

The Impact of a Professional Development Program: a study from Pakistan

JOHN RETALLICK & SHAHZAD MITHANI
The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

ABSTRACT In the context of a developing country with enormous problems in the quality of school education for the majority of children, this article seeks to reveal some insights into the impact of one teacher development program in two schools. The Advanced Diploma in School Management (ADISM) program was conducted by the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development in Karachi, Pakistan, where there is increasing interest in studying the impact of all programs. An action research method was employed to develop case studies of two program graduates as they sought to bring change to their schools based on strategies of reflective practice and mentoring learnt during the ADISM program.

Background and Context

Pakistan emerged as a nation in 1947 when British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. It was a difficult birth and it was almost 10 years before the first constitution was agreed upon and the nation became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with a parliamentary form of government. With a current population of 140 million ethnically diverse people, the provision of quality education has been, and continues to be, one of Pakistan's most pressing problems. Telling indications of this are an adult functional literacy rate of less than 50% and a low school participation rate, with some 6 million children not attending school.

The school education system was inherited from the British rule in India, but it was a very meagre inheritance: 'At the time the citizenry of the new country was about 90% illiterate and there was only a handful of educational institutions which were grossly inadequate for the needs of the country' (Hayes, 1987, p. 8). Nowadays, school education is provided

by a range of different systems and types of schools, which are difficult to classify and of greatly varying quality:

- a government system of primary and secondary schools;
- a range of private schools and school systems (some non-profit and others for-profit);
- religious schools (known as madrasahs);
- community-based schools.

The major problems with the quality of education are to be found in the government system that caters for four out of five children who attend school, but has been described as a 'failure' (Hoodbhoy, 1998, p. 5). Furthermore, Hoodbhoy (1998) points out that 'Pakistan's education system fails because, in its present form, it is simply not valuable or important enough to the society' (p. 3). The argument is that the rich can afford the fees to send their children to private schools, but few care enough for the poor to be concerned about the quality of their education.

Besides lack of resources, other factors contributing to 'failure' are:

- political and bureaucratic interference (e.g. staff transfers, lack of merit-based appointments, corruption in contract awarding);
- lack of accountability and sound management practices;
- lack of internationally comparative learning outcome standards (i.e. curriculum and assessment);
- lack of high quality teacher and staff training (Bregman & Mohammad, 1998, p. 68).

The problems are enormous and the need for quality improvement is obvious, but the solutions are not easy to find. One of the directions for quality improvement is in improving the quality of teachers and teaching: 'If the supply of educational services to children in Pakistan is to improve, teachers will have to be active participants in the learning process' (Bregman & Mohammad, 1998, p. 82).

An important contextual variable that affects most of the private schools is that an individual does not need a teaching certificate in order to teach. The notion of a pre-service teaching certificate is prevalent, but primarily limited to teachers in government schools. Even then, the certificate in teaching is not a university credential. As a result, a person who completes tenth grade at school can start teaching in a primary school with a certificate in teaching from a government elementary college of education. Most of the teachers in private schools do not have any such pre-service training and, hence, it becomes imperative for the schools to provide some form of training. Especially in low-income communities, where it is difficult to attract qualified teachers, they come with no preparation and teaching is usually not their profession of first choice.

This situation implies that teacher education, both pre- and in-service, needs to be vastly improved if teachers are to have opportunities to build the knowledge and skills to help children learn. It also implies a new direction for the role of the school principal or head teacher, and that is to become an educational leader with a view to building a community of learners in the school (Memon, 1998). Commenting on the need for change and improvement, Kazilbash (1998) says: 'Headteachers must play an important role in this and need to be trained first in team building, reflection and the collaborative culture' (p. 134).

In that context, the Institute for Educational Development of the Aga Khan University (AKU-IED) was established in 1993 with the specific mission of improving the quality of education in Pakistan and the surrounding region. Of the many programs conducted by AKU-IED perhaps the two most significant are the 2-year MEd and the 1-year Advanced Diploma in School Management (ADISM). The focus of this article is on ADISM, which is designed for aspiring and practicing head teachers to introduce notions of improved educational leadership and management. It is a field-based, modular program that aims to encourage participants to:

- reflect critically on school management practices and explore possibilities to enhance the vision of their management practices as pedagogical leaders;
- understand the organisational dynamics of schools as learning organisations;
- develop action research and inquiry skills to undertake small-scale research projects;
- develop on-the-job professional development programs for staff;
- collaborate with other schools in the wider community;
- develop skills for managing educational change for school improvement (Memon, 1998, p. 26).

A particular concern of AKU-IED in recent times has been researching and evaluating the impact of the programs. This study is one of the first to engage with that concern and there are now others underway as the issue of program impact increases in prominence both here and in other places. For instance, Flecknoe (2002) points out that, in England and Wales, Teacher Training Agency-funded professional development for teachers must be evaluated for its impact on pupils in schools.

A Framework for Studying Impact

The impact of educational programs may be thought of as a subset of the wider field known as knowledge use or utilisation (Rogers, 1995). Knowledge utilisation encompasses information dissemination and utilisation, innovation diffusion, interpersonal and mass communication,

organisational change and improvement, and policy and program development and implementation. Whilst distinctions may be made between diffusion and dissemination (Rogers, 1995, p. 7), they both refer to the planned or spontaneous spread of new ideas with a focus on the importance of communication:

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are new ideas. (p. 5)

For the purpose of analysing impact, the term 'consequences of innovations' is useful and refers to 'changes that occur to an individual or to a social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of an innovation' (Rogers, 1995, p. 405). The notion of consequences of innovations highlights the potential of impact to be unintended as well as intended. Of course, change agents intend to bring about desirable consequences through adoption of innovations, but there are many examples of unintended consequences or complete failure to adopt an innovation (see Rogers, 1995). The latter has particularly been the case with a great deal of educational innovations over the years.

Rogers (1995) points out that the consequences of innovations have been understudied in the past (as is the case with impact studies in education) and he calls for research that illuminates and explains consequences, not merely assuming that they will be positive. He further points out that the study of consequences requires extended observation over time or in-depth case studies, rather than one-shot survey research.

In investigating the impact of AKU-IED programs it is important to consider the working knowledge of teachers and school administrators in Pakistani schools. The knowledge that they bring to their daily work is important because it underpins their practice and revealing that knowledge will help us to understand the basis of the practice. Conceptually, working knowledge can be thought of as having three components. The first is knowledge drawn from educational programs or educational enquiry, i.e. research-based knowledge. The second is experiential or craft knowledge; that type of knowledge drawn from practical experience which is regarded as good practice in the profession. The third is local knowledge, that is, knowledge that is based on common-sense understandings of the local context. What is not sometimes understood is that research-based knowledge, which is usually the basis of educational programs, is filtered through the other forms of knowledge in the process of being applied. This is an important issue for impact studies and it means that researchers need to be mindful of the fact that what they see in operation in a classroom, for example, is an amalgam of all three forms of working knowledge, rather than pure research-based knowledge in practice.

Impact Evaluation

Impact may also be considered from the perspective of evaluation. Owen & Rogers (1999) take the view that 'Impact evaluation is predicated on the not-unreasonable view that citizens at large should know whether programs ... are making a difference' (p. 263). They argue that the public has a right to know that money spent in the public arena is producing effective social and educational interventions, and that programs, where possible, are meeting their intended goals and not leading to negative side effects. They suggest that impact evaluation has a strong summative emphasis in that it provides findings from which a judgment of the worth of the program can be made. Ideally then, impact evaluations are undertaken on programs that are in a mature or settled stage, and have had sufficient time to have an effect.

They further suggest that impact evaluation is concerned with:

- determining the range and extent of outcomes of a program;
- determining whether the program has been implemented as planned and how implementation has affected outcomes;
- providing evidence to funders, senior managers and politicians about the extent to which resources allocated to a program have been spent wisely;
- informing decisions about replication or extension of a program.

Guskey (2000) argues that there are five levels of professional development evaluation that should be investigated in relation to impact:

- participants' reactions (i.e. were they satisfied with the program?);
- participants' learning (i.e. what did they learn?);
- organisation support and change (i.e. are the teachers being supported in their change efforts?);
- participants' use of new knowledge and skills (i.e. is there evidence of change in classroom or school practice?);
- student learning outcomes (i.e. what is the benefit for students in terms of improved learning?).

Most evaluation of professional development programs is at level 1 only, i.e. did the participants enjoy or feel satisfied with the program? Deeper impact evaluation is more costly and time-consuming although potentially more illuminating. The most difficult and problematic, but perhaps the most important, is the final level, i.e. impact on student learning and achievement.

A Study of the Impact of ADISM

Two case studies will be reported here. They are drawn from a research project titled: 'The Impact of selected ADISM strategies on Mid-level Managers and School Reform'. Mid-level managers are school

administrators usually at one level below principal, e.g. vice-principal, department coordinator, section-in-charge. There is evidence of increasing interest in the role of mid-level managers in school improvement with a particular focus on teacher development (e.g. Wise, 2001) and the present study was designed to extend that line of research in the context of a developing country.

The research question was 'How and to what extent do selected ADISM strategies impact on mid-level managers and their school reform efforts?' Action research methodology was chosen as the project is concerned with school reform and that implies change in a school. As Calhoun (2002) points out, action research 'can generate data to measure the effects of various programs and methods on student and staff learning' (p. 18). Action research is a cyclic process that is concerned with researching interventions whereby both action (that is, change) and research (that is, understanding) are simultaneously achieved. It is a negotiated approach to research where researchers and participants are partners in the process.

Each school was visited on four occasions over a 3-month period, and this was followed by a group meeting of researchers and participants at AKU-IED. On each visit an interview was conducted, and these were tape-recorded and transcribed. In the first interview a specific school reform strategy initiated by the participant and emanating from the ADISM program was selected as the intervention to be studied.

Case Study 1

Our first visit to School X was on 28 August 2002. On entering the school the first impression was one of surprise at the outstanding quality of the building, constructed entirely in marble and glass with a marble forecourt. We entered the building to find it was just as impressive inside, and were warmly greeted by Ms X and shown to her office. After a brief discussion we took a walk around the school, and saw many classrooms with well-dressed boys and girls in the nursery and kindergarten sections. We found that it was a pre-primary school and the rooms were brightly decorated with children's work. We passed a teachers' resource room, where a number of teachers were working on some teaching materials. Upstairs were more classrooms and a well-appointed Professional Development Centre for teachers. The third level is a multi-purpose outdoor rooftop garden that serves as a social area. The school is very well appointed and there was an atmosphere of lively and active learning going on.

The school is a private, non-profit school for children of the 'twelvers' community of Islam. There are 30 teachers and around 400 students at the school, with each class having 32-33 children and two teachers. The school mission is for students to become confident, able to

compete with the world and be critical thinkers. The school is located in a quiet, middle-class area of Karachi and most families with children at the school are economically well off. However, all categories of students from the community are accepted, with those who cannot afford it being given subsidies on their fees and other financial benefits.

Ms X started in this school system as a senior mistress at another branch around 2 years ago and in April this year she was promoted to vice-principal at this school. She is now responsible for all aspects of the school from student welfare to teachers' work in the classroom and teacher development. Ms X completed the ADISM course in June 2002 and she said that ADISM:

helped us a lot and gave us completely new ideas relating to the management of the school. Previously I used to be very formal with teachers and very strict, it literally changed us. Now I help them out by discussing matters with them to get mutual understanding about their particular problems.

She identified reflective practice as a strategy she learnt during ADISM and that she has introduced in the school. She had started work on reflective practice by asking teachers to write their reflections and submit them to her on Fridays:

but the thing is not very clear to them, what we mean by reflections. What they are writing is just the review, these are things that we did or are doing, just anecdotes. But what we mean by reflections, they are not clear on that issue. So I plan to do a workshop on what I expect them to write on reflective practice.

When asked about her understanding of reflective practice Ms X said:

it is whatever I am doing or whatever I have done in fact. That thing happened and what was the reason it happened and what is the next step I could take for that ... this is what I believe reflection is. If a child is not able to write, think why is he not able to write, what was the reason and what action can you take or discuss the problem to find the reason.

To encourage teachers to write, Ms X provided each teacher with a blank booklet and a brief explanation of what she wanted. Previously, the teachers had been asked to answer some questions, but they resisted that and they suggested that they would like to write on their own. Ms X said: 'but still some of the teachers are not getting the essence of what they should write'. When asked what the problems or difficulties were for the teachers she replied:

even I have not really understood this thing'. One reason given was that: 'some of the teachers are new and not used to

writing, others are still of the view that we have to just tell our head that these are the things that we are following and they just end their sentences like that ... it went very well and so on so they don't further clarify what happened. Another reason is that most of the teachers are not very confident in writing, maybe they are hesitant to write in English.

The second school visit began with Ms X describing how she learnt about reflective practice during the ADISM course:

I learnt through our instructors as they were giving us lectures and explaining things. Secondly, doing my assignment on reflective practice and during that I went through many books on reflective practice and that really helped me with what is meant by reflection as such. I don't know still that I am very clear on reflection, but whatever I learnt it was through these sources. It was mainly through my assignment and of course writing my reflections during ADISM also.

Ms X mentioned that there were some questions that helped her to reflect:

What had happened to me? Why had it happened? What action I took and why I took that action? These are some of the questions that at times clicked me to think about what was going on and I was not on a track before that. Still I'm not sure that I'm going right or wrong but I feel I am going slightly in a correct direction for reflection. This practice really helped me and it is helping me in different ways also. While I am reflecting on something it gives me a chance to think about whatever I have done and the response I receive from my colleagues or my head or whatever. It is helping me to think on those lines.

When asked if ADISM had changed her practice in the area of reflection Ms X responded:

I can quote you an example. If I ask teachers to do something, such as a strategy we need to follow in class, I ask them to go through this strategy then give me your reflection or feedback about how that thing went in your class and how your students responded. That helps me to come to an assessment about this is something where we are going wrong and if we twist it or turn it like this we might go in a correct direction. I'm not sure if this is reflection or not but these are some of the things which we felt.

We then read some of the teachers' reflective journals and discussion followed about the nature of the writing. It was found to be mostly a

general overview of the whole week, although some pieces concentrated on a particular episode that enabled the writing to be more specific and disclosed feelings about the situation. Two teachers were then invited to join the discussion. One teacher said:

Writing reflections helps us to see ourselves in a better way, to observe something carefully and then reflect on it ... sometimes if we are facing some problems and we need some help from our head and things like that we can share with our heads. It's a better way that our heads could read this and see what problems we are having'

The other teacher commented:

This reflective practice is very beneficial for me. Whenever I have something in my class I share it, it's a very good thing I think because sometimes we don't have time to come over here [to the VPs office] so just writing is good and we get a very prompt response.

We then suggested a strategy that the teachers might like to try. This was our first action step in action research. The idea was for teachers to focus on a critical incident during the week rather than try to write about everything that happens. There were four questions teachers could use to probe the incident:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What does it mean?
- What are the implications for my practice? (Hole & McEntee, 1999)

We felt that following this protocol might help teachers to sharpen their skills of writing. We also provided an article that explained and gave examples of how teachers might address the four questions.

On the third school visit we began with discussion of the article on reflection. Ms X commented: 'Yes, they have really worked on it ... though there was confusion over question 3 "What does it mean?" and they were asking me to explain it but I was not sure about it'. Ms X was concerned about the focus on one incident:

I was thinking if I ask them just to write on one or two issues, how about their teaching and the problems they are facing in all different subjects. We have one teacher taking all the subjects and how will I know about what issues they are facing in their classrooms ... and if I am asking them to write about everything in such depth then it will be too much for them to write and for me also to read.

This was followed by a discussion of the purpose of reflective writing and the focus on meaning: '... by doing this we are going in depth and really getting teachers to think about their practice'.

Ms X was also concerned about another matter:

Don't you think then my process will be very slow? ... what about the syllabus and curriculum, do I leave that behind? ... I can't leave some things behind, some children go to another branch and there will be complaints from parents, so how am I going to face that thing?

She continued:

At times it is difficult for us to understand parents also because more than 50% of our parents are not literate, if they start comparing this school with other schools and they start complaining the standard is going down because we are not doing any writing and they don't know anything, they are just focusing on reading and other things ... because they can't help their children to read, because they themselves are not literate ... These are the things we are facing and ADISM is not teaching us.

While we felt encouraged about the process of reflection in the school we also had to take account of the difficulties of doing action research and reflective practice in a real school setting where the priorities are different; the priorities are not about teachers reflecting deeply on their practice, the priorities are satisfying the parents and covering the syllabus.

At this stage, the same two teachers who were with us last week joined the conversation. They produced their journals for us to read and we could see they were doing a fine job of reflective writing about a critical incident though there was still some uncertainty about Question 3: 'What does it mean ...'. After some discussion Ms X said that it is now more clear about how to handle that question and she suggested: 'One thing we can do is get teachers to sit together and talk about their reflections and all give their suggestions of why it happened and what it means'. We felt that was a very good idea and she said: 'We can do it in a workshop'.

In the final school visit the main focus of discussion was the workshop that Ms X had conducted with all 30 teachers in the school. She had given the teachers a handout concerning reflective practice to do with beliefs, assumptions, prejudices, actions and their consequences. She also addressed the four questions in the writing protocol by giving an example and asking teachers to write about a critical incident. Later, the feedback from teachers was very positive:

they wrote me that this method is quite easy, is better than the previous one, this is the feedback ... [the earlier approach] according to them that was quite challenging and it was at times becoming too much for them to write, because I asked them to write on each and every aspect and so they were not able to write very deeply on all those things, here I've asked them just to reflect on any one particular incident and go deep into it, so this group found it more easy.

We resolved the troublesome question of 'What does it mean' by considering it from the perspective of the various stakeholders: what does it mean for the teacher, for the students, for the parents and for the school management. This approach seemed to make good sense and enabled teachers to look at the different interests of these groups. One teacher had written in her journal: 'The effect of that workshop is that now I developed a new understanding about step three, that we have to see the effect of happening on the things'.

Other examples from the teachers' journals also indicated that teachers were writing in a more insightful and thoughtful way about incidents in their classrooms. It was also proving to be a very positive experience for Ms X who was greatly encouraged by the success of the workshop and now plans further workshops for the teachers indicating a change in her practice. She came to realise that she is learning through reflection on her own practice and we then discussed the importance of teachers valuing their practice as a source of learning. What it needs, however, is someone to help them find the meaning in their everyday practice.

We concluded the discussion by asking Ms X how she was feeling about the action research process. She responded:

I am really feeling as if I am learning and this is the evidence.

As I told you, I am not saying that they all have done very good work, but most of them have given me good response and I am really learning from this action research. This is something you have told me about, a new track or something, which I am working on these lines and which is really helping me.

Case Study 2

The second case began with our first visit to School Y. It is located at the outskirts of Karachi, approximately 40 km from AKU-IED. The school is located in a low-income community with parents having had limited formal schooling. The school has a very nominal monthly fee and in several cases provides subsidies of up to 100% for poor families. For the majority of families in the community, this school would be the only

opportunity for educating their children and for most of them the national language, i.e. Urdu, is not their first language.

Some 1200 students attend this school every year. There are about 60 teachers along with three section-in-charges, 8-10 subject coordinators and a principal. The school is divided into three sections, pre-primary section (kindergarten I and II, and grades 1 and 2), primary section (grades 3-5) and secondary section (grades 6-10). Grades 7-10 are gender-segregated and have also been divided by vocation, i.e. computers, sciences and technical. The school has a purpose-built structure with two three-story units that provide classrooms to all students and it includes a computer lab, staff room, library, and offices for academic and administrative staff. A voluntary Board that has membership from the community undertakes the school's administrative and financial oversight.

Ms Y started working at this school as an untrained teacher almost 8 years ago and over the last few years she has also been responsible for academic administration in the capacity of section-in-charge for primary classes, grades 3-5. While she continued her duties as a section-in-charge, she completed the ADISM course in 2002. Prior to ADISM, she had undertaken an 8-week certificate program at AKU-IED, which according to her: 'really created interest and motivation for teaching'.

Ms Y identified 'systematic ways of undertaking assignments and prioritising them' as the most positive and visible outcome from ADISM. When asked about the nature of her tasks, she said: 'I am involved in everything, teacher induction and mentoring, class scheduling, syllabus reviews, teacher assignment, students class and home work assignment, parental involvement ... everything, all decision-making is with me'.

She identified several key areas that required her immediate attention on an ongoing basis due to the prevailing conditions, especially related to dissatisfied parents. They were complaining about lack of access to the school and no direct teacher interactions. Recently, she had initiated several ways in which the parents would be able to come to the school, and one that she prides herself on is the 'open door classroom' initiative. According to her, parents had complained regarding their inability to know how well their child was performing in class. This initiative gave access not only to the classroom and student work, but also allowed parents to sit through the school day to see how their child was taught and to question the teacher as well. Ms Y further said that, as an outcome of this exercise, not only did the parents have an opportunity to visit, but the teachers received a significant boost in their confidence.

Other critical areas that Ms Y identified as factors inhibiting school progress were untrained teachers and a high teacher attrition rate. This had significantly affected the consistency of a teacher working with a class, overburdened other teachers and negatively affected student

performance. The incidence of student misbehaviour with other students, as well as with new teachers, had also been reported to be very high. From this context, Ms Y identified 'teacher induction and mentoring' as a key management function in addition to her other academic administrative work. According to her: 'I have not had a formal supervised practice in the area of mentoring' and she thought that this action research opportunity would provide her with some ideas on mentoring and improve her mentoring practice with her teachers.

When asked about her understanding of mentoring, she said: 'actually this is a skill where an experienced teacher can train inexperienced teachers who are fresh in this profession ... I mean provide help and support to teachers to develop their knowledge, classroom management strategies that can support students as well and to make the teacher feel at ease in the classroom'. Ms Y narrated the possible steps that she has planned to take in the mentoring process: 'I have tried it just recently but not all the steps, I want during the first week to make them [new teachers] familiar with the environment, with the people, with the resources, types of books that we are using ... so they will be familiarised with everything'. Moreover, the exercise in the first week also includes: 'introduction to lesson planning, i.e. what and how of lesson planning ... part of the first week and second week, I have decided to work on correcting their misconceptions regarding teaching that would lead towards providing demonstration lessons to the novice teachers'.

Identifying possible next steps for this action research to move forward, Ms Y suggested that she would like to work on mentoring three teachers that she has identified to address the classroom management and teaching issues related to a class of special needs students. The researchers agreed to work with this proposal.

Before the end of this visit, Ms Y was asked about her prior knowledge and practice of action research and she replied by saying that 'I had a brief experience of conducting an action research during ADISM and I feel comfortable with it'. She further indicated that inquiring into the mentoring process using action research and assistance from the researchers would also help her to learn more about action research. As a next step it was decided to observe her demonstration to her mentees, collect data from her demonstration and from the critical reflective dialogue with her mentees after the demonstration.

The second visit initially recaptured notions that were discussed in the first meeting, especially regarding prior experience with conducting a formal mentoring process. Ms Y indicated that she does not have any formal experience; however, she has been involved in an informal mentoring process with her teachers. When asked what would be her expectation from this process, she said, 'I expect that this process will make my teachers independent, I do not want them to come to me for everything and that they should be able to work and help other teachers

as well'. Moreover, she said that: 'I want my teachers to give me feedback as well, since I did not have any formal training, I need to learn as well'. Ms Y said 'I [also] expect that this process would help decrease teacher drop out, I want teachers to be confident and feel that they have some support from me'.

Prior to the demonstration lesson Ms Y was asked whether she had planned any objectives for this lesson today. She replied, 'yes I do, not only that, I sat with my teachers after preparing these to get their input as well. We not only worked on objectives but we also worked on activities and strategies and I also prepared some [student] assessment sheets'. Moreover, she said that this is the first time that we have done this kind of preparatory exercise.

The duration of the observation was an hour and a half, which would conventionally mean two class periods. The class, together with three other teachers, was greeted by Ms Y and ourselves. Ms Y initially took 10 minutes to set the social skills norms for the class and tried to involve students in reasoning why it is important to adhere to certain forms of social skill, such as raising hands, waiting for turns, noise level, etc. She moved further along with the topic of the day, involving her teachers as well in the activities that she had planned for the students. She conducted the whole session in English.

Following the lesson, Ms Y inquired about her use of English language, whether they (the mentees) thought that it created more problems for students to understand and work on the activities. One of the teachers said, 'it seemed that the students could understand English as there were quite a few students who had their hands raised to respond to your questions'. How about their behaviour during the lesson? Ms Y asked one of the teachers, who responded: 'their behaviour was not disruptive'. To this she added: 'I was trying to get their attention while constantly focusing on a student by taking their names 2-3 times and asking them questions'.

A general discussion followed between Ms Y and the three teachers related to the disruptive behaviour of the students and the difficulty for any teacher to get any work done with the other students. It was also highlighted that because of a few students, other students do not get the teacher's attention and also become disruptive. She emphasised the importance of preparing activities ahead of time so that the teacher is also focused and knows how to involve the students.

Two weeks later we visited the school to discuss and reflect on the progress and development from the previous visit. A new development Ms Y pointed out was that: 'two out of three teachers have moved to the secondary section and I am now working with one teacher'. This depicted the true reality of this school, especially with reference to teacher attrition and the demands placed on teachers and administrators.

Ms Y claimed that the progress that she has achieved with the third teacher is very satisfactory: 'she is designing activities, and she has realised how to manage class and how to help those students'. Moreover, Ms Y said, she has two other teachers who have surprised her with the kind of problems that they brought to her in the coordinator's meeting; problems related to classroom management, time management and lesson planning, those that Ms Y believes are fundamental for all the teachers in order to complete the syllabus.

Ms Y identified these teachers for her second systematic mentoring program, looked again at the mentoring processes and along with involvement of these two teachers, short-listed areas that they need to develop. One of the first areas of work was 'instructional language'. Ms Y believed that this is a very important aspect of classroom management; unless the children are clear on what they are suppose to do, how will a teacher be a good teacher? Since English is the instructional language, it posed an additional problem for these teachers, as they were not fluent in it. Lesson demonstration and observation by Ms Y was the first strategy that was used along with problem posing by the two teachers, and in due course this not only improved the teacher confidence but has also given her an opportunity to develop a team of teachers to mentor other teachers on specific areas of classroom management.

The third visit gave possibilities on how a systematic mentoring process could enable identifying areas of development and potential teacher collaboration and improved practices. Ms Y mentioned that this action research process allowed her to systematise her workflow, follow up on tasks and with timely probes by the researchers, she was able to reflect more and with continuity. She said that she was encouraged by this process as she could always refer back to the researchers in case she had some difficulties.

Conclusion

To conclude the project we invited both Ms X and Ms Y to meet with us at AKU-IED on 18 Nov 2002. The purpose of the meeting was to enable the participants to verify the accuracy of the case studies, discuss the two cases in relation to the research questions and celebrate the conclusion of the project.

The first point to make from the cross-case analysis is that the two schools are very different places. School X is a relatively small pre-primary school, whereas School Y is a combined pre-primary, primary and secondary school, making it large and very complex. The locality of the schools also makes them very different. School X is in an affluent area and School Y is in a poor area of Karachi, making the socio-economic status of the school clients widely disparate. Because of the locality, School X attracts well-qualified teachers who will travel a considerable

distance to work there, whereas School Y finds it difficult to recruit trained teachers from the local community and teachers are not prepared to travel to work there. The role of Ms X as vice-principal of School X puts her in charge of the place as her principal is in another location, whereas Ms Y is in charge of one section of a large school and in the midst of all the action with the principal in the same building. This produces a different work environment for the two participants.

The case studies reveal that both participants reconceptualised their roles as leaders and managers in the schools as a result of ADISM. It is clear that the program had a major impact on them. They have both moved from an authoritarian, 'telling' orientation to a role of working with their teachers in a supportive team approach to promote school improvement. They are now inclined to explain the reasons for requests they make, rather than simply issuing orders to the teachers as they did in the past.

The ongoing school-based results of their participation in ADISM are that the strategies of reflective practice and mentoring have been adopted in the respective schools and these are directly attributable to ADISM. During the case study research we were trying to understand how these strategies were being applied in the schools and some interesting findings emerged. First, in the case of reflective practice the process has developed to the point where teachers themselves are now conducting workshops for other teachers to help them improve their reflective writing. Now, more than 70% of teachers are writing very clear reflections. Teachers are working and learning together about reflective writing. Secondly, in the mentoring study it is more noticeable that changes have occurred at the level of classroom teaching and student learning. The new teacher being mentored is now working well in the classroom and getting good results from students. The process of improvement is slow, but noticeable.

One impact of ADISM is that both participants have redefined their role and/or position in the school, though in different ways. For Ms Y there has been an increase in expectations from the principal and she has been asked to share ADISM strategies with other coordinators in the school and thereby help other teachers to improve. In the case of Ms X she was promoted to vice-principal and given responsibility for running a branch of the school. Both of these changes are attributable, at least in part, to ADISM.

Both participants are using their newly acquired knowledge by putting into practice some strategies from ADISM. In this research we focused on two strategies, but there has been a wide range of others as well, including parental involvement, school development plans and community involvement, e.g. medical doctors invited to the school to talk to students in a health project. As well as knowledge of new strategies, it appears that both participants gained a great deal of confidence from

ADISM in their own ability to make changes and make a difference in the lives of their students. One of them claimed that she is now on a crusade to improve the school and the community.

However, to temper the successes there are also continuing challenges. Since ADISM, the expectations on them are much higher and there are still problems of a poor community, many untrained teachers, lack of English skills and an unattractive locality for School Y, which are beyond the scope of ADISM to deal with. Workshops for teachers and parents are helpful, but many of the problems remain untouched.

The idea of school reform is itself a major challenge that both participants have taken up. They see continuing action research with teachers focusing on aspects of their teaching as one way to move ahead. One problem is that teachers are not in the habit of reading so this will need to be dealt with. Students also need to improve reading skills for academic progress, so that will also be a project for next year.

The prevailing school culture, though very different in the two schools, is not seen as a major hurdle in achieving school reform. In School X there is not so much pressure on academic achievement because of the young age of the children, but in School Y it is a major issue. Fortunately, in School Y the culture is supportive, sharing and focused on learning, though very challenging and busy.

Both participants see themselves as able to influence practices in their school in the future. They want to have a positive influence on teachers. They want to encourage teachers to come up with ideas that they can support and they feel a strong bond with their teachers based on trust that comes from their knowledge and experience. We are convinced that much of that knowledge and the confidence to act on it comes from the ADISM program. This is the real impact of a professional development program.

Correspondence

John Retallick, Associate Professor, Institute for Educational Development, The Aga Khan University, PO Box 13688, Karachi 75950, Pakistan (john.retallick@aku.edu).

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