development opportunities. For the purpose of this, the term will be applied to a full range of activities that have the common goals of increasing the knowledge and skills of the staff members. Professional development of school staff is defined as, systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs and the learning out-comes of the students. There is vast literature available that focuses the importance of teachers' professional development to improve quality of education. Most of the educationists agreed with the ideas of linking educational reforms with the professional development of teachers (Borko et al, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Fullan, 2002).

In order to implement any professional development programme, one can think about the needs of the context and the teachers. However it was agreed by all educationists that professional development of the teachers is essential for improving quality of education, but still there is not only a one model for this purpose. (Guskey, 2000) suggests that for teachers' professional development the contextual needs should be considered.

## **Mentoring and cluster based mentoring programme**

Mentor not only touches someone's life .... They have the potential to touch and change the life of the nation. (Newsweek, 1999)

Mentoring is not a new concept; it has existed formally and informally in schools for a long time. Mentoring features desirable aspects of professional development

Informally elders play 'mentors' role for the young in families. This culture is reflected in schools as well: senior teachers often play mentors' role for novice teachers. In recent years these informal interactions between veterans and novices has considerably changed into formal interaction. Now, mentoring of novice teachers by veteran teachers is a central feature of many beginning teachers' programmes for their professional and personal development.

Mentoring is generally defined as a process of establishing personal and professional contacts between a mentor (more experienced) and a mentee (less experienced) for the purpose of professional development.

Anderson and Shannon (1998) describe that a mentor serves as a role model, sponsor, encourager, counselor and friend to a less skilled or less experience person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and personal growth. The above definitions indicate the importance of mentors' role, in providing support to the primary school teachers from less benefited areas. These mentors are performing the same job in their clusters as mentioned in the literature; they are working for the professional and personal growth of teachers from the cluster schools. During the programme, the mentors groomed and developed to facilitate mentees during workshops to expose them to new teaching/learning ideas, as indicated in the literature. The mentoring process is usually a one-to-one interaction between two individuals based on the needs of the mentees and the skills of the mentors. Qaisarani et al (1999) and Lalwani (1999) in their research studies in the context of Balochistan consider mentoring programme as an innovative programme for in-service teachers. They showed that cluster based mentoring programme helped in improving the quality of education at the grass root level.

## **Findings**

As mentioned in the background about the programme, it was a field based mentoring programme, which was designed in a way that the mentors after completion of the programme, will implement field based mentoring programme

for primary teachers from the cluster schools. The main aim of FBMP was for the participants (mentees) of these programmes to develop themselves professionally and personally through a series of workshops conducted by the mentors. Development of the mentees helped them to create friendly and supportive learning environment for the children, which will improve the quality of education in schools.

It appeared from our observations and discussions during the programme that the mentees have developed in the following areas

- Reflective practice
- Role of mentor
- Pedagogical content knowledge

## **Reflective practice**

Reflective practice was one of the major themes of the programme. Throughout the programme CPs were involved in different activities, which helped them to reflect on their existing notions about teaching and learning and to re-conceptualize these notions. At the end of each activity, the CPs were asked to reflect on that activity, to relate it to their real context, and to see whether the activity would be appropriate for their contexts or whether it needed modifications. The CPs realized the effectiveness of reflections for professional development and for their personal growth. As one of the mentors shared,

Reflective practice is an important aspect of our profession that without it I think it is not possible for the teacher to see his/her level of professional and personal growth. (Zamarrud, Turbat, Balochistan)

The CPs were also engaged in writing reflective journals in order to reflect on the different activities introduced to them during the sessions. They wrote their reflective journals on regular bases and shared these with facilitators and their peers. Written feedback on these reflections developed CPs understanding about teaching and learning through reflective practice. In these journals the CPs raised questions for clarifications, and even brought in some suggestions for the tutors. One of the CP mentioned in his journal:

Writing reflections was difficult for me initially but as time passed I improved writing journal through the feedback of tutors.



In the journal writing I got opportunity to discuss issues and raise questions about the points which I did not understand during the sessions. (Kashif Kakar, Qila Saifullah).

Through reflective practice the CPs have recognized the importance of observations; they have keenly observed their own and their colleagues' performance during classroom activities. As a CP shared her thinking during group discussions by saying,

I think reflective practice is the most important part of the programme. It enabled me to rethink about my practices as a teacher. I am now thinking about bringing changes in my teaching methods. (Darya Khatoon, Sukkar)

The reflections of the CPs and facilitators' observations reflect the fact that the programme provided the CPs a chance to rethink their existing practices and notions about teaching and learning. They developed habits of thinking about the positive and negative aspects of any idea they learn during the course. This exposure enabled them to realize that childrens' interest and needs should be valued rather imposing their own ideas.

## **Role of Mentor**

During the programme, the CPs were also exposed to the activities in order to enhance mentoring skills and to understand their roles as mentors. The programme predominantly focuses on the theoretical and practical aspects of the role of a mentor at a primary school level. As mentioned in the background of the programme, as mentors, these teachers have to establish a Learning Resource Center at a central school, conduct and evaluate a series of workshops for teachers from primary schools, co-plan and co-teach with the mentees in their classrooms.

During the session of mentoring, rich discussions were carried out there, in response to the many questions raised by CPs. Understanding the notion itself took longer and meant that CPs had to view themselves through different lenses.

As mentors, CPs were expected to perform different tasks. To expose them to some of these, the team emphasized developing CPs understanding about planning, conducting and evaluating workshops. CPs were asked to plan and conduct workshops in groups on different topics. These topics were related to core primary subjects areas such as languages, mathematics, science, social studies. Generic topics included how children learn, how adults learn, lesson

planning, and multi-grade teaching. During the planning facilitators helped CPs in designing activities and preparing teaching material by using low and no cost material. The CPs used to ask questions and give suggestions to improve the workshops conducted by their colleagues. The facilitators' feed back was also helpful for the CPs to improve the activities and time management. As some of the CPs reflected,

During the workshop we learnt that how the time could be managed.

Another CP said,

By discussing with the group members we not only learnt about the topic but also built our confidence.

After going through the planning and conducting of workshop CPs were above to conduct workshops for teachers from their own clusters. As one of the CPs Adil Jahngeer said,

I think it is now possible for us to plan and conduct the workshop for mentees. He further said, "We have developed this skill at [AKU] IED. (23 July, 2004)

While observing and attending regular sessions, CPs were able to think and acquire some understanding of how more than one teachers could be engaged in planning and teaching. Facilitators' support and guidance helped them to plan and teach in a real classroom. During these sessions the CPs learnt to formulate SMART objectives related to the particular topics. As one of the CP wrote in his reflective journal,

During planning, I learnt that how the objectives of the lessons could be established". (Asmat-Ullah, Killa Saifullah, July 26, 2004)

Another CP reflected that,

The activities, during the teaching in real classroom helped students to broaden their thinking abilities. They were interacting with each other to complete the task. They came up with the results beyond our expectations. At this moment I realized that this is the real way of teaching. I will share these experiences with the teacher of my cluster.

He further said,

It was wrong that this is only the teacher who knows every thing but a student can think as good as teacher. (Bismillah, Killa Saifullah, 26 July, 2004)

Through observation of different classes it seemed that due to positive behavior of CPs that was very polite and soft, students were encouraged to interact freely with each other and with their teachers (CPs). During teaching they were trying to use almost all the teaching strategies. Forming groups of students and a creating friendly environment, where students were allowed to discuss, they were manipulating with given objects and at the end of the activities the students presented their work.

## **Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

One of the main objectives and expectations of the programme was to enhance CPs pedagogical content knowledge in core subject areas such as Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Language (Urdu and English) in order to be an effective teachers as well as effective mentors. Consequently, sessions like planning and conducting workshops, and engaging in real classroom teaching and being involved in group tasks were planned in order to develop mentoring as well as teaching skills of the CPs. It was observed during the session that CPs were actively involved in different activities. Eliciting current notions, beliefs and practices regarding teaching of core subjects helped facilitators to be aware of their opinions about teaching of those subjects. The views of CPs regarding enhancement of pedagogical content knowledge showed the effectiveness of these sessions:

Before the programme in my opinion Social Studies was a boring subject, for that reason I always avoid teaching it. Now I realized that it is interesting and valuable subject to build childrens' attitude and develop them as a reflective citizen. The way in which I involved as learner provides me the opportunity to learn a lot and now I willing to teach this subject in my school. (Saeeda Bashir, Gawadar)

In Mathematics session I learnt that children can solve mathematical problems if we provide them the chance to think logically and discussing with each other about mathematical problems. (Gul Muhammed, Chagai)

For me language teaching means only to complete the text books just by reading and giving with some question answers and grammar. But the language session provided me the opportunity to realize the importance of language skills that are reading, writing, speaking, listening, observing and comprehension. (M. Aslam, Killa Saifullah)

In Science sessions we learnt about the importance of science education at primary level and how science concepts effectively learn by using different process skill such as observation, prediction, classification and explanation. As we have learn in our session concepts of 'SENSES' and 'MATTER' through simple hands-on activities, we can use them in our context with teachers and students. (Lal Muhammed, Chagai)

The above reflections from CPs showed how activities introduced during the programme helped CPs to develop their teaching skills as well as mentoring skills. The achievements of CPs throughout the programme demonstrate that teachers started have thinking of deviating from textbook-oriented activities and are trying to be more creative in their teaching approaches. This has enabled them to overcome misconceptions as well as enhance their own understanding of core subjects. Apart from the enhancement of pedagogical content knowledge, CPs have learnt to develop instructional material by using low cost and no cost material. CPs have used this material while engaged in real classroom teaching. During discussions, CPs realized that using low cost and no cost material would be helpful for them in their context; they also realized that the mentees should also be exposed to this activity during the workshops.

In light of the achievements of the programmes mentioned above, these mentoring programmes supported and helped the teachers of the Primary schools from remote areas of Sindh and Balochistan in their personal and professional growth. CPs' reflections recognize the quality of the programme. Mentors who have graduated from cohorts 1 and 2 of the mentoring programme have been almost completed a one-year cluster based mentoring programme successfully in their respective Districts, while th mentors from Cohorts 3 to 8 are still engaged in conducting these programmes. It appears from the feed back of the DCs (AKU-IED based District Coordinators) that these mentors are not only motivating the Primary School Teachers from cluster schools to participate in the workshops but also introducing innovative teaching techniques during the workshops. These mentors encouraged the teachers to plan lessons before going into the classes and created a friendly environment to promote child-centered

teaching/learning approach. With the cooperation of the DCs, mentors established a team in the districts to implement professional development activities. These mentors collaborated with their colleagues in planning, conducting and evaluating workshops. The mentors are also involved in follow-up activities during which these mentors provide support to their mentees in planning and implementing lessons in their classrooms. During follow-up visits the mentors also observe the impact of activities on students' learning, which have been introduced by the mentees.

To ensure the quality of the programme AKU-IED based District Coordinators have been placed in the nine Districts. These DCs maintained the records of all the professional development activities carried out by the mentors. The mentors supported by these DCs in maintaining the master file of each and every activity. The mentees are also keeping the records of their activities in their classrooms; these mentees are also encouraged by the mentors to write reflective journals. During our visits to these districts we got an opportunity to see these resources and discussed with the mentees and about the benefits they were getting from the workshops, some of the mentees shared their views as,

Although the mentor is from us but I am surprised how he has learnt so many things, the methods he taught us would be helpful for us to teach our students about the difficult concepts.

Another mentee reveals,

The workshops helped me to understand how the children learn, I have never thought about the childrens' interest, I have always imposed, whatever I want to teach them, but now I have realized that as teachers we have to care about childrens' level of understanding and their interest.

Apart from mentors, another role played by these teachers in their context is that of classroom teachers. Mentors are asked to spend four days in their schools and two days for professional activities for clusters. As classroom teachers these mentors introduced newly established ideas in their classes, it was observed during our visits to respective districts of Sindh and Balochistan. It was good to see that the students were engaged in group activities; they were actively participating in these activities and enjoying the lessons. The encouraging aspect was that these mentors allowed their colleagues to sit in their classes and asked to share their feedback about the lesson at the end. It showed that these mentors not only worked for the cluster school teachers but they were trying to bring about changes in the existing school culture to improve the quality of education.

## Conclusion

The quality of mentoring programme can be evident from the impact of the programme on mentees' cluster schools and students' progress.

The mentoring programme developed the mentors professionally and they are still benefiting from the field based mentoring programme while planning and conducting workshops. Mentors continue to observe mentees during follow-up activities, provide them feedback, and allow them to review and reflect upon their own practices. Mentors have become more confident and are creating environments in their clusters that stimulate the interest of mentees to be lifelong learners. Mentors encourage mentees and their colleagues to focus on students' learning and attainment and set challenging targets that will raise the quality of education.

Mentees are implementing acquired knowledge and skills in their classes to motivate students' effective learning. The interest of mentees in bringing about changes in their teaching methods demonstrate that the mentors who conduct workshops for them are committed to the profession and the system and the mentoring programme gave them lots of opportunities to help others. It showed that the mentors who are now responsible to conduct mentoring programmes in their districts have developed themselves to support their colleagues, students and the system. This all has been achieved through a quality teacher education programme, that is, "Certificate in Education: Primary Education Programme (Mentoring Focus).

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# **Quality in Early Childhood Education: Assessing Early Child Development - A Holistic Approach for Ages 3-6 years**

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## **Abstract**

*Early childhood lays strong foundations for adulthood. Experiences, positive or negative, during this period have long-lasting effects. The purpose of this paper is to underscore the need for an integrated approach towards early years, particularly pre-school period (3 to 6 years). The article also introduces to 'Record of Early Childhood Growth and Development' developed by Human Development Programme of Aga Khan University to measure holistic child development.*

*Key Words: Holistic, Integrated, Child development, Assessment*

## **Introduction**

A Child's early years are critically important, for they provide the foundation for rest of the individual's life, both as an adolescent and as an adult (Young, 2000). It is a unique opportunity period for every individual where they undergo significant social, intellectual, emotional and physical development. Positive stimulation during this period not only promotes optimal development but will also enable the child to thrive and survive in adulthood. This knowledge is supported with increasing research and evidence from natural and social sciences, historical studies, genetics, epidemiology and neurosciences (Mustard, 2000).

Due to the recent discoveries from neurosciences, we are now beginning to understand the links between brain development and its effects on learning, behaviour and health throughout an individual's lifespan. There are sensitive periods when a young child requires positive stimulation for the brain to establish the neural pathways and with this also happens the elimination of those elements that are not being stimulated (McCain & Mustard, 1999). During the pre-school years the brain and nervous system grows rapidly and at six years it attains 90% of its adult size (Tanner, 1978).



## An Enabling Environment

Brain Development is very much vulnerable to environmental influences (health, nutrition, sensory stimulation and care) and their effects are long-lasting (Carnegie, 1994). Essentially, most experts agree that every facet of a child's development is the result of some complex interaction between nature and nurture. The central processes of early childhood development (e.g. physical maturation, attachment, symbol use) are influenced by external factors.

The key elements of child development, physical, mental and social & emotional are not distinct, and cannot be compartmentalized in to health, nutrition, sensory stimulation and care. It is entirely an integrated approach and deficiency in any of these factors or its determinants could cause immeasurable disparities. Health, nutrition, stimulation and care interact for better growth and development as demonstrated by the flow diagram:

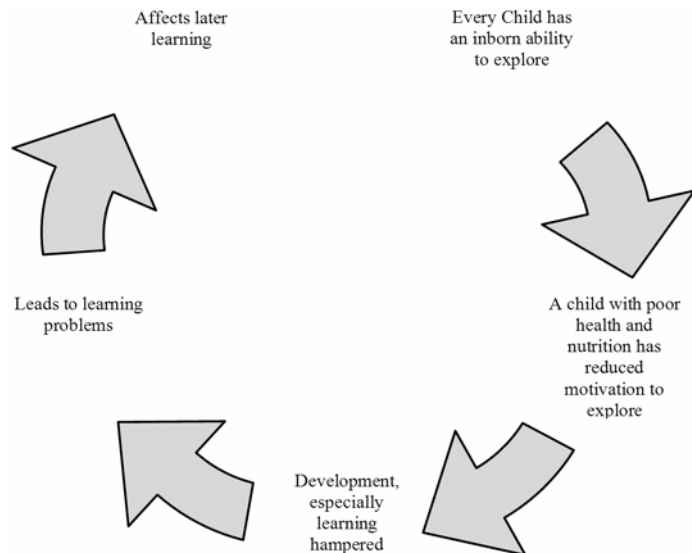


Figure 1: Model of Holistic Child Development. Source: Adapted from “Early Childhood Counts” (Evans, Myers & Ilfeld, 2000)

Every child is born with an ability to explore and the skill is mastered by praxis (practice of a skill). Those with poor health or / and nutrition have reduced motivation to explore. This hampers overall development, in this case learning, which further leads to learning problems at school and could later affect earning opportunities.

## Approaches towards Early Years

‘Early childhood’ is generally defined as a period from birth to six years. Early Child Development (ECD) begins even before birth. ‘Development’ refers to the process in which child learns to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment (Evans, Myers & Ilfeld, 2000). ECD encapsulates all the facets of child development, including health, nutrition, sensory stimulation and interaction; which are prerequisite for optimal child development. Early Childhood Education (ECE), the word ‘education’ pertains to school education during pre-school years and concentrates more on the cognitive development, in other words, learning.

Learning, in general of course, is very crucial to development but cannot happen in isolation. It is defined as a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, habits, and values through experience, experimentation and observation (Myers, 1995). The age group 3-6 years is commonly referred to as Early Learning Period or Pre-school period. This is the time when the child enters school for formal learning. Along with cognitive development, socialization with peers and caregivers also broadens. ECE inculcates self-esteem and confidence, and this plays crucial role in mental development (Khan, 2004).

Both ECD and ECE are different but overlapping approaches. ECD espouses health, nutrition, birth registration, early stimulation, care and education; while ECE is more focused upon cognitive and psychosocial development only (UNICEF).

‘Learning’ and ‘education’ are embedded in care and development (Myers, 2001). When we talk about ECE, the outcomes are high school enrollments, school retentions, intellectual and academic achievements, low delinquency rates, better job opportunities. The fact is that these can only be achieved by a holistic approach, taking in to consideration health, nutrition, psychosocial stimulation and care. Holistic child development is imperative for mental, physical, social & emotional development. Although ECE recognizes as well that child development should be holistic in cultural context, ECE programs are more likely to be associated with education (Myers, 2001).

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† Some schools of thought describe ‘early years’ as a period from conception or birth to eight years.

Keeping in view the need to assess and support holistic child development in communities, the Human Development Programme of Aga Khan University has developed *Record of Early Childhood Growth and Development* and *Suggestions to Caregivers* for 3-6 years old children. Research experiences in communities during 2002, determined a dire need to develop a culturally relevant instrument for measuring child development. A standard instrument or standardized outcome measure to assess child development does not exist so far. The majority of the instruments developed by the 'Minority world' do not reflect the true norms of our population, which makes it more difficult to choose and adapt these instruments to this part of the world.

The *Record* is intended to assess growth (height and weight) and physical, mental, social and emotional development of children of ages 3-6 years. Another important component of this *Record* is 'Suggestions to Caregivers' which are to be used to disseminate information to primary caregivers, usually mothers, about child nurture for better growth and development.

## **Methodology**

### **Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development**

The *Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development* is a follow-up child record to track the brain development of children, 3 to 6 years old, over time. The child record has 2 main sections. The first is the assessment section providing the opportunity to assess growth and development, which is followed by caregivers' suggestions, which are intended to sensitize caregivers' for importance of child nurture. The *Record* is intended to assess the association of physical growth and brain development with the child's nurturing environment. It is developed to observe growth and development over time and to gauge the age, where the acquisition of various functional abilities occurs.

Development is broadly divided in to 3 trajectories: Physical, Learning and Behavioural. These trajectories are tracked by means of four domains:

- Gross and fine motor
- Language

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• Dr. Bilal Iqbal, Department of Community Health Sciences, The Aga Khan University Medical College, 2002; unpublished data.

- Cognition
- Social & emotional

For each domain, there is a sub-set of functional abilities, varying in number from 4 to 8, to indicate the development of the functions of brain networks, and also to reflect associations with the nature of the child’s social environment.

Table 1: Functional abilities considered in the *Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development* for each of the four domains of child development.

<b>Domains</b>	<b>Functional Abilities</b>
Motor Development	Catches a large ball Throws a ball towards a target Hops forward Catches a bounced tennis ball with both hands The child dresses himself completely Colour within lines Copy a triangle Ties a simple knot
Language Development	To associate a sound with its symbol Tells a story Writes his first name Names colours
Cognitive Development	Arranges objects by increasing size Repeats a pattern in sequence Recognizes patterns Counts in sequence Works out simple addition and subtraction mentally Reads the hours of a clock
Social & Emotional Development	Toilet habits Follow simple rules in a game Managing toileting needs Resorts to temper tantrums Child’s general emotional state

## **Salient Features of *Record of Early Childhood Growth and Development***

- Tried on about 1000 urban and rural children and modified accordingly
- Results of testing has shown that the Record can be effectively used to asses the age of acquisition of functional abilities
- Community based workers with at least Matric education (Secondary school), and a 3-weeks training on ECD can effectively use this Record.
- Functional abilities and suggestions are illustrated in order to help illiterate caregivers
- Available in 3 Languages (English, Urdu, Sindhi)
- The caregiver, for her information and record retains a copy of Child Record.
- The assessment section is accompanied by Suggestions to sensitize caregivers for better child nurture.
- The Record is actually being implemented in two rural communities of Sind and Baluchistan on more than 900, 3-6 years old children.

## **Developmental Trajectories**

### **Physical Development**

It includes physical growth as well as gross and fine motor development. Scientists believe that the sensitive period for gross motor development is at its maximum from birth to 5 years. During the pre-school period significant advances occur in motor control involving both the large muscles, such as those used in jumping, running and climbing; and the fine muscles used in writing, cutting and tying a knot.

The purpose of the functional abilities that we selected for this record is based on the child's:

1. Increasing ability to perceive body size, shape and position
2. Increasing body strength,

3. Increase in bilateral coordination between the right and left sides, and the upper and lower body parts, and
4. Increasing coordination between hands and eyes.

Again, physical development is largely determined by nutritional status, environmental stimulation, good health and appropriate care. The following graph will enhance further understanding:

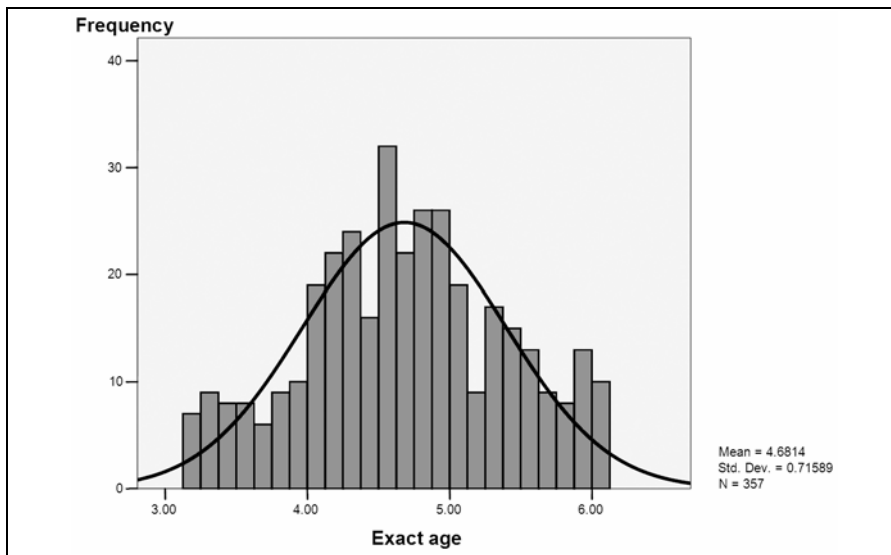


Figure 2: Kicks a large ball towards a target

This graph clearly demonstrates the age of acquisition for ‘Kicks a large ball towards a target’ is normally distributed. The mean age of acquisition is 4 years and 8 months and the standard deviation is  $\approx$  8 months. The graph clearly demonstrates that there are children who are able to acquire this ability even before 4 years, probably due to better health, nutrition, stimulation & care. On the other hand, there is subsequent number of children who acquired this skill after they crossed 5 years. The reason could be malnourishment (Children malnourished for longer period of time are likely to have delayed motor development), lack of stimulus or opportunity to practice.

Following is an example to demonstrate an association between malnutrition and acquisition of a functional ability.



Figure 3: Catches a bounced tennis ball with both hands

The graph clearly demonstrates a normal distribution for the age of acquisition of 'Catches a bounced tennis ball with both hands' with mean of 5 years and 2 months and standard deviation  $\pm 7$  months. The minimum age of acquisition of this functional ability is 3 year -2 months; again a myriad of factors could be involved. Upon stratifying at various age levels, the effect of acquisition of the functional ability is significantly associated (at 0.25 level of significance) with malnutrition (underweight). This clearly emphasizes the role of nutrition on the acquisition of functional ability.

## Learning (Language and Cognitive Development)

Language is an efficient way of communicating thoughts and feelings. It includes all the skills that will help the child, to read, write and to express their ideas. The sensitive period for acquiring language and language skills begins before 1 year, and peaks during pre-school years. All forms of language, that is, expressive and receptive (story telling), as well as written language (recognition of letters or sounds) is learnt and mastered during pre-school period.

For cognitive development, curiosity is the basic driving force leading to exploration, which provides sensory inputs and the opportunity to learn from sensory perception. Recognition and understanding the meaning of symbols are indicators of such learning. Also creativity involves imagination and is a prominent feature of normal child. Cognitive development includes memory, problem solving, and numerical understanding (Mikulencak, 1999). Cognitive

development spurts during the 2nd year of life (Thatcher, Walker & Guidice, 1987) and continues till puberty, but with some limitations (Doherty, 1999). Cognition and language development both happen in close coordination.

## **Behavioural Development**

It comprises of social and emotional development. Emotional development includes the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behaviour, to develop empathy for others and to be able to sustain relationships (Denham, 1998). Social development involves the process of acquiring socially desirable characteristics, which are values and norms. The pre-school years are the peak sensitive periods for Social & Emotional development. The sensitive period for emotional development starts at birth and wanes at puberty (Begley, 1996); while peer social competence begins around 3 years and extends up to 6 or 7 years (Doherty 1997). Preschool period is the time when the child's social circle starts to expand and they spend significant amounts of time with their peers and teachers. They learn the rules of behaviour (socialization and expression of emotions) and self-help skills. For example voluntary control of bowel is a social act but mainly depends on reflex, brain functions and neuronal connections; controlled by higher cortical functions.

## **Conclusions**

Child development is an integrated phenomenon and has massive influences of all sorts. The interrelation between positive stimulation during pre-school years and nutrition is very well demonstrated by the above mentioned results. Nonetheless, the associations with health and care can also be demonstrated. In terms of functional outcomes, experts agree this is likely to result in improved indicators of human development (such as improved school achievements, peer interactions).

Child centered, family focused, community based, holistic care and education during pre-school years is essential for securing the well being and rights of all children. The *Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development* attempts to integrate the different facets for optimal child development in the assessment procedure, and encourages a programme of communication with the primary caregiver to support child nurture.



There is a great deal of potential for further development of a quantitative instrument for school going children to assess holistic child development, with involvement and support from the education sector, especially preschool teachers and trainers, based on the modified version of *Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development* or other suitable instruments.

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# Least Common Multiple of Teacher Leadership Styles: Implication for Classroom

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## Abstract

*In a school, a teacher, as a leader, interacts directly with the students to develop their cognition for a desired outcome. At the same time s/he also forms a caring relationship with them not only to guide them academically but also socially and spiritually. Students also have certain capacity for their own learning. This capacity to large extent influences by teacher's role in the classroom. Hence three factors have major influence to shape effectiveness of a classroom. In the study reported in this paper, combinations of these factors were sought and presented in three dimensional models. Eight different combinations (models) emerged by considering extreme existence (+) or extinction (-) of the three factors in order to specify a particular leadership style for teacher leadership.*

*In order to explore the implication of these different styles in a classroom, a list of eight most important aspects of a classroom were identified through literature and later on validated by experts and practitioners. The influence of the above three factors on these eight aspects were opined from experienced teachers and head teachers. Most of the teachers and head teachers opined that the presence of all the three factors is essential for an effective classroom.*

## Introduction

Leadership and pedagogy are two important notions in the education literature and have been discussed widely (e.g. Bastien, 1999; Dupont, 1982; Frost & Durrant, 2003; Grace, 1995; Heimlich & Norland, 2002; Hopkins, 2003; MacNeill & Silcox, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1998; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). One notion is about leading or controlling human beings and the other is about educating them. An integration of these two concepts, which are sufficiently complex on their own, gives rise to a new concept in teacher leadership: pedagogical leadership.

When we talk about the teacher as leader in the classroom, a few factors come up that impact classroom dynamics. Among these factors, a minimum number is necessary for effective classroom activities. The Least Common Multiple (LCM) refers to the minimum that is needed to enable a particular state or event.

Building on the same notion, this paper identifies a combination of factors required for effective teacher leadership in a classroom situation. The study reported in this paper, specifically discusses the following questions: (a) What are the most important aspects of classroom dynamics?; (b) What are the factors impacting the identified aspects?; and (c) What are the possible combinations of these factors to constitute a specific leadership style and implications of each style on the identified aspects?

## **Methodology**

### **Development of the Model**

Based on Riden's (1987) 3-D Managerial Grid for leadership styles and theories related to pedagogy (as discussed by Altet, 1994; Houssaye, 1994; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Meirieu, 1993;), the three most important factors impacting different aspects of a classroom were identified. Combinations of these factors were sought and presented in three dimensional models. For this purpose, each factor was assigned one axis (as chosen by Riden) to generate visuals for these models. In order to avoid complexity, only those combinations were discussed, that emerged by considering extreme existence (+) or extinction (-) of the identified factors, in order to specify a particular leadership style for teacher leadership.

A list of the eight most important aspects of a classroom was developed after a review of literature. The list was validated by experts and practitioners. Implications for each model of these aspects were discussed in the light of points of view of different experts available in the literature.

### **Validation of Implications of the Identified Styles on Different Aspects of a Classroom**

In order to validate the implications of the identified styles in a classroom, a small scale survey was done in Karachi (Pakistan). For this purpose an open-ended questionnaire was developed and administered to over 15 teachers and five school heads. In the questionnaire, respondents were requested to: (a) name each combination of factors of different leadership styles, using the literature available on that topic; and (b) state implications associated with each combination for all the eight identified aspects of a classroom. Before administering the questionnaire, an orientation was given to them in order to understand the purpose of the study, implications associated with the name of

each leadership style and the eight factors of the classroom. During data collection, formal and informal discussions further clarified any issues.

## Review of Literature

### Leadership

There are more than 350 definitions of leadership (Henderson 2003). Thousands of studies have been conducted to identify characteristics distinguishing leaders from non-leaders and, more importantly, distinguishing effective leaders from ineffective leaders. We still lack a clear and indisputable understanding of the notion. Because of the large scope of the construct, there is no consistent and universally agreed-upon definition of leadership: “within the field of educational research, ambiguity and confusion surrounds the notion of leadership” (Foster 2004, p.35). Hopkins (2003) considers the literature on educational leadership as problematic because:

... most commentators, certainly those writing during the past ten years or twenty years, tend to conflate their own views about what leadership should be with their descriptions of what leadership actually is and fail to discipline other positions by reference to empirical. (p. 57)

However, it is clear that “leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve the purpose” (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p. 28). Northouse (2004, p. 3) also considers leadership as a process “whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. Frost and Durrant (2003) state that “leadership is a concept that can be illuminated using three key words: values, vision, and strategy” (p. 174). In order for a leader to be able to direct a group or an individual towards a goal, he or she must be able to exert influence or guide the thoughts or behaviours of others (Bass, 1990; Hollander & Offerman, 1990; House & Podsakoff, 1994). This process contains two necessary and interrelated parts: leadership and followership. However, in Predvall’s view “leaders must let vision, strategies, goals, and values be the guide-post for action and behaviour rather than attempting to control others” (1994, pp. 30-31).

Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) define leadership as follows:

It is a process consisting in influencing the objectives of work and the strategies of a group or an organization; to influence the

actors of an organization to establish strategies and to achieve the goals; to influence the operation and the identity of a group and, finally, to influence the culture of an organization. (p. 149)

Leadership is much more than simple individual behavior. The basic variable which comes out from this definition is the “influence”.

Most of the definitions of leadership refer to the process whereby one influences other people in order to reach certain organizational and/or individual goals. In this connection it is not only necessary to develop visions, to create values and to observe a direction as a leader but it is also important that the leader becomes a role model for his or her followers (Hinterhuber, 2003). In short we can say leadership is “the process of guiding followers in a direction in pursuit of a vision, mission or goals” (AKU-IED Educational Leadership and Management Study Guide, 2004, p. 28).

## **Pedagogy**

“The term pedagogy is seldom used in English writing about education” (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999, p.1). It has deep historical roots and meanings. Pedagogy derived from French and Latin adaptations of the Greek... literally means a man having oversight of child, or an attendant leading a boy to school”. van Manen (1991) explains:

The term pedagogue derived from the Greek and refers not to the teacher, but to the watchful ... guardian whose responsibility it was to lead (*agogos*) the young boy (*paides*) to school ... The adult has the task of accompanying the child, of being with the child, of caring for the child. This is the kind of “leading” that often walks behind the one who is led. The ... pedagogue was there in loco parentis (or in place of the parent). (p. 37)

Hill (1997) views pedagogy as the art of teaching. According to him pedagogical issues relate to teaching and learning. For example, a fundamental pedagogical issue in distance education pertains to the importance of the medium in distance learning environments.

Brief definitions of pedagogy are offered time to time. A common example is “science of teaching”. However, the breadth of this phrase may create its own difficulty, since such a definition depends on the reader’s assumption about “science” and their conceptions of “teaching”. (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999, p. 2)

An alternative way of thinking about pedagogy, which is neither science nor art, is viewing pedagogy as a craft, an approach suggested by writers who recognize uncertainty and the limits of predictability.

So there is no need to define the term pedagogy in a way that stresses only the teacher's role and activity. Let us consider the teacher as craftsman. I believe that it is helpful to our discussion to focus our attention on teaching but we also need to take the learner into account. Thus I consider pedagogy as, "any conscious activity by a person designed to enhance learning of another" (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999, p. 3).

### **Role of a Teacher as Leader**

Teachers practice leadership directly since in schools they stand first and closest in a caring relationship to children. As leaders, they have the major responsibility for guiding children academically, morally, socially and emotionally through the world of childhood to adulthood.

As a guide or leader of a class the teacher is brought to make operational decisions. Indeed, the teacher is above all a decision maker as "each teaching action is founded on an interactive decision" (Altet, 1994, p.100). According to Rey (1999), the "teacher makes the management and it implies infinite number of micro-decisions which are necessary to take in the urgency and the improvisation" (p. 98).

The teachers, following the example of leaders, are thus confronted with unique situations. Although most of the work in itself remains the same but its components can vary in quantity, quality, availability, and modifiability. This condition makes each situation unique.

### **Factors Affecting Various Aspects of a Classroom**

In this section I have tried to identify and define operational factors contributing to effective teaching learning processes based on leadership and pedagogical aspects of a class. It requires greater care and thought in the selection of these factors, since to a great extent these factors are arbitrary and restrictive and at the same time are quantitative and qualitative.

## With Respect to Pedagogy

While identifying factors affecting pedagogy, I noticed that behind an apparent difference between several pedagogical models lies an identical structure. Pedagogy is often presented in the form of a triangular model (see Houssaye, 1994). Vertices of the triangle are teacher, the student and the knowledge Meirieu (1993).

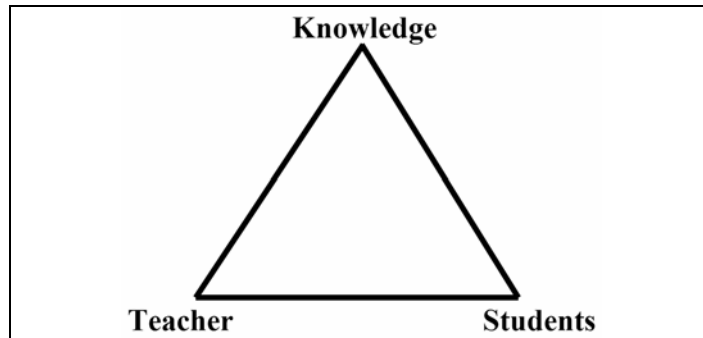


Figure 1: Pedagogy as Houssaye's triangular model

However, Dupont (1982) underlines the triple role of the teacher in any educational transaction: teacher-helping, teacher-teaching and teacher-organizing.

Moreover, one should not neglect the fact that teaching must be active and constructive. In this direction, pedagogy would be only one art of mediation making it possible to build "an arch between the child and the knowledge" (Meirieu, 1985, p.173). This makes it necessary to use student participation as a variable in evaluating teaching in the classroom.

Altet (1994) points out that the role of the teacher is not limited to communication of knowledge any more because this can be done through textbooks and other learning materials.

A teacher's role therefore is (a) to guide and accompany the student in his problem, (b) to lead this problem to formulate questions, and (c) to analyze data and to build an answer. She still has to adapt the interventions according to the needs of the students, keeping in mind the scale of participation, which accounts for the degree of implementation of the concept of participation in an education system.

"Each teacher is unique and can use his or her style to be as effective an educator as possible" (Heimlich & Norland, 2002, p. 23). The concept of teaching style is very significant in the field of education. Teaching and learning styles are



the behaviors or actions that teachers and students exhibit in the learning exchange.

For example, in studying a group of international students in a business administration program, Ladd and Ruby (1999) found that of primary interest to students was establishing warm personal relationships with their teachers.

Teaching behaviors reflect the beliefs and values that teachers hold about the student's role in the exchange (Heimlich & Norland, 2002).

### **With Respect to Leadership**

While discussing leadership one cannot overlook the Managerial Grid developed by Blake & Mouton (1985). For them, any organization in the broad sense comprises two universal characteristics:

1. The objective (concern for production)
2. The human factor (concern for people)

#### **The objective (concern for production)**

It is the extent to which a manager directs his subordinates' efforts towards goal attainment, characterized by planning, organizing and controlling:

Concern of production is not limited to things; instead it denotes a concern for whatever the organization engages its people to accomplish i.e. the successful accomplishment of the organizational tasks. (Hoy & Miskel, 1987, p. 299)

#### **The human factor (concern for people);**

It is the extent to which a manager has personal job relationships, characterized by mutual trust, respect for subordinates' ideas and consideration.

Hoy & Miskel, (1987) pointed out:

Concern for people refers primarily to sound and warm interpersonal relations. Self-esteem and the personal worth of the individual are stressed. (p. 299)

Blake & Mouton place concern for the objective along the “x-axis”, with a scale from one to nine, with nine being high concern. Concern for the human factor was placed on the “y-axis” also on a scale of one to nine.

The human factor (concern for people)	1,9							9,9
				5,5				
	1,1							9,1
	The objective (concern for production)							

Figure 2: Managerial Grid of Blake & Mouton (1985)

Reddin (1987) considered capacity as an essential requirement for any leadership style. He introduced it as a third variable to be simultaneously taken into account. Reddin's three dimensions are:

1. Task Orientation

This is the same as Blake & Mouton’s concern for objective.

2. Relationships Orientation

This is also like Blake & Mouton’s concern for the human factor.

3. Effectiveness

Capacity – motivation and the manner in which the hierarchical system is used to make people take part in the production – is the extent to which a manager achieves the output requirements of his position.

Effectiveness became the third dimension, the “z” scale.

Reddin (1987) proposed and used an eight-box model of management behavior.

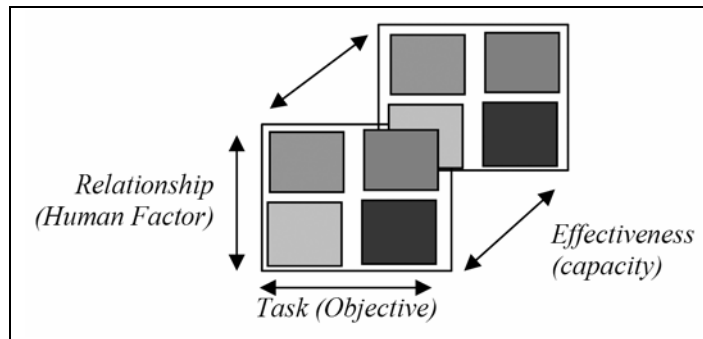


Figure 3: Reddin's 3-D Grid

Reddin, like Blake & Mouton, identified four major leadership styles on the high effectiveness plane and four corresponding styles on the low effectiveness plane, effectiveness being where the leadership style matched the demands of the situation.

It is important to notice that Reddin's research led him to the view that degrees of relationship orientation and degrees of task orientation were independent of effectiveness i.e. either could be correlated with success because this was dependent upon the situation.

### **With Respect to Teacher Leadership**

Some recent findings (e.g. Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003) show a strong relationship between leadership and students' achievement. Teacher leadership is more effective in this regard. It is "talked about in terms of the extent to which teachers can be persuaded to take on management roles" (Frost & Durrant, 2003, p.176). Nevertheless it is not a formal role, responsibility or set of tasks; it is more a form of agency where teachers are empowered to lead development work that impacts directly upon the quality of teaching and learning.

It is more inclusive in that the need to encourage all teachers to be "change agents" is addressed (Fulan, 1993) whether they have or do not have formal managerial roles. Therefore, teacher leadership seems to offer a very appropriate model for leading teaching and learning. It can expand the role of educative leadership because of its value correspondence with it, especially in relation to Fullan's (2001) three core aspects of leadership – moral purpose, relationship building and knowledge creation. Keeping in view these core aspects of leadership, the three factors given in Reddin's 3D managerial grid for leadership,

Houssaye’s (1994) triangular model of pedagogy, and Altet’s ( 1994) scale of participation in teaching and learning process, I came up with three basic factors for teacher leadership that can impact almost all aspects of a classroom:

- Interest of teacher for the objectives (*Learning outcomes*) in terms of students’ result (L)—concern for the production: students’ achievement.
- Interest of the teacher for the human factor (students) in terms of *students’ Care*, interpersonal relationship, students’ self-esteem (C)—concern for students.
- Interest of the students for their own learning keeping in view their own capacity i.e. *students’ Motivation* (M)—students participation in the learning process.

### **Models Emerging from the Various Combinations of the Factors Affecting Various Aspects of a Classroom**

Although it is possible to further divide the three factors identified above into independent elements, doing that would bring complexity into the geometrical representations and might lose simplicity, representativeness and especially accessibility. Therefore, taking into account these three factors, eight different combinations (models) emerged by considering extreme existence (+) or extinction (-) of the L, C and M in order to specify a particular leadership style for teacher leadership.

Style-1: (L-, C-, M-)	Style-2: (L-, C+, M-)
Style-3: (L+, C-, M-)	Style-4: (L+, C+, M-)
Style-5: (L-, C-, M+)	Style-6: (L-, C+, M+)
Style-7: (L+, C-, M+)	Style-8: (L+, C+, M+)

### **Identification of Important Aspects of a Classroom Affected by Teacher Leadership**

According to Harris & Muijs (2003), teacher leadership is primarily concerned with developing high quality learning and teaching in schools. It has at its core a focus upon improving learning. Frost & Durrant (2003) have also emphasized

that teacher leadership is “development work” which has an explicit focus on teaching and learning. Keeping in view the focus of teacher leadership and classroom activities, I identified eight important aspects:

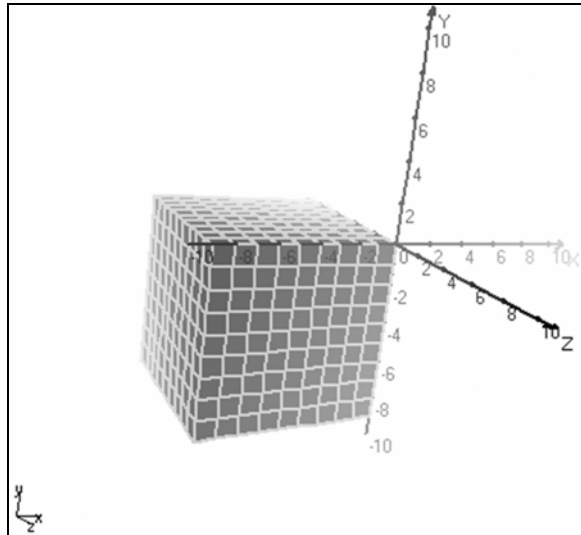
- Teacher’s role (mentor, leader, facilitator, transmitter etc.)
- Teacher’s attitude towards students (kind, polite, accommodative, harsh, etc.)
- Teacher-student relationship (friendly, empathy, mutual respected, annoying, etc.)
- Students’ personality development (openness to experience, emotional stability, confident, depressed, etc.)
- Students’ conceptual understanding (problem solver, in-depth, life long, shallow, etc.)
- Students’ attitude towards knowledge (asset, means to achieve a goal, task completion, liability, etc.)
- Nature of learning activities (student centered, focused and light, heavily content loaded, teacher centered, etc.)
- Overall environment of the class (student friendly, supportive for learning, pleasant, frustrating, etc.)

These aspects were validated by five professional development teachers.

## **Models (styles) of Teacher Leadership and their implications in a classroom**

In this section implications of the three factors on the identified aspects will be discussed in light of literature and data collected for the validation of each of the eight styles. Every combination is graphically presented in three dimensional models by taking L, C & M along with X, Y & Z axis respectively. Keeping in view the model developed by Blake & Mouton (1985), a scale of 1 to 9 has been used for each face of the models.

## Style-1: Laissez-faire (L-, C-, M-)



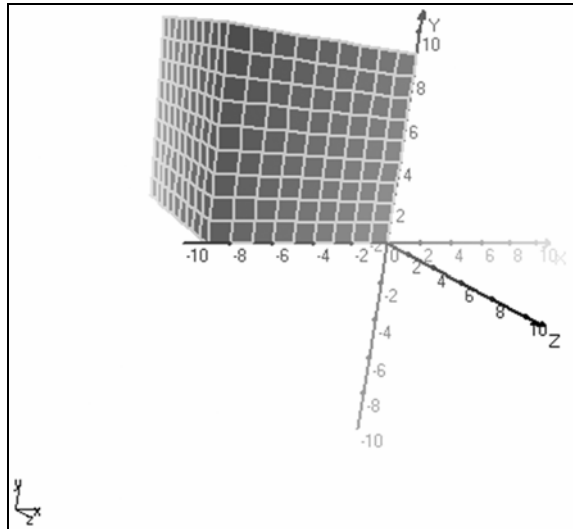
The respondents picked title “laissez-faire” for this style.

A teacher with this style seems tired, careless, disappointed or de-motivated and satisfies the necessary minimum. The division of the work of teaching as well as the simplification of the tasks is thorough to the extreme, not offering any stimulant, and there is no challenge to be surmounted.

This type of style generates monotonous and repetitive work. In order to avoid controversy, evaluation design in this style is limited to the bare minimum, avoiding drawing attention to its lack of engagement. It reflects the teacher’s incompetence and lack of aptitude.

A student confronted with this style usually faces two main negative consequences (a) lack of stimulation in the teaching associated with the indifference, and (b) lack of consideration. These can cause the student to reproduce the behavior of the teacher, which will result in a drop in motivation, lack of cognitive engagement, and lack of perseverance.

## Style-2: Paternalist (L-, C+, M-)

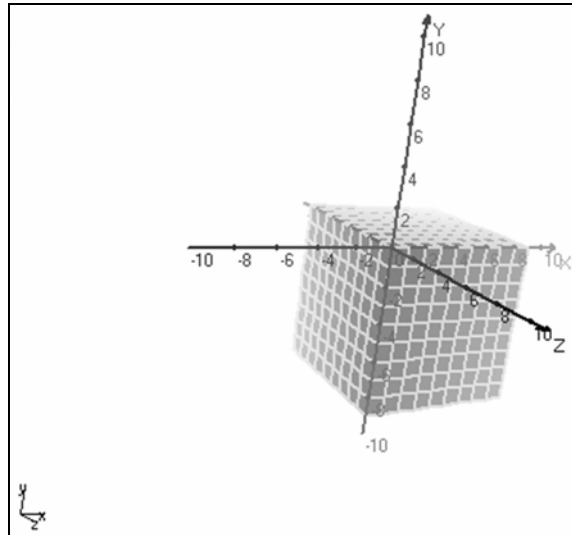


The respondents picked title “Paternalist” for this style.

With this style, everything is arranged in sequences of teaching to satisfy needs of students. The standards of knowledge are established on relatively low levels in the spirit of user-friendly. Thus a teacher with this style often seeks to successfully make it across all the obstacles of the school course (while encouraging positive reinforcement and trying to convince) by developing a good relationship with students.

The students could however underestimate the suitable requirements for knowledge in their search for an environment that is “child-friendly”, or think that what counts before all is the quality of their relationship with their teacher (Rey, 1998).

### Style-3: Autocratic (L+, C-, M-)



This combination was given the title “Autocratic”.

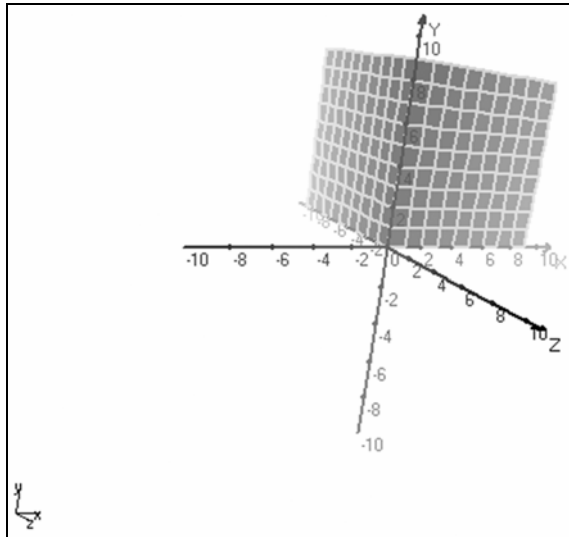
In this mode of leadership, the classroom environment is not significant; the most important thing is to complete the task, and to achieve the objectives in order to cover the matter guided by the handbooks and the exercise books.

The programme constitutes the only “contract” (not negotiated and non-negotiable) binding the teachers and students. The course of the teaching is collective, of transmitting type and is carefully controlled by a strict discipline. The teacher gives her instructions only step by step, breaking up and parceling out the knowledge. All occurs as if the process of teaching were “extrinsic and alien with the personality of the student” (Bastien, 1999, p. 417).

This pedagogical rigidity can generate more “weakness”, de-motivation, high level of stress and even school overwork. Since too much is solicited through repetitive activities or of seed-planting drill, the students do not have time to develop their creative aptitude. Above all, this pedagogy generates conformism by supporting only the reproduction of a standard setup in ideal-type. Accordingly, punishment would play an essential role in this attempt to obtain “flexible bodies”.



#### Style-4: Benevolent Autocratic (L+, C+, M-)

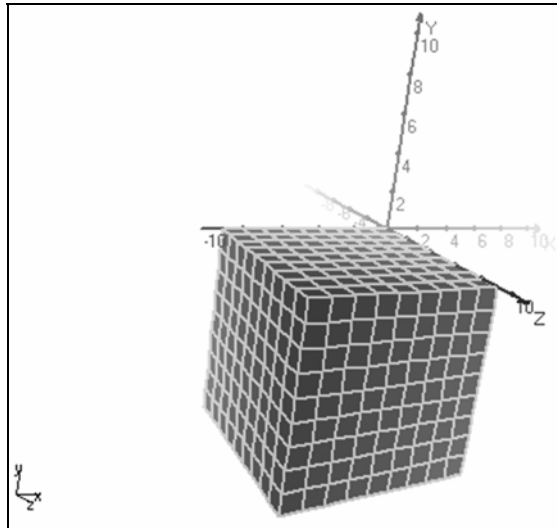


A teacher with this style expresses a high concern for students and their results but is unable to relinquish control and allow students to make their own contribution.

The basic internal principle of similar teaching (neglecting participation) could be described in these terms: “I am the teacher responsible for your teaching, I will transmit my knowledge to you and I will help you but in return I await your obedience in the way that I will show you”.

The spring of motivation which probably hides behind this style is to encourage admiration by granting to the students (with the limit selected and sorted) the benefit of teacher’s experience and counseling. In this way, we approach more patronage, the student becoming an apprentice under the aegis of a mentor (teacher). The implication for the student is two-fold: (a) the knowledge is folded back by the student; (b) creativity is choked and attached in the efforts to answer, waiting for the teacher’ question.

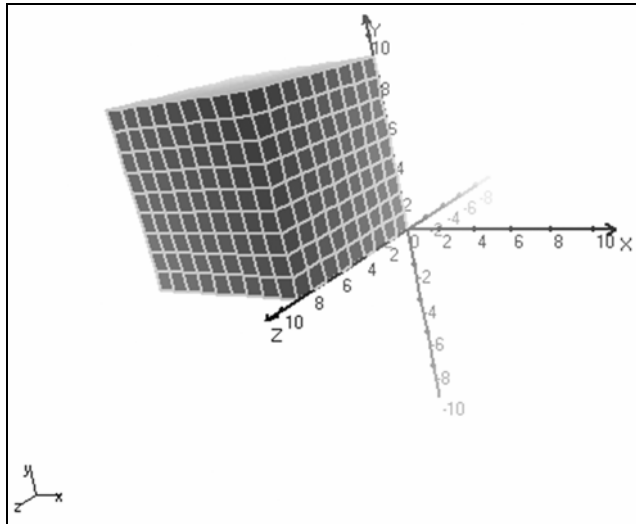
## Style-5: Pure Form (L-, C-, M+)



It is a question here “simply” of giving the exchange, to create the illusion of participation in order to meet the requirements of the official curriculum. Actually, in this style, objectives could be of three types: (a) minimal conformity with the programme; (b) obtaining obedience; and (c) success with examinations, which become the goal even of the acquisition of the knowledge.

This step comprises a trap which would likely block the learning process. For Rogers (1996), one of the essential qualities of the teacher is authenticity. However, this quality is precisely incompatible with a leadership of pure form. Research (e.g. Miller 2001; Stitt-Gohdes 2003; etc.) supports the view that when students’ learning preferences match their teachers’ teaching styles, student motivation and achievement usually improves.

## Style-6: Buddy (L-, C+, M+)

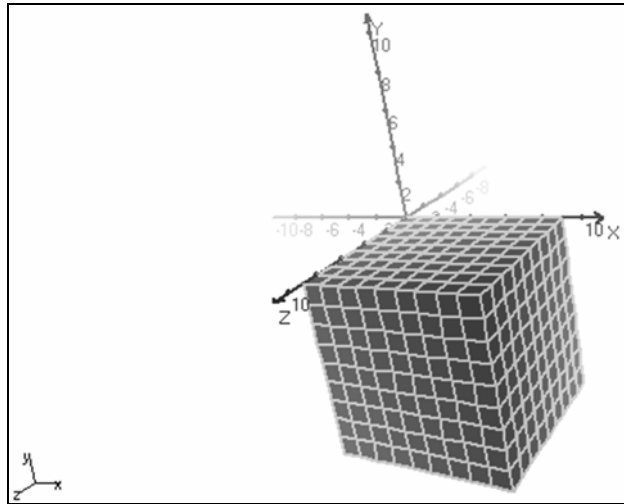


Perhaps this style is mostly observed in young people at the beginning of their career. This style combines interest for the students and their participation. The required harmony can come owing to the fact that the teacher keeps abstract relations with the students, e.g. through discussions on their centers of interest (like games).

This style of leadership can, for teaching, lead to for example, the formation of a group for a recreational activity, like a festival.

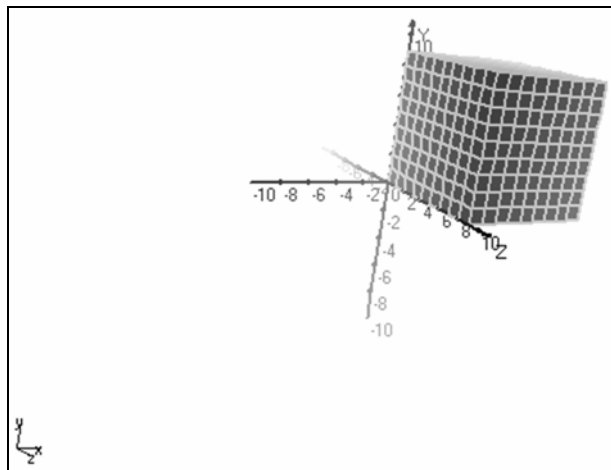
However, essentially the formation of a group for a festivity is temporary. It is thus the entire problem which is raised after the festivity that has to be addressed in terms of teaching style! “What will happen once the festival over? The things will take again their normal course... and formed will only mobilize very little the learned assets” (Galambaud, 1980, p. 181).

### Style-7: Manipulator (L+, C-, M+)



Apparently a teacher with this style is attractive to students because of her emphasis on the task as well as participation. However, the lack of interest for her student's learning is an indicator of an underhanded style and most dangerous for this model. By skewed presentation, the teacher induces the choices of her students and later on takes credit for good teaching.

### Style-8: Mediator (L+, C+, M+)



The pedagogical orientation of leadership “mediator” carries out the integration of the three axes “learning-care-motivation”, supported by a classroom environment where it is good to work and where the students not only take

pleasure in work, but are also stimulated to deal with themselves and to develop their critical spirit and their creativity (Rogers, 1996). In this way, the material taught is not an end in itself, but a means with the pedagogy centered on the development of the students. Thus the students become true creators of their learning.

The data collected regarding the implications associated with each style also validate the above discussion. A summary of implications associated with each of the above styles mentioned by the respondents is given in Annexure II.

## Conclusion

The model for teacher leadership discussed above can undoubtedly appear very simplistic, incomplete or too conceptual. This was also evident during formal and informal discussions with the teachers and school heads, at the time of data collection. However, the limitations of the model are as many as its prospects for development and exploration, and a lot of work remains to consolidate the model. Observations in class would be necessary to identify the behaviors of teachers and to locate them in a suitable space. This would then equip the model with tools that are genuinely operational and can be mobilized in various situations.

With the perspective of initial model formation, the model stresses the various elements to be taken into account in a teaching situation. Moreover, it explicitly points out some standard and unquestionable behaviours and practices (a thorough knowledge and a better comprehension of the concepts allowing a greater objectivity) for prospective teachers. However, it is obvious that the minimum requirement for effectiveness of classroom activities is presence of all factors i.e. L+, M+, and C+, known as the “mediator style”.

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# Appendix 1

## General Description of Leadership Styles

### **Style-1: Laissez-faire**

A person with this style exercises little control over his team members, leaving them to sort out their roles and tackle their work, without him participating in this process. In general, this approach leaves the team floundering with little direction or motivation. Generally with this style very low motivation can be maintained in an organization.

### **Style-2: Paternalist**

A person with this style demonstrates all of the strength, determination, and courage that brings about results, and yet also considers people in the process. Paternalists don't just want to control others, but who want them to smile and say, "Thank you!" He often has a proven track record of accomplishment and wants to share that expertise by taking care of everyone in what he perceives to be a helpful and supportive way.

### **Style-3: Autocratic**

A person having this style dominates team-members, using unilateralism to achieve a singular objective. This approach to leadership generally results in passive resistance from team-members and requires continual pressure and direction from the leader in order to get things done. Generally, an authoritarian approach is not a good way to get the best performance from a team.

The autocrat has little confidence in his subordinates/team members and distrusts them. He makes most of the decisions and passes them down the line. He makes threats where necessary to ensure that his orders are obeyed.

### **Style-4: Benevolent Autocratic**

The benevolent autocrat sees herself as a superior father figure who makes all the important decisions and then convinces his subordinates/team members to go along with them. He may allow some decisions to be made by some subordinates/team members within a framework set by her/him. Rewards as well as punishments may be used to "motivate" people.

### **Style-5: Pure Form**

A person with this leadership style has minimal consistency with the production; desires for master and servant from his subordinates/team members; and achieves the output requirements of his position.

### **Style-6: Buddy**

A person with this leadership style avoids confrontation and dealing with negative issues e.g. performance and behavioral problems. Poor performing subordinates/team members often get advantage from him and he loses top performers because they are burdened with covering for poor performing subordinates/team members who are not properly disciplined by buddy managers.

### **Style-7: Manipulator**

A manipulator believes the ends justify the means. This style is the least ethical. This is based on short term gain and lacks trust.

### **Style-8: Mediator**

A person with this style is motivated to create and maintain interpersonal harmony; incorporates others' agendas and opinions into decision-making process; seeks a comfortable living and working environment; steady, adaptable and easygoing; understands all points of view in a conflict, but may find it difficult to assess personal priorities; may become inflexible and immovable once a decision is reached. The person promotes acceptance of differences and mutual positive regard. He emphasizes teamwork, cooperation and collaboration as a way to reduce conflict and maintain good will. He believes in hearing all sides of a dispute before making a decision.

## Appendix 2

Summary of implications associated with each combination mentioned by the respondents.

Combination Style	L-, C-, M-	L-, C+, M-	L+, C-, M-	L+, C+, M-	L-, C-, M+	L-, C+, M+	L+, C-, M+	L+, C+, M+	
	<i>Laissez-faire</i>	<i>Paternalist</i>	<i>Autocratic</i>	<i>Benevolent Autocratic</i>	<i>Pure Form</i>	<i>Buddy</i>	<i>Manipulator</i>	<i>Mediator</i>	
<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Implications</b>								
<i>Teacher's role</i>	Passing information	Facilitator, more directed towards students' interest	Dictator, director, dominant, threatening	Mentor, control with bit caring, keep on reminding, transmitter of knowledge	Master	Friendly, Facilitator	Self-oriented	Moderator	
<i>Teacher's attitude towards students</i>	Non-participatory, passing time, careless attitude	Caring, loving, friendly, satisfying students' need	Means to an end, all are same	Wants her student to learn best, Indifferent, result focus	Less or no formal, more professional than humanistic	Respect student ideas, positive attitude	Use students as a mean towards an end, lack of care & respect	Nurturing, positive, encouraging	
<i>Teacher-student relationship</i>	Most of students in this class will be damaged. Both students and teacher remain like a stranger	Interpersonal relation are developed, friendly, very open to each other, mutual trust	Very poor, senior-junior	Frustrating for the teacher, Rapport but not ever lasting.	Restricted to academic support, not socialization with each other	Friendly and close	Good relations but declining, no respect to each other in future	Mutual trust and reciprocal, interpersonal harmony Co-operating	
<i>Students' personality development</i>	Confused, drift, afraid to take initiatives, aggressive, self centered	Lack of confidence, very weak interpersonal skills	Not holistic only cognitive level	Lopsided, lacking	Lacking human relationship	Social development	Social & Interpersonal skills	Confident, independent learner, holistic development	

Appendix 2: Summary of implications associated with each combination mentioned by the respondents (contd.).

Combination Style	L-, C-, M- <i>Laissez-faire</i>	L-, C+, M- <i>Paternalist</i>	L+, C-, M- <i>Autocratic</i>	L+, C+, M- <i>Benevolent Autocratic</i>	L-, C-, M+, <i>Pure Form</i>	L-, C+, M+ <i>Buddy</i>	L+, C-, M+ <i>Manipulator</i>	L+, C+, M+ <i>Mediator</i>
<b>Implications</b>								
<i>Students' conceptual understanding</i>	No concept building, can only reproduce	Low level of conceptual understanding, no proper learning	Rote learning, assessment focused, superficial	Scanty, superficial, no improvement in understanding	Less or no learning	Critical	Rote learning, superficial	High level of cognitive development
<i>Students' attitude towards knowledge</i>	Hatred, feel liability, assessment oriented	Motivated because of the care of teacher, leisure time activity, not a priority not bothering about learning	As a fixed content to be reproduced, learning for the sake of learning	De-motivated, Non-involvement	Look at teacher for knowledge seeking, Non-serious	Independent learner, life long learner	Students are enjoying but not learning, assessment oriented	Knowledge is asset, interested, like to access more and more knowledge
<i>Nature of learning activities</i>	Non stimulating, memorization of factual knowledge, no concept building, teacher centered	Learning from fun, without any objective in mind, not challenging for the students, student centered but objective-less	Lack of variety, transmissive nature	Routine, teacher directed, focused, boring	Exam oriented activities	Value, students' choice and interest	Not student centered, devoid of conceptual learning	Student-centered and cooperative, according to students' mental level
<i>Overall environment of the class</i>	Monotonous, controlled, boring, tense, chaotic, partially out rolled	Comfortable, noisy, not taking care of what is going on, undisciplined	Military type, outcome oriented, threatening	Business like, disciplined, tense situation	Little bit discipline, individualistic	Conductive, friendly	May be discipline in traditional way	Every one takes part in classroom actively, interesting, harmonious

# Educational Development Projects at IED: Towards School Improvement

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## Abstract

*The M.Ed. program at The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) helps to develop Course Participants (CPs) as teacher educators/educational leaders. AKU-IED always welcomes innovations in its various programmes. The Educational Development Project (EDP) was conceived as an alternative to research to develop CPs' knowledge and skills required for developmental work. The EDP is concerned with capacity building at classroom and school level depending on the needs of the relevant stakeholders. A contextually relevant model was adapted for EDP at AKU-IED.*

*The purpose of the study was to investigate the course developed for EDP at AKU-IED. For the research to be reported in this paper the main question was: To what extent does the Educational Development Project (EDP) prepare M.Ed. CPs to apply their learning from the course in actual classroom / school settings as an initiative towards school improvement efforts? Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through different instruments and strategies. Case study method was also used in this regard. The data reveal that it is appropriate to engage teachers and educational leaders in conducting small scale educational projects to bring about whole school improvement.*

## Introduction

Innovations in any system are an indication of its dynamism, improvement and progress. The Aga Khan University Institute for Education Development (AKU-IED), for the first time among South East Asian countries, introduced developmental work at Masters Level in education through the commencement of a course on educational development projects using a project management framework. The course was conceived to develop and enhance M.Ed. course participants (CPs) skills in development work at a micro level, that is, its effectiveness in real school and classroom situations, and to provide CPs an opportunity to engage themselves in educational development activities.

Innovations can have various outcomes, including both improvement and/or decline in the education system. The notion of improvement per se, is subjective and controversial and can be influenced by the perspectives and interests of different groups or segments of the same stakeholder groups.

There are some who say that even if a particular innovation does not yield replicable results, it was still worth the effort to try something new. It gets everybody 'fired up' and creates interest and enthusiasm (Payne, 1994, p.6). Assié-Lumumba (2004) has identified factors that have an impact on the conception, design, implementation, likelihood of success and diffusion of innovations in general. These include "the role of the individuals, groups, and the institutional units that introduce innovations and the official and actual beneficiaries; and the method used to introduce the innovation" (p.73).

In the case of AKU-IED there was a lot of dialogue about the project innovation. The dialogue was specifically about the course outline, essential readings identified for the course and application of the knowledge and skills CPs had learnt during the course regarding identification, design and implementation of the project in real settings.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the innovation and thereby continue the dialogue over the course developed for EDP at AKU-IED, identify gaps (if any) in the course, and offer recommendations to improve the course.

This paper aims to respond to the main question: "To what extent does the Educational Development Project (EDP) prepare M.Ed. CPs to apply their learning from the course in actual classroom/school settings as an initiative towards school improvement efforts?" The paper specifically discusses the following questions:

- Is there an alignment between the course conception, design, delivery and evaluation?
- What is the satisfaction level of the CPs regarding the course?
- What are the kinds of understandings, knowledge and skills that CPs acquire from the course?
- How did the CPs perform while doing the project?
- Does the EDP developed by the CPs contribute to classroom/school improvement?

## Background

The M.Ed. program at The Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) helps to develop Course Participants (CPs) as teacher educators/educational leaders. CPs who are aspiring to become teacher educators, engage themselves in learning and practicing more about curriculum teaching, learning and assessment; while others who aspire to become leaders in educational development, spend time in learning theories and observing practices regarding educational leadership and management.

Both fields have one common element i.e. “education”; one through the path of school curriculum and its effective delivery, and the other by understanding leadership roles in organizing the effective implementation of school improvement. These courses assist CPs to “develop” and define, use, access and connect their knowledge and information meaningfully and with their conviction to achieve something for themselves and the institution.

At AKU-IED CPs are given the choice of undertaking a research dissertation or a development project in their area of specialization. The research dissertation and development project have equivalence in the programme (AKU-IED M.Ed. Handbook 2003-2005). The difference between the dissertation and project options was drawn on the familiar distinction between research and development (R&D) by declaring, “Research is the *discovery* or generation of new knowledge and development is the *application* of existing knowledge in new and innovative ways” (AKU-IED M.Ed Handbook 2003-2005, p.25).

The rationale for providing the two options was two-fold. First, it provides increased flexibility in the programme in recognition of the diversity of roles that graduates would undertake in their own contexts after completing their MEd. For some graduates research skills are important, while for others management and development skills are more important, particularly in activities such as teacher development, materials development or curriculum development. Secondly, it recognizes the individual differences of CPs in terms of their interests and career aspirations.

A team comprising of five faculty members of the AKU-IED, having expertise and experience in various projects, developed the draft course outline. The frame of reference for the team was the paper presented in a faculty meeting for approval of the course. This draft was presented in a faculty retreat. Concern was expressed that the outline was for large projects instead of small or school based educational projects. After addressing the concern, the revised course

outline was developed by the committee and sent to the Academic Review Committee (ARC) of AKU-IED for approval. ARC gave suggestions and raised a number of queries on the outline. After incorporating these suggestions and preparing the answers to the queries in consultation with the team, the team coordinator presented the revised outline to ARC. In the meeting ARC approved the course. Four faculty members who had been part of the team taught the course.

The aim of the course was to equip CPs with the knowledge and skills of project management and to enable them to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate an educational project in the following semester.

Of the 35 CPs in the group, 12 opted for the project. One of the CPs had to exit from the M.Ed. programme during the course, so 11 CPs completed the course. During the course they designed, implemented and evaluated individual projects.

## **Literature review**

### **What is a project?**

A project is referred to as a set of investments and other planned activities aimed at achieving specific objective within a pre-determined time-frame and budget (Magnen, 1991, p.14). Furthermore a project is viewed as an isolated, probably one time effort to “try to make a difference” by using an innovation. The “innovation” might relate to an alternate or new method of teaching science or mathematics through activity-based learning; or an approach to improving students’ attitudes towards English language learning in a particular school; or perhaps, bringing alternate practices in assessment. However, it is important to find out if the innovation is of value, for example has it made a positive impact on students? If it has, then it may be incorporated as a regular part of a classroom or school (Payne, 1994).

Martin (2002) lists the attributes of a project as follows. A project:

- Has a clear purpose that can be achieved in a limited time;
- Has a clear end when the outcome has been achieved;
- Is resourced to achieve specific outcomes;
- Has someone acting as a sponsor or commissioner who expects the outcomes to be delivered on time;



- Is a one-off activity and would not normally be repeated.

## **Change in general and Curriculum change in particular**

There are some practitioners who say that even if a particular innovation does not yield replicable results, it was still worth the effort to try something new. It gets everybody fired up, the creative juices flowing, and gets the enthusiasm coursing through our veins (Payne, 1994).

Magnen (1991) explains the concern of project development as twofold: to have a better understanding of the reality of education, in its own specific dimensions, empirically observed; and to ensure better analysis and consideration of this reality so as to improve, where possible, the hypotheses that underlie educational policies and strategies for change. However, Fullan (1995) states:

Change may come about either because it is imposed on the teacher/practitioner by natural events or deliberate reform or because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation. (Hence, it may emerge from a need). In either case, the meaning of change is rarely clear at the outset, and ambivalence will pervade the transition. Any innovation cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared. (p.31)

Clark, Lotto, & Astuto (1984) contend that “surprisingly, simple changes are the ones school systems are least likely to adopt and implement successfully” (p. 56). Although the literature suggests that change in attitudes and beliefs is a gradual and difficult process for teachers (Bolster, 1983; Fullan, 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Guskey, 1986; Lortie, 1975) Fullan (1995) reiterates that institutions or persons may not perceive it as worth the effort.

However, the systematic and sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goal more effectively, is the reason for bringing improvement in the status quo (Van Velzen et al., 1985).

This view stresses the significance of careful planning, management and continuity even in the face of difficulties. It also emphasizes a focus on teaching and learning, as well as the need to support organizational conditions. Additionally, there is an intricate relationship between school improvement and change, although it cannot be assumed that all changes lead to improvement. One definition of improvement views it as “a distinct approach to educational

change that enhances student outcomes as well strengthening the school's capacity for managing change" (Hopkins et al., 1994).

Finally, change depends very much on teachers' learning new communication strategies and new ways of organizing an information environment (Martin, 1988). However, such learning only happens when the teacher is experimenting with new practices within her own socially constituted "zone of proximal development" (Kahaney, Perry & Janagelo, 1993: xvii)

## **Project development as an approach to school improvement**

It is important to consider the effectiveness of the project if it is to be sustained. Hence, project effectiveness can be seen as the production of a desired result or outcome (Levine and Lezotte, 1990). School effectiveness practitioners aim to ascertain whether different resources, processes and organizational arrangements affect student's outcomes and, if so, how? And conversely, if not, then why? (Mortimore, 1998) If the results or outcomes are significant and impact is on learning, the chances of sustainability increase.

Therefore, relevant and effective planning requires the planners that they pay close attention to the translation of objectives into action, and ensure continuous monitoring or guidance of project execution, and that they systematically evaluate project results.

Unfortunately, all this has turned out to be difficult if not impossible, in many developing countries, because of a lack of training of the staff of the ministry of education planning and management units (Magnen, 1991). Failure of educational projects is due to the lack of realistic plans, objectives being established without sufficient prior analysis, and merely on the basis of the society's value and traditions, or the leaders' ideologies.

Whilst we do not claim resounding success, and in many ways there is no such thing given the perennial complexity of change, we can obtain glimpses of a more powerful future by deriving lessons from AKU-IED's educational development project course. Fullan (1995) refers to such examples in terms of the central role of "moral purpose and change agent-ing" (p. 59).

A logical framework for projects necessitates a certain degree of rigor on the part of policy-makers. It is possible to ensure that the initial objectives are not lost sight of, and that the allocated resources are used in a rational manner. The "specificity of the objectives" and the need to define them clearly forces the planner to design projects "realistically" (Magnen, 1991, p. 19).

## **Programme evaluation**

An evaluation is action oriented. “It is conducted to determine the value or impact of a policy, programme, practice, intervention or service, with a view to making recommendations for change” (Clarke, 2000, p.vii). Clarke (2000) has presented evaluation as a form of applied social research. According to him “the primary purpose is not to discover new knowledge, as is the case with basic research, but to study the effectiveness with which existing knowledge is used to inform and guide practical action” (p.2).

However, Yates (1981) points to the difficulties in evaluating the effectiveness of academic programmes because of the absence of a coherent evaluation strategy. As raised by Gorostiaga and Paulston (1999), there are various models or new approaches in academic programme evaluation.

Most of these models range from outcome to process, and among those for outcome evaluation, Kirkpatrick (1998) has developed a four-level framework for measuring; (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) behaviour, and (d) results to evaluate programmes particularly related to teacher education. Basarab (1994), and Basarab and Root (1992) have reported that Kirkpatrick’s model has been widely used and adapted for use in evaluating teacher education programmes. His model has been regarded by Bernthal (1995) as a ‘classic model’ and Abernathy as a ‘supermodel’ in programme evaluation of training (Abernathy, 1999).

Despite this, Adams (2001) integrates the model of Kirkpatrick with others and makes evaluation a continuous process with data collected through the pre-programme, during programme and post-programme stages.

In this study, Kirkpatrick’s model was used as a framework for evaluation, but up to only the first two levels, that is the measuring of reaction and the learning of the participants at the post-programme stage. For pre-programme and during programme stages we will use mainly the ideas of Adams (2001).

## **Methodology**

This study was initiated by the faculty of AKU-IED. Both investigators have been involved in the development and teaching of the course designed to prepare CPs for EDP.

## Sample of the study

All the eleven CPs who opted for the educational development project course during its first offering were invited to respond to a questionnaire. Out of eleven, ten responded.

For case studies, the sampling unit was not the CPs per se, but the projects they designed, implement and evaluated. There were four major areas in which CPs worked: (a) teachers' pedagogical content skill development; (b) curriculum development and enrichment; (c) building community and school relationships; and (d) improving, school leadership and management practices.

Out of these four, two areas (b & c), were investigated for the study. From the six projects conducted by the CPs within these two areas, four projects and two in each were included in the sample as case studies. These are: (i) Let's Talk, and (ii) Let's know what is unknown in Curriculum Enrichment area; and (iii) Developing school assessment policy and procedures; and (iv) Transforming the school environment. These are all in Improving Leadership and Management Practices area.

The two investigators used a matrix to record their observations at the planning, designing and implementation stages of the projects. Document analysis of materials included in the projects was also part of the study.

## Instruments

For the study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. Quantitative methods were (a) a questionnaire (*instrument 1*), and (b) a matrix (*instrument 2*).

The questionnaire solicited the initial level of satisfaction of the CPs with the course and invited recommendations for its further improvement, as well as gauging their understanding from the course.

The first question of the instrument 1 comprised 14 statements on a 5-point rating scale, whereas the remaining three questions were open-ended questions.

The matrix gave quantitative analysis of the needs identification, designing, implementation & evaluation of projects (see appendix 1) by the use of learnt knowledge and skills.

For the qualitative aspect two strategies were employed; interview (*strategy 1*) and document analysis (*strategy 2*) for further probing and clarification. Case study method was used to organise the data.

A structured interview was conducted with CPs; and their project reports and deliverables were analyzed. Moreover, all documents relating to processes regarding planning, designing, developing and implementing the course along with reports and deliverables of projects were reviewed.

## Data analysis

### Questionnaire and matrix

For the quantitative analysis, the mean score for each aspect was calculated. In this regard opinions were converted into scores on a scale of: strongly agree/excellent (5), Agree/good (4), No opinion/satisfactory (3), Disagree/to some extent satisfactory (2), and Strongly disagree/unsatisfactory (1). Interpretation was made on the following scale:

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4.5	3.5	2.5	1.5
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	To some extent satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

The remainder of the questionnaire was analyzed as for the interview and document analysis given below.

### Interview and document analysis

For the analysis of data generated through CPs' interviews and analysis of project reports, along with deliverables and other documents, qualitative approaches were adopted by seeking patterns, identifying themes, developing major categories and planning each category under a code to generate explicit findings.

## **Findings and interpretation**

### **Is there an alignment between the course conception, design, delivery and evaluation?**

#### **From interview**

Yes, it was sequential and systematic, different kinds of recap activities were used to align the course. “The phases of needs analysis and prioritizing them were a major factor in identifying the project. This was helpful.” (CP-1) These included presentations, discussions, group work. Designing project tools however, needed more time (CP-3).

### **What are the kinds of understandings, knowledge and skills that CPs acquire from the course?**

#### **From interview**

The kinds of knowledge and skills that CPs learnt from the course, and which they were able to apply, ranged from formulating goals and specific objectives, negotiations with the school, identifying, prioritizing and analyzing needs; to planning, implementing, coordinating and managing project activities; and using project tools effectively, collecting and analyzing results and writing a report along with gathering deeper insights into the nature and process of developing the project.

Analytical thinking skills and developing alternate resources were also evident. “It encourages holistic development. By this I mean it is a process of integrating several skills to develop a concept.” (CP-1)

#### **From questionnaire**

CPs felt confident about developing data collection tools to conduct needs analysis (3.8), designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a project on a small scale (3.9), and data analysis for report writing (3.7).

## **What is the satisfaction level of the CPs regarding the course?**

### **From interview**

“It offered something creative and different from the dissertation.” (CP-3) “It offered me practical experience of the kind of work I am required to do as a professional development teacher when I return to my context.” “I have deeper insights to the project now, the nitty-gritty of the whole process.”(CP-3) “The need analysis process was thoroughly done; with these experiences I can now identify the needs of my school while doing my next project.” (CP-4). “The faculty was supportive, and the course was both sequential and systematic. However, one CP shared her discomfort stating, “too many facilitators and feedback confused my thinking”. (CP-3)

### **From questionnaire**

The overall mean score of 3.6 for the 14 items of the first question reveals that CPs were satisfied with the majority of the aspects of the course and their learning from it. Course aspects (along with the mean) upon which CPs showed their satisfaction included course outline (3.6), clarity upon assessment tasks and criteria (4.2), overall classroom discourse (4.2), effectiveness of essential readings (3.8) and templates developed or provided in the class (3.8). However, CPs were unsatisfied with the availability of relevant material in the library (2.5), some strategies employed in the classroom (3.4) and the way they selected the course (2.5).

The above mentioned picture from quantitative data become clearer as respondents identified some strengths and challenges of the course:

### **Strengths**

Presentation of the course delivery, availability and presence of the course leader and team members, classroom discussion, group work, input of visiting faculty, practical work in the field and encouragement to improve the task were identified as strengths. Also identified were an alternate approach to research, focus on planned activities, promotion of templates and ongoing feedback. Learning from the course helped in designing, developing and conducting the projects with help in conducting further projects in the CPs’ context.

## **Challenges**

Reading material was insufficient as there was shortage of resources in the library. Extra workload was not anticipated, and it was assumed this course would be easier than doing research. Drafting consent letter for negotiation entry was another problem, along with designing data collection tools. Prioritizing time management, approach to report writing (hence writing one before), different kinds of feedback given (some in detail, others brief) and different teaching style of faculty were also big challenges.

- Respondents also made some recommendations for improvement:
- Coordination among faculty in providing and giving feedback.
- More literature to be made available, especially about small scale projects.
- Expectations from the course should be more explicit.
- Knowledge of the subject and techniques for monitoring and evaluation of project need, along with better preparation and more time.

## **Does the EDP developed by the CPs contribute to classroom/school improvement?**

### **From interview**

Addresses the emerging needs of teachers/classroom and finds ways to overcome them; for example, in curriculum areas, classroom teaching, learning assessment, etc. Raised the awareness of teachers, to seek other means rather than depend on one single source of knowledge such as the textbook. It also offered alternate ways of/for applying content knowledge, to teaching Algebra, assessments practices, English Language, Science and others. Systematic and sequential planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project cycle may help to undertake or initiate other projects at the classroom level. Helps place theory into practice, the notion of 'doing' – practically, and learning from the experiences gained or not gained and redoing the same task, results in deeper reflection and helps overcome barriers to teaching/learning. "For me, the Project provided practical experiences for realization of learning." (CP-1) "It motivated the teachers and students through active participation in a series of activity-based learning situations." (CP-1).



“I got the opportunity to address some of the classroom issues and to find their solutions.” “It enhanced my knowledge of planning and implementing small-scale projects. I got an opportunity to reflect in and on action, and this helped me to gauge the situation from different angles.” (CP-2)

### **How did the CPs perform while doing the project?**

While one CP improved the current syllabus of grade-8 in Algebra by offering new ways to teach the content, through teaching alternate approaches for concept understanding and development, the other focused on activity-based learning in Science. Yet another had foreseen that there would be other ways of assessment of student learning, thus demonstrated and taught alternate strategies for assessment. The introduction of environmental awareness by creating a “green school” and setting up of a English language resource library for young learners was another endeavor to bring school improvement in achievable and sensible ways. It provided a “Practical implementation of linking theory into practice.” (CP-1) “I did not have Report Writing skills, and this was the most challenging part.” (CP-3).

However, CPs at times felt anxious, stressed, confused and in need of more support. They were not confident in the early stages of the project cycle. They felt the whole process of developing projects was very challenging. Literature search related to the project and their own project area was difficult to locate and difficult to grasp. “Limited computer skills and knowledge further exacerbated the situation.” (CP-1). Being a new course, the reference material in the library was limited. “Non-availability of sample work and text was a major hindrance.” (CP-3).

### **From questionnaire and matrix**

Overall mean score was 3.9 for the use of learnt knowledge and skills mentioned in the matrix. This discloses that CPs were good at the use of learning from the course. They were particularly good at project design (4.4), its implementation (4.4) and evaluation (3.8). This data also depicts that CPs needed more input on exploration of project context (2.5) and use of relevant tools for needs analysis (2.8). For more details please see appendix 2.

It is interesting to note that data from both sources complemented each other, especially overall mean scores of 3.8 and 3.9 on claim and performance, and on designing and implementation of projects, respectively. Regarding developing

relevant data collection tools for needs analysis, the claim (2.8) is in line with performance (2.8).

Another emerging problem for the faculty teaching the course was the lack of understanding of the faculty that was supervising the course. A majority of the supervisors came from the research paradigm and did not have a background in project management. Therefore, they guided the EDP supervisees according to research processes rather than a project management approach. To further exacerbate the situation, CPs' colleagues who had opted for the research methods (RM) course, influenced their thinking as they too were of the opinion that EDP and RM had similar elements.

Another means of collecting data was the case study method. This provides further insights into CPs work.

## **Case Studies**

### **Case 1: To Know What Is Unknown**

CP-1 opted for project development due to 3 important practical reasons: 1) to develop as a professional development teacher, who would in the future be required to work closely with other professionals in curriculum development; 2) to gain skills in terms of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating an educational project; and 3) to explore and develop her own pedagogical content knowledge for teaching mathematics.

Her focus was to address the needs of mathematics teachers in the field of algebra in Grade 8. This need emerged from the need analysis conducted at the school. The need was greatly regarded as significant, as it was a means to enrich the curriculum; for knowledge and skill enhancement of teachers, and to make it more relational and meaningful for students who feared mathematics.

For her, the fundamental aspects of quality teaching, which encompassed her implementation phase were motivation, learning by doing - the practical, ongoing feedback to the teachers she taught and understanding of how to encourage teachers to reflect on their learning/teaching and make sense of their experience.

Her evaluation of the project revealed that students understanding increased to an extended level as teachers themselves gained a better understanding of how students learn algebra. Most teachers did not use concrete material because

they did not understand the connections between algebra and mathematics, and they failed to gauge how students' algebraic understanding, reasoning and thinking skills develop. By increased use of resources, other than the textbook, in the form of stories, games and algebraic tiles, she managed to increase the students' understanding of algebraic learning.

The major challenges she faced from the school teachers were syllabus coverage and change in teaching approaches. However, she overcame this aspect by using the textbook as a baseline but changed and extended the theory into practical activities. By recognizing teachers' past beliefs and practices, she demonstrated alternate ways of thinking about algebraic learning. She states that willingness from teachers to learn, vigilance, support, time and providing opportunities are crucial for teachers to sustain new ways of teaching mathematics. Her manual "Guide to teaching algebra differently" has contributed a rich source to algebra teaching for secondary school teachers.

## **Case 2: Let's Talk**

For CP-2 the needs analysis revealed that the school needed support in developing English language teachers' knowledge and skills, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning of language skills in Grade 5. The rationale for this project was to move the teachers' thinking about the English syllabus as a 'sacred' textbook, and to make them look for means to alter and modify the existing text. Teacher-centred classrooms and delivering instructions in English in a lecture mode with students as passive listeners, was a matter that needed immediate attention. Reading and writing was the focus of language. The CP built her conceptual framework for her project on the Chomsky's (1957) natural communicative approach, claiming that there exists an innate language learning capacity in all humans and that learning occurs in ways that are interactive.

Implementation was based on providing opportunities to learners for the communication of ideas that mattered to them. This approach was based on the fact that everyone has something to share and learn from others. Listening activities, songs, chants, poems to mimic, master sounds, rhythms and intonations were given. Authentic tasks were weaved in games, as information related to their daily lives. Watch and listen, listen and speak, read, observe and talk, dialogues, debates coupled with agreements and arguments were some practical activities used.

Evaluation of the project revealed that teachers do have the potential and the creativity of adaptation, rather than adoption of and from the text, if provided

with the right kind of support and professional training, which should be relevant to the context and their experience. Ample opportunities to practice speaking and listening in the targeted language was given to improve their skills. A collegial learning environment and a strong desire among teachers to bring improvement in students' skills of listening/speaking were the two fundamental ways to promote learning. However, a significant part of learning for the CP herself was that there is a lot more involved in activity-based learning other than simply activities. Teacher's competence in the target language, her fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and thinking skills are necessary; along with the support if alternate ways to fostering speaking and listening skills in students are required.

### **Case 3: Review and improve assessment policy of a school**

The project of CP-3 set out to review and modify a current Assessment Policy (not explicitly written) in a school. This was the need of the school and it matched well with his interest and expertise. Traditional paper and pencil tests were the only means for assessing student learning; this focused on rote memorization, hindering students' skills in creative and critical thinking. The other factor was the traditional examination system. Besides this, lack of teachers' skills in designing tests was crucial. Through a variety of measures he set out to explore students' assessments practices and to determine whether the learning outcomes are achieved which the teachers set out. Data revealed that there were no open-ended questions, tests were summative rather than on-going, recording and reporting mechanism was missing, marking criteria and grading policy was norm referenced and teachers had little or no understanding of criterion reference testing. The purpose of the report card was to inform parents and students about the marks; they contained no information on students' academic, social or moral development.

A series of workshops were held for teachers and management. They ranged from creating awareness by reviewing the existing assessment policy, to hands-on training by preparing different kinds of assessment tools such as portfolios, surveys, checklists, rating scales, anecdotal records etc.

By using alternate ways based on contextual needs, a new policy was devised. The implementation phase was adapted from Bullen's framework on Management Alternatives, and included holding consultative meetings to create an awareness of new assessment practices, brainstorming with stakeholders and managers on what and how to review the existing assessment policy, preparing a draft policy, circulating for comments, incorporating feedback in final draft,

validation and sending it to the Board of Governors for validation and inculcating the skills among teachers for using these practices. The outcome was a manual and guidelines as a ready reference for teachers and management.

Some concerns shared by the teachers were increased workload with formative assessments and the nature of the examination systems. The CP however, convinced the teachers and the management that taking it slowly by introducing one assessment tool at a time in daily testing was a possibility.

#### **Case 4: Transformation of an ordinary school into a green school**

The main thrust of CP-4 was creating environmental awareness in a school where individuals are taught to cope with challenges to face the future. One of the biggest challenges across the world is engagement in industrialization at the cost of the environment. The school was looking for ways to inculcate social action, besides academic strength, and to foster the students' role in contributing towards the school. One of the prime objectives of the project negotiated by the CP and unanimously agreed by the school was to bring about a change in the school community's (student, teachers, and management) attitude towards the environment.

In the planning and implementation phase informal talk with stakeholders about ways to bring about school improvement was useful. Environmental education was seen as an emerging need because environmental issues did not arise in the textbook or in teachers' classroom approach. Environmental teaching was felt to be theoretical and did not acknowledge the need of the environment nor the role that the students can play in environmental care, conservation and preservation. The immediate response was to make use of the barren land that lay waste in the school. This would offer students several alternatives, namely an extra curricular activity to cultivate and nurture plants in the area, learn the content and scientific skills of planting to reaping, erosion, preparing compost, grafting, pruning, watering, different plant life, use of fertilizers, etc. Workshops were conducted, pictures and posters highlighting environmental issues were demonstrated for awareness, the campaign of all hands at work was established, and each class had a part in nurturing the barren land. Teachers' capacity to infuse environmental issues in the social studies and science textbook was highlighted.

The evaluation and outcomes of the project revealed an enrichment of the Social Studies Textbook through designing hands-on-activities, and the conception,

development and establishment of the Green Club, which was perceived as an effective strategy in preparing students to bring about environmental change in their immediate context.

As an evaluation exercise, the reflective journal revealed the interest, enjoyment, commitment to social action. To sustain this project there was registration in the Environment Club, which was observed as a way forward in a small but significant initiative to bring about school improvement

## **Conclusion**

Projects have the potential to make a genuine contribution to school improvement and thereby make a difference in schools. During the EDP Course M.Ed. CPs had several opportunities to disseminate their project conception, for need analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation through interaction with the school teachers, the management, IED teaching team and supervising faculty; and through their reports and deliverables. Feedback received from AKU-IED faculty was very encouraging, and this makes it clear that CPs had a good grasp of the fundamentals of project planning, implementation and evaluation.

The attitude of the schools towards this initiative has been acknowledged and the IED-school partnership is strengthened with this educational endeavor. For the first time, CPs are giving back some form of practical experiences and concrete materials as deliverables to schools. Areas where guidance was most needed in the schools were tapped and action was taken. In the process of 'doing' projects, practical learning through using several innovative strategies, low/cost resources and means of reviewing documents have been taught and practiced.

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# Appendix 1

## Project-wise application of learnt knowledge and skills during implementation and report of projects writing by the CPs

Projects	Case 1					Case 2					Case 3					Case 4				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Quality level</b>																				
<b>Needs analysis</b>																				
o Level I Exploration of the overall schools needs																				
o Level II Identification of specific area for project																				
o Level III Identified the specific needs in the identified area																				
o Relevance of tools used for needs analysis for each level																				
<b>Project design</b>																				
o Logical link among; identified needs, and goal, objectives and activities of the project																				
o Support from literature for the proposed activities to fulfill the identified needs																				
o Rationale of using M&E tools																				
o Relevance of the tools with the proposed activities																				
<b>Implementation of the Project</b>																				
o Negotiations																				
o Accomplishment of the scheduled activities																				
o Relevance of alternate strategies adopted during the project																				
o Quality and relevance of deliverables																				
<b>Evaluation</b>																				
o Proper analysis of the data for drawing conclusions																				
o Identification of challenges faced during the project																				
o Identification of areas for improvement in design for such projects in future																				
o Conclusion																				

Key 1= unsatisfactory, 2= to some extent satisfactory, 3=satisfactory, 4= good, 5= excellent

## Appendix 2

*Overall mean score for CPs' ability to use learnt knowledge and skills from the course*

	<b>Mean score</b>
<b>Quality level</b>	
<b>Needs analysis</b>	<b>2.9</b>
○ <b>Level I</b> Exploration of the overall schools needs	2.5
○ <b>Level II</b> Identification of specific area for project	3.0
○ <b>Level III</b> Identified the specific needs in the identified area	3.5
○ Relevance of tools used for needs analysis for each level	2.8
<b>Project design</b>	<b>4.4</b>
○ Logical link among; identified needs, and goal, objectives and activities of the project	4.3
○ Support from literature for the proposed activities to fulfill the identified needs	4.5
○ Rationale of using M&E tools	4.8
○ Relevance of the tools with the proposed activities	4.0
<b>Implementation of the Project</b>	<b>4.4</b>
○ Negotiations	4.3
○ Accomplishment of the scheduled activities	4.0
○ Relevance of alternate strategies adopted during the project	4.5
○ Quality and relevance of deliverables	4.8
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>3.8</b>
○ Proper analysis of the data for drawing conclusions	4.0
○ Identification of challenges faced during the project	4.8
○ Identification of areas for improvement in design for such projects in future	3.0
○ Conclusion	3.5

# Teacher Mentoring Programme: A Vehicle to Support Professional Development for Improving the Quality of Education in Districts of Sindh and Balochistan of Pakistan

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## Abstract

In general practices it is noticed that there is greater improvement in teacher's performance if they refresh themselves by attending different professional development programmes. They start rethinking about their role as effective teacher and how to support novice teachers. In order to support the novice teachers and develop them professionally there is a need of quality teacher education programme. Literature reveals that "Teacher mentoring programs have dramatically increased since the early 1980s as a vehicle to support and retain novice teachers. The vast majority of what has been written about mentoring focused on what mentors should believe and do in their work with respect to novice teachers. The professional literature typically describes the benefits for novice teachers" (Odell and Huling 2000). By keeping in mind the importance of shared literature and significant contribution of The Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) offered Certificate in Education: Primary Education Programmes (Mentoring Focus) under the Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) project to improve the quality in teacher education.

This paper presents some of the strategies used during the mentoring programmes, specifically focused on developing the participants' skills of 'mentoring' such as to provide facilitation, support and help to motivate less experienced selected primary teachers of the cluster schools to reach their true potential. The series of programmes developed participants as effective teachers for their classrooms and as mentors for their learning resource centres (LRCs) at union council level through reflective practice and critical thinking. This paper also describes the mechanism of professional support to develop the other primary school teachers (mentees) for their professional growth through Cluster Based Mentoring Programme (CBMP) and impact on their classroom teaching. Consequently the growth of mentees created friendly and enjoyable supportive

learning environment in their classes where children enhance their learning abilities. These facts showed quality of CBMP, which in turn improves the quality of Primary Teacher Education.

Hence, the graduate of Certificate in Education: Primary Education (Mentoring Focus) programmes are supporting their mentees professionally for improving the quality of teachers education in selected districts of Sindh and Balochistan of Pakistan. Furthermore the paper also highlights the experiences of the instructional team during teaching, follow up field visits, anecdotal records of feedback sessions, participants' reflections and interviews provided as evidences of how Mentoring Programme became a vehicle to support professional development for improving the quality of Education.

## **Introduction**

The quality of teachers in the current education policy of Pakistan is a crucial factor in implementing educational reforms at the grass root level (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 1998). The recent Education Sector Reform Action Plan of 2001-2004 recognises teachers' professional development as one of the basic elements for improving the quality of education (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 35). According to the thesaurus of the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) database, professional development refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth." Such activities may include individual development, continued education, and in-service education; as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring.

In the context of education, the purpose of Professional Development can be summarized as the acquisition or extension of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities that enable individual teachers and the school-learning organization in which they work to (Blanford 2000).

In developing countries, the role of the Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) is remarkable as it provides opportunities that lead to the improvement in the quality of teacher education. Considering the significant contribution of AKU-IED for bringing change in the education sector, its role has been recognized as a national partner in the implementation of Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) initiatives. ESRA programmes are managed by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Government of Pakistan.

The AKU-IED is to take the lead in Component - 2 of Research Triangle Institute Education Sector Reform Assistance (RTI-ESRA), which is titled as “Professional Development for Educators, Teachers and Administrators”. Its primary objective is to assist provincial and district authorities to establish a sustainable organizational and institutional framework for ongoing teacher professional development, that makes the most effective and efficient use of available resources.

As per agreement, initially AKU- IED has developed capacity in the 9 selected districts of Sindh and Balochistan (Hyderabad, Khairpur, Sukkur, Thatta, Noshki, Chagai, Gwadar, Qila Saifullah and Turbat) to improve the quality of education at the primary level. This is a multi-pronged effort to develop the skills of education officers, teachers and teacher educators through a variety of customized courses. While working closely with the district governments, AKU-IED provided technical assistance for establishing Resource Centres (RCs) which will sustain in-service teacher education at the district and tehsil levels.

In order to build upon the capacity at the grass-root level, the AKU-IED plans to offer a series of programmes. The Certificate in Education: Primary Education (Mentoring Focus) programmes are designed for Supervisors (SPEs), Learning coordinators (LCs), Resource persons (RPs) and experienced teachers of elementary/primary schools. These programmes are field based; and comprise of three phases of 300 contact hours that spread over a period of ten weeks. The main aim of the programmes is to help the SPEs, LCs and RPs; along with teachers from Primary and Elementary schools to restructure their roles as mentors and to be able to provide professional support to teachers (mentees) at tehsil level. The long reaching aim of the programmes is to develop course participants (CPs) as mentors for their own clusters through reflective practice and critical thinking. The mentors developed through these programmes are expected to further develop the capabilities of the primary teachers through a cluster based mentoring programme, which is field based and encompasses 300 contact hours to improve teacher classroom practices and students’ learning.

## **Notion of Mentoring**

Mentoring is usually an intense, dyadic relationship in which the mentors further the professional and personal development of the protégé by providing information, assistance, support and guidance. Levinson et al., (1978) define mentor as “a teacher, sponsor, counselor, developer of skills, and intellect host, guide, and exemplar” (Merriam, 1983, p. 162). This characterization of mentor as a teacher or guide who befriends, supports, and sponsors a protégé is repeated

frequently in literature (Anderson and Shannon, 1988; Daloz, 1983; Fagan and Walter, 1982; Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986, Gray and Gray, 1985; Klopff and Harrison, 1981; Odell, 1990; Zey, 1984).

Mentoring is also described in terms of professional relationships that mitigate teacher isolation, promote the concept of an educative workplace and lead to the creation or understanding of consensual norms in a school faculty or grade team (dialogic learning). (Little, 1985; Costa and Kallick, 1993; McCann and Radford, 1993; Yeomans and Sampson, 1994; Ballantyne, Hansford and Packer, 1995).

In reviewing the literature, a mentor's role can be synonymous with that of a teacher, coach, trainer, role model, nurturer, leader, talent-developer, and opener-of-doors (Sullivan, 1992). Professional development can come in a variety of forms such as mentoring, modeling, ongoing workshops, special courses, structured observations, and summer institutes (Rodriguez and Knuth 2000, p. 4). However, it must provide opportunities for teachers to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice, and broaden themselves both as educators and as individuals. Beau Fly Jones contends that "effective professional development is necessary for all teachers involved in educational reform" (Cook and Fine 1996, p. 3). Mentoring supports professional growth and renewal, which in turn empowers the faculty through individuals and colleagues (Boice 1992).

In Pakistan, research studies, especially those pertaining to Balochistan, were conducted (see. Qaisrani et al., (1999) & Lalwani, 1999) and these provided some useful insights into the effectiveness of mentoring programmes. Some of the available literature (Ganser, 1995; Memon, Lalwani, Meher, n.d.) studies the voices of mentors by discussing the mentors' role in professional development. Qaisrani and his associates (1999) consider mentoring programme as an innovative programme of in-service teacher education. They show that the cluster-based mentoring programme has had a significant impact on students' learning. This programme has added a new dimension of group mentoring based on the cluster approach to in-service teacher education.

## **Applied Strategies**

The following strategies were used during the Certificate in Education: Primary Education (Mentoring Focus) Programmes:

## Reflective Practice

Reflective practice has gained currency as bedrock for teachers' learning and for the improvement of their teaching practices. Dewey was the first educationist to promote reflection as a means of professional development in teaching. He believed that critical reflection is the most important quality a teacher must have, and that it has much more impact on the quality of schools and instructions, rather than the teaching techniques commonly used (Dewey, 1933). More recently, Donald Schon (1987) has suggested that the ability to reflect on one's action is a defining characteristic of professional practice. Schon has also noted that reflection can take place throughout the teaching process and is a crucial aspect of the process by which beginners in a discipline improve their work to make it more consistent with that of successful and experienced practitioners. Kottkamp (1990) defined reflection as "a cycle of paying deliberate attention to one's own actions in relation to intentions... for the purpose of expanding one's opinions and making decisions about improved ways of acting in the future, or in the midst of the action itself" (p. 182). We consider the meaningful role of reflection in the teaching practices we introduced, and in so doing develop a bridge between reflection and professional growth.

During the programmes, CPs were encouraged to rethink their existing beliefs, attitudes and practices towards the child and the teaching-learning process; and to reconsider the kinds of professional support they provide to teachers at the primary level. The CPs got the opportunity to reflect and get deeper insights into organizing the multi-grade teaching in different scenarios: as a practical model, as a curriculum, its narrowness and its aptness; the difference between curriculum, syllabus and scheme of studies; role of text books and the role of teachers as mediators of the prescribed curriculum. Participants also discussed and analyzed the primary curriculum to update their existing practices and to incorporate and demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge through classroom teaching. In order to be an effective teacher as well as an effective mentor, participants also got the chance to enhance their understanding of core subject areas, such as mathematics, science, social studies and languages (Urdu, English, Sindhi) through practically involved hands-on and mind-involved activities; and by reviewing planned lessons for adaptation and learning from good examples. The CPs also realized the importance of the reflective practice sessions and how these reflect on different areas; and how the practices mentioned above help to recognize the CPs' own strengths and weakness. They considered it as a professional development tool for further improving the teaching/learning process. Activities to promote and sustain reflection included:

1. Maintaining a reflective journal
2. Critical discourse of sessions
3. Evaluation and analyses
  - Lessons and workshops
  - Individual weekly assignments
  - Programme Evaluation questionnaires

In this regards the CPs maintained their reflective journals and shared it with their respective tutors for feedback. In these journals, they raised questions and related their experiences with their learning, by describing their reflections. Data that is presented in this paper was derived from the CPs' reflective journals. They developed their understanding about teaching and the learning process through reflective practices, as one CP mentions in his journal,

“Through reflections I have started thinking about my teaching methods. During writing reflection, the what, why and how improved my thinking skills, and I planned to improve my teaching skills as an effective teacher and an effective mentor. Now I realized it is a truly professional tool that helped me think logically and overcome my drawbacks during cluster based mentoring programme”. (Abdul Basit Khairpur)

One of the CPs expressed his feelings on reflective practices through the journal by saying, “Initially writing reflections was difficult for me but as time passed I have improved the writing in my journal through the feedback of tutors. In journal writing, I got the opportunity to discuss issues and raise questions. Writing reflective entries and critical thinking are important professional tools and without it I realized it is not possible for teachers to see the level of their own professional growth”. (Zamarrud Turbat)

In summary, reflection fosters professional growth and development; along with critical thinking, self assessment, and self-directed learning. It promotes the development of new knowledge, leads to broader understanding, and creates greater self-awareness (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). It facilitates sorting through and selecting from many ideas, helps to confront and challenge one's current conceptions of teaching and learning, and assists in identifying how these affect classroom decision making. Therefore, reflection is an invaluable tool in facilitating lifelong learning and professional growth.



## Developing Mentoring Skills

The specific objectives of the programme revolved around the theme of 'Mentoring Skills'. To achieve the target of the programme, the team has planned to engage the CPs in different activities to develop their mentoring skills i.e. classroom presentations, lesson planning, team teaching, preparation of instruction material for conducting workshops and one year cluster based mentoring programme planning that allows them to think about their future roles as mentors.

During the whole programme CPs have ample opportunities to develop themselves in the following areas:

1. Enhancement of Pedagogical Knowledge
2. Practicing and improving their teaching skills in their own context
3. Exposure to observe the teaching and involvement in feedback session
4. Exploring the concept of peer coaching and team teaching
5. Planning and implementing the workshops in groups
6. Designing and reviewing the instructional materials
7. Planning and preparing a hand book of Cluster based Mentoring Programme
8. Individual strategy planning for:
  - Field component of the programme
  - Cluster based mentoring programme

It was one of the hallmark features of the programme that CPs were engaged in a variety of subjects' content based activities in order to rethink their existing notions and practices in core subject areas. For instance, in effective science teaching, teachers need to develop an understanding of the scientific concepts involved and also the pedagogical content (Shulman, 1986), that is how to integrate their knowledge of children's reasoning with their experience of classroom organization. The lesson plans were designed within the constructivist framework. Activities which promote thinking were included. Each lesson plan contained an extension, enabling teachers to differentiate between pupils of different ability. Pedagogy was focused upon along with content teaching,

exposure to new ideas in subject matter pedagogy and effective teaching; this promoted professional growth on the part of the mentors as well.

In order to provide the CPs with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of newly acquired pedagogical content knowledge and skills in core subject areas, the class was organized in pairs for teaching practice in a government school followed by a debriefing session. Each pair was given one period to deliver a lesson while other pairs were given the opportunity to observe their colleagues along with facilitators. After the lesson was delivered, a session was arranged for feedback from observers and facilitators. In this way they got experience on how to take feedback sessions with their mentees. As the CPs will work as mentors in their respective cluster schools, the session on classroom teaching provided them with an opportunity to widen their observation skills and to explore the means to impart professional feedback to their colleagues. This experience can be taken back by them to be applied in their own contexts. In this regard one of the CPs reflected, “Team teaching was good experience to plan lesson with my pair in which I learnt that about how newly acquired knowledge can be embedded in my teaching. (Zubair Khan, Hyderabad)

Another CPs reflected in her reflective journal:

Now as a mentor, I understand how to help mentees and how to give them realistic feedback. When I go through the process of team teaching and classroom teaching, I realize what type of problems mentees might face while teaching in this way according to acquired teaching knowledge. The session also helped me in understanding how to take notes during observations and how to provide feedback. (Nuzhat Zohara, Hyderabad)

For developing mentoring skills, during the programme, the participants got opportunities to explore the concept of peer coaching. These participants have to work with their cluster school teachers in order to enhance the teachers’ professional learning by observing their teaching, providing feedback and discussing/suggesting alternatives on the teaching that they have observed. The participants received the session very productively and reflected that:

Peer coaching helped us to see how senior teachers facilitate each other in teaching. We need to get insights into the concept because after completion of the programme here we have to work with our cluster school teachers (mentees). (Saifa Aliyan, Turbat).

Workshop planning and implementing in a small group is one of the tasks assigned to CPs during the programme. All participants got experience in planning and implementing workshops for their colleagues at AKU-IED and in the field. During Phase-III at AKU-IED, after getting experiences by conducting workshops at AKU-IED and in the field, CPs were given a chance to review their Phase-I instructional materials in the light of their experiences. In this regard one CP reflected in his reflective journal:

Designing workshop in phase I was a helpful experience, but reviewing the instructional materials in phase III was more fruitful and strengthened our experiences to improve the instructional materials (workshops plan in core subjects) on the bases of field experiences. Consequently, we built up our confidence to be able to design workshop on any topic. (Munwar Baig, Hyderabad)

CPs developed the 300 contact hours 'Cluster Based Mentoring Programme' handbook with the guidance of the facilitators. At the end of each programme, the CPs learnt how to prepare a strategic plan for field based programme, and a long term action plan for one year long cluster based mentoring programme, and how to organize the said according to time and objectives.

To conduct one year cluster based mentoring programmes, CPs established Learning Resource Centres in Central Schools.

## **Establishment of Learning Resource Centre**

The term "Professional Development" is a most attractive issue, and is the centre of attention nowadays. (Craft, 2000). Teachers' professional development programs are conducted in an environment where the process of learning takes place on various platforms, all of which aim at a long lasting qualitative change in the teachers' approach toward educating themselves. As Lieberman (1994) defines, the professional development of teachers is a foundation for the establishment of a supportive culture involving norms of collegiality, where teachers update themselves with new content within the scope of their work. Professional development activities that introduce a collaborative culture and collegiality among teachers need a centre, where they can be used to create opportunities to develop the teachers professionally. One such centre for creating opportunities for professional development should be the Learning Resource Centres (LRCs), which need to be established at the union council level of each selected districts. The rationale of an LRC is to provide a platform to the

teachers, to use within their own context, in which they can practice and implement learning. Eventually, these LRCs and cluster schools will provide a vital path, which the teachers can easily traverse within their own contexts.

## **Cluster-based Mentoring Programme**

After successful completion of the AKU-IED based programmes, all mentors were given the responsibility to conduct a one year cluster-based mentoring programme at their respective LRCs. Each mentor is hence expected to develop the capacity of a cluster of primary school teachers at the LRC. Each cluster comprises of a maximum of 30 primary teachers, in which the mentor is expected to conduct a 300 contact hours long programme (192 hours of face-to-face sessions, comprising of 4 hour long sessions on every Saturdays of the month, and 108 hours of field based component). The main objectives of the cluster based mentoring programmes are to improve teachers' classroom practices and students' learning at the primary level.

Mentors from each cluster set-up are to be provided on-going support in organizing teaching and learning processes of the mentees (primary school teachers), and the children by district coordinators of the AKU-IED and the district government. The support mechanisms of the mentors remain available throughout the year, and the mentees who successful complete 300 contact hours of the programme are certified by AKU-IED.

## **Impact on Classroom Practices**

Students' learning is at the core of all school improvement initiatives and therefore, it closely reflects the quality and practices of teachers and the overall performance of the schools. This is because of the fact that teaching approaches used in the schools reflect students learning. Those primary teachers (mentees) who are attending the cluster based mentoring programmes have shown their good performances and practices by implementing the acquired knowledge in their classroom. The mentors also provide help and follow up support to the mentees in their schools. During follow up, mentors help them in co-planning and co-teaching. Mentors shared their experienced reflections on follow-up visits by saying, "the great achievement I observed was that mentees adapted 'active learning' strategies of teaching and provided supportive learning environment where children enhance their learning abilities". (Noor Hussain, Khairpur) Hence, cluster based mentoring programmes improve the quality of teacher education at the grass root level.

## Team Learning Experience

*Reflective practice* was the foundation for our professional development throughout the programmes and the in-field working with colleagues and mentors. The points most emphasized were the importance of thoughtful analysis and frequent revision of effective approaches to teaching and learning. The contextual diversity of Sindh and Balochistan, and the resulting experiences that these provided enhanced our learning. Diversity, whether related to gender, background, economic status, developmental level, learning style, or other characteristics was treated as a potential source of enrichment and not as an automatic scarcity.

*Developing mentoring skills* as a support by which teachers can break down their isolation and support professional learning in ways that focus on the daily tasks of the teachers and teaching/learning situations. The current interest in mentoring for professional development stems from the belief that mentoring, coaching and preceptor-ship are a way in which individuals and institutions can learn and develop.

*Learning from the experience of working* with government teachers and officials in ESRA focused on districts of Sindh and Balochistan Provinces.

## Conclusion

Capacity building is a continuing process for professional development of individuals. Change is a slow process; however institutional change depends on both people and policies. With the support of the ESRA, AKU-IED is putting its efforts in selected district of Sindh and Balochistan for professional development activities and institutional development activities, by establishing leaning resources centres through cluster based mentoring programmes. We can hence say that these programmes are emerging as powerful vehicles to support professional development of primary school teachers at grass-roots level.

However, for sustainability there is a need to recognize the mentors' role, and to provide facilities for their mobility to engage them in the follow-up of professional development activities at cluster school level. Then these programmes will lead and help to sustain the teachers' education for improving the quality of primary education in schools. (Annual Project Report Jan-Dec 2005)

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# Action Research—A Means of Continuous Professional Development in a Rural Context: Possibilities and Challenges

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## Abstract

*This paper presents our findings from a research initiated to support teachers' continuous development through action research in the rural context of a developing country. The study investigated the experiences of seven teachers and teacher educators from the rural context of Pakistan, who spent nearly six months undertaking action research projects as part of a follow-up strategy for a university-based teacher education programme. After the completion of the university-based programme, the participants had gone back to their respective institutes and were expected to initiate action research projects in order to implement new knowledge/learning. It was also a strategy to ensure the continuity of their professional growth.*

*This study was designed to follow-up the participants' implementation of their action research plans in order to understand the processes involved in bringing reform in the teaching and learning situation in their context and identify related issues. The data includes pre and post conference discussion sessions with the participants as well as the observations of their classroom practice.*

*The findings suggest that as part of their action research plans, and through the facilitators' support in the context, the participants were able to initiate change efforts and introduce innovative ideas in the classroom. The participants' engagement in this experience provided them with the opportunity and motivation to think about the actions that may improve their practice.*

*However, going beyond the initial level of efforts in terms of being able to influence their teaching or teacher learning practices or to improve the learning experiences of students in classroom, were still difficult for them. Due to various constraints, the participants on their own were not able to understand and address the complex issues related to teaching or teacher learning. We conclude that action research in the rural context of a developing country can possibly be seen as a collaborative endeavor only. Various constraints restrict the possibility of engaging in action*



*research as a self-initiated and self-sustained process of individual's learning and growth.*

*This paper, therefore, present an overview of how action research was redefined for the context of a developing country: What were the constraints that hindered the process; what were the opportunities that could facilitate the process; and what were the conditions that are necessary for teachers to engage in action research as an effective way to promote self-learning and self-growth.*

## **Context of the Research Findings**

The study investigated the experiences of seven teachers and teacher-educators from the rural contexts of Sindh and Balochistan, who spent nearly 6 months undertaking action research projects as part of a follow-up strategy for a university-based teacher education programme. The programme was offered for their capacity building to improve practices and bring reform within their context. The participants belonged to the rural public sector, and had varied responsibilities, ranging from teaching to teacher-education. After completion of the university-based programme, the participants had gone back to their areas and were expected to initiate action research in order to implement new knowledge, as well as strategy for the continuity of their professional growth.

## **Methodology**

Our study with the participants was conducted in a qualitative research paradigm, where we played the dual roles of *facilitator* and *researcher*. Our work with the participants was to provide them follow-up support to help improve their practices, which was done mainly through our monthly field visits to their context. These visits would normally include pre and post conference discussion sessions with the participants and their classroom observation. In the discussion sessions, we would facilitate the participants in reflecting on their practice, helping them identify, understand and improve their roles; and help them with practices in order to bring reform in the teaching and learning situation in their areas.

Facilitation involved asking critical questions to help them, and to identify and address any issues/concerns related to their inquiry and development process. It was to help them remain focused, refine their focus and eventually improve it by reflecting on it. However, we had kept our role flexible in the sense that it did change according to the need of the situation. In addition to this facilitative role,

we were also studying the process of the participants' growth and learning - the issues, challenges and opportunities related to their learning in this context.

The schools/areas where these teachers and teacher-educators had come from, had limited resources available for teaching and learning. For example, the children would be seated on the floor, or various grades/levels would be combined in one small room due to the shortage of space, furniture or teachers. Some schools were located in such remote areas, where even the basic facilities such as electricity, telephone and newspaper were not available; they did not even have the notion of 'toilet' in this context. Children, in this context, would mostly travel several miles on foot to reach their schools. They had very limited exposure and access to any resources other than their textbooks, whereas, in some cases, it was noticed that the students did not even have this resource available to them. Due to their inability to get textbooks, they would be punished and harassed by the teachers. The availability and provision of resources, however, varied from region to region (Sindh and Balochistan).

## **Action Research: Theoretical Perspective**

Our research was based on certain assumptions about the role and outcome of action research for the professional growth of individuals. These assumptions were mainly derived from literature originating from all over the world, especially the West, as literature pertaining to developing countries, especially Pakistan, is very limited.

The current literature on teacher learning/development makes suggestions for rethinking professional development and reconceptualizing educational research (Clark, 1992). There is a greater emphasis on the notions such as 'self-monitoring teachers', 'teachers as researchers', and teachers as 'extended professionals'. Current research on teacher education advocates for teachers to become designers of their own professional development.

The focus of professional development in general and teacher education in particular has now shifted to the notion of 'lifelong learning' or 'continuous professional development'. This further supports the argument that the responsibility for teachers' professional development should be placed in the hands of the professional teachers, since in order to continue and further their professional growth, they need to be engaged in the process of on-going reflections and inquiry into their practices, which would enable them to understand their practice better and improve it further. And, teacher research is seen as an important tool to help them achieve this purpose. Researchers argue

that 'learning from teaching' ought to be regarded as a primary task of teacher education across the professional life span, and that 'classrooms and schools should be treated as research sites and source of knowledge.' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993)

A number of studies have suggested that action research methodology offers a systematic approach to introducing innovations in teaching and learning. It seeks to do this by putting the teachers/ practitioners in a dual role; as owners of new knowledge and consumers of the self-generated knowledge, whereby participants learn and create knowledge by critically reflecting on their own actions, and at the same time developing concepts and theories about their experiences in order to improve their practices. In this way, teachers virtually extend their role, and in that role, they critically reflect on their skills and problematic situations with the purpose of improving their practices and resolving problem situations (Woolhouse, 2004; Nico, Cl et al 2004; Mohammad, 2005).

The notion of 'teacher research' is also supported by the fact that teachers as 'practitioners' or 'implementers' are in a better position to inform about practices and policies concerning them, rather than relying solely on input provided by outside researchers, which could be too generalized to be used / implemented within their contexts. Since teachers have the knowledge of context, as well as practical knowledge built through years of experience, they could use that knowledge in a better way to identify and address issues concerning them directly (Ponte, P., et al, 1995; 2004). Thus, there is a growing consensus that teacher research / action research helps the teachers "improve their practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which they work" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) and that this can function as a powerful means of personal and professional development (Johnson?). Thus, the role of teacher research in improving practices, forming policies and promoting on-going professional development, is well established in the literature.

In this backdrop, some of our assumptions were that engaging in action research would contribute positively towards the participants becoming more professional problem solvers. They would look for ways to improve their practices, given the various constraints of the situation in which they are working, and become the change agents thereby. Action research would help the participants become practitioners, who are engaged in systematic reflection and inquiry for improving teaching and learning within their contexts. This reflection and self inquiry would provide the basis for the developmental process, which in turn, may lead to greater capacity building and improvement in teaching and learning condition. Thus, it was assumed that the participants would be able to continue their

learning process, as well their professional growth once they got back their localities; and that action research would provide a means to help them continue this process.

## **Action Research in the Rural Context of a Developing Country: Findings and Analysis**

Based on this theoretical perspective, action research was viewed as a tool for continuous professional development in order to improve teachers' and teacher-educators' practices, as well as to sustain the reform efforts in the reality of the context of rural areas. It was assumed that action research would promote self-learning ability; an attitude which, in turn, would result in independent learning.

Our findings, on the other hand, suggest that the teachers could engage in action research only in collaboration with the facilitators. Teachers faced various constraints that did not encourage them to see action research as a means for self-growth and independent learning: they lacked pedagogical content knowledge as well as understanding of their role (the moral and ethical responsibilities as teachers and teacher-educators), required to promote meaningful learning environment. This also hindered their ability to identify their own limitations with regards to the nature and complexity of issues. In addition, their sense of isolation because of hailing from a rural culture further restrained their growth process. It was difficult for them to cope on their own with the complexity of issues related to teaching and learning, which in turn, resulted in their limited growth and understanding of action research. Below we present one case study of a teacher, who aimed to improve his teaching practice through action research within the contextual constraints, as an example of issues related to teachers continuing professional development within the rural background of Pakistan.

### **Story of Hayat – An example**

Hayat was a head master in a middle school, having 15 years of teaching experience. He started his teaching career as a Junior School Teacher (JST) in 1990. After completion of his B.Ed., he was promoted to a Senior School Teacher (SST). Along with his responsibility as a head teacher, he would teach all the subjects to the lower secondary classes. Hayat's school was very far from his hometown, where his family lived (including his wife and three children). Therefore, he usually took a week or ten days off from the school to visit his family. In his absence, the school would remain closed. According to him, he had applied for transfer to his home village; however, he had not been very

successful yet, since the government system did not have any proper mechanism to make the justified decisions (especially, when he had been living away from his family for the last 8 years or so). In addition, there were only other two teachers in the school, and they also did not have sufficient knowledge of the subject nor were they proficient at teaching in general. They belonged to the same village and they would mainly be involved in other personal activities rather than the further improvement of their teaching skills. The main responsibility for the teaching hence fell on Hayat; if he was absent, then the school would be off.

The school runs classes from 1 to 8, consisting altogether 119 students. Children would sit on the floor due to lack of availability of furniture. In addition, various grades or levels were also combined in one small room due to the shortage of teachers. The children mostly came from the adjacent village. The older girls would mostly bring their siblings to the classrooms, as they were supposed to take care of their younger ones, as part of their household responsibilities. Girls and boys studied in the same class in a multi-grade setting (2 or 3 classes combined). The class size (on which Hayat would focus) would normally range from 23-24 students. The language of instruction as well as the textbook was Urdu (except for the English textbook); however, the teachers and students would mostly use their native language in the class.

Since the school was located in a very remote area that was not easily accessible due to traveling conditions, government officials had never visited this school (for monitoring, supervision or any other reason) or similar schools in the remote areas. However, Hayat had close interaction with the community as far as students' learning was concerned, and he said, "If a child doesn't come to the school for a day or two, then I go and look for him in the market; I see his parents and ask them why their child is not coming to the school".

### **Hayat's Action Plan and Implementation**

Prior to his participation in the teacher education certificate programme at AKU-IED, he used to focus on teaching only one class at a time in the multi-grade setting (class 6 and 7), while the students of the other classes would mostly sit silently, or would be sent outside the classroom. He would not engage both the classes simultaneously in the learning activities. Therefore, in his action plan, he aimed to use 'Group Learning' as a strategy to maximize students' learning time, as well as their participation. He wanted to understand how group work could help the students of the two different levels learn more effectively from each other and with each other.

During our first field visit, he informed us that he had started his research according to his plan; however, since he had not heard from the facilitators for a long time after his return from the programme, he had not continued his work. Nevertheless, he believed that the facilitators' presence and support would enable him to assess the outcomes of his new practice and improve it further. He perceived the facilitators' presence as a motivational factor to begin his work from where he had ended. He said that he would plan lessons in such a way that they could allow all the students of varying levels to participate. We had four meetings with Hayat which included observation of his teaching lessons and pre and post observation meetings. Hayat would also maintain his reflective journal on a weekly basis.

### **Hayat's Process of Growth – Outcomes**

Hayat's participation in the action research process resulted in the following outcomes:

- Understanding of Group work and his Role as a Facilitator
- Understanding and Maximizing the Use of Available Learning Resources

### **Understanding of Group work and his Role as a Facilitator**

Our work with Hayat provides evidence for significant changes in his understanding of the use of group work in a multi-grade setting. He made efforts to familiarize the students with this new strategy of 'group work'; explaining to them the benefits, expectations and requirements of working in groups, the roles and responsibilities of individual members in group, use of social skills, and so on. He also took into consideration the differences in the students' levels, making sure that the lessons would be planned in such a way that different aims and objectives could be achieved for different levels, through the correct use of various activities. For example, he would think about how to plan the lesson in such a way that it could serve different purposes for both levels? It was evident that he had conceptualized group work as a strategy that could be used for multi-purposes in a multi-grade setting. For example:

- Engaging both the classes simultaneously, aiming to achieve different purposes; for example, in a combined setting of group, serving as a revision lesson for one group, whereas, providing new knowledge to the other group;

- Teaching common topics related to both classes such as use of language, learning about sentence structure, discussion on problems, professions, issues regarding health, education etc.
- Teaching one class and engaging the other in solving problems or tasks related to their learning and level;
- Teaching them 'learning from each other'; combining groups for the purpose of sharing of ideas/leaning from each other (especially, when there was a difference in levels).

It was evident that he involved students actively in their learning by using group work for the various said purposes. In his planning, he would decide how a lesson could be planned in such a way that if the students of Class 6 learned something new, then Class 7 students could revise the previous learning. For example, while teaching fractions, he planned some problem-solving tasks. He divided the class into groups according to their respective levels. The same worksheet was provided to each group, however, the purpose of the task was to teach a new topic to Class 6 and engage Class 7 in solving problems or tasks based on their previous learning. On another occasion, he taught an English lesson where he aimed to teach one class and engage the other in revision, thus aiming to achieve different purposes for different levels.

...they [these words] were not new for class VII – they were new for class VI. For VII, these terms, 'might', 'right', 'light' – they have been studying in their lesson...but for class VI, they were not....I had decided that it should be easy for VI as well as VII, so that both of them could learn and revise these words together.

Similarly, sometimes, he would prepare tasks specific to each level by preparing two different tasks for the two different levels, and then dividing them into groups according to their respective levels. This was done to teach them according to their specific syllabus. For example he said,

If it's Maths period, then I teach Maths. For example, I ask one class to do these questions that these sums are for class VI and these are for class VII. Class VI is doing its own work and VII is doing its own. When I'm explaining to class VI, then VII is doing its own work. That is, in a way, both are doing their own work.

He would try to identify the topics in the textbook that could relate to both the classes (such as, use of language, learning about sentence structure, discussion

on problems, professions, issues etc.) and planned them in such a way that all the students could get involved and learn together. The purpose was to provide them with an opportunity to discuss similar topics according to their own thinking or take it further according to their previous knowledge.

The lesson that I have planned today is a class VI English lesson in which children are to be told what 'I' means and what 'you' means...and this is a bit easy for class VII but for class VI, it is suitable. I have planned this for both the classes.

...sometimes, what I do is that I take one topic for the classes [while teaching Urdu, English], for example, in Pakistan studies, teaching about District - what is the role of a Coordinator in a district...

...Like, if it's a topic on Maths or Pak Studies, which is interesting for both and is the same for both - for example, it could be for both that they are learning about the provinces of Pakistan...or about the district management or if it's about our education department's officials, such as ADO, DBO, etc...

He also used 'group work' as a strategy to build confidence among the students who were very shy. For this purpose, he would make mixed ability groups so the active one could encourage the shy ones to participate effectively. He thought that this kind of grouping could also help promote self-learning attitude in the students as well as providing them with a diverse experience of learning with each other and from each other.

I formed the groups because groups have the benefits that they learn from each other. [Where] one is weak and the other is intelligent - one is from 6th and the other is from 7th - they take care of each other in the group.

He realized that his role was not only in planning the lessons - rationalizing objectives and designing the relevant tasks - but also in providing appropriate facilitation that includes ongoing assessment for taking action to enhance learning.

In group work, a teacher should facilitate each group and explain to them; he should help them a little and see/monitor how the children are working and also encourage each student [within the group].... I took the role that if the children were hesitant or not



participating, then I encouraged them to take part, or participate in writing...

His effort to plan lessons according to purpose, level and expected outcomes was evident throughout the duration of fieldwork. He realized that a teacher needed to reflect on the lesson outcomes in order to analyze practice. In the feedback session, he would criticize his planned tasks and reflect on the nature of the tasks and their outcomes. This experience also helped him in realizing how to improve group work and what kind of tasks needed to be planned in order to increase participation. His analysis also supported him in taking decisions regarding his planning, i.e., to think about the kind of tasks that could encourage discussion. For example, in one of the lessons, while teaching them about the various 'Professions and Occupations', Hayat did all the explanation himself rather than initiating any genuine discussion or involving the students. Then, he assigned some tasks to the students to discuss about different occupations and relate them to their own experiences i.e., what professions do the people have in their community?

In the feedback session, he realized that he could have invited the students in the beginning to promote meaningful discussion, since he had come to realize that the students had not moved beyond what the teacher had already explained to them in their group discussion. As a result of his reflection on the lesson, he decided that in the following lesson on '*the Qualities of a Teacher/Doctor/Nurse*', he would invite the students to first share their opinions and views before he made any input.

After yesterday's lesson, I found it suitable to ... ask them personal questions [related to their life], and not just the questions given at the end of the text or exercises....I thought that I should ask questions related to their real life ... this lesson would have two kind of benefits, one they would learn about the lesson and they would also get the opportunity to learn more or talk more.

On another occasion, he realized that his own instructions were not clear enough to generate rigorous discussion among the children.

[Reflecting on limited interaction/ issues related to interaction in CLO3] Maybe, I didn't give them such points that they could discuss [that could generate discussion]

His analysis and follow-up actions helped him in moving beyond the traditional practice since he himself was also able to observe change in his practice, he mentioned,

What I had planned that when [earlier] I used to teach one class [level], then the other [level] would remain quiet, get bored, start making noise or they would simply go outside. But when I started working on my research [action research] according to the plan - that I have to take both the classes together and that I have to select such a topic that is of interest for both; and would enable both to get involved in it at the same time, the benefit was that both [levels] did not remain quiet, both classes were being taught, they were both reading, were involved in the lesson, giving responses as well, they were listening as well.

He further commented,

Today, I saw that to prepare any lesson, for any teacher, its necessary for a lot of preparation to be done. Before today, we just used to go like that. We used to teach by looking at the text. However, in this teaching method [referring to the current one], even to prepare a small thing [activity], we need to think a lot, to go into such depth. That means that, in a way, it's my development, the development of my teaching.

Thus, as a result of his participation in this research, he was able to define and refine his theoretical assumptions about using 'group work' as a strategy for multi-grade classroom, within the practicality of the existing context.

### **Understanding and Maximizing the Use of Available Learning Resources**

Initially, Hayat would use charts to write the tasks or to get students' written responses; however, he realized that the blackboard could be used for such tasks. Analyzing the outcomes of different lessons, he learned, 'And group work is not simply a display of materials and charts; it is rather a strategy which could be used without concrete materials'. For example, in a Grammar lesson, he had used charts and paper worksheets for writing the tasks. On that worksheet, the teacher had written different words, (i.e. man, light, boy, cat, me in separate rows) the students were asked to think about the words with the similar sounds. He also provided the students with paper sheets and colored markers to do group work and display this work in the class.

In the feedback session, he informed that he had spent a big chunk of time and money to get these materials. Since these materials were not accessible in the village, he went to the main district (which required 4 hours' traveling time on one side) and spent his own money to buy them. The other implications included his absence from the school, therefore, no teaching and learning took place on that day. He suggested that planning a lesson through group work did not only require conceptual clarity, but it was also very expensive in terms of time and money. The facilitator encouraged him to think about how the similar lesson could be taught without using the resources that he had used. It was identified that the blackboard and students' notebooks could also be used to serve the same purpose. In our initial meeting, Hayat mentioned that his personal experience at the AKU-IED suggested that use of such materials was important to create meaningful learning environments. He said "I was thinking that if I'd use some material, then perhaps the lesson would be much easier and attractive... their availability here is also very difficult..."

However, later, he was able to reflect on the expensive nature of the approach he was trying to use, and that it would be difficult for him to continue group work in the classroom if he were to continue with the use of such materials. He informed us that in another lesson (a Grammar lesson), he had planned similar kinds of group tasks; however, this time he used blackboard for the instructions. He asked the students to discuss and present it verbally. While students presented their work, Hayat would write their responses on the board so that everyone was able to hear and see the other groups' presentations. This experience helped him develop an understanding of how to make maximum use of the available resources.

... Resources can be there in the textbook as well. This way, it's not necessary to use any chart or any other materials - I can prepare some activity from the textbook itself. That is, when initially you people were to come here, I was thinking that there used to be so many resources at IED, where do I get them from now? Then I thought I could give task based on the lesson and the exercise for children's learning - and learning can take place any way.

Initially, Hayat did not realize how the textbook itself could be used effectively as an important resource; however, he was later able to relate the textbook knowledge to the existing context, inviting the children to share their experiences or by making it more relevant and real for them.

To some extent in my teaching, I think that this had improved, because I had come after complete preparation and when I used to teach before that, I used to teach in a superficial way – but today, I taught in depth, because of which my teaching improved.

He analyzed the difference between the AKU-IED situation and real conditions, and reached the conclusion that his understanding of the strategies used during the certificate programme had been enhanced and improved through his engagement in trying out new ideas in the reality of the existing context.

At that time, I thought we used to have materials at IED, therefore, I'd use low-cost-no-cost material. But I didn't have to do it here. The change that I have made [that I see] in my thinking is that I can take activities from the textbook and get it done in two to three different ways. This is a big change [in my thinking] I guess.

It seems that his engagement in reflection and self-analysis helped him to adapt new strategies according to the situation. He learned how group-work setting in the reality of his context is different from the context of IED, and also understood about adapting the new methods according to the contextual realities. Referring to his learning during the programme, he mentioned that at IED, his learning was related to organizing students in groups and in different ways of getting the groups to increase their interaction and participation with colleagues. However, based on his practical experiences, he realized that frequently changing groups had implications in terms of time with the context of his situation. However, he would make combined groups of students from Class 7 and 6 (with the ratio of 2 and 3), when his purpose was for students to learn from each other.

At IED, I thought that group work was much easier, that is, groups are formed easily. However, here I felt that this is difficult that you assign names to various students and ask them to sit at different places. When I looked at this method [in this context], I felt this way their time would get wasted and the children won't be able to understand the instructions...therefore, I have decided that it would be a group of five children. I have to teach in any case. I don't have to take so much pain for forming groups this way. I just have to help increase their learning. I'm not concerned how groups are formed that one is assigned the title 'rose' ... if I have to make groups then I'd consider that class 6 and 7 are combined.

Hayat reflected on the outcome of group work, and he analyzed that new experiences created motivation and interest among children to work together in various ways. He observed that all the children were involved; they were all participating, helping each other and practicing social skills during the lessons. This observation, in turn, motivated him to continue his efforts to work on his new methodology.

Yes, this [group work] would continue. I see its outcomes very clearly – because when I did it for the first time, they [children] didn't show/give me much response but today, despite your presence, I think at that time [his first attempt], I was alone – but today's was better to some extent....Obviously, they had never been taught like this before. They came in 6 and 7 and hadn't even heard about 'group work', but today they understood. I told them that someone is coming; therefore, it [group work] must be a serious thing. That's why they took it seriously and took interest.

His on-going assessment of students' learning helped him to make a comparison between prior lessons and subsequent ones, and by so doing, helped improve his teaching. He analyzed the differences and progressions in students' behavior, i.e., students' movement from less participation to slightly better, improvement of confidence and the subsequent implications for their learning outcomes. He also discussed and reflected on the role of individual members in the group, individual accountability within a group, and on thinking and planning strategies in situations such as when one group had completed the task while the others were still working.

If one group is still thinking [working] and if I ask one to present, then the others who are still on task – they would get affected.... [On the other hand] if one group has done the task earlier and if I ask them to stop while the others are still on task, then they might get involved in talking and might forget the task....In this situation, a teacher should ask the students to record what they have discussed, to write it on paper [i.e. involve them in an additional task] ... Yesterday...all [children] were not talking [participating]...maybe there are some such children who don't get involved, but today I thought I would also focus and assist whether all the children were getting involved in group work or only 2-3 students were talking or working. So, that's why I felt that need that I should ask individually as well ... so that they are

ready to respond individually as well....this way, children would remain prepared that they can also be asked; only one person [in a group] is not responsible for all – I can also be asked and I should also be ready to respond.

Students' improved participation had developed a sense of ownership and achievement in their learning. Hayat now wanted to extend the scope of this kind of work to the other classes and other teachers as well.

From children's perspective, I learnt that this teaching method [group work in a multi-grade] should be used in our context – not just myself but other teachers of the school as well should use this method because it'd be very effective for the children; especially for small or nursery classes ...because they learn through playing – maybe it'd be good for class 7 as well and it should be implemented in the whole school... if it's done once or twice a week, then it'd be better. And I have learnt that children, through this teaching method, are giving a lot of responses and are also taking interest...even when you weren't there once and I did this lesson, they were taking a lot of interest.

Reflecting on his learning from action research, he said that until he experienced the new methods himself, he was not sure of what action research was and how it helped in learning. He had developed his action research plan at the AKU-IED because it was the course requirement; however, he was not sure how he would work on it:

I took it non-seriously [during the course at AKU-IED]. At that time, we were thinking that we just had to write the proposal – maybe it would happen, maybe not – this is what we were thinking there – but we also knew that in our context, we face a lot of challenges – we had told this before as well that in our context, doing such research is quite challenging.

He realized that integration of research in teaching brings reform to the practice; teaching without thinking becomes a routine or mechanical activity, which does not serve the purpose of improvement.

I understood [at that time] that [action] research is like a PhD that a teacher does. He does it alone – and learns himself – he does it on his own and does not involve anyone else. He writes thesis on it. But now I understood that the one who is researched

upon is also involved in this research, the way you are doing it with me....My learning took place here because I got more opportunity to think; I planned innovative new lessons...and for planning, I had to learn some new ideas and how I should plan them so that they are also effective for the children and that there's also potential for increase in my learning.

## **Hayat's Process of Growth –Constraints and Issues**

The above examples provide evidence of change in Hayat's thinking and practice. However, there were various conceptual and contextual issues for which he still needed some support and facilitation in order to move further in his growth process. Various concerns and issues were identified and analyzed in this regard:

- Limited Exposure and Resources
- Loneliness and Frustration

### **Limited Exposure and Resources**

Our analysis indicated that since the students were from very remote and poor backgrounds and because they did not have any exposure to the outside the world, it was difficult for Hayat to relate the textbook's topics to their real life situation, despite his efforts to increase participation. For example, in the lesson on teaching about the 'Professions', it was difficult for the teacher to generate dialogue due to the students' limited exposure and personal experiences. Three professions, i.e. doctor, nurse and teacher were identified in the textbook, since there was no doctor or nurse available in the village, it was difficult for the students to share their experiences and discuss the qualities of a doctor or a nurse. The only contribution (in their discussion on qualities of good doctors) they made was that good doctors should serve the poor people.

The teacher tried to use students' prior experiences and daily life experiences to make learning more relevant but faced difficulty in doing so. For example, the students did not have any concept of cleanliness due to poor facilities and conditions, and therefore it was difficult for him to teach about cleanliness, such as taking shower to keep themselves healthy or changing into clean cloths regularly. These were not possible for the students who did not have even the basic necessities available to them; they had to fetch water from far places. Similarly, while teaching them vocabulary in relation to the context, the teacher used the example of students' hunting the immigrant birds (who migrate to this

village in this particular season). During our discussion regarding the environmental safety and promoting students' ethical values on survival of the birds, he said that the students did not have any other entrainment here – this was the only activity over the year for which they wait eagerly. It seems that no such generalization could be made about what is morally right or wrong; it all depends on the context and peoples' needs in such contexts. Thus, due to the students' weak basic education and limited exposure, he sometimes appeared very frustrated and unmotivated with the whole situation to continue reform in practice. Hayat himself was motivated to take initiatives but due to lack of support on part of the government, he also felt that he would lose motivation to take initiatives or make efforts to bring about change in the long term. For example, it was a frustrating situation for him that despite his various written requests, the school had not been provided with any proper furniture.

### **Loneliness and Frustration**

He did not have any activity after the school time. Therefore, he would spend his evenings in taking extra coaching classes and in reflecting on his actions for revised planning. He realized that reflection required time and concentration; therefore he used to utilize his extra time in reflecting on experiences. The time available for reflection helped him in planning the task beyond the textbook, which was an outcome of his deliberate effort and effective use of time.

Sometime, it seems difficult, and then sometimes it seems easier in loneliness. In loneliness, one can think clearly and if interest is there, then one can enjoy.

However, the adverse effects of his situation were his complete sense of isolation. He did not have anything to do in his own time, no access to newspaper, radio etc. He needed entertainment to get mental and emotional relaxation. Though he was provided with a room, it was isolated from the village; there was no electricity. In addition, he was also away from his home and family. All these factors developed a sense of frustration and negative attitude that created hindrance for the process of reform. He felt isolated in the absence of any other kind of entertainment since he did not have much interaction with the people around, as he did not have like-minded people to talk about politics or any other topic of mutual interest – they were mainly labors and farmers, and the topics of their discussion were specific to their work. He was tired of his situation, which sometimes resulted in the lessening of his motivation towards improvement. At times, he would question the very need for efforts on his part



for improvement, when the government itself was not supportive and kept ignoring his application for transfer.

[Talking about his situation and sense of isolation] Yes, they can affect...I face difficulty in studying here. Secondly, the environment is not such where one can sit with others and discuss something or learn...the society is not such...of course, going to market or fields and talking to farmers about goats would not cause increase in knowledge. Secondly, there aren't any newspapers or magazines, etc. Thirdly, politics is also involved. It' been 15 years since I have been working outside my hometown, in different schools...some other teachers have come, they have been adjusted...Then one feels frustrated that I haven't taken the sole responsibility for education!

Consequently, despite the limitation in terms of his understanding of action research, he did make an effort to use some aspects of learning and gain some insight. This was because of his commitment and sincerity towards his job and his students. Hayat also raised important questions and concerns regarding his role as a teacher-educator and the way it was envisaged in the AKU-IED training programme. He did not see himself engaged in any such model, which was discussed in terms of its future role as a teacher-educator model, used in the capacity of building mentees at the district level.

Thus, he raised important questions about the continuity of his professional development: Would he be able to continue his development in isolation, in the absence of any support or incentive, and with such constraints? Is it a fair expectation or even a realistic one to expect from him to continue his action research process? Action research itself is an intellectual activity, requiring an environment that could support such kind of intellectual tasks, while Hayat did not even have the basic facilities to survive in this context.

## **Discussion**

As part of their action research plans, the participants were able to initiate change efforts and introduce innovative ideas in the classroom. However, going beyond the initial level of effort, it was still difficult for them to be able to influence their teaching, teacher-learning practices, and to improve the learning experiences for students in the classrooms. The participants' engagement in this experience provided them with the opportunity and motivation to think about some continuity or follow up on the course after returning to the context.

However, it was evident that the participants, on their own, were not able to understand and address the complex issues related to teaching or teacher learning. It was mainly due to the facilitator's presence and support available to them in the field that the participants were able to begin the process.

The case study above raises a very important question, what are the possibilities of continuous professional development in the context of rural context in Pakistan? Despite the various constraints that hindered the participants' growth process, their engagement in this research and their experience provided them with, at least, some opportunity to implement their learning in the field. This could be seen as an important step to begin the process of their professional development.

However, our findings suggest that action research and professional development extends only if the culture and environment provides the necessary impetus and support to the teachers. Thus, in the rural context, action research could be seen in terms of a collaborative activity. The participants, on their own, did not have the capacity to understand and deal with the complex issues of teaching or teacher learning alone within their various contextual and conceptual constraints.

Although the conditions were not present in the reality of their context, the facilitators' presence made some conditions available to them and, as a result, they were able to meet the programme expectations to some extent. However, the question for most of the participants remained, 'What would happen when the facilitators won't be there?'

For us, the question raised had significant implication: Would they continue their action research or not? They could not initiate the research until the facilitators' availability was confirmed, and due to the various constraints faced, they saw little hope in taking this journey/process further; therefore, it is difficult to analyze whether what they had been engaged in could be termed as 'action research'? How can action research be defined or redefined for the rural context?

Our study suggests that for the continuous professional development, there must be a collaborative setting involving like-minded professionals, where teachers who encounter the same situation work together to help one another in designing and investigating the situation. Since such kind of culture did not exist in the context of this study, the facilitators created an opportunity, providing a forum to the participants for raising questions, sharing concerns, identifying issues and outcomes. In the presence of the facilitators and their support, the participants

felt secure to take risks for implementation. However, now that the inquiry is over, would they continue? Some of them gave a positive response to the question, elaborating that a thousand miles begins with a single step, that they would possibly continue asking the questions that we have raised together; however, would it be sufficient enough to proceed on the long journey of continuing to be a reflective practitioner?

For us, there is danger of losing the impetus: In the absence of these factors (the support provided, for example), how would they be able to keep up with the momentum, even if they wanted to? There is no simple answer. In some cases, the participants did express their willingness and commitment to continue the process of their growth, however, we can imagine their becoming gradually less thoughtful, asking fewer and fewer questions, and becoming even more complacent.

In some cases the answer was 'no', where the participants clearly stated that they were not strong enough to continue this process, despite their realization and acknowledgement that the outcomes of action research for them would be *learning*, for them, their learners or their teachers.

For example, some of them mentioned that they may not be able to sustain the effort of working with the teachers, of planning lessons together, organizing pre and post conferences as a teacher/or teacher educators but they could perhaps meet together with a small group of fellow teachers, simply to ask one another difficult and unsettling questions, every now and then. For example, one of them said that once this process of awareness begins no one could stop it.

The participants' involvement in their action research enabled them to experience possibilities of continuous professional development – to provide a basis on which they can build as they develop their *vision* of change in their classrooms, schools and communities. This leads to the assumption that teachers come to see the purpose of action research by doing it and they start to do it when they start to understand the purpose.

Thus, at a conceptual or theoretical level, everyone had this understanding and belief that action research is a means for continual professional development – seeking to understand and acting on the best we know.

However, for real outcomes in terms of improved practice, the participants required motivation (both extrinsic and intrinsic), commitment towards their profession as well as reform initiatives to improve the teaching and learning

situation, emotional attachment, and a moral and ethical perspective of teaching and education.

Although the essence of the notion of action research, as discussed in the literature, is the simultaneous development and application of knowledge by teachers. This implies that the development and application of professional knowledge are aspects of a cyclical that teachers are themselves responsible for – they apply knowledge to achieve certain goals and based on their application of knowledge they develop new knowledge, which they then apply again, and so on. However, in the context of this study, it was not possible for the participants to engage in this process on their own; they required assistance of the facilitators. Thus, action research in a rural context was a collaborative endeavor.

Therefore, we conclude that in the context of this study, action research is possible only as a collaborative activity or endeavor. We conclude that action research, in a rural context, can be initiated in a collaborative situation, where some form of support is available that could provide them with a forum for sharing questions, concerns and outcomes of their research.

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# Are There Returns to Schooling in Pakistan?

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## Abstract

*Nearly fifty-nine years after the initial target was set, the goal of universal primary education in Pakistan remains elusive. This study uses regression analysis to estimate returns to schooling on earnings in Pakistan to identify whether low income gains from education could be the reason for low educational demand in Pakistan.*

*This study estimates returns for male income earners using data from the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey. Overall, the empirical results indicate very low returns to schooling in Pakistan. Moreover, these findings were emphasized through an analysis of the impact of the number of unpaid family workers and their education levels on the earnings of family establishments.*

*The paper suggests that In order to achieve the target of universal primary education, it is imperative to implement policies to increase returns to education. Thus, there is a need to first identify whether low returns are the result of an economic environment that does not require high-skilled labour, or whether they result from poor quality of schooling in Pakistan that does not equip students with the necessary skills to facilitate increased productivity and earnings. Moreover, given the indication of high returns to English-medium schooling in urban areas, there is a need to invest in increasing access to English schools in order to spur higher returns to education. Finally, since this study focused only on returns for males, further research must be undertaken to identify returns to educational attainment for girls.*

## Introduction

The goal of universal primary education has eluded successive governments since Pakistan's founding. Pakistan's net primary enrolment rate stood at 59.1 percent in 2000, significantly lower than the average of 81.8 percent for low-income countries (World Bank Group, 2005). Moreover, 50 percent of children dropout of school before completing Class Five (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2004). In order to identify effective measures to increase educational attainment, it is imperative to identify the reasons for low educational demand in Pakistan.

If education is a private investment, it should yield returns that make the expenditure as well as the foregone opportunity costs worthwhile through expected income increases resulting from schooling. The link between returns to schooling and enrolment has been evidenced through empirical studies. For example, a study on returns to education in India found that increases in returns to schooling at the primary and middle school level were associated with an increase in educational attainment amongst boys (Chamarbagwala, 2004). Similarly, a study on the Green Revolution in India found that as returns to primary education increased due to the complexity of the high yielding variety (HYVs) seeds technology, schooling increased (Foster & Rosenzweig, 1996).

This study attempts to quantify the returns to education through increased earnings associated with each additional year of schooling to gauge whether low returns to education can perhaps explain the low levels of educational attainment in Pakistan. The focus will be limited to boys because, given the socio-cultural factors inhibiting female schooling and earnings, it is imperative to discover why, despite fewer social constraints, males still have low educational attainment. The lessons that are seen as impeding male education can probably be applied to females, although additional constraints to girls' schooling must also be addressed.

## **Methodology**

While returns to education have previously been measured for Pakistan (Nasir & Nazli, 2000; Haroon, Toor, & Khan, 2003), the analysis has focused solely on wage earners, thereby eliminating half of male income earners. This study uses regression analysis to estimate the returns for both wageworkers and those who are self-employed.

Returns to schooling are measured using an extension of the basic Mincerian model on returns to schooling. The model aims to estimate the change in earnings associated with each additional year of schooling. Instead of the standard years of schooling used in the Mincerian model, schooling was measured separately for those who studied until classes that fell within different levels of schooling (primary, secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary) in order to gauge the varying returns to education accrued from the various stages of schooling. Experience was included to control for increases in wages that result from each additional year of experience in the work force. English-medium and private schooling were also controlled for in the model.

## Sample

The sample studied was taken from the data set of the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS), 2001-2002, which is nation-wide household survey administered by the Government of Pakistan for 16,400 households.

In order to measure returns to schooling for Pakistan, the sample used consisted of male income earners between the ages of 25 and 59. The age range of the sample was limited in order to include people after they had completed their education and before they retired. After limiting the sample, 14,380 males were included.

## Composition of Sample

Geographic Composition	
Rural	61%
Urban	39%
Punjab	37%
Sindh	26%
NWFP	16%
Baluchistan	14%
Azad Jammu and Kashmir	3%
Northern Areas	3%
FATA	2%

Composition Based on Schooling	
No Schooling	41%
Some Primary Schooling	17%
Some Secondary Schooling	26%
Some Higher Secondary Schooling	6%
Some Tertiary Schooling	11%
English-medium Schooling	5%
Private Schooling	3%

Composition by Employment Type	
Paid Employees (Urban)	25%
Paid Employees (Rural)	28%
Self-Employed (Urban)	9%
Self-Employed (Rural)	8%
Agriculturalists	19%

## Returns for Paid Employees

The basic model for this study was used for paid employees. However, in order to gauge the difference in returns to schooling in rural versus urban areas, separate regressions were conducted for each of these areas.



## **Returns for Self-Employed Individuals**

Estimating the returns to schooling of self-employed individuals is difficult because the family head reports the net family income, which is also impacted by the contribution and education of other family members working on the enterprise.

As a result, in estimating the returns to education amongst self-employed individuals, the number of unpaid family workers (both male and female) and their average education levels were controlled for. Unpaid family members were disaggregated by gender.

Separate regressions were calculated for self-employed agricultural and non-agricultural households, with non-agricultural households being further divided into rural and urban. The returns to education for agriculturalists were measured in the same way as those for self-employed individuals, except that the amount of irrigated and non-irrigated land used for cultivation was also controlled for.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Because the number of employees per employer as well as their education is not available in the data, returns for employers could not be calculated. However, employers make up less than two percent of working males in the sample population and thus their exclusion should not have a significant impact.

Another caveat to this study is the inability to control for factors that may influence both earnings and schooling decisions, such as social standing or wealth. However, private and English-medium schooling can proxy for these to some extent and are controlled for.

Finally, although it would have been preferable to control for non-land inputs of self-employed agricultural households or the assets of self-employed non-agricultural households, this data was not available.

## **Results**

The empirical analysis based on the above-described models found the results shown on the following page.

## Earnings And Education: Estimates From Various Employment Categories

Ln Income	Paid Employees (Urban)	Paid Employees (Rural)	Self-Employed (Urban)	Self-Employed (Rural)	Agriculturalists
Experience	0.064** (17.28)	0.054** (13.20)	0.05** (6.60)	0.0698** (7.62)	0.032** (3.76)
Experience2	-0.0089** (13.42)	-0.008** (11.08)	-0.0008** (5.73)	-0.001** (7.01)	-0.0005** (3.88)
Yrs Primary	0.028** (4.85)	0.04** (7.55)	0.035** (3.39)	0.037** (3.38)	0.031** (3.83)
Yrs Secondary	0.045** (19.88)	0.05** (22.09)	0.042** (8.80)	0.048** (8.07)	0.022** (3.59)
Yrs. Higher Secondary	0.059** (20.90)	0.06** (22.27)	0.05** (7.67)	0.045** (5.77)	0.036** (3.16)
Yrs. Tertiary	0.074** (40.69)	0.07** (37.22)	0.056** (11.34)	0.064** (7.33)	0.041** (4.89)
Private	0.19** (3.96)	0.12 (1.11)	0.34** (3.52)	0.22** (2.28)	0.38 (1.03)
English	0.32** (7.94)	0.19* (1.72)	0.28** (2.46)	0.12	0.12 (0.54)
Unpaid Family Workers (Male)			0.15** (6.02)	0.069** (2.42)	0.14** (8.08)
Unpaid Family Workers (Female)			-0.099** (2.71)	-0.029 (1.31)	-0.01 (0.91)
Avg. Edn of Unpaid Family Workers (Male)			0.018** (3.28)	0.033** (4.54)	0.008 (1.39)
Avg. Edn of Unpaid Family Workers (Female)			.019 (1.27)	-0.018 (0.71)	0.01 (0.88)
Land (irrigated)					0.0004** (7.26)
Land (not irrigated)					0.0003** (4.41)

(t-statistics are reported in parenthesis under the coefficients)

\*\*Statistically significant at the 95 percent level

\* Statistically significant at the 90 percent level

## **Returns to Schooling**

Returns to schooling in Pakistan were low for all levels of schoolings and across all employment categories. For example, each additional year of schooling for those who had some primary schooling was associated with only approximately a 3 to 4 percent increase in earnings. For those with some secondary schooling, earnings only increased approximately 4 to 5 percent per year of schooling. For agriculturalists, who make up 22 percent of the sample population, the return to those with some secondary schooling was significantly smaller at only 2.2 percent per year. The increased earnings per year of schooling for those with some primary and secondary schooling were lower than the income returns per year of experience. Returns were higher for those with some higher secondary (4.5 to 6 percent) or tertiary (5.6 to 7.4 percent) schooling for all categories except agriculturalists but these returns are still low.

## **Returns to the Number and Schooling of Unpaid Family Workers**

Returns to male family members working on a family establishment were very high, significantly exceeding the returns to their average years of schooling. For example, amongst the self-employed in urban areas, the return to each additional male working on the family enterprise was 15 percent, which is significantly higher than the 1.8 percent return per average year of schooling for these male workers. Thus, families are more likely to forgo education for their male members, as having an additional male working on the enterprise is more profitable than increasing his educational level.

The results regarding female unpaid family workers were puzzling. Returns to each additional female family worker were negative. This was especially true in the case of families with family enterprises in urban areas, as the study found a 9.9 percent decrease in family income associated with each additional female unpaid family worker. Why would a family's income decrease as it increases the number of women that work on its establishment?

A possible reason may be related to women's status in Pakistan, where they have a limited role in the public sphere (UNDP, 2005). For example, while 51.2 percent of the individuals in the PIHS data set between the ages of 25 and 59 were women, they only made up 13.4 percent of the income earners for that same age group. Thus, due to the limited integration of women into the public sphere, perhaps only families that are less productive are forced to have female household members work on the family establishment to increase productivity.

Thus, rather than reflecting the impact of unpaid females on a family's enterprise, the negative coefficients are capturing the limited productivity of such households. The returns to the educational levels of female unpaid workers were not statistically significant and, thus, inconclusive.

## **Returns to Private Schooling**

Private schooling was associated with significant increases in earnings, ranging from 12 to 34 percent. However, the implications of these returns are unclear. If private schools are perceived to be of a higher quality than public schools, the returns to private schooling could be indicative of a return to quality schooling. However, these could result from a selection bias, if those families with greater wealth or social connections are more able to send their children to private schools. According to the PIHS data, families who have a child currently enrolled in private school spend 2.6 times more per year per child in school than families who have a child in a government school. Thus, the high returns from private schooling may reflect the ability of those with wealth and social clout to secure higher incomes due to a greater access to resources, rather than the benefits of private schooling.

In order to gauge whether there is a selection bias associated with private schooling, the years of schooling attained by a household head was used as a proxy for wealth and social clout. The correlation between this proxy and the decision to send children to private schools was tested. A statistically significant difference in the mean educational attainment of the head of household for children who go to private schools versus public schools would suggest a selection bias. The sample used to test this hypothesis consisted of males between the ages of 10 and 24.

It was found that males in the sample who went to private school came from families in which the head of household had, on average, 2.98 more years of schooling than the head of household of those who went to government schools and this was statistically significant. Thus, there is evidence of selection bias in private schooling and, as a result, it is not possible to infer any implications between quality and private schooling.

## **Returns to English Language Schooling**

The returns to English schooling were extremely high, particularly in urban areas, where English schooling was associated with a 28 to 32 percent increase in earnings. In rural areas, the returns to English ranged from 12 to 19 percent,

with only the 19 percent return to paid employees being statistically significant at the 90 percent level.

What are the implications of these high returns to English-medium education? As with private schooling, selection bias could have a significant influence, as the data indicates that families with a child enrolled in an English-medium school spend 3.7 times more per year per school-going child than families whose children attend local language schools. The selection bias was estimated for English-medium versus other schools using the same methodology used to test the bias for private schools. The mean educational attainment of the household head of children going to English-medium schools was 6.99 years more than that of children going to other schools and this was statistically significant.

However, while selection bias clearly played an important role in the returns to English-medium schooling, the significant difference between returns in urban versus rural areas indicates that there are returns to English beyond the selection bias. To elaborate, while there is a selection bias in the decision to send children to English-medium schools in both rural and urban areas, the associated increase in earnings is approximately double in urban areas. If selection bias is the only contributor to the positive correlation between wages and English schooling, the differences between rural and urban areas should not be so pronounced, as wealth and social clout should yield similar results between rural and urban areas. The stark difference between returns to English in rural versus urban areas seems indicative of increased earnings resulting from English language skills in urban areas. This seems reasonable because in Pakistan's increasingly global economy, English is the language of commerce. Thus, English speakers are advantaged in attaining positions with higher pay (International Crisis Group, 2004).

## **Recommendations**

The results of this study have made it evident that private returns to schooling in Pakistan are very low. Thus, it is not surprising that educational attainment is low, as investment in education is costly, given its minimal impact on earnings. In order to promote educational attainment, policies must be instituted in order to address the low returns to education in Pakistan.

## **Further Research to Gauge the Reasons for Low Returns to Education**

Pakistan's returns to schooling need to be explored to ascertain why they are low in order to determine effective policy to increase educational attainment.

One possible reason for Pakistan's low returns to schooling could be a lack of high-skilled positions available and schooling, therefore, does not translate into increased earnings. When income-generating activities do not require skills acquired through school, schooling does not enhance productivity or income (Rosenzweig 1995). For example, a study found no significant returns to schooling amongst agricultural workers engaged in harvest activities in the Philippines, as harvesting is a simple task that does not require the skills acquired through schooling (cited in Rosenzweig, 1995). On the other hand, a study on the Green Revolution in India, where the new seed technology required basic literacy and numeric skills, found that primary schooling was associated with increased productivity and, thus, earnings (cited in Rosenzweig, 1995).

Because the complexity of economic activity determines the returns to schooling, it is imperative to undertake further investigation to determine whether Pakistan's low returns to education result from the predominance of economic activities that do not require schooling. If this is true, educational attainment can be increased through the generation of skill-based employment.

Another possible reason for the low returns to schooling in Pakistan is low educational quality. Hence, individuals coming through the school system may not be equipped with necessary skills and will not have a significant productivity advantage over those who never went to school. As a result, schooling will not translate into increased earnings. For example, a study of Apartheid South Africa found that Black students in districts with higher pupil-teacher ratios had higher returns to education (Case & Yogo, 1999).

There is significant evidence pointing to the poor quality of education in Pakistan. Educational quality has been at the top of the agenda of non-governmental organizations advocating for education policy reform. One indicator of low educational quality in Pakistan is students' low learning achievements. For example, a study of 112 primary school children in NWFP found that 36 percent received a score of less than 30 percent, indicating that they had learned very little in school (Shah, 2004).

Thus, it is imperative to determine whether quality is the major constraint to returns to schooling in Pakistan. Further investigation into the relationship

between educational quality and earnings could be conducted for Pakistan by quantifying quality measures (using variables such as learning achievements or student-teacher ratios.) to determine their impact. If quality is found to impact returns, quality improvement must be prioritized.

### **Increased Investment in English Language Education**

The high returns to English-language education, particularly in urban areas, indicate that investment in English schooling must be increased. Currently, English-medium schools are expensive and, thus, predominantly accessed by the upper- and middle-classes (Social Policy and Development Centre, 2003).

Pakistan needs to introduce comprehensive programs of English language education in public schools in order to increase educational attainment. Initially, this can be done through pilot programs. Once enrolment figures for these schools become apparent versus those of controls (existing Urdu-medium schools in similar areas), these programs can be scaled up to promote access to affordable English schooling for all.

### **Further Research to Identify Barriers to Female Enrolment**

Since this study was limited to boys, the returns to schooling for girls must be further explored. Due to the low participation of females in the work force, the impact of education on earnings may not be the driving incentive for female enrolment. Instead, alternate areas in which returns to education amongst women are realized must be explored. For example, improved dowry and marriage prospects due to schooling may create incentives for female enrolment. If there are no manifestations of returns to education amongst girls, demand-driven policies such as cash transfers conditional on primary school enrolment can be explored.

### **Conclusion**

The low returns to schooling for males found in this study provide a compelling explanation for low educational attainment in Pakistan. Thus, in order to promote educational attainment, policies that increase returns to education must be prioritized. Until Pakistan is able to increase educational returns, universal primary education will probably remain elusive.

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# Post-Graduate Education in United Arab Emirates – Change in Teaching Styles

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## **Abstract**

*UAE is a fairly new country aging in its mid thirties and so is the education system. In recent years, the UAE education industry has seen phenomenal growth, especially with the inception of educational hubs such as Knowledge Village and the Academic City. In addition to the growing undergraduate programs at these knowledge metropolises, an interesting note is the growth in the number of Post-graduate (PG) programs.*

*These PG programs are either partnered or franchised or accredited by a foreign varsity. Combination of parent campus, local and online faculty oversee the smooth run of these programs. Such a situation has significant impact on the teaching quality. All accreditation bodies have different requirements.*

*This paper is going to address the different methods used as modes of delivery for Postgraduate programs at the above mentioned variety of programs. Thereby making the offered programs different from each other, although under a generic label at times. Experiences from students in context with their expectations and delivery satisfaction from the teacher's perspective would culminate in highlighting practices in UAE.*

## **Introduction**

Three out of the six foreign market entry strategies, namely franchising, licensing and joint ventures; as identified by Cowell (1984), are being used to changing the education industry scenario in the UAE. On the surface, these may only be strategies, but the influence they have on an industry that is new yet enthusiastic, is worthy of note.

Education in UAE is a true example of globalisation, with 90% of Postgraduate program attendees coming from the rest of the world. A wide range of accreditation bodies and commissions, ranging from the sub-continent region to North America, emphasize different skills under the same degree tag. This has led to positive bearing on education delivery in a young country.

Table 1: Diverse Education Modes

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Education examples</b>	<b>Correspondence with types of cross-border education means</b>
Cross-border supply	The provision of a service that crosses the border (does not require the physical movement of the consumer)	Distance education Online education institutions Education software Corporate training through ICT delivery	Program Mobility
Consumption abroad	Provision of the service involving the movement of the consumer to the country of the supplier	Students who go to another country to study	People mobility
Commercial presence	The service provider establishes or uses facilities in another country to provide the service.	Local university or satellite campuses Language training companies Private training companies	Institution mobility
Presence of natural persons	Person traveling to another country on a temporary basis to provide the service	Professors, teachers, researchers working abroad	People mobility

Certain curricula being offered are designed to ensure a broad and integrated conceptual coverage of the functional areas, along with an added ability to apply the concepts, principles, analytical tools and techniques to guide decision-making in the global environment of the business. At the same time, there are others that focus entirely on advanced technology support from the parent campus. In such a case, utmost responsibility goes to the instructor. In this paper, we discuss various methodologies that are current practices in the industry.

Institutions that are service providers in UAE implement the necessary standards of teaching due to the fact that the programs are franchised for a precise period, and are monitored by the franchisee's quality control body.

## **Cross-border Education in UAE**

Cross-border education is growing in importance. Cross-border education can take three different forms:

- A person can go abroad for educational purposes (people mobility).

- An educational programme can go abroad (programme mobility).
- An institution or provider can go or invest abroad for educational purposes (institution mobility).

Table 2: Types of Cross Border Education

Type	Main-forms	Examples	Size
<b>1. People</b>			
Student/Trainers	Student mobility	Full study abroad for a foreign degree Part of academic partnership for home degree or joint degree Exchange programme	Probably the largest share of cross-border education
Professors/trainers	Academic/trainer mobility	For professional development As part of an academic partnership To teach in a branch institution abroad	An old tradition in the education sector, which should grow given the emphasis on mobility of professionals
<b>2. Programs</b>			
Educational programme	Academic partnerships E-learning	Joint course or programme with a foreign institution E-learning programme Selling/franchising a course to a foreign institution	Academic partnerships represent the largest share of these activities E-learning and franchising are small but rapidly growing activities
<b>3. Institutions/ providers</b>			
	Foreign campuses Foreign investments	Opening of a foreign campus Buying (part of) a foreign educational institution Creation of an educational provider abroad	A trend increasing very quickly from a low starting point

## Student Mobility

1. The UAE has one of the highest rates of admission to higher education, with 90 percent of secondary school graduates entering college and university, leading to an increased level of investment in institutions of higher education.

## **Academic/Trainer Mobility**

1. The Higher Colleges of Technology has teamed up with the Australian based Deakin University, to provide the postgraduate programme for students at Dubai Women's College and Abu Dhabi Women's College. The new programme will be offered at the two said colleges. Faculty from the Education Department at Deakin will facilitate the degree. They will visit the UAE twice a year to provide face-to-face teaching. In between their visits, local tutors will teach the students.

## **Academic Partnerships**

1. British university in Dubai (BUID) is organized around specialized institutes, each linked to a leading UK university. Each Institute offers a distinctive discipline. The Institutes also offer Masters Programmes and strive to be centers of excellence for research in their respective disciplines, through the creation of shared environments with the UK partners.
  - The Institute of Informatics has been established in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh.
  - The Institute of Education has been established in collaboration with the University of Birmingham.
  - The Institute of Engineering has been established in collaboration with the University of Manchester.
  - The Institute of the Built Environment has been established in collaboration with Cardiff University.
  - The Institute of Finance and Banking has been established in collaboration with the Sir John Cass Business School, City University, London.
2. U21 Universitas 21 Global
3. University of Cambridge Postgraduate program in Management is offered in UAE. Knowledge horizon is the local partner who delivers the program through the established infrastructure in Dubai city.
4. Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Business IT (PDSB) – NCC education UK  
The programme is divided into two major qualifications. Al Abbas Institute of Technology will deliver the Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Business IT

(PDSB) element of the programme, and students must pass this before they are eligible to go on and study the top-up MSc programme online, with the University of Portsmouth. AIT offers teaching and tutorial support along with other learning resources for the MSc programme.

## **Foreign Accredited Post Graduate Programs run at Local Campus**

1. American University in Dubai
  - MBA

## **Foreign Campus**

1. SPJain Centre for Management - Mumbai (India)
  - Global MBA
  - Executive MBA
2. European University College Brussels. EHSAL is an Institute of Higher Education accredited by the Belgian government.
  - International MBA
3. Heriot-Watt University in Dubai (Heriot-Watt is the eighth oldest higher education institution in the UK)
  - MSc IT
  - MSc (Strategic project Management)
4. Islamic Azad University- Iran
  - MBA
5. Mahatama Gandhi University Off-Campus centre - One of the largest government universities in India
  - MBA
  - MCom

- MCA
  - MSc IT
6. Manipal Academy of Higher education- Mangalore, Karnataka State, India
- MBA
  - MSc(internet Systems and Security)
7. Middlesex University – Dubai ( A chartered UK University)
- MA- HRM
8. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and technology (SZABIST) Chartered Institute established through an Act of Sindh Assembly (Sindh Act No. XI of 1995) and is approved and recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as a degree granting institution.
- MBA
  - E-MBA
  - MS(CS)

## **Need of Postgraduate programs in UAE**

Government of Dubai, under the leadership of H.H. General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, has extended all of its facilities to make Dubai a leading commercial, trading and tourism hub in the Middle East, enjoying a diversified economy, with the non-oil sector accounting for 90% of GDP.

Furthermore, the expatriate population that outnumbered the nationals by a mammoth 80% consists of the major players in job market. Out of these, 80% of the major populace comes from the Sub-continent. An under-graduate degree is the minimum qualification required for a decent job in UAE. As qualifications of candidates improve, job opportunities for the degree-holder in the lucrative UAE job market increases. Increasingly becoming a pre-requisite for middle to senior level jobs, is the completion of a post-graduate qualification.

A mature market, dedicated government, enthusiastic expatriate population and fascinated west, are the key factors that institute the basis of the increased number of postgraduate programs in the UAE.

The key concept of Emiratisation, which refers to the employment of UAE nationals into more jobs, especially in the private sector, demands educated nationals. Gap analysis identifies a major lack of locally developed PG programs, and this is in stark contrast to the growing demand for University education.

Evidently this is a booming market for higher education. As described above, many around the globe have acknowledged the said fact and are facilitating the need of the time. This has led to impressive amplification of PG programs in UAE.

## Different Accrediting Bodies and their Teaching Focus

Table 3: PG programs in UAE and relevant accrediting bodies.

Country	Accrediting Body	Program focus
India	University Grants commission - India	Content Knowledge
United Kingdom	Quality Assurance agency for higher education	Focus on “HOW” to think
United States of America	International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education Council for higher education accreditation	Rich in conceptual content equipping students with the applied skills and the professional and ethical perspectives necessary for success in the global marketplace
Belgium	Flemish Higher Education	Programme aims at building bridges to real world. The integrative approach of programmes is conducive
Australia	Australian Universities Quality Agency	Commitment to continued and independent learning, intellectual development, critical analysis and creativity.
Pakistan	Higher education Commission	Content Knowledge

## Profile of PG Students in UAE

Contrary to the practice in rest of the world, where a postgraduate degree is pursued either immediately after the first degree or followed by a break, the majority of PG students in UAE are working professionals for reasons identified above.



One of the said reasons is visa constraint. Males above 18 cannot be under father's sponsorship and therefore need to either leave, or join an institute that offers student visa. In such a situation, parents support their children generally up till the basic qualification (first degree).

Furthermore, regular PG programs (morning shifts), are not a common practise due to the insufficient number of registrations.

Emiratization is leading to more working nationals becoming life long learners. Training budgets of multinational companies are also being utilized in assisting employees who opt to be life long learners.

## **Ingredients of University Teaching – UAE Case Scenario**

The mental transformation that we call learning on the part of the student can be facilitated by a combination of the following means on the part of the teacher, who has the freedom to choose what (s) he/she regards as the best:

- Curriculum design and
- Curriculum implementation

Generically identified ingredients do not align well with the current scenario in the UAE. Curriculum design does not happen locally, and a teacher/instructor has partial control over the implementation zone, as focus is clearly set through well-defined learning objectives provided by the parent program provider.

Thorough and continual inspection from relevant accrediting bodies ensures the endorsed vision of the program can be fulfilled. The programme can be franchised, partnered, or be a joint venture.

Why is it so that at the implementation stage, the instructor does not have enough leverage? This could be an immediate question that needs to be asked.

In a curriculum implementation setting, following are the general activities: preparation of teaching materials, classroom activities in lectures and tutorials, design of exercises, assignments, projects and quizzes; feedback to students, and final examinations.

In case of branch campuses, pre-defined syllabi follow from the parent campus, which develop these through putting rigorous procedures in place. these

procedures are implemented by their local education ministries and accrediting bodies.

With the general course outlines specified, design of the exercises, assignments, projects, quizzes and feedback to the students becomes the major responsibility for the instructor.

How are teachers handling the situation? Advancements in technology support the defined assessment criteria and program focus. Hence, teachers in UAE, although hailing from other parts of the world, have been successfully following diverse styles, making PG education in UAE unique and distinctive despite the country's young education establishments.

## **Classroom Activities**

The traditional view of teaching is that of it being a classroom activity, while the traditional view of a university teacher is of lecturing. What are then, the differentiating factors in the cross border education that prevails in the UAE?

### **General Classroom activities of the teacher**

- Oral presentation of material (lecturing),
- Asking questions,
- Responding to questions,
- Providing learning tasks.

Table 4: Classroom activities in UAE

General Classroom activities	Classroom activities in UAE
Oral presentation of material (lecturing)	Not as much of focus on lecturing instead attention is given to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informative handouts for extra reading</li> <li>• Stanford Videos and other web-based materials</li> </ul>
Asking and Responding to questions	In addition to the regular face to face contact with the lecturer, additional support in form of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment tutors,</li> <li>• Separate tutorial classes,</li> <li>• Email comments and contacts,</li> <li>• Class groups and</li> <li>• University web-portals are used</li> </ul>
General learning tasks like individual home-works and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paradigm shift from 100% final exam evaluation to projects based assessment.</li> <li>• In some programs entire qualification rests on a written assignment on a case.</li> <li>• Case-Study methodology (Harvard case-studies)</li> </ul>
Traditional library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscription to web based libraries, Journals and Periodicals</li> </ul>

From the above findings, a major question arises, which asks about whether the advantages of access and flexibility accompany the trade-offs in learning experiences and outcomes?

In both school and university settings, and even in the world outside, it is crucial for people to have “skills in questioning, analyzing, comparing, contrasting, and evaluating, so that [they] will not become addicted to being told what to think and do” (Freseman, 1990: 26).

Dr. Mohan Guruswamey senior lecturer UOWD remarks “The most effective strategies at postgraduate level use integrated delivery approaches to create flexible learning environments with premiums on individual time management and practical application of learning”

Harvard case studies are considered to be the best in the business world, and are one of the most illustrious and factual ways to expose students to real world happenings. Similarly the eye connection to learning i.e. the visual learners benefit from Stanford videos is another stimulating technique to disseminate learning experience to students.

Findings clearly depict, with various diverse methodologies in practice, the fact that the learner is unquestionably in an encouraging environment, and is willing to experience learning from others. This leads to excellent ground settings.

With a clear focus on developing critical thinking skills, assessment is case-based in many programs. The formula for critical thinking seems to be: critical thinking = thinking skills (1) + thinking disposition (attitude) (2) + understanding (knowledge) (3) (Harpaz, 2003). These well aligned as categorized in the table below.

Table 5: Critical Thinking Executions in UAE PG programs

Thinking Skills	Handouts, extra readings, web-based content, videos.
Thinking disposition	Group activities, web based groups and active discussions with supplemented support of assignment tutors and tutorials
Understanding knowledge	Application in case-studies

## **Advanced Technology used at the American University in Dubai – An Example**

Advanced technology supports all aspects of campus operations; most appropriately, the delivery of the University’s academic programs. Specifically, ten computer labs with both IBM and Macintosh hardware form the basis for instructions in IT, business administration and the applied arts. Two language laboratories serve to enhance teaching effectiveness in the University’s intensive academic English courses. Among the software packages that are of special interest, is the MINITAB, a statistical package for MBA students that is useful in carrying out research for term papers and theses. In addition, two searchable databases, Business Source Premier and Emerald, are accessible from any workstation connected to the AUD computer network, and are especially useful to MBA students. These databases provide online access to thousands of full-text

papers and other material published in a large number of leading international academic and professional business publications.

## **Conclusions**

Surprisingly to some, with its unique educational settings, UAE offers innovative philosophies in terms of PG programs, and the teaching and learning process.

On the score of encouraging intellectual independence, many non-traditional delivery methods are fairly robust (Beattie & James, March 1997). The challenge for teachers in traditional and semi-traditional environments is to ensure a paradigm shift, especially in realizing, excellence can be achieved through the use of innovative concepts in teaching.

## **Profile of an Excellent Teacher**

Let us put together the different pieces of teaching approaches that result in quality. We have come up with these in the course of our exploration. Our summary of excellence of teaching in terms of the quality of learning, as we saw earlier, involves helping learners to:

- Acquire high quality knowledge content;
- Acquire the ability to apply the knowledge to standard classroom problems;
- Acquiring the ability to apply the knowledge to novel problems and situations; and
- Become self-directed and independent life-long learners.

To achieve this, the first important role of a facilitator is to create a supportive atmosphere within the classroom, whether they be real or virtual, for learning. In a supportive environment, students will feel comfortable interacting with one another, so that positive intellectual and effective development can take place. They will listen to others, value one another's ideas and learn to handle positive and negative feelings. They will become more confident, more willing to take risks and face up to failure. As a result, they will have a stronger desire to be personally involved in the learning process (Mohan, 2003).

## **Means to trigger learning**

The quality of the following learning triggers an increased likelihood of learning:

- Formulation of objectives and syllabi;
- Construction of handouts, selection of readings;
- Classroom activities;
- Choice of modes and of topic delivery;
- Feedback to students, and design of exercises;
- Design of assignments, projects, quizzes; and
- Design of final examinations and the weightage of final examination

Finally for a university graduate, the actual characteristic that needs to be nurtured should possess the following characteristics:

## **Profile of a University Graduate**

Independent of the area of specialization, a university graduate should possess the knowledge, abilities and attitudes necessary to function effectively in familiar and novel situations, in personal, intellectual and professional life. In order to function effectively, one needs to acquire the following:

1. **Knowledge:** the non-specialized broad-based knowledge that we expect an educated person to have, including an appreciation of the evidence that bears upon this knowledge;
2. **Application:** the capacity to draw upon available knowledge and apply it successfully in familiar as well as novel situations;
3. **Thinking:** the general thinking abilities involved in knowledge building, knowledge critiquing, and decision making, as well as the global habits of critical and independent thinking;
4. **Independent learning:** the capability for independent life-long learning including the capability to engage in independent inquiry;

5. Being articulate: the general language abilities needed for articulating ideas, opinions, proposals, and values in a clear and effective manner.
6. Mind set and values: the mind set and values that facilitate
  - An awareness of the uncertainty and fallibility of knowledge as well as the social basis of the evolution of knowledge,
  - An open mind,
  - Willingness and ability to doubt and question beliefs, especially one's own,
  - Intellectual curiosity, and
  - Motivation to learn.
7. Interpersonal skills: the interpersonal skills that facilitate the effective employment in a team or community.

## **Further Research and Limitations of the Study**

Being one of the very few researches that was conducted in the region, the results cannot be generalized. But further research options include:

- Quantitative analysis of job market fulfilment by UAE graduates
- Study of subsequent salary increase and promotions (Being the main focus of these graduates)
- Comparative study of graduates taught by means of traditional approaches versus those taught by modern approaches.

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# **Rethinking Management Education in Malaysian Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper describes the scenario of management education in the context of Malaysian universities and institutions of higher learning (UIHL). Management education has come to much criticism in recent times from the industries due to the inability of graduates to put what they have learned into practice (Sunday Star, 6 November 2005). Trivedi & Sudarshan (2003), asserted that one of the great disservices of “management education” has been the formulation of the idea that there is an exact science of management that can be learned like engineering, science or computer programming. However, unlike engineering and science, management is an interdisciplinary field with contributions from various fields such as psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and finance (Muniapan, 2005). Contemporary management also includes issues related to cross-cultural management and international management. Increasingly the understanding of management is coming to depend on understanding, analyzing and predicting organizational behavior, which is the basis for human resource management. The aim of this paper is to explore and explain how management education in Malaysian UIHL can be improved to provide greater outcomes to the industries, to the society and to the nation in achieving Vision 2020. In this paper, the author asserts the need for “glocalization” of management education and a strong collaboration between the universities and institutions of higher learning and industries in producing the required quality and quantity of management graduates. Both are the key ingredients to increase the effectiveness of management education and to produce world-class Malaysian organizations besides making Malaysia a regional hub for management education. This paper represents the author’s personal experiences and reflections as a management educator and consultant, combined with many discussions with academics teaching management, management consultants, management students and managers in Malaysia.*

## **Introduction**

Recently management education has attracted attention and also criticism due to two important issues, which are the inability of graduates to put what they have learned into practice (New Sunday Star, 6 November 2005) and also the drop in the ranking of Malaysian universities in the world universities ranking (New

Sunday Times, 20 November 2005). The issue of unemployed graduates attracted much attention, as there is an estimate of 18,000 unemployed graduates in Malaysia including management graduates (The Sun Education Focus, May 5, 2005). The blame has been largely placed on the universities and institutions of higher learning (UIHL) for not producing the required quality graduates who can meet the needs of the industry. Producing employable graduates both in terms of quality and quantity is one of the main objectives of any UIHL besides research and development activities. In Malaysia, currently there are eleven public universities, three private universities, four foreign university campuses, several university colleges and hundreds of private colleges and management institutions. Since early 1990s the number of private educational institutions with foreign links especially from United Kingdom (UK), United States (US), Australia and New Zealand have been increasing at a rapid pace. Business and management courses seems to be the most popular degree courses offered both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in Malaysian UIHL, thus management education in Malaysia has been witnessing increasing growth and demand over the last two decades and the demand for management education is also expected to grow with the increase in demand for efficient and effective managers.

Management is an interdisciplinary field with contributions from various fields such as psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and finance (Muniapan, 2005). Contemporary management also includes issues related to cross-cultural management and international management. Increasingly the understanding of management is coming to depend on understanding, analyzing and predicting organizational behavior, which is the basis for human resource management. Management is an art of getting things done through people, efficiently and effectively. The study of management itself is interesting and exciting. One of the keys to successful management is the ability to understand and apply modern management principles and techniques effectively. Managers must develop an in-depth knowledge of past and present models, theories and processes to manage effectively and intelligently. Contemporary management practice is pervasive in every aspect of human life within all types of organizations.

Management education is the mechanism for transferring the knowledge contained within management subjects from the holder of that knowledge (the academics in the universities and institution of higher learning) to the persons desirous of receiving that knowledge (the students)(Elmuti, 2004). However, one of the great disservices of management education has been the formulation of the idea that there is an exact science of management that can be learned like

engineering, science or computer programming (Trivedi & Sudarshan, 2003). As a result, management cannot be taught using the same methodologies of teaching engineering, science or computer programming.

The aim or the purpose of management education is to produce efficient (doing thing right) and effective (doing right things) managers who will be able to contribute to the organizational and societal growth. Henry Mintzberg (1973), in his book *The Nature of Managerial Work* (cited in Robbins, 2003) provided ten roles of managers play for increasing organizational effectiveness, which can be divided into interpersonal roles, informational roles and decisional roles. Interpersonal roles include the roles of managers such as figurehead, leader, and liaison roles, which arises from a manager's status and authority in an organization. Among the activities associated with these roles directly involve implementing interpersonal contact and developing relationships among people. Informational roles of the managers include monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson roles, relates to the receiving and transmitting of information, while decisional roles include entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocation and negotiator roles. Decisional roles might be the most crucial part of a manager's work as performing the roles justifies the manager's great authority and his powerful access to information. Mintzberg (1973 as cited in Robbins, 2003) emphasized that these roles involved the managers in the strategy-making process in their respective organization.

In order to play these roles effectively, managers need some sets of skills; Robbins (2003) also cited Robert Katz three types of managerial skills, which includes technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills. Technical skills refer to the ability to apply specialized knowledge or expertise. People can learn the special knowledge and practices in their field of study through formal education in schools, and not all technical skills have to be learned in schools or formal training programs. Many people develop their technical skills on the job. A lot of technical skills related to management requires on the job training and education. A human skill is the ability to work with, understand, and motivate other people, both individually and in groups. Since managers get things done through other people, they must have good human skills to communicate, motivate, and delegate their people to achieve organizational goals. A conceptual skill is the mental ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations. Different managers at different levels in the hierarchy of management within an organization do not need the same combination of the three sets of skills. In general, managers at lower levels need to have more technical skills while the counterparts at higher levels should have stronger conceptual skills. Management education must spring from the management roles and skills and requires

mastery of the management roles and skills and not merely understanding the knowledge of management roles and skills.

## **Benefits of Management Education to Organizations**

With the growing economy in Malaysia and its vision to become a developed country in 2020, the need for effective management education is necessary to produce world-class managers in Malaysian organizations. As organizational failures often result from poor management skills of the managers, the need to increase managerial effectiveness is bound to benefit any organization and society. Emulti (2004) cites Longenecker and Ariss (2002) in describing the benefits of management to the organization. Management education is beneficial to organizations because an effective management education program can help organizations create competitive advantage through:

- Exposing students or managers to new/better ideas and business practices which are needed in rapidly changing business environments;
- Motivating student or managers to improve performance (both theirs and that of their operation) and actually helping them develop and improve their skills;
- Providing opportunities for reflection and self-appraisal; helping student or managers identify specific performance problems and deficiencies;
- Increasing a student or manager's confidence, reducing stress level and challenging them to think differently about their business situation and themselves; and
- Encouraging students as future managers to think about their career development and setting a good example for subordinates who see their leaders trying to learn and improve themselves through participating in management education programs.

The benefits of the management education however depends entirely on the ability of students to put what they have learned into practice depending upon the clarity and consistency of the theories, models, principles, and practices presented to them throughout the curriculum. Emiliani (2004), cited a study by Pfeffer and Fong (2002) in the American context which suggests that business school education overall has not been very effective. The education was not found to correlate with career success, and business school research was found to have little influence on management practice. In the context of Australia, a

report called “Karpin Report” released in 1995, provides detailed outcomes from a major government task force set up to identify effective management practices. The findings include recommendations as to how the tertiary education sector could improve management education programs to better meet the needs of the industry. Among the suggestions include an increasing emphasis on soft skills, internationalization, and cross-functional integration, diversity and links to industry (Holian, 2004). In the context of Malaysia, a management practitioner from a multinational corporation based in north peninsular, commented that management theories and approaches in the textbooks contradict one another and many of these theories and approaches may not be applicable in the real workplace, he further commented that as most of the theories and approaches have the origin in the west, it might not fit into the Malaysian collectivist culture. Management lecturers and educator in the UIHL can teach right and wrong of management, but ultimately it is the graduates who have to put into practice what they learned in order for the teaching to have an impact in the real world.

## **Issues and Problems in Management Education in Malaysia**

It is probably impossible to find a perfect management education program and it is also probably impossible to find the best formula for efficient and effective management. Management effectiveness and quality of management education is a process of continuous improvement as quality is a journey and not a destination.

In Malaysia, among the key issues and problem in the management education, has been the ever-increasing number of institutes and schools offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in management education. This has raised one common question pertaining to quality of education. Although in Malaysia, there is an accreditation board called NAB (National Accreditation Board or LAN by its Malaysian acronym), which is responsible to approve and monitor the courses offered by private institutions of higher learning, there are still many institutions, which are operating and offering programs without the NAB approval. A standard fee for a certificate program is RM 5,000, for a diploma is RM 6,000, while for a degree program is RM 7,000 and the private institutions also need to pay accreditation for the second stage of the quality process (Ayob & Yaakub, 2000). It is important to note there are several private institutions without NAB approval cashing in on the rising demand for management education degrees and operating the programs illegally. With

inadequate infrastructure, untrained academic staff, and management expertise, the institutes are displaying poor business sense ignoring the real customer, the industry or the corporate recruiter. Jagdeesh (2000) also found similar scenario in the context of Indian management education. In the case of collaboration with foreign universities, several institutions of higher learning are offering a program for which a foreign university awards a degree mostly from UK, US, Australia or New Zealand. The attraction of foreign degrees has made many students enroll in these institutes, as in Malaysia degrees from the above-mentioned countries are always respected and reputable. This has resulted in some private institutions offering programs with a degree awarded by bogus universities or collaborator universities whose credentials are not known. The most popular programs are Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA). Thus the students take a certain amount of risk when joining these programs and of course, there is no guarantee that employers will recognize these programs; moreover the qualities of these programs are also questionable.

Jagadeesh's (2000) study in the context of India also seems to be applicable in the context of Malaysia, in terms of inability of private institutions of higher learning to attract bright students into management discipline. Bright students with good results mostly enroll in the Science disciplines such as medicine or engineering and even if they enroll in a business programs their first choice seems to be accounting and finance rather than management. Although every management school in UIHL would love to draw bright students, it is difficult to attract them, because they too would be evaluating the quality of institutions before joining. Besides, if the fees charged are high, not many students may be able to enroll, thereby eroding the viability of the program. For example, the total fee for an undergraduate management degree is almost four to five times more in private institutions of higher learning compared to the public universities. This has prompted some institutions to compromise during admission itself. It is not a secret to find that many institutions tilt the admissions in favor of those with a heavy purse, ignoring their capabilities. Paradoxically enough, many bright students may not be able to join due to their non-affordability of high fees and also availability of places in the public universities. Often it may not be possible to exercise strict quality control in many private institutions because, with poor quality students joining the course, maintaining high standards may lead to more failures among the students in meeting the prescribed standards. Many students may even have to drop out of the programs because of their inability to meet the minimum standard. This would result in negative publicity and may adversely affect the admissions for the coming years. Thus dilution of standards sets in voluntarily and almost

seems inevitable in some cases. Once students with lesser capabilities are admitted, the academic staff would be under severe strain to bring the best out of them. Again, if the assessment methods insist on high quality, many students would automatically fail to get even minimum scores or grades. Thus to project a healthy picture and to attract student numbers, the assessment criteria are lowered leading to dilution of standards. However, when it comes to final assessment in the hands of recruiters and prospective employers, the low quality of output churned out by the private institution gets seriously exposed, putting credibility of the institutions itself at stake. However, revenue is given first priority ahead of quality, bringing down the standards and quality of management education in most cases.

In addition to the difficulty of attracting bright students, attracting good and competent academic staff also seems to be problem as remuneration in the UIHL is not as attractive as in the industries. Moreover, even after recruitment, good academic staff is difficult to retain, unless they see career growth and high returns. Quite often they are head hunted by the competitors. Sometimes, people from industries get attracted towards an academic career and take up the role of lecturers and management educators, but often they find the job neither satisfactory nor challenging compared to their earlier profession, compelling them to quit the job. Another common feature is the high rate of academic staff turnover in almost all private institutions of higher learning. Many people join the profession of management education full time, but leave within a short span of one to two years. During a discussion with an academic staff of a private institution in East Malaysia, he compared his school within the institution to a hotel where the academic staff joins checking in during the beginning of a semester and checking out when the semester ends, meaning they stay only for one semester or not more than four months. Some common reasons identified includes disillusionment with the profession, lack of support from the top management, poor administrative support with lazy administrators, absence of autonomy in academic and non-academic matters, poor monetary rewards, work load not appealing or uninteresting, and not being able to cope with student demands. By the time an academic staff becomes acquainted with the profession or the place, he or she decides to quit in disappointment, seeking a new career. This discontinuity drastically affects the quality of functioning and efficiency of programs.

Another academic in a private institution of higher learning commented on lack of leadership in his institution. According to the academic from a private institution in northern peninsular Malaysia, poor leadership and lack of commitment and motivation from top management is one of the main reasons

which creates a barrier to the growth and effectiveness of many private institutions and management school. The turnover of the principals, management staff and lecturers are high and in his institution there was always a farewell lunch or dinner. He commented that a number of institutions employ retired academicians to occupy prime and decision-making positions and many of these retired academics lacks vision, motivation and commitment with no interest in promoting the institutions and management education. They continue to imbue the same culture inherited from their previous organization in most cases public sector, which may not fit into the new organization especially the private institutions.

During another conversation with a renowned human resource management consultant in Malaysia recently by the author, the problem of westernized management education with continuous use of western-based teaching materials such as the textbook, case studies, assessment instrument, etc will not improve the management education in Malaysia. He further asserted that most Malaysian students and managers are still mentally colonized and feel that whatever from the west must be good. Management educational programs in UIHL tend to place too much emphasis on western management theories and concepts, which were written, in a different cultural context.

## **How Management Education in Malaysian UIHL can be Improved**

Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) cited in Elmuti (2004) regard education as the “end product of learning”. Thus, management education would be shaping the students mindset in acquiring the required knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA). In general, we find that management education views management as a discipline that can be learned through classroom (off the job). Thus, it tends to focus on the delivery of a broad range of conceptual knowledge in the various fields and functional disciplines of management.

The Ministry of Higher Education and NAB, need to monitor and enforce the existing laws to prevent and close the operation of many non-accredited and illegal foreign based management educational programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. This is to ensure students who enroll for any management or other academic programs are ensured of good quality of education, good facilities and also value for money. This will definitely strengthen the development of Malaysia as the regional education hub.



The emphasis on western management theories and concepts used in teaching management education in Malaysian UIHL is one of the problems and issues identified earlier. Therefore, the author suggests the need to increase Malaysian based management research and textbook publications, Malaysian based case studies and even developing Malaysian management models or theories as in the case of American, Swedish, Japanese and Indian management theories. This can also help “glocalization” of management education. Foreign management models can be taught in comparative management programs. The government through the Ministry of Higher Education need provide incentives to local management authors and researchers to conduct research and publish in Malaysian management contexts and Malaysian based management case studies.

Further, an urgent need for management education offered by UIHL to provide the required KSA to meet the current and future challenges and the requirements of the marketplace. There is a strong need for UIHL to link with industries in terms of management research and development. The current perception in Malaysia is that UIHL is not motivated to cooperate with the industries and vice versa. Apart from theoretical and foundation knowledge taught in classrooms, practical management training to undergraduate students should be made compulsory to enhance their learning experience. This can be a win-win situation for UIHL and industries (Muniapan, 2003; 2005). A former Director of Human Resources for a large conglomerate in management e-group discussions recently, suggested the possibility of bringing management practitioners into classrooms as adjunct lecturers to share real life management experiences. He asserted that when it comes to subjects like management and human resource management, inputs from practitioners would enhance and add value to the students.

Besides, in the UIHL, a paradigm shift from traditional teacher or lecturer centered to student centered learning is required. This is because excellence in teaching begins with the realization that it is not the teaching but learning that is important. The responsibilities of the UIHL goes beyond the teaching management; it is to help students to develop and master various work skills such as interpersonal communication, decision making and problem solving skills (Muniapan, 2005). A good, strong, motivated and committed leadership is also required at UIHL to attract, develop and retain good academic staffs, which eventually can contribute positively to the growth and the effectiveness of the UIHL.

## Conclusion

Management education has seen a remarkable growth in Malaysia in the recent years as reflected in the steep rise in the number of institutes offering programs in management at various levels. Effectiveness of management education is a must to produce world-class Malaysian organizations besides making Malaysia a regional hub for management education. However, this requires a lot of rethinking, reengineering and revitalizing management education to increase organizational effectiveness, societal well being and national development towards achievement of Vision 2020.

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# Developing Teachers' Skills in Thar Desert Area, Sindh, Pakistan

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to present AKU-IED's experiences about working in the Thar Desert Area of Sindh. AKU-IED aimed to develop teachers' skills and to help them provide quality education to the children of the said underprivileged and remote area of Pakistan.*

## Background

Tharparkar is one of 23 districts in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Tharparkar borders with India on two sides; in the East are two districts of India i.e, Barmer and Jaisselmir, and in the South is the Indian desert of Rann Kuchh. According to the Population Census of 1998, Tharparkar is the largest Hindu populated area of Pakistan. Its share of Hindu population is approximately 24%. The co-existence of Hindu and Muslim customs in Tharparkar has created a very rich local culture. The area is mostly rural with an urban population of approximately 4%. The total population of this district is less than a million, standing at 914,291. The split between men and women is pretty close, standing at 499,859 and 414,432 respectively. Tharparkar is a desert area extremely deficient of natural resources; subsistence agriculture is dependent on rain which is not sufficient.

A day in a Thari village starts for women as early as 5.30 a.m., i.e. before the sunrise. As Tharparkar suffers from drought, one million people there rely on sporadic rainfall for their survival. The sources for getting drinking water are stagnant rain water stored in ponds or a few sweet water wells. Women are responsible for fetching drinking water, and in some cases they need to walk for an hour to fetch the water from a nearby pond or well. Therefore, normally females wake up earlier than male members. After fetching water they prepare breakfast and offer it to the males and the children. After breakfast, the male members leave for work, which includes animal grazing, collecting fodder for animals, collecting firewood etc; females, however, continue to work at home, and their tasks include cleaning the home, washing clothes, doing needlework and other such work. They then make lunch for the children, who also take the

meal to the male members in the fields. They continue the same work till sunset. At sunset they prepare dinner and take the meal together with the male members, who have returned from work by then. They usually go to bed early, as there is not any arrangement for proper lighting at night.

Government Boys Primary School Harijan Colony is a typical Thari school in a small village of District Tharparkar, commonly known as Thar. There are two small rooms for this school, which are locally known as '*Chaunra*' (small rooms in round shape with the roof made of straws). There are two teachers appointed for this school, one in each *Chaunra*, teaching students from Class 1 to 5. Like majority of the schools in Thar, this is also a multi-grade school, where one teacher is responsible for teaching the students belonging to different grades in one room.

The geographical structure of Tharparkar consists mostly of deserts and barren tracts of sand dunes covered with thorny bushes. Villages are scattered sporadically, yet there is a lack in communication facilities, as a result of which most people in the rural areas have less exposure. Like many other parts of the province, the data regarding education in Thar is also not impressive. Almost half of the children within the school going age remain out of school. A major reason why children in Thar exist in such a condition is because of an appalling standard of education. As a result, there is little incentive for parents to send their children to school. To improve the quality and access to the education, the Thardeep Rural Development Program (TRDP), in collaboration with AKU-IED, developed a Mentoring Programme for teacher development under the Child Rights Protection Project. Teacher training is the core activity of this project and is assumed to be the most critical factor in providing sustainable improvement in the quality of education.

Uttam Chand was one of the participants of the mentoring program. Before the training, Uttam's school was a traditional silent school, where children dared not to speak whenever the teacher was around. Children preferred to go to the carpet making unit (locally known as '*Khaddi*') instead of coming to school due to the strictness of the teachers and the threat of corporal punishment. But now, Uttam's school is full of children, who are able to enjoy themselves at school.

The girls' participation in terms of their numbers and their contribution to the classroom learning is also significant. Children seem comfortable with smiling faces and stay busy in different activities.

Uttam shared that before that training he was of the view that the only responsibility of the teacher was to teach children how to read and write and for

that purpose strictness is the best strategy to maintain discipline in the classroom, so that children can stay focused. But now he feels that he was wrong. Now he is of the view that children can only be made to focus when they are relaxed and involved in the teaching and learning process; and this can only be possible when a teacher uses strategies that are both interesting and enjoyable for children.

Uttam now uses a variety of activities, which include group work, drawings, experiments, and brainstorming. Now he encourages children's participation in teaching and learning by asking questions, and by encouraging them to take the lead and by appreciating them.

Training has helped Uttam a lot, and he now feels that his class is full of life. He has also helped out other teacher in the school in using the strategies that he learnt during the training. Children are also proud of being at school and they respect their teacher, and the feeling is mutual.

The state of education in rural Sindh is very alarming. Tharparkar is one of the neglected districts of Sindh regarding the provision of education for children in rural areas. There is a lack of educational facilities and high gender disparities exist. There are only 3676 primary schools for the population of 0.235 million children (4-9 years), and alarmingly more than 50% of the children are out of school. The educational facilities for girls are far lower than boys. There are only 447 primary schools for girls as compared to the 3676 total primary schools in the district. Consequently, most of the girls are restricted to staying at home, and if some of them are able to reach the boys' schools, their chances of dropout increases. The dropout rate in Tharparkar is 21% (SEMIS 2003-2004). The training mechanism is not sufficient as there are few training opportunities and teachers are poorly trained.

## **The Programme**

A Certificate in Education Programme: Primary Education course was conducted by the AKU-IED for 25 selected Master Trainers from Thar. The emphasis of the course was on mentoring and it aimed to improve the content knowledge of teachers while introducing them to innovative teaching methodologies, curriculum development and relevant educational issues. It also attempted to assist teachers in their personal development so that they may gain a better understanding of their own and their students' roles in teaching and learning. The programme focused on the teaching and integration of Social Studies, Science, Language, Mathematics, and Health Education.

In order to help the government primary school teachers of Tharparkar, the Mentoring Programme was initiated in three cohorts. The programme aims at enabling teachers to:

- Reconceptualize their professional knowledge, beliefs roles and attitudes as reflective teachers;
- Enhance their content knowledge, including health education and pedagogical skills;
- Develop their understanding about integrated curriculum;
- Improve their professional knowledge and understanding of how children learn;
- Develop an understanding of the role of assessment in enhancing student learning;
- Adequate level of commitment towards professional development

## **Successes of the Programme**

### **Re-conceptualization of Mentors' Role as Reflective Practitioners**

The encouraging classroom learning environment facilitated the participants in rethinking about their prior knowledge and beliefs with regards to teaching and learning. Throughout the programme, participants were encouraged to critically examine their role as teachers and mentors, reflect on issues, discuss teaching strategies and discover alternative teaching and learning practices. A reflective dialogue between CPs and the course tutors was maintained throughout the course through the reflective journals that were maintained by the CPs. The CPs journal entries were descriptive in the beginning, but later moved towards critical description. In the beginning CPs seemed reluctant about sharing their personal views, but as the programme progressed the majority of the CPs became open and actively participated in discussions through classroom interactions and presentations. This helped them to build their confidence and presentation skills. Their action plans, discussions and presentations clearly demonstrated that they were able to challenge their own myths and personal theories of teaching and learning. As one of the participants said; "The programme helped me to realize that only meaningful education can bring about progress in our region."

## **Enhancement of Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

CPs were able to use pedagogy as a tool for improving their content knowledge of science, maths, social studies and languages. This turned out to be quite an exciting experience for most of them. According to them, in the previous professional development programmes that they had attended, content knowledge was solely learnt through textbooks and instructional materials. However, in this programme, a wide range of instructional strategies were used in the four subject areas of language, social studies, science and mathematics teaching. The CPs were introduced to alternate methods and approaches of teaching these subjects, as well as to developing low-cost no-cost teaching and learning materials. During the classroom teaching and workshops, CPs were encouraged to choose topics that they usually find difficult to teach. They were enabled to assess and improve their own level of pedagogical content knowledge through different instructional strategies.

They were also able to analyze the curriculum and see the relationship between curriculum and textbooks. As one participant said:

My initial beliefs were that the Curriculum is a sacred document and teachers have no role in it. However, after the input of facilitators I got knowledge of curriculum and textbooks.

Sessions on health education were quite significant for the CPs as they viewed health education as an essential ingredient for quality education. The sessions helped CPs to learn more about health education practices in schools and the role of community in education. The sessions also enabled the CPs to understand the complexities of children's learning difficulties.

## **Developing Understanding of Alternative Pedagogical Approaches**

The concept of the child-centered approach to teaching and learning was dealt with throughout this programme. Other instructional approaches such as cooperative learning, action learning, constructivism were also introduced, and the CPs were able to practice these strategies within their groups and in their respective schools. CPs were introduced to various learning activities, learning theories, principles and instructional techniques for learning; both with the children and adult learning approaches. Their understanding of andragogical and pedagogical approaches, and the importance of multiple intelligences in the teaching-learning process was enhanced. CPs also had an opportunity to develop their skills in classroom management, team teaching, observation and giving feedback.



## **Enhancing Understanding of Micro-teaching / Multi-grade Teaching**

CPs' were engaged in micro-teaching sessions for the purpose of trying out newly learnt teaching strategies. These sessions also aimed at building the participants' confidence through the support and feedback given to them by their colleagues and tutors.

Micro-teaching sessions were often followed by reflective sessions, during which CPs discussed alternatives for improving students learning outcomes. The CPs were also introduced to effective ways of conducting multi-grade teaching.

The general problems of curriculum integration, classroom management and material development were also discussed. Lesson plans that had been used in the micro-teaching sessions were developed further and used by the CPs for multi-grade teaching in schools. This enabled the CPs to sharpen their multi-grade teaching skills.

## **Improving Professional Learning**

CPs' evaluation about the programme suggests that they found the programme quite exciting and challenging. As one of the CPs said; "It was the first programme of its nature and the first step as well." Learning about alternate approaches to student assessment, as an area of focus, seemed to be quite successful.

Assessment plays an essential role in improving students' learning. CPs were exposed to different types and techniques of assessment. They were introduced to the notion of the formative and summative assessment practices.

The participants analyzed their current assessment practices and implications of these for the students' learning. They were involved in discussions and debates about the alternative assessment practices that can be used for enriching students' learning. The CPs were able to differentiate between assessment and evaluation. Teachers' self evaluation was also discussed.

## **Sharpening Lesson-Planning Skills**

Throughout the programme the CPs were engaged in developing lesson plans for teaching in their respective classrooms. This enabled them to develop their confidence in developing and modifying their lesson plans.

As a result, the objectives and activities of their lesson plans showed careful, systematic and appropriate explanation of the concepts and procedures, with an added emphasis on the development of understanding, rather than learning by memorization.

Phase I of the programme enabled the participants to understand the role of a teacher, the notion of mentoring and the roles and responsibilities of mentor. As one of the participants said that:

Now I realized the roles of teacher and mentor. I was able to learn different approaches and at the same time I was able to enhance my content knowledge. The most important thing about this training is that the amount of respect that I enjoyed was tremendous and this I have never experienced before.

## **Challenges**

- Sustainability, particularly after the completion of the project;
- Regular Monitoring at classroom level;
- Training of the teachers belonging to non-carpet weaving areas schools;
- Shortage of female resource persons;
- No proper usage of LRC in clusters;

## **Lessons Learned**

- Interactive collaboration between the three main service providers (AKU-IED, TRDP and EDOs Education Tharparkar/Mirpurkhas) helped in the smooth implementation of the programme activities;
- EDO's (Education) active involvement in the programme activities enhanced Mentors' motivation in the programme;

## **Conclusion**

This programme has raised awareness and developed skills of spreading quality education throughout Tharparkar. All the stake holders realized their roles in this process. The Government Education Department, the NGO and the

community are now eager to achieve the goal of quality education through sustainable mentoring programmes.

The experience of working with the teachers of Thar area has verified that Government Teachers are also committed to bring about a positive change in the society through quality education. All that they need for the said are innovative ideas and encouragement.

## **Contact**

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