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# Quality in education: Teaching and leadership in challenging times. Vol. 2


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

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Institute for Educational Development  
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## **Proceedings**

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### **Editors**

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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

# Local and Global Dynamics in the Construction of Quality Teaching

*Sarfarozi Niyozov, OISE, University of Toronto, Canada*

## Abstract

*The core empirical basis of the paper is based on a number of qualitative case studies conducted between 1999 and 2001 in Badakhshan province of Tajikistan. The study's insights were subsequently connected to my earlier teaching and research experiences in Pakistan and the broader literature. The analyses of the above research and teaching experiences were subsequently linked to the contexts and histories of the teachers' practices, which exposed complex, rich, and contradictory realities, forces, and factors that have contributed to (a) the dominance of the teacher-centred and transmissive approaches in their worldview, instruction, and relationship, and (b) the existence of the unrealised potential of the alternative of dialogical and interactive pedagogy, rooted in teachers' beliefs, culture and system and innovations. These analyses illustrate complex and contradictory classroom realities in which teachers appear as not always obedient servants to the forces that subdue them to transmission-oriented practices; they try to promote transactive and transformative activities to meet the fundamental needs of their students and community in terms of quality, hope, and opportunity for better and more just education and society.*

*The conclusions will try to connect the cases and discussions with the concepts of globalization and political economy and highlight the necessity of the awareness of the personal-professional, structural, and cultural challenges, accompanied with teacher empowerment to increase the chances of the alternative pedagogy, through restructuring the existing conditions, and teachers' ability to navigate through classroom, school and community, national and global factors. The paper's insights have implications for the reconstruction of pre and in-service teacher education, teacher development, education research and innovation implementation in the context of developing countries.*

## Introduction and Method

This paper suggests a number of points: (i) any definition of quality teaching depends on how teaching itself is practiced, conceptualized, and portrayed; (ii) a complex, contradictory and rich conceptualization and portrayal of teaching is most hopeful in terms of capturing the lived reality of teaching and engendering

sustainable and quality improvement; (iii) this broader practice of teaching is the result of the dynamics between local and global realities at the level of both particular classrooms and classrooms across the globe. In presenting the above, this paper consists of three parts: (i) an extensively grounded discussion of the rich and broad notion of teaching, based on the empirical data from my PhD study, (ii) a brief discussion on the globalized construction of teaching, based on the literature review across the globe, and (iii) a briefer closure on ensuing implications for redefining and improving quality of teaching, teacher education, and research.

This paper's empirical base consists of my unpublished PhD thesis on teaching and teachers' work and life in the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan. This data was examined and enriched by a number of survey studies conducted in Central Asia by local and international agencies such as Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UNDP, Open Society Institute, and the Aga Khan Foundation. These empirical data were analysed and connected to the context of the teachers' practices, with the insights concomitantly connected to the literature produced globally to further illustrate the global dynamics of teaching. The study suggests the need for research approaches that could provide a more complex and richer portrayal of classroom, schooling life, and teachers, and the need to avoid argument and proposition-based depictions, which in their desire to prove and verify, often result in reduced portrayals of teaching (unless the arguments themselves are complex and not closed ones. They either block the possibilities for sustainable improvement of the education quality that is grounded in these classrooms across the globe or suggest one-sided solutions (either positive or negative) that often falter in the face of complexity, bringing a bad name to research and researchers, reform and reformers, and creating cynicism among teachers and other stakeholders. This paper provides insights for reformers, policy makers and teacher educators about how to gain this richer understanding and how to find the language of realism and possibility that could be contextually and culturally grounded and is more sustainable in terms of financial, structural and human resource requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter, I also refer to Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous province as Badakhshan and Pamir. Other titles for the province appear in the literature, among them the Russian term, Gorny-Badakhshan, and the Tajik phrase, *Wiloyati Khudmukhtori Kuhistoni Badakhshon*.

## The Context

Although Tajikistan as a country was created during the Soviet delimitation policy in the 1920s and 1930s, and although it became a titular independent country in 1991, as result of the Soviet Union's sudden collapse, its cultural history goes deep into the history, culminated with the Samanid statehood in 9-10th centuries CE (Ne'matov, 1989; Shorish, 1984). Mountainous Badakhshan, as a province of Tajikistan, was the site of this study. It is located in the south-eastern part of Tajikistan, bordering with Kyrgyzstan in the north, China in the east, and Afghanistan in the south; The province represents a linguistically, ethnically, and religiously diverse context, with a number of the ancient languages spoken in addition to Tajik and Kyrgyz; it is highly mountainous, owning the highest peaks of the former Soviet Union, recently renamed from Communism to the Samanids and from Lenin to Tajikistan. The province is predominantly rural with a mix of nomadic and settled lifestyles. It occupies more than 40% of the country's territory, with only less than 5% of its population and around 1% of its arable land. It is believed to be richest in mineral and water resources, yet is the most impoverished in terms of per capita income and least developed industrially; claiming to have the highest percentage of "educated" population, the province suffers from the highest degree of unemployment and ceaseless migration. While the province's population strives to call itself Tajiks and has been named so in the literature of the past century, it is distinct from the majority of Tajiks in both language and religious denomination, which creates ambivalence in terms of their ethnic unity with the rest of Tajiks. The study was conducted in three sites of this province in three public schools. Its core informants were five teachers, whose voices and practices were checked against the voices of focus groups and broader community members. The upcoming pages of this chapter will illustrate this broad notion of teaching, which goes beyond most of the existing conceptualizations available in the literature produced in the west and elsewhere.

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• The majority of the province's population speaks various Pamiri languages, which indicates its indigenous roots. The majority of the population also adheres to the Ismaili branch of Islam, while the rest of the Tajiks belong to the Sunni interpretation.

• For details on the methodology see Niyozov (2001, chapter 3).

• For a review of these concepts and how teacher's notions cross all of them, see Niyozov (2001, chapter 9, part 1, pp. 400- 420).

## Teaching as the use of Contradictory, Evolving, Complex and Mixed Methods and Styles

The two boxes provided below, illustrate a number of realities: (i) teachers move between teacher-centred, authoritarian, coercive, transmissive, and student-centred, democratic and collaborative styles of teaching; (ii) these mixed and complex practices problematize the nature of their pedagogical styles, suggesting that both (i.e., teacher-centred and student-centred) are not monolithic and fixed; they have shades and degrees. This in turn requires a more nuanced judgement on their teaching style and their portrayals. Each box is divided into two columns: the teachers' sayings and actions.

<b>Box 1: Transmissive, teacher-and textbook centred/authoritarian classroom practices</b>	
<b>Sayings</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>How long can I wait for their response? Is not there a limit?</p> <p>Due to lack of textbooks, I have become the source of knowledge and have made them parrots; there is not enough material for them to work on their own.</p> <p>Teacher is the captain of the ship, he knows the final destination, said a Russian thinker.</p> <p>Because I and they are not used to group work, I cannot switch to it right away. It must be gradual, it should be both way.</p> <p>They move around the point too long. I want them to be fast so that I can tell more and more, I feel that the class is ending and this is left and that is left ...</p> <p>Teachers are the most educated people in the community. They are the only one who can promote ethics.</p> <p>Shouldn't I know more than the students? Teacher should be like an encyclopaedia. He should know everything possible. That raised his value not only in front of students, but their parents too.</p> <p>I will tell them about corruption and about lies written in the text, about nepotism; if I do not someone else will. That person may not be sincere with the children.</p> <p>How can you call it indoctrination? When I tell them the good side and bad side of an issue, when I warn them about a topic, I find myself asking too many question and sometimes telling.</p> <p>I am older and more experienced and tell them so that they do not make my mistakes, do not waste time, and also tell them the correct answer so that they do not fail.</p> <p>I have taught this way for so many years. I have learned so much by this way. Our children can learn by many ways, including by</p>	<p>Warn; Stand in front; always have serious face:</p> <p>Make sure students do not move and look at the teacher all the time and follow the rules of behaviour; raising hands, sitting and standing.</p> <p>Emphasize the years, dates and names; repeat and explain the same thing more than once, but every time with some changes in words' use.</p> <p>Convince students through logics and more information.</p> <p>Maintain close relationships with parents, but strict relations with the students; threaten students with their parents.</p> <p>Interrupt when students are not up to point.</p> <p>Organise activities inside and out of classroom.</p> <p>Let the students choose activities but not the</p>

<p>lecture.</p> <p>I had some really nice teachers' whose knowledge would right away enter my head as they lectured.</p> <p>The teachers' whip is like a flower, in beating it sounds like a nightingale... My child's bones are yours, Girls we say long haired and short minded; repetition is the mother of knowledge; no one has become something without a teacher; the younger need to listen to wise people and seek their advice.</p> <p>I prioritise the curriculum over the students, because it is the textbook that is the basis of the assessment and this is for the students own benefits; because there is too much information to cover in a short time, I must make it short, simple and concrete and lecture that to them.</p> <p>Many became schema teachers due to pressures of the visitors from Komsomol and Party and inspectors who check if we teach things according to the party line, if we cover the textbooks and if we have conspectus and if we are depressed properly; the inspectors won't like to hear the noise in my classroom.</p> <p>It does not matter, how I teach. Let's see what the results of my teaching would be by the year's end.</p> <p>Their language and vocabulary are too weak, and I cannot use their mother tongue – I am not allowed... our language does not work beyond the airport.</p> <p>Due to cold we have long winter break, we need to move fast to cover the topics, so I have to tell them the most important points.</p> <p>Teacher is the captain of the ship, he knows the final destination, said a Russian thinker. I pay attention to everything in the classroom. Teacher is the springboard of the lesson. Everything comes to him, moves from him and moves around him.</p> <p>Students' independent problem solving must start early and at home. It is too difficult for them to learn the rules by themselves and during my 40 – 45 minutes, when nowhere else they do the same things. We all in the schools need to do the child-centred thing together, not one by one.</p>	<p>content.</p> <p>Ridicule; point out mistakes right away.</p> <p>Correct language use momentarily; do not allow the mother tongue's use.</p> <p>Tell the students to move out of the classroom, stand still, move to corner.</p> <p>Use row-based classrooms; and whole-class instruction.</p> <p>Lecture, tell.</p> <p>Daily plan and develop a conspectus; ask students to copy it.</p> <p>Ask questions, give feedback.</p> <p>Prefer the mixed-lesson framework.</p> <p>Do not let the students move without permission.</p> <p>Evaluate students at the end of each class.</p> <p>Use moralist poetry and verses from authoritative texts and figures;</p> <p>Do not let them speak in their mother tongues;</p>
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Box 1 illustrates *teacher-centred instruction and the transmission mode*, with an emphasis on teacher domination of the agenda, memorisation, and coercive relationships. The teachers appear as believers in the existence of a direct link

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° Transmission teaching implies a “one way movement wherein the student imbibes certain values, skills and knowledge” (Miller, 1988, p. 4).

° For coercive relations see Cummins (1996).

between their teaching and the students' learning; they are concerned about covering the curriculum and teaching for tests, and from the textbook. According to a teacher, even in this case, it was possible to cover the programme and make students learn:

100% of the students learn the topic...When the topic is small and I have enough time. If I explain it well. Explaining well means to understand it very well by myself, be well prepared, and use simple language. If I use Shugnani in explaining the difficult words and ideas and break the text into parts. *Use teaching aids, get students' attention and say something that is interesting to them, something they could connect with.* (Niyozov, 2001, p. 258, italics added)

Regardless of the fact that the last two sentences complicate the teaching notion provided in the first part, telling and lecturing appear as the major approaches. This is because the teachers and students have got used to telling, and because, [in addition to those in the box], few other deeply-seated cultural and linguistic assumptions in Shugnani, Roshani and Tajik reinforced this approach. This included expressions such as *darsum nawzhid* (I passed on the lesson), and *donishum dakchu* (I gave knowledge, dispensed knowledge); *kudak it arang chakh butsak, molim wid odam kikht* (a child is like a pet, the teacher makes him human), *donishum zukht* (I took knowledge), *ilm yod thedo* (giving one to learn knowledge), *odam chido* (making one a human being) and *ar maaghz vethdo* (inputting into one's mind). The same teacher added:

Students can take knowledge if they are ready for that, have curiosity about the topic, have been looking for information. When it comes, they can take it. In this case, I can say I gave knowledge.... Honestly I never thought about these words. These expressions are given to us...We just use them. (Niyozov, 2001, p. 258)

The teachers seemed to believe that the more alertly the students listened, the less they moved, the more they looked at the teacher, and the better they copied, the better learners they were. The image for a teacher as "Captain of the ship" (from the table above), used by another teacher, most possibly, implies being

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<sup>7</sup> Roshani is Nigin's mother tongue, Shugnani is the closest language to it in Badakshan and also the language of her husband. Tajik is the national language, close to Persian and Dari.

certain of the direction rather than letting the students move away from the “correct” responses in the text, from correct spelling of the words and correct structure of the sentences into imperfect but student-created alternatives.

While it is worth mentioning that the teachers used transmission for achieving both academic and social purposes, it is also important to re-emphasize that these so called teacher-centred practices have a complex nature. For example, warning and telling of bad and good aspects of the society by using living examples from life, and problematizing a topic in the history textbook illustrate not only a departure from “cooked text”, but also shows that transmission should not be seen as monolithic and fixed, but sometimes as imparting critical and balanced thinking, raising students’ consciousness, implanting doubt into their minds, and helping them not to be fooled by the politicians. Further, the teachers during my probing often used to acknowledge that the coercive nature of their teaching and attitudes, their bullying of the students, their endless lecturing, their use of high level academic language, their teaching of unrelated texts could be counterproductive. They saw these practices stemming from the feelings of disempowerment in the face of increasing intensification of their working life:

I become rude and unbending because life and work conditions make me get out of control (Int. 2:38)... *My wife makes me angrier when, she, instead of appreciating my struggle, also curses me: why do you kill yourself for teaching and school, when no one cares about you and your family? I feel she is right. Why should I teach, when no one cares about these students and me?* (Int. 2: 38, emphases are mine)

To illustrate the complexity and to refute the one-sidedness of the teachers’ practices will be helped by Box 2 on the following page, which further shows practices possibly representing the alternative, “transactive and transformative teaching” (Miller, 1988).

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\* Transaction position views education as a dialogue between the students and the curriculum in which students reconstruct knowledge through the dialogue process. Transformational teaching for social change, according to Miller (1988), concentrates on an integrated, holistic transformation of individuals and society. It rests on a humanistic stance for social change. “In this position the student is not just viewed in a cognitive mode, but in terms of his or her aesthetic, moral, physical and spiritual needs” (Miller, 1988, pp. 5- 6).



<b>Box 2</b>	
<b>Sayings</b>	<b>Actions</b>
I wanted them (11th graders ) to conduct the lesson; they lived through the Perestroika and Glasnost, so they know about the time.	Students discuss and provide feedback to her teaching Students dance and sing
Once in two weeks I prepare my good students to teach the whole class.	Pose problems to do independent work; ask students to question each another
I agree that teacher may not know everything and students may know something that we teachers do not know.	Field trips; ask them to work in groups and pairs
Our students travel a lot , meet many people and see a lot of movies, so they have a lot of information.	Assign creative homework.
I want the children to explain the past so as to imagine a future. I expect them to create something new.	Hug the smaller children, when they come to the front
I could have lectured but I know you all have learnt a lot of poetry so I left it to you and you did very well.	Students select activities pole chudes and role play for some of the sessions
Even though I prioritise curriculum, in the classroom I forget about it and am concerned about whether the children have learnt something.	Bring social issues and let the students talk about them
I have used problem solving methods in the Soviet times; We used to call them <i>brigadnyy metod</i> or <i>metodi problema guzori</i> ;	Use brainstorming and puzzles
I am a friend of my students and they share with me more than with their parents.	Invite the silent students to speak up
I am there for my students when they need me.	Let the students ask questions from teacher and suggest what to do about improving teaching
I hope we had the resources of the Soviet times to meet the students' post-Soviet enthusiasm.	Large group work and competition between the groups
	Relate the topics to the students' lives

<sup>9</sup> Taken from industry this method of collective work refers to students working in groups of eight with one heading the group.

<sup>10</sup> Means problem –posing method where teacher largely encourages and helps the students who work on a problem of their choice or a one provided by teachers.

<p>It is better to ask questions than tell them; I want to ask fewer questions and let them think more.</p> <p>We have a saying “from you a try and from me a blessing”.</p> <p>I can prove to the inspector that I am doing right things.</p> <p>I said to hell with the part of speech.. I will begin from where the students were, not what the programme required. I will do everything to help the students speak and read..</p> <p>I use Shugnani and Wakhi<sup>11</sup> from time to time to help the students understand the topics.</p> <p>As I listen to my sons about ‘bad’ teachers, I learn not to be someone students would hate.</p> <p>I sit where my students play and listen to what they say about teachers and that is where I learn about what good teaching is</p> <p>We come to school because our students request us.</p>	<p>Let them read and help each other</p> <p>Ask the students to assess each other.</p> <p>Use the local landscape, old and new textbooks, and conspectus</p> <p>Bring social issues to the classroom.</p>
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From Box 2 one can see, for example, that teachers ask questions and engage their students in a series of activities. They agree with the kind of activities the students suggest such as role play, *pole chudes* and guessing games. The teachers mentioned the theories of Pestalozzi, Rousseau, and Krupskaya, and some of the representatives of Soviet era pedagogy of cooperation, such as Shatalov, Amonashvilli (1987), and their representatives in Tajikistan such as Azimov and other local teachers (Shonavruzov and Haidarsho, 1991). They augmented this with their replications of the humane treatment and more engaged pedagogy, which they had personally experienced as students during their schooling and university years. As such though, occasionally, they did allow their students to move around, recite poetry, dance, sing songs, ask questions, laugh, disagree with each other and the teacher, and make noise. They sat with their students, made jokes, agreed with their views, listened to their comments, and asked

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<sup>11</sup> Two of the seven other local languages spoken in Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan. Wakhi is also spoken in Northern Pakistan and Western China.

questions in their curricular and extra-curricular lessons and topics from *Ethics and Knowledge and Messages of Ethics*<sup>18</sup>.

## **Subject Matter: More than Facts and Inert Ideas**

While the teachers deeply cared about knowing and imparting the truths and facts of the subject being covered and inscribed in the textbook, it was not just an aspect of pedagogical content knowledge (cf., Wilson et al., 1987), confined to the classroom and considered as sets of generalizations, principles and objective facts to be imparted in a detached manner within a particular block of time. The relationship between subject matter and the teachers' work and life turned out to be more complex. First, it defined the teachers' identity and status in the school and the community. Due to his study of Biology, one of the core participants of this study became one of the best farmers in the district. The history teacher's area of expertise was a major reason for her son getting into the History department at the University without *cherez* (nepotism). The Russian teacher occasionally used the subject to defend his community and its spiritual authority<sup>19</sup>. Second, the participants were always addressed as teachers and more often as subject teachers more than by name. Third, their subject matters created the toughest emotional, epistemological, and ethical crises for the teachers; the devaluation of their subject matters resulted in an identity crisis. For the Russian and history teachers, this meant an almost radical reincarnation in a lower status.

Fourth, subject matter provided not only subjective interpretations of reality but also clearly ideological interpretations of it. In Russian and History, many universal facts, concepts, and principles turned out to be ideological and political "truths." As such, subject matters also served as primary indicators of the relevance of the educational system to the realities of the mountain society. They revealed the hidden agendas behind teaching History and Russian. Although times changed, the local languages, the local culture and nature have to still wait to become real parts of the school curriculum. The experience of the biology teacher about students' reaction to *evolution and creation* showed that this

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<sup>18</sup> New subjects introduced in the schools in Badakhshan in post-Soviet times, which focus on social skills, spirituality and humanistic values.

<sup>19</sup> The teacher wrote a number of responses to the adverse papers that came out in Kyrgyzstan about the Aga Khan and Ismailis. In those, he refuted the accusations of the community and its spiritual leader in terrorism, drugs and other socially harmful activities.

ideological quality occurred not only in humanities, but also in the so called “natural” subjects.

The subject matters strongly effected the socialisation of the teachers into both, an understanding of reality and into presenting the “truths” about this reality to their students and community. Particularly, this process led to their indoctrinary presentation of new topics, corrective handling of the students’ responses, and preferential and regurgitation-based assessment of the students. The History teacher’s comments about the changes in History also revealed that very little is learnt from the past lessons of ideological dogmatism in historical scholarship, education policy and textbook production. The Soviet “lies” have been replaced with new “truths”, which differ in scope and details, but not much in nature and purpose. Indoctrination, closed-mindedness, religious dogmatism, and aggressive nationalism appear to continue in the whole region, and will have deep implications for the security and development of the majority of the people of Central Asia.

Lastly, the teachers suggested that teachers should not only master their subject, but should have encyclopedic knowledge; this was useful not only to make-up for the teacher shortage, for making more money, but also for working with the community and parents. In this sense, all the study’s teachers mentioned the need for knowing Tajik literature and traditions. The Russian teacher’s voice could sum this discussion well:

Teaching chemistry helped me to learn things that I never paid attention to while I was a student in school. You know a lot about one's health, body and vitamins. All this is useful at home with my own children. For a teacher it is good to be knowledgeable in more than one subject. It helps the school because if there is no teacher of Chemistry or Geography, I can teach them. *It is also good to know Tajik literature. You can help the students better learn Tajik and also use the literature in the village.* (Int. 2: 31, emphasis added)

## Teaching as Caring and Relationships

In this rural context most of the teachers had a very personal rapport with the students where their students could confide in them their secrets. In some cases, the whole school staff seems to have committed themselves to care about their students.

In our school, students and teachers have no fear to tell each other any thing they want. There is this feeling of being and working together... With our director, we felt that the time has come when we can treat each other and our students as equal human beings. I really like this mutual understanding between the teachers themselves and with the students.

My grade 11 students, for example, are adults, who will soon have independent lives. They openly talk to me about their feelings, consult with me about their life issues. They tell me more than their mothers. We are like friends. I tell them what to do and solve some of their problems. They help me with preparing conferences.

This is how they will like me more and how we respect each other. This is how students stay at school and won't leave. During Perestroika and even Soviet years, some students demonstratively left the classes, and argued with their teachers over small things. (Niyozov, 2001, p. 322)

Another teacher added:

The students are forward coming because I am open. I have never been rude. I believe that each student is a human being. We used to be scared of our teachers' iron discipline during the Soviet times. There were teachers who would beat the students. But there were good teachers too.

When I came to teach I might have slapped smaller students but not the elder ones, because I can imagine how such a slap would hurt my own sense of esteem and personality. I try to be a child with students and *an adult with adults. Talk in their language and about their interests. Make their interest mine. I use Luqmani Hakim's approach*<sup>4</sup> to my teaching. Take the good things from my previous teachers and deplore their bad practices. (Int. 2: 62)

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<sup>4</sup> *Luqman the Wise*, a mythical hero in Muslim tradition, claimed that he became the wisest person on Earth because he learnt from the bad people by deploring every thing they did.

## Teaching as commitment, moral responsibility and integrity

Exhibiting this broader notion of teaching included commitment and moral responsibility, particularly in the face of the debilitating financial and structural conditions of teachers' professional lives, the decline of status and respect. The box provided below provides only a few evidences of the teachers' commitment to teaching.

<b>Box 3: Reasons for Remaining a Teacher</b>	
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Teachers' Statements</b>
Pedagogical & Professional	<p>There is no country without education and there is no education without teaching; We do not want our Badakhshan to go as low as Afghanistan; if I do not teach someone else will do; that person may not be qualified and will mislead the students; Teachers are most honest and least corrupt people. Only teachers can convey ethics and knowledge.</p> <p>It is service to the children, community, the Imam; When I see the children my heart breaks; I love children and they also respect me.</p> <p>Teaching is what I am best at: I have students who teach at University, My students won positions in the Olympiads; I have helped many students grow; I am not ashamed of being a teacher.</p> <p>Students are motivated and they need us; They come and ask us to teach; they offer help with our house chores so that we are freed to come and teach; Teaching is the mother of all other professions.</p> <p>A lesson pulls all of me together. It keeps me grow; In the classroom I forget about the outside challenges.</p> <p>We need to prepare the students for the new University in Badakhshan.</p>
Geographic & Demographical	<p>Where can I go with my family? The good places are so far from here; It is not easy to settle some where else; this is our land. We all speak the same language and belong to the same faith and ethnicity. Here is the mountains one cannot do much farming or businesses: Teaching can be done easier here.</p>
Political	<p>It is not safe to move out. There are conflicts and insecurity all over the former Soviet Union; It is better to live poorly here than be a slave in Russia.</p> <p>I am not politician. Teaching is not politics. But it is about making the students aware about politicians' tricks and corruptions.</p> <p>Teachers have to be peace makers and consensus builders who bring different</p>

	<p>people together rather than divide them; good teachers cannot favor some students over others or some people in the village over others. I did not mind working for the Communist state, because it looked after me, raised my status and gave me good salary; now the Government still uses us for every event, but cares much less about us. We are now indirectly coerced and pressurized; I feel as if we are again pushed to follow one way.</p>
Cultural and Spiritual	<p>We work so that the help of the Imam (the Aga Khan) becomes halal; The Imam said teaching is the noblest profession. If there was no the Imam, I would have never tried to become the best teacher of the district.</p> <p>Poetic expressions used by teachers: “Each day ask yourself if you are man. What service have you done to the people”; “No one has become some one without a teacher..” teacher’s value is higher than of one’s father’s.</p> <p>Leaving the children is unethical: They will find a bad guide who may involve them in drugs and guns. We are the intelligentsia and leaders of the village; people still ask me about every thing.</p>
Economic	<p>I have no money to move and resettle in other areas; I have a few more years left to retire; I can make money, by teaching children after classes: My relatives know I am poor, so they bring me food and clothes so that I do not leave my teaching.</p> <p>Education and health are the only two public fields that work in Badakhshan; Government has been increasing our salaries and also there are many privileges such as free housing, electricity, vacation, and pension for teachers.</p>
Psychological	<p>It keeps me busy, provides me with energy. It is the worst thing to be unemployed. It helps me grow and feel useful.</p> <p>There is hope and there are signs that things will improve; I have tried other jobs, but failed: You have to be able to say no to work as commersant; I cook and wonder what am I going to teach in the next History lesson in grade 5.</p> <p>Teachers die soon after they retire, because thy cannot get bear the separation with children, school and teaching; Every one looks at teacher and if we give in that would be too bad.</p>
Personal	<p>Am not I ultimately I teaching my and my relatives’ children? I have become a better parent by teaching my own children; I cannot imagine myself except as a teacher. It is an honour to be an educated woman in the village.</p> <p>Teachers are ideal human beings, they are source of culture and spirituality, pillars and moral guards of the society; I find it hard to look at the faces of those whom I taught not give in and have given in myself.</p>

The box is a testimony to the layers of commitment to remain in teaching. The following core participant's voice is another compelling addition to reveal how commitment and responsibility are interconnected to the teacher's identity.

I don't have to teach. Materially this teaching does not give me even 5% of what I would do at home in my farm, by collecting wood for winter, looking after my cattle, or just taking rest at home. But I prepare myself and come to teach the children despite of this, I care for them and for my community. They do not understand this, and this makes me very angry, so angry that I cannot sometimes control myself and leash my anger on the students.

Another teacher added

Teachers are a source of spirituality, culture, education and the future of the society. We work so that the children live better than we do and our community does not fall back to the level of Afghanistan. In 70 years we have moved so much ahead and we do not want our people to become ignorant again. Both the prosperity of the society and its backwardness are our concerns. (Niyozov, 2001, p. 244)

## Teaching as Relevance

While teachers were aware of the problems with curriculum relevance, its failure to provide real, relevant, and meaningful learning, they also did not judge the existing curriculum as fully irrelevant. A history teacher, examining the relevance of the Soviet approach to history, suggested that the post-Soviet researchers and policy makers consider the lessons from that period:

During Soviet times History of Tajikistan was a small section, something like two to four hours within the History of the USSR. In fact, we studied the History of Russia from the primitive time until the present. *Soviet we said, but Russia's history we taught.* Even at VUZs<sup>15</sup> there was not enough attention paid to teaching the History of Tajikistan. I learnt this topic [Kushan state, a new topic in Tajik history, which she had to teach] in a hurry, 25 years

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<sup>15</sup> VUZ is a Russian acronym that stands for higher educational institution.



ago, but never taught this topic in school. In selecting the topics from Tajik history more attention was paid to the history of Tajikistan in the Soviet period. *It was acceptable, because we were united within the Soviet Union.* But it was not right to ignore our own history, the history of a whole nation, even at that time. The Soviet system was based upon commands and “you must do it” and everything was decided centrally at the USSR level. The history curriculum was always published in the journal: *Teaching History in Schools* and we merely copied and translated it. I think our Tajik scholars and researchers did not do a good job. Tajik scholars have always relied upon the Russians. They did not do anything significant by themselves<sup>16</sup>. They were not particularly strong as far as the interests and concerns of their nation were concerned.

The same teacher added:

We learnt about USA, Russia and the Roman Empire, which were too far and too old. But we knew nearly nothing about our neighbour Afghanistan. Ultimately, we came to teach our Tajik history. But, because our scholars did not care, we have so many problems with teaching it now. *Maybe they were not allowed to do this.* The current programmes are being developed in Dushanbe and sent down to us. There should be someone in charge of looking at the school programmes here in the provincial education board. Many important themes, such as our many problems, the origins of which go deep down in history, need to be there. Students won't read and pay attention to these things on their own, even if there were books available. The local education board and some good teachers could develop a programme that includes topics from our history. I would include the view of mountains, the traditions of the people of Badakhshan, the needs of Badakhshan and the problems we face today. We have several small peoples and languages here in Badakhshan, which have little

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<sup>16</sup> Many scholars, particularly historians, would disagree with the teacher's comments, because some of the most important histories of the Tajik people were published exactly in Soviet times (e.g., Ghafurov, 1972; Masov, 1996; Ne'matov, 1989). What this particular participant might be right about is that whether there were books or not, the subject was denigrated in the school and university curricula.

respect for and understanding of each other. *We need to know about ourselves before knowing others.* Why are there so many languages here? There are debates about the meaning of the words Badakhshan and Pamirs and we do not know enough about them. I would talk about our economic and political life. *Why are we despite our high level of education so poor? Why did we follow blindly our populist leaders in 1992?* This helps us to have a better life here. I have nothing against the Soghdians and the Bactrians<sup>17</sup>, but I want to know about ourselves first and how are we connected to them. The peoples of this place are registered in the Red Book<sup>18</sup>. Many people do not even know about how our people are divided between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

We should start the history of Tajik people from the history of Badakhshan. We should have a special topic on famous Pamiri figures and their contribution to Tajik history. Everyone talks about Shotemur as one of the founders of current Tajikistan. He is from this village. This school carries his name. In the programme of Grade 9 and 11 Shotemur is very briefly mentioned as one of those who founded the revolutionary government in Tajikistan. We in the school conduct extra-curricular activities to teach more about him, take the children to the spring of Nosir Khusraw<sup>19</sup>, bring in a veteran of the war and work, or a local scholar. We arrange a visit to Shotemur Museum here and to the Ethnographic Museum in Khorog. On our own efforts, time, energy and expenses. No one pays us for these. No one thanks us. But we have been doing this since Soviet times and we believe it is important for the children's learning.

I am going to raise these questions at the provincial professional development courses. I blame our provincial Education Board. Why do the responsible people there not inform the Ministry of Education about this? *Is it not their job to care about our joint history?* (Int. 1: 102-103, emphasis mine)

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<sup>17</sup> Soghdians and Bactrians: peoples of the area in the days of classical era Persian Empire. Soghdians and Bactrians are seen as predecessors of the current Tajiks.

<sup>18</sup> Red Book, in the Former Soviet Union, was a book that contained the names of endangered species.

<sup>19</sup> Nasir Khusraw an 11th century Ismaili preacher, also revered as one of the great Tajik-Persian poets and philosophers (for more see Hunsberger 2001).

The focus group participants added that in addition to historical and literature content, school programmes should include the discussion and resolution of social issues such as drugs, guns, corruption, decline of ethics, spread of disease, in-street fighting between various groups in the villages and the city of Khorog. A biology teacher added to the issue of relevance as follows:

For our areas biology is one of the most useful subjects, more than English and History. Due to biology, I have become one of the best peasants in the district. I can take care of the health of my family members. I know what kind of food is best for them and try to find that food. Many people, even the agronomists, ask my advice for farming. If children learn biology well, they do not need to pay doctors and agronomists for each [a bit of] advice. They can also teach their parents about farming.

Relevance, however, was not just a content question. It also involved the pedagogical issue of linking a topic to students' experience, going according to their pace and starting from where they were. A Russian teacher, facing this dilemma of authentic teaching in the Soviet times, decided to go with his students' learning pace and interest:

I left the programme. I said to hell with the "Parts of speech." I will do everything to enable these students to read and write first, if not to speak. As they start reading and writing we can move to grammar. I knew that I was violating the directives. In the journal I would write that I am covering grammar but in reality I was doing the reading intensively. (Int. 2: 32)

## **Teaching as Vision, Goals, and Context**

Reflective of their multiple roles, and worried about the dramatic post-Soviet changes, the participants in this study emerged as active, concerned citizens whose zone of praxis went far beyond the classroom doors and school walls. For many of them the major concern was "where the society is heading, no one seems to care about the poor and neighbour, there is no accountability, no rules, every one is grabbing the rich, promoting their own relatives, the future is bleak". A teacher mentioned this as follows:

Unlike some teachers, I cannot sleep comfortably when I do not tell the students and parents about the wrong-doings around. The children hear in the street about how modesty, humility,

generosity, and knowledge do not work. I am very worried about where our society is going. Once I talked about Tajikistan being socialist; now we criticise that past. Once we talked against religion, capitalism, and private ownership; now we are in favour of all of them. Once I said Uzbeks were our brothers; now people talk of them as occupiers of Samarqand and Bokhara. If I talk today about Russians as brothers and friends, the youth of the village and my students do not like it<sup>20</sup>. I do not want to be a liar again, because of someone else's mistakes. How can I talk about Samarqand and Bokhara so as to avoid a conflict between Tajiks and Uzbeks?<sup>21</sup> How can I state that we have a law-abiding, democratic and secular society, when there is drugs, guns, corruption and nepotism? When a third one tried to force us to pray? (Niyozov 2001, p. 242)

The teachers envisaged and worked for a society that was to be based on cooperation, sharing, and caring for each other and the poor. They voted for what was called a humanist, egalitarian and international society. The following remark is a clear testimony for this vision:

I should be pushing a humanistic ideology. You noticed how many nationalities and ethnicities we have got here in Murghab [a site of the study]. Murghab is not Darvaz or Shugnan<sup>22</sup> where one ethnicity lives. We should make it a tradition to celebrate the days of each ethnicity here. One day for Wakhan, the other for Roshan and so on. Another day we should have a Kyrgyz cultural event. I should promote education that teaches respect, justice and internationalism. By internationalism I mean the equality of

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<sup>20</sup> This view is based on the clashes between the Russian military and the youth of the village. While the military justifies its positions and posts by curbing the cross-border trafficking, the youth blame them for unsubstantiated harassment, restricting freedom and killings. For example, many of the villagers, not only the youth, alleged that Russian border guards were involved in the death of the four young men from the village during my field work.

<sup>21</sup> I know of no policy that encourages teachers to instigate conflict between Tajiks and Uzbeks. Indeed Tajik constitution and criminal law ban any comments that may promote racism or interethnic hate. The respondent's concerns rather arise from popular media viewpoints particularly as expressed at the time of the Samanid celebrations.

<sup>22</sup> Two of the six other districts of Badakhshan, with Murghab constituting another one.

people despite their geographical locations, languages, races, and religions. I like when there is pluralism of thinking, instead of having an ideology of a party or a clan.

As the teachers worked for a Tajikistan that was free from drugs, guns and corruption, they connected this spread to the market economy and the bureaucracy's inability and incompetence. In critiquing and fighting corruption, guns, and drugs, teachers joined their school's fight for each child, where they jointly talked with parents, and used the living examples of those who ended up badly with drugs and guns. They avoided drugs and guns themselves assuming that students would follow them if they were to become bad role models; they used the sayings of the Aga Khan<sup>28</sup>, who suggested that the ethics of faith has no room for socially harmful activities and who in his 1995 visit to Tajikistan emphasised that the continuance and even tolerance of such activities as drug dealing would only hurt Tajikistan's chances of development in a world increasingly tending to becoming meritocratic (cf. Aga Khan IV, Roshan, Tajikistan, May, 1995)<sup>29</sup>. Another teacher expressed her disgust for nepotism and corruption, which have become hallmarks of Tajik society:

Imagine a poor child prepares himself all life, works day and night. Then someone else who had enjoyed all life and did not work hard gets to the university by giving a bribe or using a connection. I have developed hatred for those who do all this. I feel humiliated and slapped in face. I just wonder how patient people we are. I know which of my students is capable of what. When you see your good student has failed you curse the Earth

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<sup>28</sup> The spiritual leader of the Ismaili community. For more on the Aga Khan see [www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk), and [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org).

<sup>29</sup> The major source of this information is the Aga Khan's farmans in Badakhshan. Farmans are major private instruments of the Aga Khan for guiding the Ismailis. They are defined by the 1986 Ismaili Constitution as any "pronouncement, direction, order or ruling given by the Imam [the Aga Khan]" (Aga Khan, 1987, p. 7, quoted in Keshavjee, 1998, p. 47). Farmans can pertain to both the secular and religious concerns of Ismailis. According to the current 1986 Ismaili Constitution, "[b]y virtue of his office and in accordance with the faith and belief of the Ismaili Muslims, the Imam enjoys full authority of governance over and in respect of all religious and Jamati matters of the Ismaili Muslims" (Aga Khan 1987, p. 5). I witnessed several of the farmans as a member of the audience and on some occasions acted as the official translator of the farmans from English to Tajik. Given the sensitivity, and private nature of the famans, I avoided their direct quotation, allowing myself to mention the content of some of the directly relevant famans in this cross-case analysis.

and the sky. I pray that the Imam saves us from this at the new university.

The teachers' societal vision embodied a synthesis of the achievements of the various forces and ideological frameworks, which currently existed in Badakhshan. In doing so, they challenged the "happiness" of many in the West and East about the collapse of the USSR<sup>28</sup>, suggesting that the collapse of the communist ideology did not mean an automatic success of the anti-totalitarian or other authoritarian frameworks; neither has it meant that life will get better or that the society will be freer and democratic. As the teachers compared the Soviet certainty and relative security with the post-Soviet chaos and conflicts, as they related the Soviet access, employment and mobility opportunities with the pre-Soviet and post-Soviet obstacles and nepotization of jobs and opportunities and, as they related the history of their linguistic and religious minority's sufferings in the pre and post-Soviet times with its relative prosperity in the Soviet era, they suggested that not everything was that bad in the former Soviet Union and that most of the critiques of Soviet and post-Soviet promises embedded in the religious and nationalist discourses, have been nothing more than the agenda of selfish, greedy, jealous and upset politicians. They feared that the post-Soviet society might lose its achievements and bring the negative features of the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet worlds to the vulnerable young Tajik society.

## **Multiplicity and Multilevel Goals and Objectives**

Similar to the broad societal vision described above, their teaching too appeared as a multi-purported endeavour<sup>29</sup>, varied according to the hierarchy and domain,

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<sup>28</sup> In a US political TV show in 2000, the collapse of the USSR was considered the most important event of the 20th century. Those who try to voice the insiders' views have increasingly challenged this western-oriented viewpoint. Without supporting oppressive and totalitarian structures, these voices suggest that the implications of the collapse of the USSR have been more complex politically, economically and socially. They also warn against seeing the Soviet system in entirely negative terms (Ignatieff, 1993; Keshavjee, 1998; Niyozov, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> The notion of teaching as an inevitably intentional act is not new. Pearson (1989, pp. 63-85), for example, approaches the question philosophically, as part of his debate with Green (1971) and Fenstermacher (1986), to endorse that teaching and learning are related. Like my study, he suggests that intentionality: "...is rather a part of what we mean by teaching... It is the principal criterion that we use to identify actions as teaching actions." He suggests the notion of intentionality as the possession of goals and purposes on the part of the teacher:

students' age and the subject matter. Box 4 illustrates the types and levels of objectives the teachers expressed. I have classified them into three broad types: academic, social and logistical.

<b>Box 4: Types and levels of the participants' goals of teaching</b>		
<b>Academic objectives</b>		
<i>Broad goals</i>	<i>Pertinent subjects</i>	<i>Pertinent topics</i>
<p>Make all the children learn and be hardworking physically and academically.</p> <p>Get a good profession and feed their families.</p> <p>Make the students able to debate as equals with the increasing number of foreigners.</p> <p>Replace corrupt leaders and politicians.</p> <p>Think and analyse, distinguish good from bad for them and their community.</p> <p>Create something new in their life.</p> <p>Become students of the national and upcoming international Universities in Tajikistan and Central Asia.</p> <p>Want the children to speak good Tajik; enlarge the child's mind and vision to see beyond their mountains.</p> <p>Make the children understand what is happening around.</p> <p>Do not join gangs and do not listen to populists.</p>	<p>Be able to speak Russian freely without help.</p> <p>Appreciate Russian culture.</p> <p>Create basis for learning English.</p> <p>Learn how countries were governed and why they collapsed.</p> <p>Not repeat the mistakes of the past.</p> <p>Be aware of the politicians.</p> <p>Know the importance of unity and consensus, memorise the national anthem.</p> <p>Learn and use biology for their life needs.</p>	<p>Teach dates of events and names of people.</p> <p>Explain the reasons of the fall of the Kushans.</p> <p>Tell the causes and outcomes of Perestroika.</p> <p>Sort out verbs from other parts of speech.</p> <p>Know the names of fruits and vegetables in Tajik and Russian.</p> <p>Know theory of evolution and believe in it.</p>

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“When someone is teaching, he or she has the purpose, goal or intention of getting some one to learn something.”

<b>Social objectives</b>
<p>In the child every thing must be fine: the face, the body, the mind and the soul; Avoid bad habits such as alcohol, drugs and guns.</p> <p>Become ethical human beings who care not only about themselves but also the society; develop love for the motherland, the President, and the Imam; Listen to the Imam's and other elderly's words; Help and share with those who are needy; Good teaching is about helping the weak ones; "If you can help the weak one you are a man, if you can contain your desires you are a man" [from local poverty].</p> <p>Develop a sense of pride in the community's and village's contribution to the development of Tajikistan and to the victory in WWII.</p> <p>Foster friendship with Kyrgyz, other Pamiris and other Tajiks.</p> <p>Celebrate multicultural characteristics of the people of Murghab; be internationalists and humanists.</p> <p>Understand the various aspects of one's self and one's identity; Respect not only adults, but also the classmates and siblings.</p> <p>Be peaceful, avoid drugs and guns; Help parents at homes.</p>
<b>Logistical/organisational objectives</b>
<p>Attend the school, be clean and punctual; Listen to teachers and obey what we say; Do not forget the pencils and pen; have notebooks.</p> <p>Don't throw seeds of sunflower on the classroom floor; Bring their peers to the school; Clean the classroom; Help with heating the classroom, supplying chalk, bringing wood.</p>

The classification into academic, social objectives and organizational objectives<sup>27</sup>, as displayed in Box 4, was not however the end of the objectives question. There were objectives for each lesson and even for each of their students. They had tacit plans about where to take each student and how much the students could be stretched in academic and social terms. Some of the teachers' utterances indicated this:

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<sup>27</sup> Muckle (1990), Tabachnik et al. (1981) suggested that in the Soviet school the moral and ethical aims of education were taken seriously, were not as an optional extra, divorced from academic aims, and were also infused in every aspect of schooling, such as youth movements, labour education and extra-curricular activities. Popkewitz (1982) pointed out that the aim of upbringing was to produce an active stance for living, which expressed the communist worldview and moral code. These codes suggested that individuals put the societal interests above personal.



The above accounts reveal another layer of complexity, multiplicity, hierarchy, evolving and sometimes contradictory societal and education goals, visions and commitments. The teachers verbally considered the social and moral goals more important and harder to achieve than the academic ones. This was exhibited in the local proverbs such as “*Olim shudan oson wa odam shudan mushkil*” (it is easy to become a learned person and much harder to become a human being). They considered that the development of the students’ social qualities occurred more through modelling in the classroom and the community. They wondered about the ineffectiveness of the newly-introduced courses on ethics, morality, conflict resolution and peace making, as illustrated by a teacher’s comment:

The more we teach ethics the less ethical we are becoming; street has stronger influence on the students; mafia and drug dealers impress them with cars, good clothes and money; with dollars in hand you can buy any kind of education and position. The students look at our poor clothes and tired faces and do not want to follow us. The rich of the community avoid teachers as moralist people. We find ourselves moonlighting to those who were not our good students and who have become the rich commersants. Some of the mafia members give the school more money than any one else.

Despite this, the teachers could not follow what they called “unethical” ways of living. A teacher said: If we go for drugs the students will follow us. Another teacher added:

I am afraid that the students may ask me one day whether I have prepared them for this world or the other one? I do not know about market economy a lot. What can I see is that there is no regulation. To become rich everyone does what he wants. There is no accountability. *But I cannot tell these students to cheat, steal, kill or sell drugs.* The values that I talk about never die and never get old. I hope we are going to have a country where there is law and which is also blessed by *Mawlo*<sup>2</sup>. The key to this is preparing people with ethics and knowledge. That is what the Imam tells us now and that is what the Communists told us before. The issue is to put all this into practice. Not just talk about them. It will take

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<sup>2</sup> A term refers to the Imams in the Ismaili interpretation of Islam (e.g., Imam Aly, the Aga Khan).

time when the number of these people becomes larger than those corrupted. I believe that good is going to win. The current victory of bad is temporary. Victory may not come in one form only. We may not win materially and physically, but we can do so morally. We can cause a deep psychological blow to the bad, make it feel ashamed and put down. (Int. 2: 62, emphasis mine)

The teachers were convinced that their working without salary for years, their bringing in guest speakers, local famous people, or veterans, their not drinking alcohol and acknowledging to the students that smoking and drugs were harmful, their rejection of doing drugs, their use of the words and actions of the Imam, the local poetry, were still the only way to go forward. Yet while they fostered respect for hard work, honesty, bread, bravery and love for one's motherland, their classrooms still mostly remained about covering curriculum and textbook, a task which often made them become authoritarian, teacher-and-textbook centered and coercive in their relationships. Various writers have cited examination practices, coverage of curricula, and cultural practices as reasons for the contrast between the rhetorical emphasis on developing social traits and the practical promotion of rote learning (Guthrie, 1990; Kizilbash, 1986; Niyozov, 1995; Tabulawa, 1997). The mountainous and post-Soviet realities, in which the academic year was reduced to six months, coupled with the demands of disciplining, organising and grading, created a new panic situation: there was even less time available to achieve the academic objectives. Further, the teachers also accepted that within the current conditions of work, the spread of various types of video movies<sup>=</sup> and corrupt practices, their educational goals and by extension, educational visions, were too hard to achieve.

The teachers also realized that since the 1980s, when corruption became the major quality of the Soviet system (De Young & Suzhikova, 1997; Simis, 1982) the parents' purpose in sending their children to school had become more of getting a graduate certificate. This led the teachers to lower their expectations: "If we demand too much the child may do something harmful to his life; I will

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<sup>=</sup> All the participants considered that various kinds of movies – Indian, American and Latin American melodramas, violent, erotic and action movies – have damaged the children's morality, motivation and work skills. Regardless of poverty, the number of videos and cassettes in each village was considerable. The teachers often referred to video as a negative force in their classes. Video has altered even the nature of the gatherings in people's houses. Nowadays there is much less conversation, much less recitation of spiritual songs, and much more watching of movies.

give them a 4 and a 5 for simply attending the school; Both teaching and studying has become women's business; There is little hope that one gets to University without a connection", were some of these desperation's signs.

Through the years of transition, the scope and complication of the nature of the teachers' objectives obviously enlarged. Facing the various ideologies and forces, the teachers found it hard to negotiate between what to value and whose side to take, or, more important, how to develop objectives that drew from the best of all these ideologies<sup>30</sup>. The history teacher of public schools had to follow the nationally-prescribed curriculum, which demanded that she promote Tajik nationalism, partly as a response to the similar nationalist revival in the neighboring states. She appreciated her Tajik ethnicity, her country's leadership's concerns, her Ismaili identity and the Imam; yet she found the intrusion of religion and too much of nationalism, and the reinterpretation of the Basmachis (Islamic guerrillas in the 1920s) as freedom fighters as depressing, if not unacceptable. Personally, she continued to favour Socialism, which had now disappeared. The biology teacher's challenge was more difficult: His personal belief in Darwin's theory of evolution and Engels' philosophy of nature went against some of the Islamic mullahs' and the local Mujahedin who had strong influence on the content of the curricula in this particular area. They warned the teachers in this district against promoting an atheistic and anti-Islamic agenda<sup>31</sup>.

The teachers in this site absorbed their notions of ethics and knowledge into the outgoing Soviet categories of upbringing and academic education. Although explicit ideological claims of these concepts have altered from the development of a communist personality to the development of a democratic, secular Tajik or a good Muslim, at least at the level of rhetoric. Hence, a good human being simultaneously showed the same character, values, and ethics as a good Muslim, communist or democrat. Some schools displayed the pictures and sayings of Lenin, Marx, the president, and the Imam side by side, to show the continuity of the values of education, hard work, honesty, justice and other egalitarian ideas. A teacher observed that, as theories, Socialism, Democracy and Islam were great

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<sup>30</sup> Lisovkaya & Karpov (1999) analysing Russian social science textbooks foresaw a similar challenge for the Russian school teachers.

<sup>31</sup> A few years earlier, during the fierce opposition between the Islamic opposition and the secularist Government, a number of teachers of a technical college were beaten and some were killed in a district in eastern Tajikistan by the Islamist guerrillas for alleged collaboration with the Government, for teaching subjects not approved by them and for allowing women and female students to mix with the male teachers and students.

and kind. But at the level of practice, the teachers were wary and cautious at best in their ideological expression. The teachers obviously ignored the ontological and philosophical differences between the various ideologies, merging various frameworks to serve their educational and societal visions and goals. Finding similarities was more important than searching for differences.

The teachers' goals contradicted not only inside the school domains, but also often contradicted those of the community's, particularly this rural one. This has historical roots. Across the history of Russia, the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet period, the school and teacher have always been assigned the role of modernizing and changing rural or marginal people's traditional beliefs, mentality and practices and "civilising" or rationalizing their rural and traditional societies. Schools, in fact, took over the role of the church and mosques in moralising communities (Ekloff, 1993). There is extensive literature discussing the potential of schools and teachers as change agents (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1998; Churchill, 1994; Watson, 1983). The communist state, holding a similar mandate for change, saw schools as part of its ideological state apparatus for reconstructing society (Ekloff, 1993; Webber, 2000). Apple (1982) maintained that states used schools not only for changing communities but also for changing them in ways that perpetuated the new social orders.

The teachers' promotion of universal "good" values also stemmed from the moral nature of their educational and societal visions (Fullan, 1995). Like their visions, the teachers' noble intentions essentially form their response to the confusing, chaotic and unjust environment and practices.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

Such broad, rich, complex, dilemmatic, unfixed, and non-dichotomous constitution of teaching is a result of the interaction of multiple forces that operate at both global and local levels to create both despair and hope, limits and possibilities at the same time (Britzman, 1991), making teaching a process of negotiation (Niyozov, 2001) and process of contestation (Giroux, 1988; Lisovskaya & Karpov, 1999).

This kind of descriptions, however, is rare. The majority of studies find it easier to depict teaching in a simplified and one-sided manner, often in deficient and hopeless ways – a wholly teacher-centred, authoritarian, coercive, transmissive, technicist teaching across the globe. A few quotations would suffice to substantiate this. Kerr (1990), for example, extends the case of Tajik teachers in this chapter across the whole of former USSR:

Instruction from the first grade on was characterised by fairly rigid pattern of rote mastery of text, oral recitation by students, and teacher dominance of classroom activity...the typical Soviet school was often a dreary place: a decrepit building with few textbooks, out-dated equipment, alienated students, bored teachers<sup>22</sup> and authoritarian administration. Students graduated with little understanding of the concepts or principles they had studied, or with narrow, outdated occupational training that was often useless in practice. (Kerr, 1990, p. 27)

Post-Soviet surveys portray this image in Central Asia, former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

On the examples of Botswana, Tabulawa (1994) and Guthrie (1990) concluded that the teachers were utterly formalistic and transmission-oriented. The authors end up either supporting very slow change or even defending the formalist model of teaching. Tabulawa's cautious approach is more plausible; it is hard to agree with Guthrie's defence of transmission mode. Avalos (1990) takes it to the developing countries in general:

Teachers occupy a central role in the conduct of teaching. Most classroom activities are directed to the whole class, with the teacher appearing as a "benevolent dictator." The teacher solicits, requests, or orders responses from pupils who in turn must render such services. The children's personal experiences is seldom used as a learning input. The provision of feedback to pupils' responses is often arbitrarily decided by teachers who might "ignore" a child's response or treat a child's error as personal insult...teaching of norms and rules overshadows other teaching activities (p.212)... even though a great number of questions are asked, most of them are either recall or simple direct questions mostly initiated by teachers. (Avalos, 1990, p. 211, see also Dalin & Val Rust, 1990)

Although in a different extent, this general classroom teaching and learning situation appears not only to exist, but also to dominate classroom practices even in the Western industrialized countries (Goodlad, 1984). Sirotnik describes what a typical American secondary classroom reflects:

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<sup>22</sup> However, no one could call the study's core teachers bored (or boring) teachers.

A lot of teacher talk and a lot of student listening...almost invariably closed and factual questions...and predominantly total classroom instructional configurations around traditional activities-all in a virtually affectless environment. It is but a short inferential leap to suggest that we are implicitly teaching dependence on authority, linear thinking, social apathy, passive involvement, and hands-off learning. (Sirotnik, 1983, p. 29, quoted in Cummins, 1996, p. 16)

With due respect for the studies and their authors, my study and experiences force me to raise some deep questions about their research approach, theoretical frameworks and motivations and intentions behind these portrayals. It looks to me as if some of the above studies have methodological flaws; some try to verify hypotheses, a point or an argument; others impose particular theories upon teaching. As a result, all these often reduce, sanitize, and crystallize the data and limit the analysis, portraying what they want rather than what the reality might be.

My study shows that reality is more complex and richer than our subjective or objective portrayals of it. The evidence here tends to agree with Fuller et al. (1991) and Farrell (1994) that teachers in developing countries move between the transmission and transaction modes of teaching and occasionally indicate a transformative position<sup>28</sup>. In fact, in a paradoxical manner, the teachers infused the teacher-directed and transmission structures and strategies with interactive and transformative content and vice versa (Osborne, 1991). In other words, they tried to reshape the existing structures to serve their worldviews, demolithizing teacher and student-centred practices. More than that, all this indicates that teachers may have the unrealized potential to become transactional and even transformational teachers for social change (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Miller, 1988), and could promote culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), if the active learning potentials of their professional lives were given endorsement.

Studies that show the complexity of teaching where there is multiplicity of complementary and competing goals, methods, contents, discourses, feelings,

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<sup>28</sup> Transformational teaching for social change, according to Miller (1988) concentrates on an integrated, holistic transformation of individuals and society. It rests on a humanistic stance for social change. "In this position the student is not just viewed in a cognitive mode, but in terms of his or her aesthetic, moral, physical and spiritual needs" (Miller, 1988, p. 6).

relationships, contexts, visions and commitments that exist side by side, are less in number but increasing, as researchers are spending more time observing real classrooms and probing deeper and more critically into the teachers explanations, voices, beliefs, assumptions, emotions about their practices, and as they are also connecting these to the local and global forces more extensively (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996). Schweisfurth (2004) in her comparative description of teaching in Russia and South Africa, Zajda (2003), Lisovskaya and Karpov, (1999) in their analysis of Post-communist Russian textbooks, De Young and Suzhikova (1997), in their studies of teaching in Kyrgyzstan, Alexander (2001) in his meticulous description and analysis of teaching in five countries, Chan (in press) in her exploration of culture and curriculum in Canada and others (cf, Berlak and Berlak, 1981; Britzman 1991; Lampert, 1984; Nias, 1989) reveal these complex realities where teaching emerges dilemmatic, non-linear, unpredictable, contradictory. Britzman (1991) captures this kind of teaching aptly:

The image of teaching advocated here is dialogic: Teaching must be situated in relationship to one's biography, present circumstances, deep commitments, affective investments, social contexts and conflicting discourses... Teaching is social progress of negotiation rather than an individual problem of behaviour. This dynamic is essential to any humanising explanation of the work of teachers. Teaching concerns coming to terms with one's intentions and values, as well as one's views of knowing, being, acting and in a setting characterised with contradictory realities, negotiation, and dependency and struggle. (Britzman, 1991, p. 8)

Such descriptions are more plausible and realistic; they show teaching as life, as lived practice rather than as a detached, objectified, and packaged activity delivered to a number of people in a detached place. This complex notion of teaching provides not only depressing portrayals but also hopeful moments and potentials for better teaching. We should not be afraid of the contradictions and complexities but welcome them; they reveal what Thiessen (1993) suggested, that some excellence exists in the teachers' existing practices, that teachers try to negotiate and navigate between the various forces and their own conceptions, and they innovate and improve on the basis of their daily practices and that quality teaching will emerge in working with empowered teachers.

All the above implies that in order to improve quality of teaching, which is one of the major themes of this conference, we need to understand what teaching itself is, as broadly and as deeply as possible. This critical-ethnographic and life-

history field work-based-chapter denounces the narrow notion of teaching and proposes that we see teaching as not just effective technical and instructional practice limited to classrooms (although these are important), but also in terms of vision, worldview, goals, ethics, relationship, learning, contexts, spirituality, politics, and power relations. Any fragmentation of teaching, therefore, results in alienation and identity crisis; in deprivation of teachers from potential and power. Instilling in them a narrow and simple meaning of teaching is a blueprint for failing them as teachers and committed human beings.

Based on this, improvement of the quality of teaching requires improvement of all these features through their internal, external and comparative examination at individual, group, and collective levels, in a constructive manner and against agreed upon criteria. These criteria could include efficiency, equity, justice, ethics, and professionalism. This study by its mode of conduct suggests that teachers' educational and societal voices, practices, beliefs, values, and emotions, need not only be actively and patiently elicited and empathized with; they must also be deeply probed and critically engaged with in terms of their ethics, justice, fairness, professionalism, and in terms of their implications for the students, teachers, schools and society and global world. Similar examinations could be done of all developed and unthought of forms of teacher development and research. More sustainably, such examination must become an internalized principle by the teachers themselves as life-long learners and seekers of critique. This certainly requires a learning and democratic culture, the seeds of which should be identified within the local cultures and connected to the global democratic forces and principles (Apple & Gundin, 2004).

Teacher education should be about preparing teachers for this difficult notion of teaching so that prospective and inservice teachers are not only better prepared for a more complex and challenging task, but are also prepared to identify possibilities in their own and their colleagues' daily practices to face the daily problems and challenges. Rudaki a well known Tajik poet of 10th century is an example to begin with:

*Those who can not learn from the daily events,  
Will never learn a thing from any teacher*

Researchers' contributions to better quality teaching, learning, and teacher education, therefore, could be achieved by moving away from proving and verifying hypothesis and argument-based approaches to more open, engaging, probing explorations, which result in richer portrayals of teaching and teachers. This kind of research is more intensive, sometimes disturbing, but is in itself a teacher development process. Further, it is these rich, complex and contradictory



portrayals that are more life like, if we accept teaching as living practice. They illustrate opportunities, pragmatism, creativity, possibilities, seeds of hope, renewal and change that cross the politicized discourses of west vs. east, religious vs. secular, tradition vs. modernity, home vs. work and teaching vs. learning, and which allow for redrawing the lines of struggle along ethics and values based on justice, equity, humane and global vision of future.

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# Women in Educational Leadership: A Comparison of Kenyan and Pakistani Women Educational Leaders

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## Abstract

*Though literature on educational leadership is expansive, most of it is related to the social and organisational structure of educational systems in the western world, thereby giving an impression that western models of leadership are universal. Hence, there is need to study school leadership in non-western countries because perspectives of educational leadership have been taken almost exclusively from western literature and practice.*

*Women in educational leadership are in a minority in Pakistan and Kenya, as is the case in many parts of the world. Whilst a number of writers have attempted to identify and categorise some of the internal and external barriers to the progress of women's careers in educational leadership, little discourse has occurred in both Pakistan and Kenya concerning how women experience leadership and even less about the role of gender in educational leadership. This paper, therefore, sets out to share findings of two studies on Pakistani and Kenyan women in educational leadership. It presents the similarities and differences between the women educational leaders' experiences from a gender perspective, in the two countries and discusses the implication of the findings in the provision of education, especially in light of the Education for All (EFA) targets of both Kenya and Pakistan.*

*The Pakistan study was a narrative inquiry based on several individual interviews with 4 the research participants and sought. A narrative approach was felt best suited to find out how the women have experienced and continue to experience gender in their positions of leadership. The Kenyan study, which is still currently going on, has employed the use of a life history approach as well as some ethnographic methods such as observations and document analysis. It has engaged 12 participants, though this paper presents findings from the first phase of the study which looked at how the personal and professional experiences of 6 women leaders have impacted on their leadership practices. For purposes of this paper, gender has been used as the dominating factor of analysis to frame the women's stories.*

## **Introduction**

Women in educational leadership are a minority in Pakistan and Kenya and in many other parts of the world as well. However, unlike many countries where women dominate the teaching profession and hence their absence at the management level is questionable, women teachers in Pakistan and Kenya make up only 31% and 40% respectively of the teaching force of the two countries (MOEST, 2004).

This low participation of women in teaching is due to the fact that female access to education is at a lower level than that of the males (Warwick & Reimers, 1995). Several reasons have been cited for the absence of girls and women in education, and these include poverty, cultural traditions and insecurity.

In both Kenya and Pakistan, the ‘silence’ on the issue of gender difference at the school leadership level, does not necessarily reflect their absence. Indeed, the very fact that teaching is a male dominated profession implies the absence of women in leadership positions in education. There has been an attempt on the part of both Pakistani and Kenyan governments to put up a career structure in order for teachers to enter managerial positions.

However, appointment to such levels is often largely dependent on the whims of influential persons in the higher echelons of the education ministry. As a result, few women are able to rise to the top of the profession. Men dominate and continue to dominate the decision making roles within the hierarchy.

Even though, a number of writers have attempted to identify and categorise some of the internal and external barriers to the progress of women’s careers in educational leadership (for example, Brown and Ralph, 1996; Hall, 1996; Coleman, 2001), little discourse has occurred in Pakistan and Kenya concerning how women are able to experience leadership, and there is even less about the role of gender in educational leadership.

However, while reviewing the composition of teachers in Africa, Central America and South Asia; Davies (1990) concluded that “educational administration is still seen as a masculine occupation in many countries” (p. 62). This is also a view that is held by Memon (2003) about educational leadership in Pakistan.

This paper, therefore, sets out to compare the experiences of women educational leaders in Kenya and Pakistan, with respect to their growth as women as well as in leadership. Two separate studies were used to study the Kenyan and Pakistani leaders. This paper begins with a description of the methodology used in

conducting each study. Thereafter, it presents the similarities and differences in experiences between the women leaders, and furthermore looks at the implications of these findings in the light of the relationship between women in educational leadership, and their effect on the quality of leadership offered in educational institutions. It also takes a look at how these are likely to impact on the general quality of education in both countries.

## **Methodology**

The study on the Pakistan women educational leaders was a narrative inquiry based on several individual interviews with four research participants.

A narrative approach was felt to be best suited to find out how the women have experienced and continue to experience gender related issues in their positions of leadership. In addition to the formal interviews, I was in constant dialogue with the participants to ask further questions or to clarify issues that arose out of the interviews.

At the time of the study, the women were either on or had completed leadership and Management Professional Development Programmes at the Higher Education Institute where I teach. All the women were married and had been in leadership positions between 3 to 16 years and ranged in age between 28 – 48 years.

The Kenyan study, which remains ongoing, has employed the use of a life history approach as well as some ethnographic methods such as observations and document analysis. It has engaged 12 participants, though this paper presents findings from the first phase of the study, which looked at how the personal and professional experiences of the 6 women leader impacted on their leadership practices. These women have been in school leadership ranging from 1.5 to 16 years and ranged in age from 38 – 54 years.

In this paper, gender has been used as the dominating factor of analysis to frame the women's experiences. Findings of both studies are presented along with relevant data to highlight ways in which gender has been and still is configured within the lives of all the women educational leaders despite of their leadership positions.

# Findings

## Similarities

### Subtle or overt push into teaching

With the exception of one participant in Pakistan and two in Kenya, all the participants had not gone into teaching because they wanted to, but because they were either overtly or subtly pushed into it. For instance, Nusrat chose teaching because she thought,

Being in Pakistan, teaching is the safest profession for a mother who wants to go to school with her children and come back with them. We used to finish at 12:00 pm. I used to come home, do my cooking and before my husband came at 2:00 pm my house was neat and clean, all cooking was done.

Shafia, who wanted to work for a corporate organisation, was discouraged by her father because of the hours she would have to stay at work. Instead, he persuaded her to take up teaching because teaching as a profession in Pakistan is more appropriate for women because it's not full time. "If you go to any school, it runs from 8:00 to 2:00, or 8:00 to 1:30 and then you can just go [home]."

Valerie, one of the Kenyan head-teachers, had this to say about her entry into teaching,

The missionary school where I was at had proposed that I go for nursing abroad, but my father refused. He thought that if somebody goes abroad, she won't come back. So, he suggested that I go for teaching. My father insisted but I feared teaching. I didn't like teaching...

Jennifer, another Kenyan headteacher, said,

I went to Kenyatta College for a diploma in education. I didn't get all the principles. I had only one principle and the rest were subsidiaries. So, I had to go for a diploma in education. That was not my line. I did not want to go into education. My first line was to do Law...

## **Men crucial to the women's inclusion and success at work**

All the participants attributed their career progress, their acceptance at their places of work and in the general society, to men. For example, Sultana attributes her rise to leadership to the school's male head-teacher and also to a male consultant who was working with the education board that managed the school she taught in. In addition, she talked of a supportive husband who would have said 'no this is enough but it was him who said yes, I should continue my education.'

Jennifer, a Kenyan head of school, shared that her career rise could largely be attributed to a former Permanent Secretary in the Education Ministry, who had met her while she was a teacher and who had believed that she was destined for greater things in education.

When he later visited the first school where I was a head, he was able to get the school money to put up more classrooms and staff houses. When I began to have problems with the then Provincial Director of Education (a woman), he ensured that I would be able to continue working without being harassed.

Zeituni, another Kenyan head, identified her former male head teacher as her mentor and one who had given her several opportunities while she was a teacher to exhibit her leadership skills. He was also the one who recommended her for promotion as a head teacher.

## **Scepticism about women's leadership capability**

The women spoke of constant reminders that they get both from their colleagues and the wider community about their place as women. They talked about how they continually had to prove themselves at their places of work. For example, Nusrat thinks that being a leader is challenging. She points out 'I think it's not that easy to be a principal and a woman at that. To prove to be a principal you have to work. You have to prove yourself. I don't find it easy.' Sultana too, finds being in a predominantly man's world a great challenge. 'Being a woman in the crowd; among men, seniors and juniors; it is difficult to show that what you are doing is worthwhile and being appreciated.' Zeenat too finds that she experiences resistance from the male parents she comes into contact with in school. For example, she said,

Some of the fathers are very rude and use abusive language with us [female teachers]. I think the reason is that they feel that the



person sitting opposite them is a woman and she is the weaker sex and they can say or do whatever they want and she'll be quiet because she is a woman. I think in our culture, it is difficult for some men to have a woman as a leader, to listen to her and accept her comments...

This view was also held by their Kenyan counterparts. They talked about being harassed and shouted at by male parents and one even talked of being mishandled by some of the officials of the School management committee, who seemed to feel that she was incapable of running the school without some help simply because she is a woman. 'The first time the chairman told me that, I was furious and I told him that the woman he meant was at home cooking and looking after the *shamba* (garden). Here, he was talking to a professional.'

### **Wives and mothers Vs men as workers in the outside world**

The idea that women are basically wives and mothers, and that men are workers in the outside world is something the women have to contend with daily. For example, Shafia pointed out that one of the things she finds difficult, being a leader and a woman, is that she cannot stay late in the office because there will be questions [from her in-laws]. This is something that does not happen to her husband. Because her money does not contribute to putting food on the table, she is often questioned if she is late at school; 'it's a different story because of course my husband is taking care of us with his money. As for me, I'm not actually giving it to the in-laws or not spending it on the home.'

These views rang true for their Kenyan counterparts too. As Valerie pointed out,

I find it very hard. I leave this place late. I have to be the last to leave as I cannot leave the girls [her students] on their own. Then when I get home, I get down to preparing the evening meal and supervising my son's homework. You know our men, they don't want food cooked by the maid, so I have to do it.

### **Choices about family relationships**

Being in positions of leadership has affected their relationships with their families. For example, for Sultana, the choice to become a leader in her field has quite often been at the expense of her family as she pointed out, 'Sometimes I would feel I was not doing justice to my children. That was the big challenge, I

think. Even Sundays, I would work. My children would suffer and my husband would be unhappy.'

For Zeenat, her decision to advance herself academically and consequently move to a higher level of leadership has meant additional work for her at home and all other quarters of her life. She pointed out,

I do get very frustrated at times with my husband and children because one of the disadvantages of being a working mother in Pakistan is that ultimately you are left with more responsibility than your husband ... I find it very difficult to cope with all these expectations.

One of the Kenyan heads, Mary, stated, 'My children have had to accept me and my work. They know I can't be there all the time. I try very much but sometimes the many things I have to do means I do not get home until late and sometimes I even spend weekends in school.'

Yet Jennifer shared,

It's like you want to progress but you just can't because of the children. One of the things that I know I gave up is my education, you know, to advance my career. You wish that there would be somebody in the house to help the children but it's like I am in school when I am in the house too. So, it's double work.

### **Impact of role models**

The participants felt that a female support system and the availability of female role leaders at the workplace are crucial for their success as leaders. As Sultana succinctly stated, 'If there were many women like me, we would be much stronger. I know they [men] would respect my ideas and there would be someone to support me morally, understand my issues.' Zeenat described the principal and owner of her school as one who 'stands by her principles. I think that is a very brave quality and I have learnt that from her.' While for Nusrat, her boss has served as a role model for her professionally as she says, 'whenever I look at her, I think she is a professional lady and this has influenced me.' She emphasizes this by saying, 'We need to work with each other. We cannot work alone. One woman cannot be strong but a group of women can be stronger.' Gladys, a Kenyan head-teacher, identified her congregation leader as a role model and had this to say, "I really admire her ... She's been encouraging me. She kept telling me, 'I know you can do it. You can make a good leader'..."

Valerie pointed out that one of her role models was a female college lecturer and as a result of what she observed, she would tell herself that 'if I plan and work hard, I'll be able to be like her.' In fact she points out that she was highly influenced by the female lecturers who taught her. In fact all the Kenyan head-teachers identified their teachers as being influential in helping them determine or fulfil their aspirations

### **Impact of leadership on self**

The women were quite emphatic about the fact that working and being in leadership positions gives them a sense of completeness; of being persons on their own right. Nusrat vividly captures this when she states that she enjoyed being a leader and a working woman because 'it's not the money I'm going for. It is for the self identity. It is a satisfaction that I get.' She went on to explain that it gave her a sense of identity because, "My husband was in the army and everywhere I would go people would refer to me as Mrs. Ashfaq. I wanted my own identity as Nusrat Ashfaq and now I'm proud to say that I have got my own visiting [business] card, my own car, everything is my own. The other day my husband said he was with a group of people and they asked him if he was Nusrat Ashfaq's husband? This is self identity for me. I have proven that I'm also a human being with my own identity."

For Shafia, her desire to work stemmed from her desire to utilise the knowledge she had gained from her studies, 'my husband was established so we didn't need that much money. There was no problem like that but I wanted to work. I had done my MBA so obviously I wanted to work.'

For these women, being happy meant wanting something more out of life than that which they felt was possessed by the other women in their society. It also meant doing the best they could with the opportunities they had been given, not only for themselves but also in terms of contributing to the world in which they and the people close to them lived.

Similar views were expressed by the Kenyan heads. One of them actually sees leadership as an opportunity to 'serve; being a servant to the children and teachers.' Quite a number of them were in agreement about the status they derived as a head teacher. As one of them pointed out, 'It feels good when I go to visit my mother. People seek my advice because I am a head-teacher and when I go to a gathering whether in church or something like a fundraising activity; it feels good to be called upon to address the people. the say that the head teacher is here. Let us see what she has for us today.'

## **Differences**

### **Dominant parent figure in participants' success**

In this study, while some of the women recognised that the support of both parents was important in their achievements, amongst the Pakistani leaders there appeared to be an unequivocal recognition of the dominant influence of their fathers in their lives, especially with regard to their career ascent. For example, Sultana states, "My father loved me very much. He would encourage me from the beginning and I got confidence from him. From the very beginning, he inculcated in me this love for education."

Similarly, Zeenat also points out that, " My father, he died three years ago, was obviously the greatest influence in my life. He was much focused and the best thing was that he thought that women were equal to men."

The opposite appears to be true in the case of the Kenyan heads. The dominant parent figure seems to be their mothers. For example, Valerie shared,

My mother had a huge impact on my life; a lot because of her encouragement. My mother really worked hard that we get a good education. She was ready to dig people's shambas to get money for this education. So, I used to tell myself that surely if this lady can work so hard, what of me? She was someone who did not want to see a child not going to school. She'd always wake us up very early in the morning ...

Jennifer, too, said, "My mother influenced my life a lot. She's a simple woman, very hardworking. I watched her as I grew up. I watched the way she would supplement my father's income as he was the sole bread winner. She was a hard worker and she has taught us to work hard."

### **Challenges to leadership by colleagues**

All the Pakistani women found that challenges to their leadership roles stem from the men they come into contact with. For example, Sultana found that her male colleagues were uncomfortable with her leadership position and as a result interfered with the execution of her duties. She stated, "I had no problem in dealing with women teachers but actually men did not want to see me in that position. I remember that one day I was conducting a workshop and the male teachers they just spoke and raised issues only for the sake of not letting me do

that workshop. They quarrelled with me and did not allow me to do it. If there was a man in my place, they would have allowed him [to conduct the workshop]. I was a women and so not important.”

Yet their Kenyan counterparts were of the opposite view. For example, Valerie had this to say,

I enjoy working with the male teachers because I have found that the men concentrate more on their work than the ladies. Women talk a lot and waste a lot of time. When it comes to discussion men are open. They'll say point blank, 'Madam, this is ABC...' But that is not so with the lady teachers... Another thing about ladies is that they like to be coaxed. When she knows how to do something then she wants you to beg and persuade her and that I find irritating.

Alice said, 'So far, from what I have seen in women's leadership, the ladies create obstacles. They would rather support male leaders. So, I don't know whether it is something that is in the ladies.'

### **Impact of cultural traditions**

In Pakistan, being a woman means acting and existing in certain ways. These ways are learnt early in life as they largely determine the level of acceptance and the place of a woman in the society. They shape the way the girls/women socialise in their families and in the larger community as females. This, sadly, has the potential to limit the capability of the girls/women to develop to their fullest promise. For example, Sultana said,

From the very beginning, my mother used to tell me that 'you are a girl and you have to live within certain limitations.' When I grew up, our society expected us to behave in a certain manner, like to wear a 'dupatta' [a piece of cloth used to cover the head and bosom] and when we walk, look down and not in front and not to be so bold and not to talk very much. I would speak much at home but when I grew up I would not talk much with my father and with my brothers; instead I would remain silent most of the time.

This was noticeably absent among the Kenyan heads. They claimed not to have experienced overt pressure to conform to traditionally acceptable behaviour either when growing up or when they became leaders. For some, they actually

broke expected traditional norms. For example, Valerie talked of having refused to get married early and bluntly told her suitor and father that she wanted to continue with her education.

### **Head-teacher Roles**

Teaching forms an important part of the head-teacher's roles in Kenya. Indeed all the Kenyan head-teachers told me that they had to teach, not only because it is a requirement by the ministry, but also because they had to be role models for the teachers they managed. All of the heads were unanimous in their agreement about teaching being the most enjoyable part of their work and their passion for teaching and caring for the children under their leadership rang out very strongly throughout our interviews. This, and some of things that I observed them doing in the school further showcased their desire for teaching. Though the Pakistani heads seemed passionate about their work, teaching as an important aspect of their work was not talked about at all in our discussions.

### **Impact of religion in leadership practices**

The place of religion in the women's lives is not an aspect that I set out to investigate. However, in my interviews with the Pakistani women, no mention was made of religion and its place in their lives or leadership practices at all. However, among the Kenyan head-teachers, religion and spirituality constantly cropped up in our discussions. Religion seemed to play a dominant role in their lives as well as in the way they related to their teachers and students, and this was something that both of the said seemed to pick on. I observed several prayer days in schools; some of the head teachers spoke of leadership being a God-given position and hence one needed to always focus on God when heading a school. Jennifer, in particular, had this to say about her leadership position,

I knew that it is God who took me there and it is God who is going to take me out. And when I went to the next school, it was the same thing. And even when I came to Matuga, it was the same thing. When I wanted to leave, I couldn't. So, I want to believe that even here, where I am I will leave at God's time. God is the centre of my being.

### **Implications**

The findings shared above have several implications for educational leadership as well as the kind of education offered in schools in Kenya and Pakistan.

The women's experiences illustrate to a large degree that gender roles are socially defined. However, the women participants show that these roles are not static, and can be challenged and redefined. The experiences of the women in this study seem to imply that as socially constructed beings, their choices were never wholly free; however, as individuals, regardless of the pressures set upon them, they resisted being individuals who were merely 'acted upon.' They were able to make choices, even if limited, and effect change. This therefore, seems to imply that schools can be sites where gender roles can be challenged and reshaped. While both the Pakistani and the Kenyan governments' have been making vigorous attempts to increase girls' access to education, this education can only be worthwhile if it is quality education that is being offered; and if it allowed both the girls and boys equal opportunities in developing themselves to their maximum potential. Also, if schools do not indicate to girls that the sky is the limit as they so often do with boys, it is inevitable that women will find it difficult to take up leadership positions. This seems to suggest that without explicitly addressing the underlying assumption of gender equality on one hand, through the overt and covert curriculum in schools, and by accepting the implicit cultural norms and values on the other, school leadership in Pakistan and Kenya may continue to bewilder and exclude women. With regard to the education of the wider school communities on gender equality, there seems to be an indication (from the data shared above) that in Pakistan men will have to be central in programmes that seek to develop this awareness. While in Kenya, though men might be part of this target, there is need to develop a sense of appreciation and confidence in women as a whole, to accept their fellow women in leadership roles, as well developing leadership skills within the women themselves.

As shared earlier, most of the participants went into teaching either because of pressure from their parents or because they had no choice. While their initial reasons for joining the teaching profession confirm the much offered view that teaching has traditionally been seen as an appropriate job for women; offering 'quasi-familial roles and identities around a core of male hierarchies and privileges' (Newman, 1994, p. 193) and that in Pakistan and to some degree in Kenya, it "is seen to be 'safe and suitable' through its compatibility with traditional norms and lifestyles," (Sales, 1999).

This not only raises questions about women's desire to get into leadership positions, which often require long hours at work but also raises questions about the quality of teaching offered by 'reluctant' teachers. It is often argued that teaching calls for passion, commitment and good training; core values that help distinguish professionals from any run of the mill 'quacks'. Whilst it is possible

for the 'reluctant' teachers to change their stance as the women participants in the study did, our schools would be much better off with willing teachers right from the commencement of their teaching practice. This is especially important given that all the Kenyan heads were unanimous on the part played by their teachers in fulfilling their aspirations.

While all the women participants demonstrate that they can succeed on male terms, a number of competing discourses coupled with the overall societal culture ensure that their work patterns in actuality replicate that of the average Pakistani or Kenyan woman. Yet, these women, who clearly are strong women, are not representative of the average Pakistani or Kenyan woman. All of them possessed an understanding of the societal forces that shape and determine their existences. Nonetheless, like any average married Pakistani or Kenyan woman, working or not, they take the major responsibility for the family and the home.

While this may not present a problem at the moment, it may do so if more women take on leadership roles. Women, who take on leadership roles in schools, may have to choose career over family since the nature of educational leadership as it currently stands is very demanding. Women may have difficulty reconciling both their roles as mothers and school leaders. Indeed, the married participants, both in Kenya and Pakistan, explicitly expressed their regrets and frustrations in trying to balance both aspects of their lives; while the single women, though they admitted that it was a challenging job, felt that they could cope. This is subtly unjust because leadership does not seem to present men with similar situations.

Whilst both the governments of Pakistan and Kenya are making concerted efforts to increase female participation in schools, such actions may be of no value to women if schools are not made more work friendly for females hers by putting in place certain structures or practices. The Pakistani or Kenyan female head-teacher is not likely to discard her motherly responsibilities just because of her leadership responsibilities.

However, what is likely to happen is that her responsibilities both as a mother and a school leader may not be carried out effectively. Putting in place support structures, such as crèches where possible, and enacting school gender policies that take into account the needs of females seems to be the way to go.

Finally, all the participants in both studies were explicit about the need to have courses that would help them prepare themselves as leaders, as they often found themselves suddenly thrust into difficult jobs, or identified for their leadership skills that they didn't seem to be aware of.



However, a quick look at some of the in service courses offered to head-teachers, including those offered by our own institute, showcases one major shortcoming: enhancing the head-teachers' teaching skills.

My observations of some of these heads in the classroom revealed that though they were strong in their content and seemed to command their students' full attention, their teaching skills seemed limited. I particularly felt that not much was done in the area of using teaching methods that would move towards enabling the boys and the girls to develop their leadership skills, express their views and so on. If these head teachers are to be model teachers then this is an aspect that cannot be ignored.

## **Conclusion**

Although the findings from this study cannot be generalised to women in educational leadership in Pakistan and Kenya, the experience provide us with the lens to examine the power structure and the norms of the education systems in Pakistan and Kenya. The findings above demonstrate that there are unexamined conceptions and practices that marginalise or exclude women from leadership in education in both Pakistan and Kenya.

They also demand awareness of the circumstances within which women attempt to flourish as leaders. From the experiences shared by the women, this paper suggests that if leadership is to become inclusive, understanding what holds women back is paramount to overcoming these obstacles and improving their access to and participation in leadership.

On the whole, this study serves to remind us that it is not important whether a man or woman leads a school, but rather a recognition and legitimization of women in leadership in every sense of the word is what matters. Perhaps, it is now time in Pakistan and Kenya to accept a more encompassing view of leadership that is more accommodating of the perspectives and experiences of women.

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# **E-Learning: Issues and Challenges in the Perspective of Pakistan**

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## **Abstract**

*Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is revolutionizing the ways societies evolve, interact and open new vistas to provide opportunities for global presence in all sectors particularly business, education and health care. Educational institutions, all over the world, are reforming their policies and considering continuing education and lifelong learning as an essential component in teaching-learning environment; and using ICT as vehicle of knowledge dissemination. Traditional learning is reshaping in the form of virtual learning, e-learning, or web-based learning. Pakistan is also facing critical challenges to meet new demands in education with its population growth and limited resources. Introducing web-based education, especially in higher learning can be beneficial, but it has its own inherited issues and challenges.*

*The paper addresses several key technological issues like: bandwidth, content development, delivery media, synchronised and a-synchronised learning; administrative issues like drop-outs, plagiarism, quality and performance, pedagogy; and organisational issues like practices and policies (Rovai, 2002). It presents a high level comparative account of the current and future directions for e-learning and possible implications for policy and practice by integrating relevant research findings. An attempt is made to unfold the reasons for the failure of the online distance education institutions, including high cost of technology, poor decisions, competition, and the absence of appropriate business strategies (Kilmurray, 2003). The discussion concludes with the most focal issue of proposing solutions and framework to implement step by step e-learning in higher learning institutions of Pakistan.*

## **Introduction to E-learning**

In the last ten years the Internet has proved to be the most effective communication channel at business and entertainment (Cole, 2002). The rapid growth of internet and web-applications, besides affecting the economy, culture and behaviours, has reshaped the modes of teaching and learning drastically. The concept of distance education is reviving with enthralling promises of dynamic web contents and highly interactive approach. The journey of education

from face-to-face classroom learning to web-based distance learning is following an exponential growth. Most prevalent is the overall trend of institutions to move from single mode delivery to multi mode with a major interactive component (Reddy & Manjulika, 2000).

## **E-Learning models used in Pakistan**

The Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan has also realised the potential of e-learning methodologies and accepted the challenge of harnessing the power of ICT, as a result various e-learning models and strategies emerged in past five years. However, only two e-learning programs remain notable and witness successful implementation. These models are described briefly.

### **The Virtual University of Pakistan (VU)**

The Virtual University of Pakistan is using a hybrid model of e-learning at undergraduate level, initially offered to Computer Science students only, but later expanded into Business Management and Social Science areas as well (Knight & Malik, 2000). This model uses the three component framework: first, the classroom and computer labs, second, content delivery and interaction through television network, and third component is the Internet (Toor, 2005). The physical campuses, opened in home towns of students, called private virtual campuses provide the students necessary infrastructure support like classrooms, computers and Internet; along with essential computing resources and facilitates face-to-faces student interaction. In this model students first watch televised lectures and then use computer labs to interact with various tutors through a learning management system specially designed to cater various needs of the students.

Television channel, the second component and means of communication in the hybrid model, relays different lectures on various subjects according to a fixed schedule and students avail the opportunity to attend these lectures, delivered by highly qualified faculty members of renowned institutions, in all parts of the country at the same time, with same quality of knowledge and delivery style. These recorded lectures substitute the classroom lectures and provide the knowledge content in that subject area covering and achieving the learning objectives and outcomes. However these lectures lack student-teacher interaction, pace adjusted on the basis of class response, immediate feedback, and change in delivery etc., which are the essential components of face-to-face learning.

The third and most vital component of the model is tutoring through Internet via a learning management system (LMS), the base of virtual learning, specially designed and developed keeping in view the needs of local students, along with an email communication system. The LMS has various features including the ability to share text, video, and images; a grade book, links to various resources, the answers of frequently asked questions and discussion boards (Sherazi & Ikram, 2001). The moderated discussion forums are also available which are led by qualified and trained tutors to help out students in respective subject areas, by guiding them to use resources available to download through LMS, thereby filling the gap of student-teacher interaction created due to televised lecture. They also facilitate students in grasping various technological aspects of LMS, and allows for students' monitoring through assessment, evaluations, and discussions. The support services like information about the fee, registration, dropping a course and similar problems of administrative nature however are handled through emails.

### **Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering (CASE)**

Centre for Advanced Studies in Engineering (CASE) is offering M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs to Engineering and other post graduate students in two different modes, on-campus face-to-face and distance learning, the later is for those students who cannot attend classes physically in CASE premises which is located in Islamabad. The main objectives of the distance learning are to provide facilities to the distant professionals for their educational uplift, to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. Distance Learning program emphasizes on a facilitated learning approach with the support of multimedia section. This section captures the video of a live lecture in a face-to-face classroom then records this Video on CDs; later these CDs are posted to concerned students through courier service within 48 hours, ensuring synchronised learning among on-campus and distant learners. This recorded lecture gives an added benefit of watching the classroom interaction with student questions and class discussions. The video screen consists of the topic, lecture contents, and lecture slides. It's quite simple, by using a PC and commonly available software, to move directly to any part of lecture content by scanning through slides. The distance learning students have to meet all the degree requirements same as on-campus students. Supervised final examination and other during-session evaluations are conducted at prescribed centres, near home towns of distance learners. Students have access to an on-line discussion forum to interact with both distance learners and on-campus students to enhance their understanding of the subject matter and to strengthen social and academic interactions. The forum acts as a learning management system and provides a

rich interaction among students, teachers and content, enabling students to raise their queries; they may also submit their assignments through email facility.

## **E-learning Framework**

The e-learning strategies can be implemented and validated through a step by step framework; however design, development, implementation and evaluation of this framework requires thoughtful analysis and investigation of how to use the attributes and resources of ICT in concert with instructional design principles and pedagogical issues. These factors encompass various e-learning issues, including: pedagogy, technology, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support, ethics and institution; providing guidance in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of e-learning environment (Khan, 1997).

## **Issues and Challenges of e-learning in Pakistan**

The implementation of e-learning inherits many issues and challenges, as diverse as policies and administration, technology infrastructure and cost, pedagogical strategies and content design, performance and quality, and not the least faculty and student satisfaction with viable return on investment. The gravity of these issues depends on the environment where virtual learning is implemented. Here these issues are summarised into three categories viz. institutional and administrative issues, technological issues, and pedagogical issues.

### **Institutional and Administrative Issues**

Every web-based learning program requires strategic planning keeping in view the organisational objectives and vision statement. The management team decides the complete business, academic, and operational policies; establishes various performance and quality indicators; develops the framework to implement these policies; defines various controls and measures to ensure desired results. A colossal challenge that the management team faces is the cost of technological ownership, which comprises cost of hardware and software, communication infrastructure, human resource training, operations and maintenance. Ever changing technology and new market demands keep a pressure on the institutions. An institute also provides other facilities and student-support services like library, laboratories etc.; hence, a careful and acute planning is required before implementing any form of e-learning, in order to cater such needs and requirements of teaching-learning environment. Measuring the quality of online education may have many facets, missing any single factor

in the framework may obscure the objectives and diverge from the desired results. In our local context we lack continuity in educational policies, a blurred separation of government and management functions, and a void of accountability and incentives. Therefore, moving towards an e-learning program solicits the change in current organisational hierarchy with strong commitment and motivation. An alarming drop factor influenced e-learning environments drastically, and created doubts among the practitioners. Reasons for high attrition are typically complex and multiple, yet institutional records are often simplistic or inaccurate (Hall, 2001). In general, drop out rates ranging from 30% to 75% have been associated with e-learning courses in the United States. A number of factors that contributed to withdrawal including technology, the student experience, lack of tutor feedback and online miscommunication (McVay-Lynch 2002) created scepticism about the success of online education.

## **Technological Issues**

Newer technologies such as computers and video conferencing are not necessarily better (or worse) for teaching or learning than older technologies... they are just different. The choice of technology should be driven by the needs of the learners and the context in which we are working, not by its novelty (McKim, Jollie, Cantillon, 2003). Technology is the vehicle in any online learning environment, whether it's pure virtual environment or any blend of face-to-face and technology-based education, in all forms deciding, buying and maintaining information and communication technology is a major and vital issue. Availability of hardware, access on licensed software, compatibility of different communication channels, security of data, and well-trained staff remain a challenge during the implementation phase. Selecting and designing a learning management system (LMS) compatible with learning objectives, learners demographic background, choice and reservation, and delivery medium, makes the situation further intricate. In the context of Pakistan, the issues of availability of computing resources, access to affordable and consistent Internet connectivity, optimal-performance bandwidth and teacher-learner training are of the prime importance for consideration.

## **Pedagogical Issues**

The foci of teaching-learning scenario are “learner” and “contents”, while their analysis and synthesis provide the insight in need assessment and help to identify suitable fusion of medium of delivery and design of contents. Most important problems faced by the designers are: determining the learning outcomes of a unit of delivery, media selection, and content design and

development. The use of multiple media like, video recording, handouts, presentations, leads to a difficulty in updating and synchronising the resources. The audio, video, and text enriched multimedia content may be effective in delivering a key concept on one hand, but may miserably fail when streaming on low bandwidth or leads to a poor and distorted delivery on the other side. Hence, achieving the learning goals by using an optimal blend of content and design strategy with media constraints is toilsome and demands complete understanding of audience and mechanics of delivery along with nature of contents. Web-based learning crosses the geographical and cultural boundaries which results in multilingual and multicultural “class” that are quite uncommon in Pakistan as opposed to physical classroom. The phenomenal problem will be faced by the teacher in handling this “class” with its diversity, and sometimes it becomes an obstacle to deliver the contents efficiently and effectively. As we have English specifically as a medium of communication in web-based learning, through learning management system and email, hence it will be further difficult for learners and teachers to be on the same pedestal while solving complex problems and exchanging conceptual ideas. As reflection on learning is a commonly applied assessment methodology in online learning, which is also based on strong writing skills, this creates a double jeopardy for the students in the context of Pakistan, where most of secondary and higher-secondary school teaching is in national or local languages. Finally besides a normal “lecture” in a face-to-face on-campus class, there are other activities like, lab-experiments, hands-on sessions, tutorials, presentations, seminars, field-trips etc. and it is quite difficult with the current technological situation here, to accommodate these significant activities through web-based learning easily.

## **Proposed Solution**

The online learning is in a transition phase, the first phase of introducing web-resources in a traditional classroom combined with email communication including lecture and assignment attachments, is successfully implemented in various institutions, and assumed as an essential part of teaching-learning environment of higher learning institutions. In the second phase technology is reshaping the communication and interaction of: teacher, learner, and content, consequently discussion boards and chat software are available to enhance the interaction and supplement on-campus learning. However, this phase lacks specially designed units to be delivered besides traditional lectures. Also the assessment and coordinated technological support is missing. The third phase of technology combines highly sophisticated software, specifically designed for the online learning environment, like WebCT and Blackboard etc., with multiple



capabilities of delivering lectures, asynchronised discussion forums, grade-book, web-resources, frequently asked questions, and enhanced email services. The latest development in this area is to provide the teachers content development facility and support services to combine various forms of contents into a single delivery medium and use video streaming to deliver these enriched media lectures over the Internet.

However, this requires broadband and fibre-optic facilities in communication network along with high processing speeds and graphic accelerators. As we lack the broadband communication infra structures even in thickly populated cities of Pakistan, hence virtual learning, or pure web-based learning, alone cannot successfully be implanted, without considering technological demand of the learning community, even at higher education level. One of the proposed solutions of this problem is blended learning with optimal mix of face-to-face and online learning considering the scalability and affordance.

## **Blended Learning**

There is a widespread opinion that blended learning comprises traditional classroom learning with one or more forms of e-learning (Australian National Training Authority, 2003), where the proportion of virtual learning often makes up at least 50 percent (Bleed, 2001). Another definition claims that hybridization occurs when on-campus educators adopt distance education technologies and practices, and when distance education organizations adopt or adapt campus-based educational practices (Waddoups and Howell, 2002).

A careful analysis of audience, learning objectives, available information and communication technology and other support resources may suggest a blended learning framework to implement web-based learning at a moderate scale to a diverse and scattered population, in the presence of experienced faculty and well planned and developed contents. The focal question still remains that this blended learning over traditional classroom based learning or any other form e-learning provides better results and meets the learning objectives or not.

Various studies and experiments also support the idea of blended learning in higher education e.g. “research from institutions such as Stanford University and the University of Tennessee has given us valuable insight into some mechanisms by which blended learning is better than both traditional methods and individual form of e-learning technology alone” (Singh, 2003, p. 53).

## Blended Learning Model

A proposed blended model, using face-to-face traditional classroom and learning management system (LMS) can be blended in any proportion is shown here to depict the interaction among learner, peers, faculty and content.

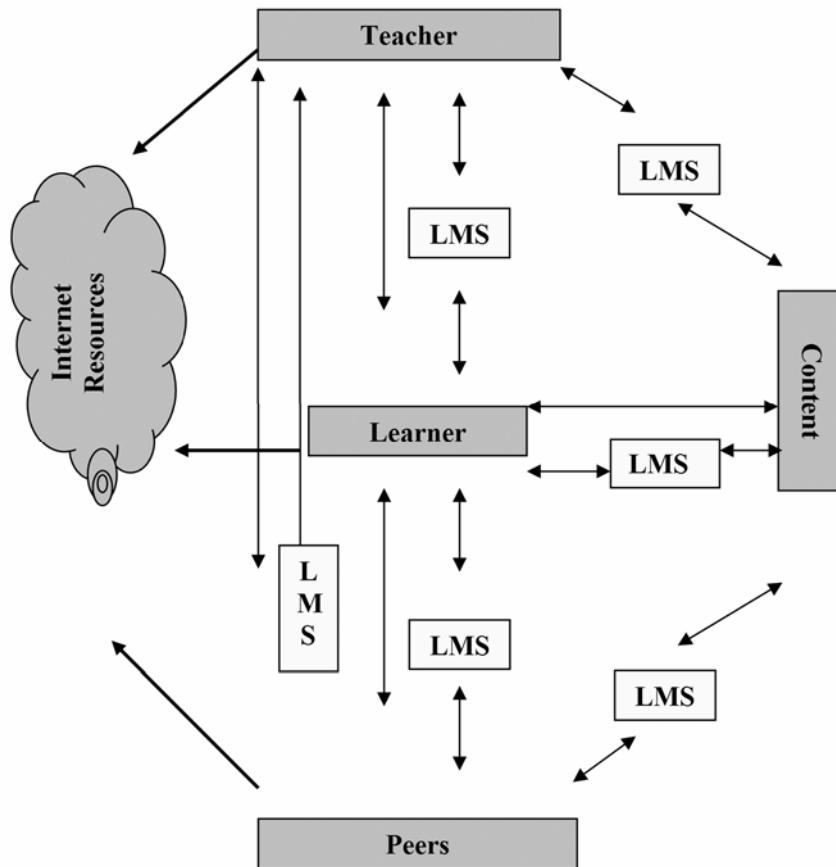


Figure 1: Interactions in a Blended Learning Model.

Whatever the proportion of online education is used in the blend, the effectiveness and quality of education is always questioned and compared with face-to-face learning. Although it is very difficult to measure the quality of education in the presence of multiple factors, but there are several ways and means to judge the quality of online learning ranging from student satisfaction and comparing classroom-based learning versus e-learning, the Sloan Consortium suggested the following as hallmark of e-learning: (1) learning effectiveness, the provider demonstrates that the quality of learning online is comparable to the quality of its traditional programs; (2) cost effectiveness and institutional

commitment, institutions continuously improve services while reducing cost; (3) access, all learners who wish to learn online have the opportunity and can achieve success; (4) faculty satisfaction, faculty achieve success with teaching online, citing appreciation and happiness; (5) student satisfaction, students are successful in learning online and are pleased with their experience.

## Conclusion

Web-based online learning promises huge opportunities for distance learning by using innovative technology and access to a vast amount of knowledge and information, but the role of government and higher education institutes increases manifold to assure quality and performance, monitoring and control, faculty development and training, building technological resources and support corresponding with global standards and local needs. We may implement blended learning at higher education level, for limited subject areas, to cater the national needs and to optimise the scarce faculty resource; furthermore, offer on-job education to promote higher learning and develop a technology-enabled workforce. However, the technology must be applied appropriately and not used simply because it is available and new, or because students and teachers have particular expectations of this means of course delivery. There can be several issues even when applying a blended learning model e.g. situational, epistemological, philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, technical, social, and cultural.

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# **Teacher Education in Pakistan with Particular Reference to Teachers' Conceptions of Teaching**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper discusses teacher education in Pakistan with particular emphasis on teachers' conceptions of teaching in improving quality of education.*

*This paper is based on an initial study that examines teachers' conceptions of teaching in the context of Pakistan. The study seeks to explore whether teachers' conceptions of teaching influence decision-making in classroom teaching. It describes conditions of teaching and learning in Pakistan and argues for reform in teacher education to improve quality of teaching and learning.*

## **Introduction**

Teacher education and teachers themselves are a crucial part of educational change and development. Efforts are being made globally to improve teacher education programmes and enhance teachers' professional development in the wake of the advent of Information and Communication Technology and growing notions of globalization, including theories of free-trade market economy. The colossal socio-economic changes occurring at an unprecedented rate in demographic, political, economic, cultural and technological arenas have influenced reforms in education in general, and teacher education in particular.

A report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first century (1996) submitted to UNESCO states:

The importance of the role of the teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been so more obvious than today. It is likely to become even more critical in the twenty-first century. The need of change, from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudice to tolerance, understanding and pluralism, from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations, and from a technologically divided world... to a technologically united world, places enormous responsibilities on teachers who participate in the moulding of the characters and minds of the new generation. (Delors J. et al. 1996, pp.141-2).

Teacher Education in Pakistan is an important area for research. There is substantial literature available on Education in Pakistan, which suggest that the education system leaves much to be desired, particularly in the area of teacher education. In this paper, I examine questions such as why the quality of teaching and learning is poor in Pakistan. Does it have to do with teacher training or the ways in which teachers conceptualize teaching and learning? How far are their concepts of teaching influenced by the social and cultural environment within and outside the school, and whether or not these perceptions shape their understanding of teaching as enacted in their practices?

This paper is based on an initial study that examines teachers' concepts of teaching in the context of Pakistan. The initial study only examines contexts and cultures of schools to study how far these elements interplay with the teachers' concepts of teaching.

With necessary permission from all the stakeholders to conduct research, four course participants of an M.Ed. programme of the Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) have been considered here as four case studies using interpretive and constructivist approaches. Here I present only one case based on the initial study.

## **Conduct of Interviews**

In each case, beside the CP, his or her head teacher, two teachers and four students in a focus group of the same school were interviewed. In the selection and content of the interview schedules, the framework was drawn from the works of teacher educators and researchers such as Fullan and Hargreaves (1992), Ramsden (1992) Fullan (1993), Smyth (1995), Harris (1995) and Moore (2000) on teacher education and teaching; Watkins et al. (1996) Watkins (2000, 2001, 2003) and Moore (ibid) on learning; and Black and William (1998), Assessment Reform Group (1999), Gipps (1994; 1996) and Klenowski (2002) on assessment.

## **A Case Study**

The case is of a course participant hereinafter called Sara (a pseudonym) who participated in a two-year full time in-service professional development programme i.e. M.Ed. in Education of the AKU-IED.

## **Background to the Case**

Sara belongs to a lower middle class family. She studied in a good private English medium school in Karachi. Being the eldest in her family, she assumed more responsibilities from an early age, which included looking after and helping her siblings in their homework. She thought she was not a very happy child.

After completing her higher secondary school certificate, she could not go for medical education due to mostly financial problems, and instead joined as an untrained teacher in a government primary school. While on the job, she completed her BSc. and primary teaching certificate (PTC) courses as an external candidate. Sara also completed her Masters, switching between her school and the university. Having completed her Masters, she was transferred to this secondary school where she has continued to date. It was from this school that she applied for AKU-IED for its M.E.d programme.

### **Sara's School**

It is well established that school cultures and contexts play significant roles in making the school and classroom effective (Fullan et al. 1990; Watkins 2003). As Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) argue that in order 'to understand the teacher's teaching, it is important to understand... the context in which the teacher works' (p.44). Fullan's statement that 'the school is the centre of change because the norms, values and structure of the school as an organization make a huge cumulative difference for individual teachers' (1991:133), is the driving force in analysing the data of the case in order to ascertain teachers' conceptions of teaching of this school.

Sara's school, established in 1967, is located in the northwest part of Karachi. The locality of the school ranges from lower middle section to the middle section of the society. At the time of first interviews, there were thirty teachers including 10 male teachers. Total student enrolment was 690 from level VI to level X.

Being an English medium school in the public sector, the principal and the head teacher have to comply with demands from the high authorities to give admission to more students than its capacity (almost 70% admissions) resulting in high teacher student ratio (1:60). Shehla, one of the two teachers I interviewed said,

Higher authorities have recommendations so we have to take [give] admission, ... first time it so happened that we had to make



sections, I have 65 students right now.... we have, very congested, cramped situation; in one desk four students sit.

The researcher observed that three to four students were sitting uncomfortably on one bench; Shehla further said, 'they cannot fully concentrate on their studies. At times they fall down from the benches'.

### **School's Physical Environment**

The school has a fine purpose built building. As I approached the school gate, a gatekeeper verified my identity. In front of me was a long but narrow corridor from one corner of the boundary wall to the other with classrooms on both sides. Most classes and school administration offices including a staff room were situated on the left side of the corridor with some trees and plants.

I will now discuss a number of themes derived from the data, and these include: the learning culture in the school, teachers' professional development, teaching as a profession, views on effective teaching, approaches to and methods of teaching, teachers as persons and as professionals, teaching and students' learning and teaching and assessment.

### **Learning Culture in School**

Sara explained that the environment of the school was not very open and supportive. For example, innovations or initiatives were considered as threatening. When she wanted to implement extra-curricular activities, or set up a student library, nobody appreciated nor allowed her to do this. She lamented,

...there is no learning environment where you [can] sit and develop [and] no professionalism.... Instead of giving support, teachers withdraw... even if you want to sit and work productively, that is not appreciated.

Sara further asserted that the senior teachers and other colleagues were not forthcoming in sharing their teaching experiences and subject content knowledge in helping her to solve some of her classroom management problems. She stated:

... all the time I had problems with children, I was thinking how to cope with them, I go to senior teachers, but they never turned to be too much of help and they were not at all open. ...

Issues such as classroom management were seen as weaknesses, and such an attitude barred her from sharing or discussing classroom issues. In their rare discussions in the staff room, Sara felt that the teachers were not of much help because she thought 'their thinking was also very limited'.

Sara's frustrations for the teachers' indifferent attitude towards their work can be understood from the reasons that Anita, the head teacher and the two teachers Shehla and Nadia attributed as to why the staff always worked under pressure: a) the compulsory requirement of completing the syllabus according to the given monthly schedules; b) checking of students' work, regarded as a cumbersome activity, as the teacher student ratio was as high as 1:60 or more; c) short span of classroom period (30 to 35 minutes only); and d) lack of material and human resources. This did not allow the teachers to involve students in active learning, do group work activities, and pay individual attention as Nadia asserted,

... due to large classes we cannot give individual attention to students. ... but in our school we have very good teachers, they are involved in teaching and they are not satisfied that they cannot teach well due to these reasons. (Nadia)

Classroom discipline and control appeared to be a major problem. For Sara it was a major issue. Shehla and Nadia suggested that a lot of time and energy go into controlling rather than teaching. Watkins (2003) argues that context is an important consideration to bear in mind as 'learning can often remain very tied to a context' (p.37). Shehla pointed out 'No teacher can teach effectively with this strength in classroom. Controlling children becomes difficult'. Nadia got the best-teacher award because classroom control was one of the winning criteria. 'they see how is your class run, how do you deal with children in classes, ... how is your class control'. Anita believed that teachers should have 'classroom control power', hence any bustling noises arising from group activities (if any), were not appreciated and the teacher was blamed for disciplinary problems in her class because,

[a] teacher's quality [of being a good teacher] is judged by her classroom (discipline), if it is well controlled and silent then that is considered as good class. Teaching and learning have no meaning rather classroom must be silent. (Shehla)

The data suggests that Sara believed in learning from senior teachers and sharing her teaching problems. On the other hand senior teachers were not interested sharing and learning from each other. Understandingly so because

either they had no time due to the high workloads, or their classes were already well behaved for which they were rewarded and not on the quality of teaching and learning. Hence they did not bother to discuss classroom issues.

Collegiality and cooperation among teachers are important factors in developing a learning community in the school (Rosenholtz 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). Rosenholtz (1985) says 'the most effective schools do not isolate teachers but instead encourage professional dialogue and collaboration' (p.351).

Collaboration among teachers is also essential for learning from and interacting with each other (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992; Fullan 1991; 1993). The relationships are said to be collegial when teachers have opportunities to meet formally or informally to discuss issues related to classroom practices, students' learning and their achievements, and to share a common vision (Rolheiser-Bennett 1991).

In this school there seems to have been little interaction amongst the teachers to voice and share their concerns, as Shehla put it. '...we don't have a formal setting where we can share our concerns. Occasional discussions in the staff room are only related to classroom control' (Shehla). Sara presents a gloomy picture, 'there is no learning environment'. Teachers, as Sara had suggested above, do not come forward to help each other; rather any teacher who wants to take any initiative is not encouraged and faces criticism.

## **Teachers' Professional Development**

Levin and Lockheed (1993) suggest that developing countries, such as Pakistan, face problems in providing quality education to their younger generations and lack the most basic resources including qualified teachers. Some studies on education in Pakistan in general and teacher education in particular reveal that the general education level of teachers is poor. Bacchus (1996) opines that most teachers who come to AKU-IED may have poor qualification and professional academic background.

One of the main reasons for low quality education has been the low percentage of expenditure on education. Pakistan spends less than 2 percent of its GDP on education, compared to the 4 percent of GNP recommended by UNESCO for developing countries. Since 1995-96 the total expenditure from 2% has actually come down to 1.6 percent in year 2000-01 (Shariff 2003, p.213), and currently it is 1.8 percent. Haq and Haq claim that 'Pakistan is the only country in South Asia where public expenditure on education as a proportion of GNP has gone down since 1990' (1998, p.53; See also Aziz 2004). Quality of teaching is

inevitably linked with teachers' qualification and professional development and training. Although the government system does have a policy for in-service programmes, teachers often do not get opportunities for professional growth and development (Ali 1998).

Anita the head teacher stated that teachers attend workshops but new learning cannot be implemented due to resource constraints, lack of teaching time and shortage of teachers. Whereas, Sara, Shehla and Nadia opined that there were hardly any staff development programmes. Anita suggested, 'the government should provide facilities to teachers to teach well... they should provide training and workshops on all subjects and these be organized within the school'. Anita further stated that some teachers were not willing to go for any in-service programme, as they believed that, 'they are not students any more so why they should go and learn'. Sara lamented:

...there is no awareness in teachers. Teachers do not know that education is such a big field ..., before [joining IED] even I had never thought about this profession being so vast. In our environment we don't have this awareness; teachers also are not interested to upgrading themselves (Sara).

## **Discussion**

Some teachers' belief that they were no longer students, suggests that they were contented with whatever academic and professional qualifications they had and did not consider on going and continuous learning as important. One of the reasons for such an attitude towards new learning could be due to the conventional teaching methods teachers adopt. Teaching is mostly based on one textbook only. Teachers are hardly challenged to be innovative and creative which is demonstrated through vast reading. It is easier for teachers to prepare their notes once and use them over many years, as there is hardly any change in the curriculum and text books.

The above data suggests that school culture, attitudes towards staff development, school environment and collegiality are important factors that may affect teachers' thinking and behaviour towards teaching and learning, and may contribute towards developing certain attitudes and beliefs. School cultures could be open and encouraging or closed and impeding. It is likely that teachers' conceptions of teaching would get nurtured and influenced by such contexts. The teachers may be good and wish to contribute, but a number of factors such as

large classes and unavailability of resources serve as impediments in classroom practices and in their indifferent attitudes.

It seems that this school could not do much about promoting an enabling culture in the school. Public schools do not have any direct authority to send teachers for the professional development programmes and the decision lies with the government education departments. It appears that this has developed a negative attitude in most teachers who do not consider learning as a continuous and life long process. The staff relationships may be termed as what Stoll and Fink (1996) call 'dysfunctional' (p.33) i.e. a sense of unreliability; lack of trust and a blaming culture prevails.

## **Teaching**

### **Teaching as a profession**

Sara was of the opinion that teaching is not as rewarding a profession as other professions such as medicine are. She affirmed:

... in our society teaching is not as respected [a] profession as doctor [medicine or engineer[ing]]. Those who couldn't go to those professions, join this profession. ... I first applied for my admission in the medical [but] by chance... I became the teacher, [because] I was providing financial support to my family. ... But, on the other hand this is one of the most respectful professions for women in our society, so ... I could join this profession, and it is also very less time taking. I have to be in school up to 12 or one [o'clock] and after that I can manage my family work, so these were my feeling.

Shehla said: this is a half-day job that is the biggest facility'.

Teaching in Pakistan is a poorly paid profession. Teachers are underpaid compared to people with similar qualifications in other professions. Mostly, less qualified low-income groups who cannot get jobs elsewhere join the profession.

Somewhat similar examples are found in the USA and the UK. Educators such as Maclean, (1999), Bullough Jr., (2002) and Hellinan and Khmelkov (2001) suggest that teachers' social and economic conditions have not improved compared to people in similar or other professions. Hellinan and Khmelkov (2001) argue that teachers are seen as 'service personnel' (p.177). Maclean

(1999) asserts that in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, teachers have been given 'semi professional (emphasis in the original) rather than a full professional status' (p.88).

In his discussion on teacher professionalism, Hargreaves (1999) concludes 'the forces of de-professionalization in teaching have cut deep, and in many places teaching has not even approached becoming a profession, by any definition of the term' (p.72 see also Hargreaves 2000). AKU-IED's (2002) *Discussion Report: Teacher Education* also suggests that teaching in Pakistan is considered a job and hardly a profession; and generally, teachers do not have a professional attitude towards teaching (Warwick & Riemers 1995). Most male teachers are engaged in other jobs or small businesses or work on farms after school hours (Ali 1998). Teachers usually give tuitions to make ends meet. Hence teaching is not regarded as a full time profession for economic reasons and because it is considered to be of low status. Teachers who join AKU-IED programme may come with such beliefs and attitudes towards teaching.

For Shehla, teaching was a family profession. But she was interested in homeopathic medicine. After marriage her husband did not allow her to continue as a homeopath so she unwillingly joined teaching. She said,

... so forcefully I did this job, but when I came here I started enjoying my attachment with children. I like ... student teacher relationship and now I feel that there is no better profession than this. [Moreover],

Shehla further stated that:

We should take this profession as Ibadat (worship), only then there is a benefit, our own conscious is also satisfied and children also get benefit, if we take it just as job then there is no use. ... This profession is such that not only we teach but we learn also, we learn a lot from our children, so we should be doing best, it gives us also opportunity to learn. (Shehla)

Both Nadia and Anita viewed teaching as a noble and sacred profession from the religious point of view. For them it is building a whole new generation. Anita believed that it is a demanding and serious profession 'although it is not a very rewarding profession [financially], one should fulfil the responsibility without expecting much reward'. Anita further explained:

... I think it is like [a] mother who nourishes her children ..., teachers' should consider students as their children and understand that the whole generation will be playing a key role in our society and they will be foundation of our country. In the teaching profession, one should be very sincere .... If we take from religious point of view, God has given us a great responsibility. In order to fulfil that, we need to be very sincere with our profession. We should leave our worries at home when we go to the class and focus on our teaching, considering that this time is amanat (trust) from God and fulfil [it] sincerely. (Anita)

## Discussion

The above responses can be categorized into three major points:

**Teaching as a sacred profession:** Firstly, they found an intrinsic value in teaching. They regarded it as a noble or religious cause. An Islamic view of teaching comes out predominantly. According to the Qur'an, God taught Adam. He taught Man with the Pen what he knew not (2:31; 92:5). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been given the title of a teacher (Mu'allim) in the Quran. Throughout the Muslim history teaching has been considered as a sacred duty (Al-Aaroosi 1980; Kinnany 1980; Baloch 2000).

**Teaching as a respectable profession:** Secondly, it is respectable because teachers command respect in the society from a socio-cultural and religious perspective, rather than a financial one. Respect for teachers is defined by culture, history and tradition (Al-Aaroosi 1980; Kinnany 1980; Baloch 2000).

**Ideal profession for women:** Thirdly, although for Sara and Shehla teaching was not the first choice and it was adopted unwillingly or even forcefully, they regarded it better and safe from the female point of view. Seen in a socio-cultural context, teaching is considered as most 'suitable' and the 'ideal half time job' for women both in urban and rural areas (Bhatti et al. 1988:242), as women can attend to their family affairs (see Ali 1998). Mostly for these reasons parents or husbands allow females to go for this profession. Hence circumstances dictate that some to go for teaching.

Notwithstanding the religious views about teaching, the head teacher complained that although teachers in her school considered teaching as a sacred (*muqaddas*) profession; they did not regard it very seriously.

Sara explains why teachers did not take the profession seriously, ‘teachers did not take teaching seriously as one teacher [has to] take many classes. Although it is a half-day job one finds it difficult to agree with Ali (1998), that it is generally considered being an easygoing job. With regard to this school, teachers have to accomplish a lot in a few hours including teaching, checking of students’ copies etc. Anita views this issue as follows:

We have 30 minutes period ..., teachers have [the] load of completing the syllabus from the Board and have this in mind all the time that they have to complete this. They are checked on whether they have corrected the copies of the students and completed the syllabus. Naturally then, teachers’ full concentration would be on these two things. This happens in all the classes, inspectors come and observe these things only.

Shehla also voiced similar issues:

We have issues like completing the syllabus, less time per period, large strengths and correcting the copies. If I teach two sections, I have in both sections 60 to 70 students, so in two or three days also we cannot correct all the copies.

Notwithstanding the religious beliefs of the teachers regarding the teaching profession, it seems that factors such as lack of conducive and supporting environment, financial incentives, high teacher student ratio and work load, interplay with such beliefs and it becomes difficult for teachers to harmonize their beliefs with their practice.

## **Effective Teaching**

For Lockheed & Verspoor (1991), teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills determine effective teaching and have a positive impact on the students’ achievement (Harris 1995; Moore 2000, 2004; Rehmani N. 2000). This is what Ramsden (1992) calls ‘good teaching’.. Levin and Lockheed (1993) suggest that effective teaching at its minimum involves: (a) presentation of materials in a rational and orderly manner, which is appropriate to the students’ age level; (b) active student participation; (c) enabling students to put their learning into application and practice; (d) giving the students feedback on their performance (p.29).

Effective teaching is said to take place when the teacher actively involves the students in the teaching and learning processes, and when the students are able



to make connections between their previous and present learning and also construct new meaning and improve upon it. This is what is called 'learning about learning' (Watkins et al. 1996; Watkins 2003). Watkins (ibid) argues that the word 'effective' is rarely defined. It is contextual and goal oriented i.e. 'effective for when? Effective for what?' (p.27).

Confessing her ignorance about what effective teaching was, Sara stated that she hardly involved students in their learning. Her teaching, like those of other teachers was traditional, 'before going to IED, I was not aware of this terminology (student-centred), I did not think that students should also participate in the class, and how much it is important to have their participation.'

Anita, the head teacher, believed that for teachers to teach effectively they should never consider their knowledge to be complete or perfect; they should learn more, acquire new knowledge, read new books and learn new techniques. 'Teachers should not rely on what they learned in their own times' (Anita).

Nadia depicts the real situation and the head teacher's remarks above make more sense in this context. The teacher said:

... what we are giving is only bookish knowledge... beyond that we are doing nothing, no more teaching and no more knowledge ... because of the strength of the class. No teacher can teach effectively with this strength in classrooms [1:65]; controlling children becomes difficult (Nadia).

Shehla suggested that even if they wanted to involve students in activities, it was not possible due to large number of students in the class and shorter span of time per class,

I tried to include some activities in my class to involve students, but failed. If we have a manageable class [size] only then we can manage this, but with full strength, we cannot manage. I prepare charts at home and hang them in class and [by the time I] try to explain, the class is over, so we cannot continue with this. If we have less strength then we can become effective.

Given that some of the teachers in the school did not believe in continuous learning due to the lack of library facilities, teaching limitations to one textbook only and frontal and teacher centred teaching because of the high teacher

student ratio and passive learning; it is unlikely that effective teaching could take place.

Another important point that can be highlighted is classroom context that may impede effective teaching and learning. As Watkins (ibid: 37) argues that context is an important consideration to bear in mind as 'learning can often remain very tied to a context'. If classes are overcrowded, classroom control and management become the priority rather than teaching and learning.

Beside over crowded classes, factors such as teaching and learning materials, library resources, use of multiple reference materials, small size of classes etc. are also considered important in creating conducive environment for effective teaching to take place. If not a leading indicator, a conducive environment is seen as 'a key underpinning of effective learning and teaching' (MacBeath 1999, p.47).

## **Approaches to and Methods of Teaching**

Generally speaking, teaching practices in Pakistan, hardly promote students' learning. Studies such as those by UNESCO (1977), Avalos and Hadad (1981), The British Council (1988), Farooq (1985), Ghafoor and Khan (1994), Warwick and Reimers (1995) and Ali (1998), suggest that teachers mostly rely on notes that they dictate to students. Whole class instruction is mostly based on lectures given from the front and there is minimum classroom participation by students. Little or no feedback is given to students on their written work and portfolios (Klenowski 2002), due to lack of ongoing monitoring and assessment practices. Teaching is generally 'rote, mechanical, expository,' teacher and textbook centered and examination oriented (Christie & Afzaal 2005).

Such teaching is considered as craft (Hoban 2002), or a repertoire of competences and skills to be mastered (Smyth 1995; Moore 2000), and implemented with little regard to teachers' knowledge, depth of the subject matter and the students' learning capacities.

Bacchus (1996) concludes that 'the same pattern of instruction which encourages rote memorization of facts rather than an understanding of processes is characteristic of teaching in Pakistan and the countries from which AKU-IED draws its students' (p.1).

As has been argued by Khalid (1996) and Hoodbhoy (1998), teaching approaches seem to have changed very little over the last five decades.

Sara was not aware of the child-centred approach. She did not know how important it was to involve children in the teaching and learning process. Discovery-based and inquiry-based methods, she said, were not known in her context, *these were not there at all in my school.*

Sara believed that she had no knowledge of any theory that underpins activity-based approach. She said she had no idea about group work. She tried to encourage students to use the library, to read more, but her colleagues rather discouraged her to do that. In her view, the school's attitude was totally discouraging towards taking any initiative. When she gave notes to students from other books, this was seen by them and their parents as a deviation from the prescribed text and was seen as problematic. She said when I gave them notes from other books, their parents came and they complained. The head teacher summoned her for an explanation. There was a lack of communication between the teachers, 'I don't actually know what other teachers were doing in their classes; there is no communication between teachers so they did not know much about each other's classes'. Sara indicated that most teachers' teaching, including her own, was textbook and teacher centred, rote learning and exam oriented.

Teachers resisted new ideas, thinking they would have to do more work. When I simply asked my students to colour a tree, my head teacher called me and said, why was I was asking children to do all those things, 'you are wasting children's time in making them colour, if they do not write they are wasting time'. I said to her that this was very important, for students, they can understand the digestive system better if they colour. 'No let them rote learn'.

The head teacher believed that the teachers were aware of group work strategies, but could not implement them due to short span of class time and the large number of students. The head teacher indicated that mostly teacher-centred approaches are adopted.

Anita said that teachers do some reading and preparation beforehand but no formal lesson planning is done. Teachers are trained and rely on use of blackboards and charts to teach. This was confirmed when Shehla said,

... Whatever I want to teach, I prepare that topic ..., we study in little detail whichever subject we want to teach. We should have mastery on our subject ... though we don't write down lesson

plans, but we have in mind that we follow, we deal according to whatever we have learned.

**Focus Group:** Four students in the focus group interview explained that they prefer a teaching method in which the teachers explain, *if we understand it feels good, if teachers explain the meaning then it becomes interesting*. They liked a particular teacher because she explained and used pictures and did not give burdensome homework. They further stated that *she gives chance to every student to read, so that if any one doesn't know, she explains, makes them learn, explains through reading, drama and meanings*.

It appears that some teachers have had prior understanding of, and believed in active learning. Conceptions of effective teaching and involving students in their learning do inform teachers as to what method of teaching and learning they should adopt, but the lack of school-learning-environment, focus on syllabus coverage and classroom realities make it difficult to put their conceptions into practice. Another important point is that senior teachers tend to hold on to their traditional methods, and show little or no flexibility in accepting new ideas or in adopting and using active learning methods to avoid additional responsibilities.

## **Teachers as Persons and as Professionals**

Teachers play a significant role as a person and as a professional in the lives of their students. Teaching as a profession cannot be separated from their personal lives, as both are linked with each other (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). It has been argued that the teachers' exposure, and their experiences of teaching and learning from their past contexts, shape their belief and influence their teaching styles, as Fullan and Hargreaves (1992:36) state, 'among them are the times in which teachers grew up and entered the profession, and the value systems and dominant educational beliefs that went with those times'.

The RPs were asked to describe how they viewed themselves as teachers. How did their teachers teach them and whether they had any influence on their teaching? What were the characteristics of their favourite teachers and what role a teacher plays in shaping students' learning?

### **A good teacher**

Sara suggests that a good teacher always supports and encourages her students. She believed in encouraging her students because she herself was discouraged by her mathematics teacher and she could not learn but rather began to hate the

subject. It shows how teacher's encouragement or discouragement could impact on student's learning. She advocated that students must be appreciated and those who are weak must be looked after. Shehla believes that,

... teachers' main job is to teach, and they should have good command of subject knowledge. Their attitude should be such that they can attract students towards them to listen and understand, not that they get fed up and loose interest. ... Our relationship with our students should be of love and affection. I have this concept from the beginning, and till now I believe in that. I don't like to hit or shout at students. Teachers should be good [role] models so that children learn good qualities from them.

**Involvement in her work:** For Nadia, qualities of a good teacher include her total involvement in her work. 'First of all what ever the teacher is teaching, full involvement is important, [but] in our school we have large classes so we cannot give individual attention to students' ... (Nadia). She also maintains that teachers have to be strict particularly when they deal with large and cramped classes.

**Punctual and responsible:** Anita, the head teacher, considered punctuality as her virtue. In her eyes, a teacher is like a pilot. As the pilot is responsible for people's lives and should fulfil her responsibilities with sincerity and professionalism, similarly a good teacher who is responsible for students' lives is punctual, sincere, loves her profession and has a complete command on her subject.

**Loving and caring attitude:** For students in the focus group, the love and care of the teachers mattered the most. However, they may become strict or even punish physically to maintain discipline yet they should always be loving. They suggested:

Teachers should be strict, but also with love, students need to be disciplined, but should be given more love, only then they will learn. Some children don't listen to teachers, and then they should be hit ...some times teachers do hit children ....

**Teacher as a model:** One of the students stated: 'one teacher is model for me, I like the nature of that teacher, I also like the way she teaches, her gestures are good, she explains very well, encourages us to ask questions, she never scolds us, [her] attitude is very good.'

Students were of the view that they like teachers who explain with meaning and do not give more homework to do and give the students a chance to read.

The teachers' encouraging or discouraging attitude may influence students' learning in terms of liking or disliking a subject area. It may result in either the student's excellence or failure in that subject. On the other hand students like those teachers who are considerate, who involve them in their learning, who encourage them, who also are able to understand their problems and whose ways of teaching are interesting for and relevant to them.

It can be argued that the teachers' own qualities, traits, behaviour and roles are seen as influencing students' attitudes towards learning. Their love, care and concern for their students, along with their commitment, support and help and the subsequent understanding of students' issues and problems are important aspects of good teaching. Notwithstanding the fact that classes are overcrowded, these effective aspects seem to play deeper role in making the teaching and learning effective.

### **Influence of their Teachers on the Research Participants**

All the research participants believed that they had good teachers who taught them with love. They were polite, caring and inspiring. Anita believed that 'they had a spirit, which is lost due to many problems and tensions. Such as: 'in those teachers were respected and parents supported them but today parents only complain and blame teachers, the situation has changed'.

Sara thinks that although memorization and lecture methods were the trends, her teachers valued students and gave them responsibilities. There were many opportunities for learning.

Nadia suggested: 'we used to get individual attention in our school, I was lucky we had good teachers, they had good teaching style and approaches ...'

Shehla asserted:

First thing, they were full of peace and ease; very loving and caring, they tried their best to teach as much as they could. In those times, students and teachers had peaceful environment, we never used to have difficulties in those times as we have today.

Sara, Nadia and Shehla asserted that their teaching has been influenced by their teachers, 'Unconsciously, I was using the same methods of teaching as they

were...'(Sara), while Anita believed that those times were different than their own because nowadays teachers have more stress and worries than the teachers of the yesteryears. Teachers' own personal and moral character, therefore, is thought to be important not only in serving as a role model, but also in grooming students' personalities. This is what Moore (2000; 2004) calls *charismatic*.

A significant point that comes out clearly is that although the methods and approaches of the past teachers were mostly teacher-centred; their care, personal attention, sense of seriousness, responsibility and the committed attitude towards their profession and on the command of the subject knowledge, were considered as highly inspiring and motivating factors. Students learned from them and liked them very much.

Teachers play a major role in enhancing the students' learning, especially in the context of Pakistan, where he/she may be the only resource available. In a context where learning is mostly passive and teacher-centred, and where teachers have authority and control over their students, their influence is one of the major determinants of student learning.

## **Teaching and Students' Learning**

Sara believed that learning takes place when students understand but saw understanding as difficult for most students to attain, as they memorized to reproduce information in the examinations. She suggested that even if the emphasis is on understanding, students do not have well enough writing power to articulate themselves in answering questions, hence it is likely, that they would do poor in their exams. 'They should understand what ever they are learning ... [but even] if they understand, they don't have the power to write the answers by themselves. Sara is making an interesting link between understanding and writing. It suggests that students' poor writing skills have implications on articulation of their thought and understanding. This opens the whole debate of 'language and thought' as has been propounded by Vygotsky.

Shehla also indicated lack of writing skills in students:

We have language problem here, children come from Urdu medium. ... [A] child in class six [first year of secondary school], cannot write his name properly; how can he write in English? Urdu medium child cannot cope up with English texts.

Shehla when probed further, said, 'no, [I teach] in Urdu, the material is in English. I have requested madam [head teacher] that I cannot explain in English, so I teach in Urdu only'. This shows the level of proficiency of a teacher in public English medium school.

The head teacher thinks that teachers exert a lot of influence on students:

Teachers have a lot of impact on students, their style of teaching impacts; children learn from teachers, they take their habits, so the teacher becomes the best model. (Anita)

Sara viewed teachers' own learning as a prerequisite for students' learning.

Until teacher herself doesn't learn, student learning cannot take place, there is a link between the two: if teacher is learning, then student will also learn, she will create for and give more opportunities to students': If teaching is good, learning will be good as well... students take whatever teacher gives them.... Even students might have many views, if we involve them that will enrich teaching and learning as well.

Nadia highlighted aspects of her own professional pre-service teacher training in which she learnt 'to motivate and involve students, children in their learning... We should give them the opportunity to share and speak, and then we should take them further from there'.

But she pointed out that it was not possible for her to apply her knowledge in the school,

...what ever we learn in terms of teaching approaches, when we come back to our government school, we cannot implement, so we become more confused and double minded, as we cannot use that knowledge, hence we are not satisfied with our teaching and performance.

For the head teacher the relationship between teaching and learning is like a mother and a child relationship:

Whatever the role of the mother is, it is the same... if a teacher is well educated, experienced, and has spirit to make their students the best, [she would] give such kind of teaching.



Conducive environment for learning is important because no matter how much effort a teacher makes or how well he/she may teach, if the environment for learning is not conducive, it is likely that teaching and learning will not be effective. A conducive environment for learning is said to be one in which all the stakeholders in the school believe that learning is an ongoing process. It takes place by learning from each other through sharing experiences of teaching; it is an environment in which schools provide learning resources, classrooms are interactive and students have plenty of opportunities to actively participate in their learning (Watkins 2003). These can include creative writing, making presentations and group discussions.

## **Learning and Assessment**

Purposes of assessment can enrich or impede learning. It is argued that one of the prime objectives of assessment is to help students improve their learning. Assessment *for* learning therefore, looks at the process rather than product of learning, diagnoses students' learning and gives feedback for what needs to be done next in order to improve their learning. If the purpose of assessment is testing to prove something as a product of learning, it is likely that it would direct teaching and learning towards reproduction of knowledge without much meaning making. It would show what instruction has been given through 'timed written tasks' with 'right answers' (Watkins 2003).

Learning based on rote memorization and regurgitation of facts and its oral or written reproduction in examinations (Hayes 1987; Warwick & Reimers 1995; Rehmani 2003) rewards better results. Passive and assessment driven approaches to learning are termed as *surface* (Marton and Saljo 1984; Marton et al. 1993), *superficial* (Ramsden 1992) or *thin* (Watkins 2001), reducing it to atomistic and unconnected facts (Gibbs, 1992) in comparison to *deep*, *transformative*, *rich* and *integrated* (Entwistle 1992; Gibbs 1992) approaches to learning, which are based on active participation, understanding, meaning making and critical reflection. These later approaches are generally missing from learning experiences in Pakistani schools.

In the context of Pakistan, it is generally the product of learning that is measured. This is truer at grade 9 and 10 levels, the terminating levels of secondary schooling, where public examinations are conducted. Research has shown that school and teacher-related factors have greater influence on students' learning outcomes (Avalos and Hadad 1981; Warwick and Reimers 1995).

The head teacher confirmed: yes we have teacher centered approaches only, because we have limitations. In classes 9th and 10th we focus more on curriculum because of the Board exams.... Sara's view is almost similar.

They [students] had to learn the traditional examination system; we were preparing our students for those exams, like machines. ... Because the way I teach influences students' learning. I teach so that they get good marks in exams, more and more, in this way it has influence on teaching and learning (Sara)

The head teacher stated that children learn as per the pattern of examination and teachers identify those areas of learning on which questions are likely to come in the examination.

Teachers teach well in the beginning but then they have to prepare students for exams, for rote learning. ... Teaching is from that point of view only, we make guesses that this chapter is important and this question is important so we try that children rote learn [those] well.

Teachers mostly teach for examination. Usually past years examination questions are repeated, and it becomes guesswork for teachers and students to see which questions are likely to come in the next exams, and hence they prepare accordingly. The study becomes limited. Anita reiterated, 'we identify the important topics and questions which they learn by heart and marks are given according to their reproduction. Children also learn from that perspective only'. Shehla stated:

For question papers we have one pattern only, it doesn't change and we cannot change. Marks system is fixed. ... Children think how they can get the passing marks; that is how they learn. It can be called examination oriented rote learning.

Students in the focus group opined: 'we prepare questions and answers, learn every thing, sleep little and prepare more'. Two of them stated the process: 'First I read questions, understand [them], and then remember (learn by heart), then write'. Another one said that soon after the school, 'I go to tuition and learn and remember, write [practice] three to four times [whatever] I have rote learned'. Only one of them suggested that he was not for the rote learning: 'Not by rote learning, I forget, so I try to understand and remember'.

The student also pointed out at the malpractices in the examination. They opined that many students try to cheat in examinations, a common phenomenon in Pakistan (Bhatti 1987; Khursheed 1993; Warwick and Reimers 1995; Greaney and Hasan 1998) and put the percentage of cheating as high as 60%. '60 percent children cheat; very few children are hard working. However they said firmly that there are those who do not like to cheat because, 'those who cheat have to answer to Allah'.

How much of the said has to do with schools, teaching and students' learning, their intellectual capabilities and socio-cultural backgrounds? Warwick and Reimers (1995) have cited a number of studies on student achievement in developing countries, which suggest that teachers and schools have much greater influence on their achievement than the students' background (p.106).

The above data suggests how classroom teaching and learning can be driven by an examination system that can reduce teaching and learning to a product, rather than process of learning (Watkins 2003). Teachers have come to believe that their job is to prepare students for examination only. It may be argued that an examination system in a particular context plays a determinant role in shaping teachers' conceptions of teaching.

## **Preliminary Findings and Conclusions**

In this case, I presented conceptions of teaching of Sara, her two colleague teachers and the head teacher. These conceptions were examined to ascertain what factors, including school culture and context, in which Sara worked, contribute in the development and shaping of her conceptions of teaching.

The data discussed above suggests that teachers' conceptions develop in a socio-cultural context that plays a crucial role in shaping approaches to teaching and learning. Factors such as teachers' own schooling experiences, ways in which their teachers taught them, the type of pre or in-service teacher education programmes, and the cultures of the schools where they teach influence their thinking and beliefs (Chan 2001) and play a determining role in shaping their conceptions about teaching.

Teaching was regarded as a responsible, serious, and sacred profession. Although it was not materially rewarding, it was intrinsically satisfying through what is called a 'psychic reward'. It is what Fullan and Hargreaves (1992:33) call 'important and central to sustaining teachers' sense of value and worth in their

work', yet it was challenging and demanding in terms of managing large classes and checking scores of students' copies.

Teachers used lecture methods, chalk and talk, transmissive, along with teacher-centred and authoritative approaches to teaching. Their conception about the scope of education was limited.

Collaboration and good relationship among teachers is significant, but school management's encouraging or discouraging attitude has a bearing on creating such a supportive culture.

The head teacher's beliefs in classroom control, strictly following and not deviating from curriculum content, completing the tight coverage schedule, rewarding those who managed their classes well, completion of checking students copies on time and teaching for examination purposes only, speak of the role of school management in creating collegiality. In such an environment it is natural that the last thing they would want to do is to discuss issues of teaching and learning and help their colleagues. This is the reason that some teachers did not take teaching seriously although they believed in teaching as a religious duty and wanted to teach well.

The teachers' averse attitude towards their professional development, lack of training opportunities, narrow understanding of the field of education and the classroom management problems, all indicate that there is something seriously wrong with the teacher pre-service training programmes, which seem to be failing in broadening trainee teachers' vision of teaching and learning. They seem to be lacking in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills of handling large classes. It is obvious that teachers find it difficult to handle large classes. Students do not have proper and comfortable seating facilities, hence classroom disruption becomes natural. No effective teaching and learning are likely to take place in such an environment.

Policy makers and school administration have to think hard on how to address these issues, bring reform in teacher training programmes and evaluate the factors that hamper effective classroom practice. A whole area of research is warranted in dealing with large classes.

In the context of Pakistan, teachers have tremendous influence on shaping the students' learning, where most students have little opportunities to engage themselves in independent learning; the teacher hence becomes the major source of learning for them. It has been argued that although teachers play a major part in students' learning, there are other factors that hinder effective learning.

Hence, teachers' own professional development and 'real world context in which teachers work' (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992, p.21) play a determinant role.

Teachers' rapport with the student was considered to be important in identifying and understanding their learning needs, in developing a trust in them so that they feel confident in sharing their problems.

A concept of the loving and caring teacher was considered important in students learning. This may be termed as a 'caring conception of teaching'. Teachers in some cases were seen as inspirational and motivating. Their encouragement and support can spark children's inclination and attitude towards learning.

Teachers' who believed that learning is an ongoing and a continuous process by considering students' prior knowledge and information as significant in building further learning, and at the same time being prepared to learn from their students, are significant concepts in understanding the approaches teachers could adopt towards teaching and learning.

On the other hand, those teachers who considered themselves as having sufficient knowledge thought that they were no longer students, and therefore, needed no further training or professional development, are likely to adopt passive and surface approaches to teaching and learning.

Again it is the system of examination that makes teaching and learning examination oriented. It leads to limited study and guessing work, and cheating; as reproduction and regurgitation is highly awarded. The findings denote that an examination system can have serious influences on conceptions of teaching and learning. Assessment *for* learning was not a widely known concept. Giving feedback for improvement and enhancement of learning was also limited.

Preliminary findings and some initial conclusions thus drawn from this study illuminate that teachers' schooling background, their own teachers' approaches to teaching, socio-cultural contexts of the society in which they live, the teachers' own knowledge, their understanding of teaching and learning, their professional development, the school environment and their colleague-teachers attitudes play significant roles in shaping teachers' concepts of teaching.

Teachers' concepts range from teacher-centered transmission and conventional approaches to child-centered approaches. However, active and transformative, reflective and reflexive conceptions did not significantly emerge.

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# Teachers as Leaders in the Pakistani Context

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## Introduction

*There are some indispensable questions pertinent to the notion “teachers as leaders in Pakistani context”: Can Pakistani teachers become leaders in their professional milieu? If yes, how can they be helped to discover a leader within themselves? What changes are required in curricula of teacher education in order to help teachers to become leaders?*

*School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative: A Report of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership (2001) argued, “Yet without richly qualified, dedicated, and enlightened state-of-the-art professional and political leadership, efforts to bring about genuine reform to enhance student learning are destined to suffer, possibly even to fail.” Generally there are four layers of educational leadership – state, district, principal and teacher. With the viewpoint that the quality of the teachers is the main contributing factor of student learning this paper examines ways through which the teachers can develop their leadership qualities as part of their professional development.*

*The paper first unpacks the notions of ‘teachers as leaders’ in different contexts and explains their implication in Pakistani school system. There is some discussion on the characteristics of teacher leaders and the roles they play or might play in the classroom, the school, and beyond the school. Finally it will present a review/critique of curricula of teacher education of few renowned institutes of the country (identification of the institutes will be kept confidential) on the basis of its strength and limitation in helping teachers develop their leadership qualities.*

## Teachers as Leaders

The word “leader” is usually used to refer to those who have formal key positions in an organization. Instead of considering leadership to be a trait, embedded in one’s personality the word is used to refer to someone who has a managerial or administrative position in an organization. In the school hierarchy the principal is thought to be a leader but a teacher is not.

Leadership has several characteristics. Someone’s ability to take an initiative in a situation that requires such an action is one of those characteristics. This

aspect of leadership is very much embedded in the role of a teacher as, “teaching has historically been a profession which granted some degree of autonomy in classroom (Flores, 2004, p.299)”.

Another characteristic of leaders is that they have power to affect somebody’s action, character or belief especially by providing examples for them to follow. Kerfoot (2003) noted that leaders could be distinguished from others by their ability to work in a group of diverse people and help everybody in the group learn. She said, “The best leaders have dirty shoulders because they are continually lifting others up” (Kerfoot, 2003. p. 148). No matter whether teachers are aware of their roles as leaders or not, if they are successful, they have to demonstrate their leadership qualities to make a difference. ‘Learning’ can rightly be considered as a synonym of ‘change’ and the process of learning is actually the process of bringing about change. Those who learn bring change in their perceptions, views, attitudes, and actions. Since teachers are the ones who help students go through the process of change. They can rightly be thought of as change agents. Leaders in any other field perform similar roles: helping others change their lives by thinking and acting differently. Giroux (2002) in an interview compiled by Aziz and Rizvi (2002. p11) articulated his role as a teacher as “my teaching is to provide conditions that enable them [students] to become agents, capable of governing and not just being governed, being able to take control of their own lives and how they mediate it with the larger society”. This is teacher leadership. Barth’s observation on the subject resembles that of Giroux: “Teachers harbor extraordinary leadership capabilities, and their leadership is a major untapped resource for improving our schools (2001, p.444)”.

There have been different viewpoints regarding teachers’ leadership as a means of school improvement. From 1970s to early 1980s school reforms in many parts of the world centred on the idea of assigning teachers with roles such as department chair or master teachers etc (Rowan, 1990) that required of them to exercise some forms of managerial tasks. But those changes failed to deliver the goods as it was observed that the new situation only picked up the teachers from classroom and deposited them in desk jobs where they found themselves to be detached from the teaching-learning process.

Subsequent reforms created some positions that were based on teachers’ expertise in being team leaders and curriculum developers.

The studies that were conducted to assess the impact of these reforms, however, revealed that putting teachers in formal positions do not always bring in positive change in instructional practices, nor do they contribute much towards changing

the wider school culture (Smylie, 1994). After these reforms there has been another shift in the approach, which connects teacher leadership to the classroom work and focuses on professional support that teachers can provide for their colleagues without taking new positions in the school (Shulman, 1987). Some studies (e.g. Hargreaves and Evans, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1984) found strong impact of such initiatives on school culture and considered them to be important factors transforming schools into learning communities.

Although there has been great emphasis on teacher leadership most of the teachers in many schools themselves do not consider assuming leadership in their workplaces by taking initiatives, bringing new ideas into their practices, helping others to develop and set new examples, a phenomenon that Barth (200P, p.443-444) has identified as a “sore spot” within the profession: teachers seeing themselves to be someone who have nothing to contribute to the school and simply thinking of themselves to be ‘mere’ teachers who have no leadership role in their schools.

Barth (2001) also cites Hample’s study in which he collected data from 10 schools to examine roles of the teachers in relation to their schools as leaders that is beyond their classroom and found that only 25% of teaching staff of the school possessed leadership qualities while rest of them were either “cynic”, “sleepy” or “yes- but” type who did not recognize leadership as an important dimension of their professional lives.

Today school reform movements all over the world emphasize greater involvement of each stakeholder in school improvement (Anderson, 2004). Notions of shared and distributed leadership lead the teachers to see beyond the classroom, participate in decision making and strive to be innovative and stop restricting themselves to simply following the beaten track and considering themselves tools in carrying out the tasks that have been planned for them by administrators.

## **Teacher Leadership in Pakistan**

There are some examples from different schools of Pakistan where teachers demonstrate their leadership skills by thinking and doing things differently, apart from mastering a body of knowledge and implementing curriculums, such as addressing the issues of students and their learning, curriculum, professional development of teachers, developing parent-school relationship. There are incidences where teachers’ innovative practices challenged and influenced others teachers to give up old practices and adopt new ones. Following are some

examples from Pakistan schools in which teachers pioneered some new practices in different areas of education.

## **Choosing Textbooks and Instructional Materials**

In Pakistan teachers regard textbooks to be the ultimate source of education and in which their role is simply to make students memorize the textbook. There are, however, some exceptions.

In a private school in Karachi, some teachers who had been teaching there for two to three years challenged the status quo and carved a niche for themselves by opting to have a say in the selection of books that they deemed appropriate for their pupils. They refused to be bullied into using the prescribed textbook published by the government. They nevertheless had to justify their action which they forcefully did by coming up with some very strong arguments that tore through the hesitation the school principal had in letting the teachers have their way. The teachers' reasons for going for the books they had chosen were so valid that the principal who had initially refused to accept the teachers' plea changed his mind.

This episode boosted the teachers' morale so much so that they dared to be more innovative in their teaching practice in later years. At another occasion requiring an original idea they bundled up several textbooks and culled from each book the material they thought was relevant for their lessons, modifying a chapter here and redesigning some there as well as taking help from some reference books. They even designed some instructional material on their own.

A similar approach was also observed in a rural non-government school in Mitari, Sindh. Here neither the school nor the parents of the students were able to afford to buy textbooks. Two teachers from that school with a lot of perseverance who were amply backed up by the parents of the students and other members of the community came up with the idea of developing their own textbooks.

The contents of these textbooks included folk tales, stories about the village and information about some local crops and other farming practices. Everything was presented in the mother tongue of the students. The books were handwritten. At every step in the process of writing the books the conscientious teacher were given a helping hand by members of the village community.

## **Evaluating Teacher Performance**

Usually in the evaluation of teachers' performance students' opinions about their teachers are not elicited but in a school in Karachi a teacher with a pioneering spirit saw the need for taking into account the students' views on what makes a good teacher and on what basis do the students judge their teachers. The teacher had taken a very bold step by giving a voice to the students in categorizing a teacher into a certain bracket according to their performances. She developed criteria of assessing teachers' performance with the help of students and then asked them to evaluate her performance against the criteria. She analysed students' responses and shared them with the school heads and teachers. She invited her colleagues to consider the pros and cons of including students' opinion in teachers' evaluation. Initially her colleagues strongly opposed the idea but they later accepted that the idea behind involving students in evaluating teachers' performances was to develop a shared understanding of teaching and learning among teachers and students.

## **Designing Staff Development and In-service Programmes**

There are several incidences where teachers after attending inservice teacher development courses designed workshops and courses for professional development for their fellow teachers. Some of those teachers who continuously engage with professional associations have assumed informal roles of leaders in their curriculum areas as they have learnt a lot from their experiences of the association. These teachers have become useful resource for their fellow teachers. These teachers have taken a lot of initiative to enhance culture of teaching and learning.

These are some examples of teachers' successes in their roles as teacher leaders. There has also been research in this area. Followings are the findings of two research studies.

Rizvi and Elliot (2005) conducted research in government primary schools in Karachi, Pakistan where reforms had been initiated. They reported that the teachers had been given authority in different affairs of their classrooms and also had acquired opportunities to perform several leadership roles in and outside of their classrooms. Many of those teachers were mentors and subject coordinators.

However another study recently conducted by a research team of The Aga Khan University (the author was one of the members of the team) had a very different



experience. The team observed government schoolteachers from six districts of Pakistan. They were primary and lower secondary school teachers and had professional qualifications from certificate of education to Bachelor and Master's degrees in education. The team found that the teachers had restricted roles, their activities mainly revolving around their classroom teaching. It was observed that the majority of teachers had no other role to play in their work place except implementing the curriculum in the classrooms.

These divergent outcomes of the two studies show that there are some powerful forces within the school culture that work against teacher leadership. If conditions in which teachers exercise leadership (as in the schools where reforms had been initiated) are favorable then "all teachers can lead, as all children can learn" if the environment is conducive for their learning (Barth, 2001). Teachers should also be required to equip themselves with knowledge and skills to understand the nature of the forces that prevent them from demonstrating their leadership potential.

## **Teacher Education Pertinent to Teacher Leadership**

As mentioned earlier in this paper that every teacher has potential to lead and their leadership is very important for school improvement as single leader or a group of individuals cannot meet the diverse challenges that schools face on daily basis. Assuming that leadership qualities can be learned and taught, teacher education courses can help teachers realize this ambition by nurturing the seeds of leadership and bringing them to fruition (Turnbull, 2005). These courses should help teachers anticipate what they will be required to perform in their professions and work to build on their expertise to be ready join the threshold of their work life.

A look on the curricula of teacher education courses of five institutes helps one to gauge the opportunities these courses offer to their student to develop their knowledge, acquire skills and form attitudes required for being effective leaders in their professional lives.

The teacher education institutes whose curricula were reviewed for this paper are being referred here as A, B, C and D. All the four are located in Karachi.

Generally the institutes admit local people who have completed their first degree. The information about the curricula was gathered from the institutes in the form of course outlines, course handbook, and students' prospectus, and information booklet.

Following is the discussion on the Bachelor of education (BEd) programme offered by Institute A.

- The current information booklet of the institute happened to be a decade old i.e. it was published in 1996. The booklet is a description of “courses of studies for Bachelor of education offered in 1996 and onward.” It is a matter of great concern that the institute did not bother to revise the booklet to bring it to the level of the needs of the present.
- The information booklet does not give any clue how the institute would help student teachers address the issues in a globalized and rapidly changing world. Those graduating from this institute would have a tough time catching up with the current approaches of teaching, learning and school improvement when they join their workplaces as professionals.
- In the information booklet nothing is said about the overall objectives of the Bachelor’s programme. However objectives are given for each course individually. The objectives do not entails developing teachers’ leadership potential
- The names of prescribed textbooks are mentioned in description of different courses along with there is fairly long reading list but most of the readings are of from 1960s to 1980s. As the notion of teacher leader emerged in the 1990s as an off shoots of the concepts of shared and distributed leadership, it seems that Instituted A have not incorporated the idea of teacher leadership in its courses.
- Out of the five core courses offered by the institute, one course is on school Organization and Management. The course outline shows that the course aims to prepare students to take some administrative and managerial role in the school such as developing school timetable, managing physical resources and keeping school records etc. The elements of leadership such as teachers’ professionalism, teacher learning, professional development, reflective practices are missing from the course. Also the word leadership is missing throughout the programme. However quite often they use terms managers and administrator for future roles of the teachers.

The courses in BEd programmes offered by Institutes B and D are very much similar to the courses offered by Institute A. The general objectives of the courses are not mentioned in the information booklet, only names of the courses are there. The institutes suggest prescribed textbooks for each course. From the

information present in the textbooks and the booklet it seems that they have not included teacher leadership aspects in their programmes.

However there is much evidence to consider that Institute D views leadership as important dimension of teacher development. Following is some characteristics of BEd programme offered by Institute D

- One of the aims of the courses offered by the institute is to “meet the introductory needs of practitioners who will occupy positions of influence in the educational community”.
- In the information handbook one of the anticipated attributes of the graduates of the programme is mentioned as the “ability to take a leadership role in their subject areas and in their local communities”.
- Institute D offers a course on school organization and management. Detail of the course shows that they did not specifically include teacher leadership notion in this course however other courses especially courses of curriculum studies include curriculum development, mentoring, microteaching which show that they have embedded concepts of teacher leadership in the courses.

## **Conclusion**

The notion of teachers working as leader in informal settings is relatively a new concept and it is not very much practised in Pakistan schools. However researchers (e.g. Hatch, 2005) have claimed that teacher’s credibility and expertise influence, people, policy and performance more than the teachers’ formal leadership positions. And the informal teacher leaders are more decisive factor in bringing whole school improvement and sustainable change in school culture. Barth (2001) has argued that every teacher can lead if they are developed as leaders not as followers. However, the available information about teacher education courses of some of the selected institutes do not provide evidence that they are helping their students to develop their potential as teacher leader rather the teachers are only prepared to take on day-to-day responsibilities of managing a classroom. However one institute out of the selected institutes seems to be more concerned with respect to developing teacher’s leadership potential. It is hoped that the institute will play a vital role in promoting idea of teacher leadership in the wider community. In the absence of valid statistical data, nothing is claimed categorically about the quality of teacher education courses. To be able to do so would require systematic study to

assess quality of teacher education programmes and the impact of these programmes on teachers' performances. The purpose of the paper was to underline the need that teacher education programs should incorporate a 'teacher leader component' as a means of preparing new teachers for the practical issues of school governance and the nature of the teacher leadership.

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# **Fundamentally Different, Essentially the same: A study of the impact of School Effectiveness Research on an international school community in Pakistan, and suggestions for the creation of a new paradigm of effectiveness.**

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## **Abstract**

*Schools strive for excellence and the notion of an elusive set of correlates that that can measurably account for the improved results shown by a particular school is one that is attractive to both politicians and school leaders alike. Since the pessimism of Colman (1966) and Jencks (1972) in the 1960s, researchers (Levine & Lezotte, 1990, Reynolds et al. 1996, Creemers 1996, Sammons et al. 1999) have been seeking to identify ways in which lessons learned in effective schools can lead to an improvement within the wider school community. This paper seeks to examine the extent to which the findings of School Effectiveness Research have permeated the ideas and aspirations of a unique school community in Karachi, Pakistan. Whilst the school itself should not be considered a model of education within Pakistan, it is a useful starting point for a discussion centred upon the dangers of the globalisation of a homogenised theory of education. The study details the increased levels of political influence that effectiveness research has experienced within the UK and globally through the activities, political and economic, of trans-national organisations. Considering criticisms of its lack of sociological awareness and narrow functionalist outcome measurements, the study challenges its transfer across national and cultural boundaries, particularly in the light of studies being completed in developing countries. Fertig cautions against the danger of accepting 'the assumption that the secrets of school effectiveness could be identified in the developed world and then transferred into school systems operating within a different cultural framework' (2000, p.389). The paper draws upon the emergent literature on education in Pakistan, documentation and policies from the Pakistan government and the school and current research in the field of School Effectiveness globally. This was combined with the findings of a series of interviews with members of the school community which identified their own opinions about priorities in good schooling and the extent to which these agreed with the received canon of effectiveness as identified by Sammons (Sammons, 1999). Similarities are discussed and trends in new ideas are identified to form the creation of a new paradigm of effectiveness for the school that reveals the emergence of a sociological*

*aspect to schooling. The study seeks to contribute towards a dialogue on effectiveness that encourages leaders within education to be both reflective and reflexive in providing a culturally relevant, socially just and equitable education.*

## **Introduction**

Here are the great thoughts, the great thoughts of Western civilization are in this corpus: you guys sit there and learn them, read them and learn them, and be able to repeat them...(Chomsky, 2003, p.234)

Whether globalisation is viewed as a internationalist enterprise of interrelating nations, or the dominance of capitalist ideals manifesting themselves through heightened levels of influence exerted by trans-national companies and organisations such as UNESCO or the World Bank (Welch, 2001, p.476), it has fostered the development of a 'new imperialism' (Tikly, 2004, p.174). What is clear through the examination of the reports and policies of both these organisations and national governments (Govt. of Pakistan EFA Plan, p.116), is that the findings of school effectiveness research lie at the heart of plans to improve education (Gray, 1999, p.29).

This study examines how the community members of an international school in Karachi exemplify the globalising mission of school effectiveness research in the twenty-first century. Does the understanding of 'effectiveness' that has evolved in the developed world, offer anything to a school experiencing different challenges and are the key tenets of effectiveness research truly, 'a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing?' (Freire, 1996, p.53).

The position of the school community within the diverse landscape of educational provision in Pakistan, the nature of its internationally recruited staff and pupil body, and its delivery of a 'foreign' educational curriculum in the English language, gives it a specifically 'global' identity. Interviews with members of the school community identify the extent to which the factors identified by school effectiveness researchers are evident in the opinions and praxis of the interviewees; whilst comparisons and analysis are used to identify a new paradigm of effectiveness.

The study aims to encourage educators, policy makers, teachers and school managers to break free from their own historical acceptance of the 'hegemony of western knowledge' (Crossley & Tikly, 2004, p.149) by engaging in the

development of culturally, and contextually, relevant ideals of effectiveness that reflect social justice and equality.

## **The Rise and Rise of School Effectiveness Research**

What began in the 1960's as a response to Coleman (Coleman et al., 1966) and Jencks (Jencks et al., 1972) is the well documented reaction to their findings that schools had very little impact on the educational outcomes of their pupils. Such pessimism was refuted by both Edmonds (1979) and Rutter et al. (1979) whose studies concluded that:

...To an appreciable extent children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution.  
(Rutter et al. 1979, p.179)

Comparative studies of different institutions have allowed researchers (Levine & Lezotte, 1990, Reynolds et al. 1996, Sammons et al. 1999) to draw conclusions across schools about factors that can be said to contribute to their enhanced effectiveness.

The concept of a series of correlations that can be identified to improve schools generically, is an attractive one to both practitioners and politicians alike. The suggestion that 'schools do not make a difference but that they make *all* the difference,' (Reynolds cited in Grace, 1995, p.117) removes from politicians the need to address the difficult sociological questions raised by the critics of school effectiveness. This is a very real concern, particularly when considering applying the findings of school effectiveness across national and cultural borders. However, school effectiveness is by its very nature optimistic; avoiding the 'pessimism that everything is determined by students and resource 'input' factors' (Davies cited in White & Barber, 1997, p.30). As such it has a lot to offer educationalists involved in a wide range of activities from policy development to school and classroom management.

## **Factors of Effective Schools**

The framework within which this study is based is a set of correlates identified by Sammons (Sammons, 1999) which provide an overview of the research (Scheerens, 1989 & Levine and Levotte, 1990) that is accessible to a broad range of practitioners within the education field; this is intended to encourage debate and application, beyond academic circles (Sammons, 1999, p.185).



School effectiveness has primarily focussed on two specific methods of measuring the 'productivity' of schools; what Scheerens calls 'education production function', and 'process-output' studies (Scheerens, 2001, p. 359). Simplified, these are the materials and people needed to create an effective environment, and the interrelation between teacher and pupils that takes place within the classroom further adds to it.

The inherent danger within 'output' studies however is their requirement, so loved by politicians, for measurable achievements. Educational sociologists raise specific concerns here, (Angus, 1993, p.333-345) questioning the limitations of the methodology of key studies in the early nineties (Reynolds and Cuttance (Eds.), 1992, Scheerens, 1992, McGaw, Piper, Banks & Evans, 1992). These studies are accused of ignoring political agendas, over reliance on standardised test data, an inability to effectively account for context, functionalising of the education process and a further failure to ensure balance in the background of participating schools (Angus, 2001, p.333-340). School effectiveness researchers are aware of these concerns and although Thrupp challenges (2001, 7-40) their 'non-response' to criticisms, Sammons was keen to ensure that this improved methodology was in place when considering her own correlates of effectiveness (Sammons, 1999, p.191,192).

### **Eleven Factors for Effective Schools**

1. Professional Leadership	Firm and purposeful A participative approach The leading professional
2. Shared vision and goals	Unity of purpose Consistency of practice Collegiality and collaboration
3. A learning environment	An orderly atmosphere An attractive working environment
4. Concentration on teaching and learning	Maximisation of learning time Academic emphasis Focus on achievement
5. Purposeful teaching	Efficient organisation Clarity of purpose Structured lessons Adaptive practice

6. High expectations	High expectations all round Communicating expectations Providing intellectual challenge
7. Positive reinforcement	Clear and fair discipline Feedback
8. Monitoring progress	Monitoring pupil performance Evaluating school performance
9. Pupil rights and responsibilities	Raising pupil self-esteem Positions of responsibility Control of work
10. Home-school partnership	Parental involvement in their children's learning
11. A learning organisation	School-based development

(Sammons, 1999, p.195)

This paper does not have the space to discuss the individual correlates in depth but they serve their purpose as a summary listing. Although many teachers in the UK would recognise the framework as their own, within the context of this study it is necessary to challenge its usefulness in influencing improvement within a school in Pakistan, regardless of how 'British' that school may be. Whilst not denying the usefulness of any of the factors, even Sammons expresses caution about using the correlates per se internationally, as 'the results of such studies are unlikely to be directly transferable to other contexts' (Sammons, 1999, p.193). Fertig also cautions against the danger of accepting 'the assumption that the secrets of school effectiveness could be identified in the developed world and then transferred into school systems operating within a different cultural framework' (Fertig, 2000, p.389).

## People and Places

A fuller version of the methodology of the research is included in Ryan (2004) but a brief description needs to be included here to justify its validity. The nature of the school, its stakeholders and the methods that were used to collect data are therefore described briefly here.

## The School

The School at the centre of this study is quite unique within Karachi, and perhaps throughout Pakistan. Although it has existed as a school since the 1950's the culture of the school has changed radically in the last decade from an truly international school catering for the children of expatriate workers (primarily, though not exclusively, from the UK), to become a part of the large private educational sector filling the gaps left by failing state provision (Habib, 1998, Korson, 1993, p.72-73). Whilst many schools offer 'British Educational Systems' such as IGCSE, 'O' Levels and International Baccalaureate, it remains the only school delivering such a curriculum through the use of UK trained classroom teachers.

## The People

The present research is based primarily, but not solely, upon nine interviews with members of the school community. The structure of the interviews was based upon the need to provide answers to the following questions:

- What factors would interviewees expect to find in an effective school?
- How will I find out what significance individuals place on their own factors?
- How will I elicit the interviewee's attitude towards Sammons Factors?

Tables 1 & 2 show the efforts made to provide a rich cross section of the school community, capturing its differences in terms of gender, nationality, educational background, experiences and culture.

Table 1: Educational Background of Interviewees

<b>Role in School</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Post 16 Education</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>
Administrator	UK State	UK Degree	20-30	1
Deputy	UK State	UK Degree + PGCE	40-50	12
Secondary Science	France State	Fr Degree + PGCert	30-40	11
PTA Chair	UK State Primary UK Private 11-14 Pak Private 14-18	UK Degree, Msc, PhD	30-40	0
KS3 Co-ordinator	UK State	UK Degree + PGCE	30-40	3

Urdu Teacher	Pak Private	Pak Degree	30-40	1
Pre-Nursery Teacher	UK State Primary Pak Private	Pak Degree Montessori UK	20-30	3
Support Teacher	Pak + UAE Private	Pak Degree and MSc	20-30	1
Board Member	UK State/Private Lebanon Private	US Degree UK MA	40-50	0

Table 2: Ethnicity of Interviewees

Role in School	Ethnicity	Other considerations
Administrator	British Pakistani	Lived exclusively in the UK until last year.
Deputy	White British	Brought up on Sark, lived in Zimbabwe for past 3 years
Secondary Science	White European	Muslim convert who has lived in Pakistan for the past 10 years.
PTA Chair	British Pakistani	Brought up in UK and working in Pakistan on an expatriate contract for a multinational company.
KS3 Co-ordinator	British Pakistani	Lived exclusively in the UK until last year.
Urdu Teacher	Pakistani	
Pre-Nursery Teacher	Pakistani	
Support Teacher	Pakistani	
Board Member	Danish/Iraqi	Has also lived in US, UK and Lebanon

Interviewees were initially questioned on their own views about what makes a school effective before being asked to rank the correlates drawn up by Sammons. The resultant findings identified similarities and differences in addition to the importance interviewees placed on specific correlates.

The range included in the selection procedure also attempted to eradicate, or at least neutralise, the effects of the ‘dynamics of power’ (Winter, 1991, p.260), relating to the identity of the interviewer and the influence that might be brought to bear by my position within the school, my ethnicity or nationality and my gender.

## **‘What Works’**

During the open stage of the interviews, the factors identified by Sammons were referred to at least once by all respondents.

In terms of priority, the answers revealed a great deal about the priorities the community has in delivering schooling with a strong focus on teaching and learning, the environment the children and staff work in, and the partnership between home and school. At a more detailed level, differences in focus occur with teachers regarding the needs of the learning environment differently to the interviewee, stating that ‘effective schools need effective toilets!’ (See also Prenton, 2000, p.48). The notion of a school community was very significant although due to its position within the private sector, as there is a different dynamic between the various stakeholders in the school than that which would be found in a UK state school.

Much less consideration, even from staff, was given to the internal organizational structures and management of the school. Many interviewees saw the role of the head teacher as negligible in terms of the daily life of the school; although this has to be considered in the light of the different nature of their roles outside of the UK (Foskett and Lumby, 2003, p. 186). The question of ‘How do we know children are doing well?’ also featured less significantly, although this remained important to parent interviewees. Even so, interviewees expressed a concern that children were treated primarily according to their individual needs and achievements, rather than in relation to their results in quantitative assessments.

## **A New Paradigm for Effectiveness**

Even within a school that contains many of the same characteristics as a ‘British’ school, key differences began to emerge that highlighted the need for a reflective and reflexive approach for measuring effectiveness. These new factors of effectiveness address the specific needs of the school and arise from its sociological, fiscal, cultural and religious context.

1. Efficient Administration and Communication
2. Human Resource Management
3. A secure funding structure
4. The development of ICT within the school

5. A moral aspect to the curriculum
6. Extra-curricular activities

These 'new' factors can be divided up into two distinct groups: those factors focussing on the efficient organisation of the school (1-4), and those concerning the nature of schooling itself (5 & 6).

## **Systems and Structures**

Even with the moves made towards self-management, schools in the UK are able to draw upon a vast array of professional resources and expertise to ensure the efficient running of the school. Computerised Management systems are in place, Teachers have the security of agreed pay and conditions, and all the staff receives regular professional development opportunities. Within the context of a school in Karachi, such presumptions cannot be made, and inputs that are perceived to be a given in the formation of correlates for the 'developed' world, actually need to be constructed in the present case.

The school management has to create systems of communication and administrative procedures that ensure the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis. The role of the administration staff is much broader than would be expected in a UK school, and has a range of differing priorities. Both the UK and Pakistani governments have recognised the need to free up teaching staff to complete administrative duties (Laeq, 2002, p.80-81) but ascertaining how much of this is practical for a private school is complex. A teaching body whose instructional time is maximised is of huge benefit to the school (Fuller, 1987, p.258).

Interviewees wanted a greater freedom for staff to both adopt and act upon specific responsibilities. The creation of a policy that allowed staff to avail themselves of professional development opportunities to enhance their professional practice was seen as a key determinant in improving the performance of the school. The recognition of staff performance through a pay spine built upon meritocracy, would lead to initiative and development, which could only serve to make the school more effective.

An inevitable equation in running a private school is the need to ensure that funding is secure. Effectiveness research that has focussed specifically on the developing world, clearly identifies the need for high quality resources (DfID, 1998 and Fuller, 1987) and the financial implications of this are serious.

Interviewees clearly identified the connection between adequate funding through fees, donors and the benefits of charitable status, and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.

I have included ICT as a factor of effectiveness because the interviewees addressed it as such. Stoll and Fink (1996) have written about the overlap between effectiveness research and school improvement, and some of the ideas that interviewees had in relation to ICT identified it more as an improvement tool than an effective outcome. It was not so much that the presence of cutting edge ICT equipment within a school revealed the effectiveness of processes and systems that had resulted in its purchase, but that ICT was seen as a valuable tool in enhancing the effectiveness of both the administrative and academic sides of school life.

## **The Purpose of Schooling**

Two further factors were identified by the interviewees, which relate more directly to the purpose of schooling and exemplify an effective school.

### **A Moral Aspect to the Curriculum**

Angus expresses surprise at the lack of concern for schooling outcomes other than the academic:

One searches in vain for any discussion of ways in which schools might attempt to be effective in a social and cultural, as well as in the educational, sense....one might expect to see some discussion of how schools attempt to articulate with the cultures of their pupils. (Angus, 1993, p.344)

It was primarily those members of the school community who had a role outside the teaching staff that made the call for a socially responsible curriculum containing aspects of citizenship and Islamic education. In doing so, they reflected current trends in both the UK and Pakistan (Pakistan Government National Education Policy, Objective 2.1). For the school to be considered 'effective', the curriculum should be adapted to the local context, whilst retaining the essential core values of its 'British' basis. The lack of quality public education in Pakistan has led to an inequality in educational provision often seen within the developing world (Lewin, 1993, p.24) and the school at the centre of this study is very close to the top of the pile. Interviewees felt strongly that this created a moral requirement upon the school to include a program encouraging

social awareness and action for all the stakeholders. The effectiveness of the school should not be measured simply on the results children achieve in internationally recognised examinations, but on its social and moral impact, both directly and indirectly, and on the community it serves.

## **Extra-curricular Activities**

A final area that revealed the interviewees concern for 'effectiveness' beyond academic outcomes was the recognition of a need for the school to develop the child holistically. It was considered that a broad program of extra-curricular activities was a clear indicator of the schools' ability to cater for a range of skills and activities that were perhaps minimised within the curriculum. In a context where the infrastructure, climate and security issues make children's social lives much more challenging than those of many children in the developed world, an 'effective' school is one that can begin to fill these gaps.

## **Conclusion**

This study presents only a glimpse of the possibilities for extending the research into school effectiveness in Pakistan. It is however, a glimpse that offers some hope for those who wish to 'act upon and transform (the) world' (Friere, 1996, p.14). Focussing as it does on educational provision for what Ali (Ali, 2002) calls the 'New Elite', its limitations can also be a strength. It cannot be said to make any claims with regard to the vast majority of schools in Pakistan, such a task is to be anticipated with enthusiasm, yet by drawing on interviewees from such an autonomous and heteroglot establishment, it provides us with many lessons to learn. The freedom the school community has in creating its own vision gives it the opportunity to model a level of flexibility in both achieving and measuring effectiveness, which has relevance beyond its own context. This is the perfect opportunity for 'loose coupling' (Lauder et al. 1998, p.60).

This process of adapting the existing canon and creating new factors offers an approach to measuring schools effectiveness, which presents a model for schools to follow, rather than a mould to which they should conform. There is an opportunity to avoid the inflexible transformation of theory into policy by freeing schools to be more than human resource factories for the next economic miracle. Free of the constraints of functionalist-output measurements, real devolution should empower schools to manage their own communities to the benefit of all those within, creating aims and objectives that recognise their individual needs. Rather than accepting the 'great thoughts of western civilization' as defined



truths, educators in Pakistan should be encouraged to engage critically with proffered thoughts, defining a reflective and reflexive praxis for themselves.

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# **Development and Implementation of Career Planning Module and Learning Motivation among Low Achievers in Malaysian Secondary School**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper describes development of career planning module that can enhance learning motivation among low achievers or at-risk secondary students. This module was developed using Career Theory proposed by Holland. The theory suggests six personality types (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional). The module has four components that could help students increase learning motivations and their study skills. Thirty-four qualified school counselors were selected from schools located in six different zones in Malaysia. They were given an experiential learning of the career planning workshop which lasted for three days. They were then asked to conduct the career planning workshop with their students. This paper also discusses implications of such workshop on other groups of students such as students with special needs.*

## **Introduction**

Children regardless of academic performance, dream about being successful in their personal and professional life. Some children went into their adolescents and adulthood following those dreams and pursuing them relentlessly, while others never realize those dreams and pessimistically took what life has to offer without disputing their needs to pursue their dreams. What makes these children different in their pursuance of career preparation? Hughes and Karp (2004) indicate that participating in school-based career development help students achieve better grades, better relationship with teachers, increase career planning, greater knowledge of career, improve self-esteem, improve self-knowledge and decrease career indecision.

A study conducted by Castellano, Stone, Stringfield, Farley and Wayman (2004) shows that student who participated in career and technical education gained long-term and short-term benefits in academic work as well as planning for

academic course taking. They posit that students who complete both a strong academic curriculum and vocational program of studies have better outcomes in their job search, as compared to students who only pursue only academic achievement or vocational/career planning program. Inevitably, strong focus on academic work alone, is not sufficient in getting a good job. Career awareness and career planning is necessary as complementary activities to ensure high employability among students in the field of their interest.

Castellano, Stringfield, Stone and Lewis (2002) suggest that career preparation should begin as early as the elementary school age group. The career preparation should begin with career awareness at the elementary level, and should be followed by career exploration at the secondary school level. They suggested that career preparation components should include; (a) exposure to broad array of career path, experiences and occupations, (b) building of relevant skills, academic knowledge and personal competencies required in the work place, and (c) opportunities for students to tailor career experiences to meet their personal needs. Career preparatory activities should also be seen as a tool for bridging process between academic theories students learn in schools and real-world applications.

Researchers and writers in the area of career planning (Benz, Yovanoff & Doren, 1997; Bremer & Madzar, 1995; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Salleh, Ibrahim, & Amat, 1998) suggest that effective career development activities should integrate academic and non-academic components. Specifically, the components should include:

- A process for career planning and goal setting
- Alignment of school-based career preparatory experiences with employer and occupational requirements and with postsecondary education plans
- Teaching of basic skills needed for career success and growth.

In developing acquisition of employability among students, researchers such as Bremer and Madzar (1995), Bailey and Huges (1999), Luecking and Fabian (2000) and Kohler (1994) propose a number of strategies which includes:

- Instruction in employability skills
- Assessment of career interest and abilities
- Exposure to understanding of workplace expectations and conditions
- Life skills instruction

- Development in areas such as self-determination, self-evaluation, planning, and social behavioral skills
- Job seeking activities

Based on findings in research in career planning tries to promote a career planning module that could help low achieving students studying in Malaysian secondary school develop awareness, and explore their capabilities in expanding career planning for themselves. This paper discusses the development and implementation of the career planning workshop conducted by the school counselors on low achieving students in Malaysian schools.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Reports in Malaysian daily newspaper insinuate that condescending behaviors among non-school aged adolescent is on an increase. These adolescent considered as low achievers are said to be involved in activities such as gangsterism, bullying, theft, free sex and substance abuse. According to Robiah (1994), low achieving students also have passive attitude towards learning activities in their classroom. Concomitantly, Kamaliah (1992) suggests that low motivation to learn leads to failure among students in getting better result in academic performance. This continuous vicious cycle, will envelop the students into more negative environment that will produce more disruptive behaviors. Although, at present at least one qualified counselor are placed at each secondary school in Malaysia to help guide the students, the ratio is too big. Subsequently, it will require the school counselors an effective program of career education to help these big number of students.

In Malaysia, more than 200,000 students graduate from high school every year. Ten percent of these students will proceed to tertiary education either in public or private colleges or universities locally or abroad. The concerned is with the rest of the 90% of this student's population. If not guided carefully, these students will be lost in the open market system and the government will not be able to tap their full potentials that could help in the nation building process.

At present, the career monitoring system is conducted by the Labour Department in Malaysia. High school graduate who are not successful in seeking a place in any tertiary education can register for job placement at the department. However, this process is not mandatory, and even so, it only act as an extrinsic motivation for the students to seek job opportunity. What is more important is to develop within themselves the need to plan their own career and ensuring that the planning will lead to career of their choice. A study conducted by Amla et. al

(2002) showed that career guidance strategies can influence students involvement in learning, and develop higher motivation for learning. Inevitably, these students need to be exposed to career education that is comprehensive and promote the 3 aspects of career education; namely: motivation to learn, career planning and study skills.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To develop a comprehensive and effective career planning module
2. To successfully implement the module with school counselors who in then wil proceed with similar activities to their low achieving students.
3. To examine problems encountered during the implementation of the career planning workshop.

## **Methodology**

This study used pre-and post-test experimental research design with control group. This experimental research design is very suitable to this study which try to see the correlation between the module and learning motivation among the two groups. The experimental group were given the treatment through the implementation of the career planning module. Meanwhile the control group were not received anything of the treatment. Both of the groups were given the pre-and post test at the beginning and after the workshop. We then can clearly compared the result between the two groups and make a conclusion whether the module had effected the learning motivation or not.

## **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The sample consisted of 1,360 Form Four students from 34 schools in Malaysia. The sample were selected randomly using academic achievement criteria and age. They are 16 years old students and had achieved a low result in Lower Secondary Examination.

## **Description of Career Planning Module**

The career planning module which used in this study was developed by Salleh, Ibrahim and Amat (1998). This module contains learning and career planning activities which had been arranged systematically in order to enhance learning motivation among the students. It has 4 main components which are:

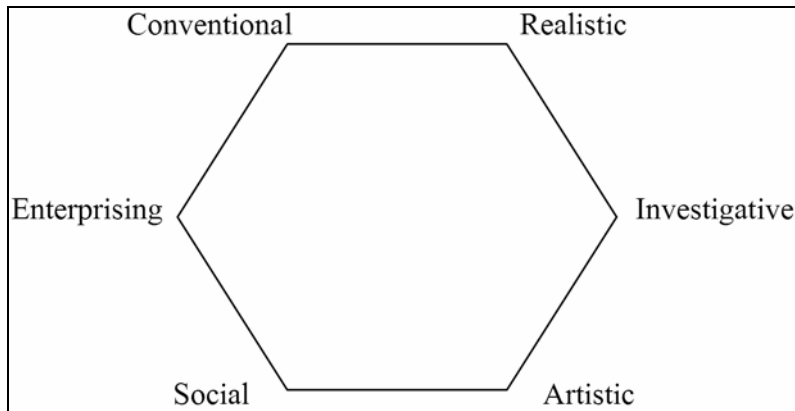
## Workshop Program Information

The workshop program information provides a set of information and schedule of the career workshop to the counselors and the students. This information is a guideline for them and to prepare themselves to be ready in the workshop. At least they will get a general view of what will be happen in the career workshop. This workshop program information also developed to guide school counselors conduct the career workshop effectively. There are three inventories that counselors have to administer to the students as pre and post test in the workshop which are:

1. Learning Motivation Inventory
2. Career Planning Inventory
3. Study Skills Inventory

## Self-Directed Search Inventory (Malay version)

Holland theory of personality becomes the underlying tenets of the Career Planning Module. The theory suggests 6 personality type that influence career planning and career choice. These personalities are Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. They are placed alongside each other as shown by the following diagram.



The Self-Directed Search Inventory (SDS) then was developed by Holland (1973) based on this theory of personality and career environment. It then was translated by Amla (1984) for utilized by Malaysian population. SDS is a very popular inventory since it had been translated to more than hundred of languages. SDS Inventory itself contains three main part which are; (a) Job of interest, (b) Job of knowledge and competency, and (c) List of career. The



students will answer the items in the inventory based on what they think suit them. Normally it took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the inventory. SDS offers a three-point codes which guide the students to get their own codes based on what they answered in the test.

## **Career Information and Planning**

Another part of this module is a six-set of Career Dictionary which provide a lot of information about the selected jobs. There were about a thousand of career list that had been grouping in six different groups which are Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. Students were determined their personality type such as SEA, RIA, ECR, ASI and others by doing the SDS Inventory. After get their own codes, they were sits in group and discuss their personality type. They also discuss job choices using the six-set Career Dictionary and try to match their personality with the career choices. This module also provides a career planning form which guides the students to plan their own interest career which they choose from the Career Dictionary. There are some activities that need the students to do in a group and through discussion in order to complete the career planning stage. They will search for career information of course related to their career interest within local and overseas institute of higher education. They also evaluate requirements needed to enter the particular courses which lead them to discuss about school subjects that can help them achieve their career ambition.

## **Study Skills**

Students will evaluate their current performances in each school subjects and will compare them with the requirements needed to enter the particular courses at the higher education institute. They then discuss the most appropriate study skills that help them to improve their academic achievement. The students also had been exposed to a study skill from counselors which offered them a lot of knowledge and information about the study skills. This will help them to improve their way of study and lead them to the smart study concept.

## **Implementation of Career Planning Module**

This career planning module was implemented in two-day workshop in selected schools. This method approach had been recommended by American School Counselor Association (1997) which was claimed can increase the students' academic achievement through career exploration activities. Thirty-four school

counselors teaching in school distributed within 6 different zones in Malaysia were selected randomly to help implement the career planning workshop at their respective school. These counselors were between the age of 25 to 45 years old. All of them are positioned as full time school counselors, and function mainly to help students deal with their personal and academic problems. They had been trained in a three-day training workshop to expose the career planning module. With this exposure, they can understand about the module clearly and will able to run the module as an expert. They then implement the career workshop in their schools in the same way they had trained. The two-day career workshop in schools was conducted as the following schedule:

<b>Day 1</b>	
08.00 - 08.45 am	Pre Test: (i) Learning Motivation Inventory; (ii) Career Planning Inventory; and, (iii) Study Skills Inventory
09.00 - 10.00 am	Talk 1: "The Need of Career Planning"
10.00 - 10.30 am	Self-Directed Search Inventory Test
10.30 - 11.00 am	Recess time
11.00 - 12.00 pm	Personality & Career Environment Discussion (Holland Theory of Career & Personality)
12.00 - 01.00 pm	RIASEC codes of Holland Theory
01.00 - 02.00 pm	Study Skills 1
<b>Day 2</b>	
08.00 - 09.00 am	Match Your Personality & Career
09.00 - 10.00 am	Career Information Discussion
10.00 - 10.30 am	Course Information Discussion
10.30 - 11.00 am	Recess time
11.00 - 12.00 pm	Career & Education Path Planning
12.00 - 01.00 pm	Study Skills 2
01.00 - 02.00 pm	Talk 2: Motivation To Learn

## Conclusion

A preliminary result showed that the implementation of career planning module had influenced the level of career awareness among the students in the experimental group. Pre-test analysis showed that the low achievers lacked knowledge and strategies regarding career planning. Overall, although still

inconclusive, the career planning module has been shown to effectively increase learning motivation among the low achieving students. Verbal feedback received from the students suggest that they were interested in the career planning activities and the activities has help increased their awareness in planning their career of interest.

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# Teacher Leaders: Experiences of Pakistani Teachers in leading School Improvement Activities

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## Abstract

*The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of these teacher leaders who were a mix of: (a) 'formal leaders' in the traditional sense of the word, that is, having a specifically defined position with a set of responsibilities (Ash & Ersall, 2000; Gehrke, 1991), like learning area coordinators (subject specialists), head-teacher and education officers, and (b) 'informal leaders' with mainly classroom teaching and related tasks (Harris, 2003).*

*The findings indicate that stakeholders' beliefs, school structures, school policies and practices are among the factors that would promote teacher leaders by facilitating their involvement in planning.*

*The data also shows that no factor was facilitative or hindering per se but it was the stakeholders' way of using different policies and structures that turned a particular factor in that direction. The research also indicates that teacher leaders were involved in, what Williams quoted in Abdalla (2004) has identified, the 'operational level' of leadership. The decisions made at this level are not strategic but deal with daily routine activities (Abdalla, 2004).*

*Despite the limited extent of their leadership, the findings indicate that the experiences of carrying out leadership tasks through their involvement in the process of planning and designing/ developing different activities for school improvement had positive impact on teachers. Stakeholders reported that the teachers' classroom practices had improved. Not only the teachers displayed higher motivation towards work but their relationship with other school stakeholders also got better.*

“The fact that schools rely on a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities presents a major barrier to the idea of teachers as leaders” (Harris, 2002:313). However, literature suggests that it is important to involve teachers in the planning and development of school initiatives. Traditionally speaking, planning and development are considered to be leaders' roles and the role of teachers, in

most school improvement initiatives, is that of the ‘implementers’. Thus by implication, teachers’ involvement in the planning process of school development initiatives is a pre-requisites for “Teachers-led School Improvement” (Frost and Durrant, 2000) as it allows them to view themselves as actively leading the change. Not only does the involvement of teachers in the planning and development of school initiatives enhance their level of commitment and motivation; but it also ensures better implementation of plans by building teachers confidence.

In Pakistan many large network of private schools have adopted the idea of involving teachers in different decisions about school curriculum and related activities. However, no research has been done on the outcomes of these practices. The present research was conducted in one such school, which is part of a large network of schools. The intention was to explore the perceptions of the stakeholders about their experiences. Our sample was a mix of ‘formal leaders’ who are traditionally defined as having a specifically designated position with a set of responsibilities like Learning Area Coordinators (subject specialists), head-teacher and education officers; and ‘informal leaders’ with mainly classroom teaching and related tasks (Harris 2003).

The focus of our research was on the stakeholders’ perceptions of the processes of involving teachers in the planning of school development initiatives and its influences on their practices. Drawn from the literature on teachers’ leadership, a set of theoretical assumptions guided our research (York-Barr and Duke, 2004; Frost and Harris, 2003; Gonzalas and Lambert, 2001). We believe that when teachers are involved in the process of planning for school improvement, they ‘feel’ empowered. This sense of empowerment not only leads to better implementation of school improvement initiatives, but also enhances their self esteem and motivation levels. The findings from our field work lended further support to these assumptions. A set of guiding questions that helped us test these assumptions included: how did our research participants view themselves in their ‘new’ positions, while working with their colleagues and administration? What was the perception of the participants and other stakeholders’ with respect to the influences of their roles as leaders and on their own practices as teachers? How did school and the school system facilitate and /or hinder the enactment of their new roles?

The intent of all these questions was to explore the perceptions of the stakeholders about the new roles of teachers as leaders. Teachers’ involvement in the process of planning for school improvement, which was seen as a vehicle for their empowerment was unpacked through two sub-themes; a) helping factors

that were perceived to be facilitating teachers' leadership roles and; b) inhibiting factors that were perceived to be hindering teachers' leadership roles. We found out that the division was not bi-polar but more like two sides of the same coin. Not only these factors were interrelated but they reinforced each other.

All stakeholders who had the experience of being involved in the process of planning for the school development initiatives felt that factors like stakeholders' beliefs, school structures, school policies and practices, were amongst the factors that would promote teacher leaders by facilitating their involvement in planning. At the forefront were the stakeholders' beliefs. If the stakeholders, including teachers, believe that teacher leaders have a positive role in the process of school improvement, they would lay down the structures and policies to support teacher leaders. Similarly, if they believe in the leadership of teachers, then their use of the policies and structures will facilitate the teacher-led school improvement activities. Although all these factors are interrelated, the findings bring stakeholders' beliefs to the forefront because the process of involvement in planning and development is a pre-requisite for implementing better school initiatives. The latter needs supportive school structures and policies, which are created by school stakeholders who are driven by their own beliefs.

Another perception about stakeholders' beliefs was that while it is necessary to have a positive attitude towards having school structures and policies in place, the said is not sufficient. The teachers, in particular, felt that no factor was facilitative or hindering per se; but it was the stakeholders' way of using different practices of involvement in the school that turned a particular factor in a certain direction. For example, the formal leadership position of subject specialists was paradoxical— their position title is Learning Area Coordinators or LAC for short. On the one hand, they played a facilitative or what Harris (2002) calls an *affiliation role* of teacher leaders, which entails close and positive relationship with teachers in line with their other roles of guiding, mediating and brokering the process of teachers' led initiatives; while on the other hand, their personal prejudices and authoritative attitudes blocked the very process of involvement, despite the presence of supporting structures and policies. If the policies and structures are in conflict with the personal beliefs of LACs, then there will be no difference between the authoritative attitude of the previous heads of departments, and the negative attitude of the present LACs..

In addition to the presence of supporting school structures and policies, the culture of collaboration was one of the school practices perceived to be among the supportive factors by all stakeholders with certain qualification. If the discussions or meetings for involving teachers in organizing and designing

curriculum or other related activities, and getting their ideas via discussions and negotiations by sitting together were not based on sharing and collaboration, and every one being given equal chance to contribute, the practice of sitting together with teachers would not be facilitative. When teachers' ideas are not valued and taken into account, the teachers will no longer be a part of the school improvement planning, because it is through their ideas that their presence in the designing bodies is fully recognized. Moreover, the culture of cooperation also provides a background for the enactment of different activities facilitated by the school policies. Hence all the factors are interconnected and reinforce each other.

It was also felt that school policies perceived to be supportive were positive only when they were enacted with positive intensions towards teacher leadership. Here again it was the belief in, and the perception of these policies, which made stakeholders apply these policies and practices fairly. If the perception is positive towards participation, then the use of school policies would facilitate the involvement of teachers in school improvement activities; otherwise these would hinder teachers in enacting their 'new' leadership roles.

One of our findings was that despite the facilitative structures, policies and practices in which the teachers were involved through middle managers, put their involvement at the level of consultation, which is not only the lowest form of involvement, but also ranks lowest among the cadre of leaders (Abdullah, 2004). Teacher leaders need to be above this level. Although setting up of structures and policies to consult teachers and involve them is important it does not automatically assure it. The change of policies should be inline with efforts to change the school culture from isolation to socially responsible (Clement and Vandenberghe, 2001). We agree with Fidler, Edwards, Evans, Mann and Thomas, (1996) that for teacher-led school improvement teachers need to fully participate in the process. Therefore, the school should consider developing ways and means by which full participation of teachers in the designing bodies can be ensured.

Another way of ensuring full participation of teachers in the designing bodies is to create a balance between the formal and informal teacher leadership. It implies that there should be equal emphasis on structure and culture to support the process of effective involvement for school improvement. In this connection the head-teachers role is very important in making use of both structure and the culture of collaboration, and using the said to emphasize and facilitate the process of involvement of teachers in designing the different activities for achieving school goals.



Formal school leaders also need to pay attention not only to facilitating those teachers who are interested in participation, but also in helping those who are not interested or do not express their desire for leadership roles. Professional development activities for teachers and LACs should focus on their attitudes towards, and beliefs about teacher leadership, along-with academics; because attitudes and the resulting relationships are important for school improvement. This is inline with Barth (1990)'s suggestion that, "school improvement is much more than raising test scores or increasing grades. Its essence lies in building school communities that are collaborative, inclusive and ultimately empowering ... it is only within such communities that the potential of both students and teachers will be fully realized". (Barth, 1990:158 cited in Harris, 2002: 119). As the success of the involvement process depends upon the roles of different stakeholders and the way these roles are enacted, therefore the schools need to adopt multiple as well as parallel leadership relations, for instance between, head-teachers and LACs; LACs and teachers; and finally between teachers and students, because as Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) have suggested, "different working relationship needs to be established between teachers and administrators in order for any new leadership role to make a positive and lasting contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 36).

Our research indicates that the very basic kind of leadership role that our teacher leaders were allowed to play, did increase the level of efficiency with which teachers implemented different strategies, introduced different activities and developed learning standards. However, it did not empower teachers to be able to 'lead' change activities. Even the LACs who were performing the role of middle managers, were involved at what Williams quoted in Abdalla (2004) has identified the 'operational level' of leadership. The decisions made at this level are not strategic, but rather deal with day to day routine activities. Although the consultation level of involvement of teachers indicates that the research context is at the first stage of the process of encouraging 'teacher leaders' by involving them in planning and development for school improvement, the management needs to focus on the future directions and plans for their full participation in the process of designing activities for school improvement, which would lead to 'empowerment.' It is also important for the administrators to help teachers understand the roles and responsibilities of the Learning Area Coordinators, which is again a new, formal leadership position for classroom teachers. It is important that their roles and responsibilities as well as the mutual obligations (teachers and LACs) be spelt out clearly in order to reduce role ambiguity and the related confusions.

The foregoing discussion establishes that teacher leaders were not empowered as they were involved at the lowest level of decision making- through consultation. However, the stakeholders felt that the experience of teachers' involvement in the process of planning and developing different activities for school improvement, had a positive impact on their classroom practices, motivation towards work and relationships with other stakeholders, despite the limited extent of the teachers' leadership roles. The classroom practices of the participating teachers reflected a more conducive and friendly relationships between them and their students, which is one of the key facilitators of student learning (Bezzina, 2004). Children learn better in an environment that is free of fear and tension. Provision for such an environment, thus becomes a key factor in the lifelong learning of students, as teaching and learning in a classroom is not a preparation for life but rather becomes life itself. The applications of effective teaching practices such as group work and enriching the curriculum by working with current issues (tsunami at that time) were some of the steps in making classrooms into a place where students learn to live and live to learn.

Motivation towards work was another positive influence of the experiences of teachers' involvement in the process of planning for school improvement. These experiences of teachers had also influenced their personal skills, as well as interpersonal relations. It increased teachers' confidence and learning. Their interactions with each other and with the LACs facilitated learning community practices, which are the basic aim of school improvement.

## **Conclusion**

Recognizing the teachers' potential as leaders is at the heart of school improvement initiatives. The research study has shown that teachers were involved in carrying out leadership tasks, such as planning and developing school improvement initiatives, through middle managers, and this put their involvement at the level of consultation. This level of involvement in decision making does not automatically guarantee empowerment which is the key ingredient for leadership.

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# Teaching for Quality Education in Environmental Education: Challenges and Possibilities

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## Abstract

The paper is based on critical reflection about 'innovative' teaching strategies and learning experiences of a facilitator and learners about the environmental education course at Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan. This 16-week elective course on environment education was offered from October 2004 to February 2005. This paper examines "what teaching strategies and learning experiences are most effective in environmental education course for bringing about positive change in knowledge skills and attitude towards environment conservation?"

Our findings indicate that the course has impacted learners in terms of knowledge and personal development, through the experiences of partnership, community interaction and taking responsible conservation action in schools. They were able to understand, cope with and positively influence the environment in which they found themselves.

We conclude that environmental education can be effectively offered to in-service teacher educators by providing them real life experiences of environmental conservation in the environment, appreciation about the environment, project conservation work in schools for the environment, through developing collaborative work, partnerships between facilitator and learner, and encouraging learners to think themselves as environmental literate citizens.

## Introduction

This paper is based on critical reflection by a facilitator and learners on the 'innovative' teaching strategies and learning experiences of the Environmental Education (EE) course at Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development Pakistan (AKU-IED).

In particular, this paper examines what teaching strategies and learning experiences are most effective in the environmental education course for

bringing about positive change in knowledge skills and attitude towards environment conservation.

Teaching strategies for environmental education must provide learners with learning experiences and opportunities to confront their own views and values related to the environmental issues in order for them to address the environmental issues (Sanera, 1998). The aim of the learning process and experiences should be to increase knowledge and awareness about the environment and its associated challenges, develop the necessary skills and expertise to address these challenges, and foster attitudes, motivation and commitment to make informed decisions and take responsible action (Wilke, 1997).

Learners in this course viewed the experience of designing and implementing the conservation project in schools as one of the most contextually relevant experiences. Teaching through infusion of environmental education in different disciplines, in order to deliver the content of EE in the real context, was also an opportunity to develop skills and knowledge for environmental conservation.

## **Importance of Environmental Education for Change**

Several studies have suggested that Pakistan's natural resources base is constantly declining (Shahid et al. 2005 p.12; Shah 2005a. and Shah 2005b). Palmer (1998) rightly advocates for global partnership for addressing the environmental issues. Similarly, Ndiaye Orr (1994) states that environmental education can awaken communities to the danger facing their environment.

The introduction of environmental education as a means to addressing environmental issues presents a major challenge to the dominant conception, organization and transmission of knowledge in the schools. This creates a conflict for teacher with their approach to teaching and learning (Palmer 1998, p. 96).

The goals, principle and guidelines of environmental education (see UNESCO 1976., 1978; UNCED, 1992) suggest a particular orientation of curriculum and pedagogical practices in which learners engage individually or in a group in problem-solving, action-based activities. The real focus of environmental issues calls for interdisciplinary and flexible inquiry.

AKU-IED was established realizing the educational needs of developing countries and Pakistan. One of the strategies for school improvement by AKU-IED is to

develop the capacity of the in-service teacher. The environmental education course was offered as an elective course in the Master of Education (MEd) programme at AKU-IED in 2002. Building the capacity of teachers is a strategy used to provide teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach their learners, thus providing improved opportunities to learn for all their pupils (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992).

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues.... It is also critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making. (Hart et al, 1999)

## **Environmental Education Course: Key features**

The environmental education course has its theoretical foundations in the notion of teacher development where, its aims are to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the integration of environmental education into teaching and learning.

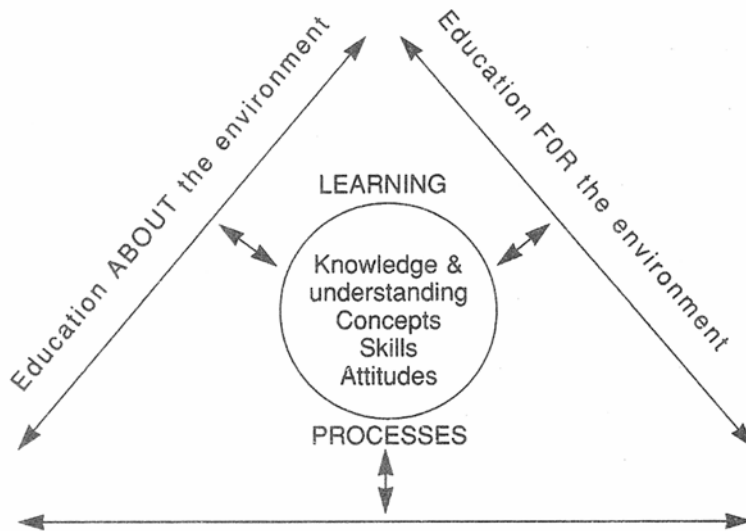
### **Thematic Mosaic of the Course**

The content of the environmental education course is based on six major themes given below. Each theme in the course is delivered through various pedagogical approaches and strategies.

1. Definition and scope of environmental education
2. The natural and social environment
3. Human Impact on Environment
4. Sustainable Development
5. Environmental Education: Approaches and Strategies
6. Environmental Management Practices

## EE Pedagogy 'IN, FOR and ABOUT' the Environment

The interaction between the course tutors and learners and among learners was encouraged through an electronic discussion forum and eight face-to-face meetings, where this was possible. Palmer & Neil suggest that teaching and learning experiences in environmental education could be based on a framework proposed by them (1994). The framework is given below.



The EE framework has focused on three aspects of the environment in teaching and integrating environmental education in teaching at all levels. The universality of the framework is very important, as this framework was used to teach learners for Africa, Central Asia, Middle East and South East Asia. The three main components of the framework as suggested by (Palmer & Olive, 1994) are:

- Education *about* the environment has the purpose of developing leaders' knowledge and understanding about *values* and *attitudes*.
- Education *for* the environment encourages learners to explore their personal response to and relationship with the environment and environmental issues. This is linked to the development of *attitudes* and *values*, including the element of human understanding and behavior necessary for the development of sustainable and caring use of the environment.

- Education in or *through* the environment uses the environment as a resource for learning. It is a resource which enables the development of a great deal of knowledge as well as *skills* of investigation and communication.

## **Constructivism as a Learning Discourse**

Constructivist learning has emerged as a prominent approach to teaching. Constructivism is based on the notion that learners construct their own knowledge on the basis of interaction with environment. The constructivist teaching and learning model emphasizes active and collaborative learning. It places great importance on learners and teachers discovering and constructing knowledge together (Zhao, 2003). Hence the environmental education course uses the constructivist discourse with the environmental education framework “in, for and about” the environment.

### **Teaching conservation through environmental infusion in school (about the environment)**

Learners enriched one teaching unit plan of their own subject and taught in the school after infusing environmental education into the subject.

### **Designing and implementing conservation projects in schools (IN and FOR the Environment)**

Learners working in groups of two designed and implemented a conservation project in school, at AKU-IED, Safari Park Karachi and at their hostel.

### **Field visits to WWF and Coastal Communities (IN the Environment)**

Learners made a day-trip to a coastal village of Karachi. Community issues were discussed with the Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum (PFF), an NGO working in the area. In another field visit, learners visited Wetland centre of WWF Pakistan. They visited a community initiative to save mangroves and in a boat, looked at the habitats of the mangroves and learned about their functions. Learners also released Green Turtles, protected specie, into the sea, as their own action.



## **Reflecting on Their Experiences**

Critical reflection refers to people developing a critical attitude through a reflective process. Dawey and Schsm (in Burton, 2005) acknowledge reflection as an essential teaching activity and skill. This includes asking ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘how come’ questions about their own learning, subject, assessment, education, lives and society at large Burtan (2005). Learners posted their reflection on the online discussion forum by responding to various environmental themes.

## **Methodology**

In order to answer the question posed in this paper, we have collected and analyzed learners’ reflections, after getting their consent. Out of ten learners who completed the course, seven learners participated in this study. They did these reflections as part of their assignment. Eight learners also responded to an open-ended questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to get specific views about the teaching and learning experiences in the course.

These reflections from learners were analyzed based on the following themes i) learners ability to connect their learning to the understanding of complex systems affecting the environment – political, economic and social (Knowledge); ii) evidence of inquiry into real world environmental issues for their teaching and learning (Skills); iii) ability to understand the relationship of environment, education and sustainable development (Knowledge); and iv) preparedness and/or willingness to take social action for conservation (change in attitude and action for conservation). Each theme was then separated into various learning experiences according to “IN, FOR and ABOUT” the environment. The voices of learners in the reflection are significantly important in this study. The learners’ questionnaires were analyzed based on the themes of innovative teaching strategies and valuable experiences.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Learning Experiences “In” the Environment**

Living and interacting in a particular environment and community is essential for developing learner’s communication and information analysis skills (Palmer, 1998). Learners viewed the experience of getting into the environment as very valuable as they had the opportunity to interact with the environment in reality. They claimed that “live” experience contributed in their sensitivity about the

environment and motivated them towards action. They learned skills to protect the marine environment and understood the dependence and relationship of the environment to human beings. Theoretical knowledge in the course was extended to real life experiences through experiential learning. They viewed this as a connection of local action to global environmental issues. This connection and understanding is very important for their future role as professional development teachers.

Reflecting on the experience Wassef from Syria noted “it was a wonderful experience to see how earth is being saved”.

Discussing environmental issues and then seeing them with their own eyes and discussing them with communities helped them understand the linkages between environment and community.

Humera from Punjab, Pakistan wrote in her reflection “I realized our environmental issues regarding mangroves forest and also I come to know the role of mangrove in the sea. I learn some of the activities to protect marine life especially turtle”.

Alfred from East Africa reflecting on the experience of meeting the community group emphasized the relevance of the field visit to the course and wrote “these field trips were very relevant in the course as they gave me “live experience” on the efforts made by various groups in preserving the environment.”

Wetland centre visit was one of the amazing practices of my learning in environmental subject. (Bahrome)

A variety of experiences in the environment contributed not only to the learners’ knowledge but also provided them with skills to analyze environmental issues, to see the big picture and to appreciate the environment. Their being in the environment and seeing what could be done to conserve the environment was an experience which contributed to their learning.

## **Effective Strategies “About and For” the Environment**

### **Conservation Project through Experiential Knowing**

Experiential knowing is “through direct face to face encounter with person, place or thing; it knows through empathy and resonance” (Reason, 1998, p. 44 in Nicol, 2002). Learners viewed working in the school for conservation with teachers and children as a means to raise awareness of stakeholders. It was an

opportunity for them to meet new people and to take action to “save the globe”. Mortari (2004) advances the argument that ethics of care is not learned just intellectually but through practice, by involving learners in actual caring experiences. The project was an experience learners want to replicate in their own context. The project was seen as an action whose result they could see and enjoy. (Nicol, 2002) considers direct experience as a foundation of experiential knowing and is valuable in many ways to learners.

For project I had most valuable learning experience. Working with teachers was learning for me as teacher. Project work realized me the benefits and problems of real context and take initiative to overcome them. (Humera)

Doing project itself was a very interesting reflection which help me to see the results of my work and encourage me to apply it in my context with my colleagues. (Wassef)

Project-based learning in the environment provided the opportunity to learners to work with real life environmental issues in and around the schools (Orr, 1994). They learned and demonstrated skills of action and motivation, from negotiating with the head of the school, to motivating the general public to clean a park. Learners developed an environmental policy for a school, initiated a solid waste and composting project and developed a water conservation project at the AKU-IED hostel. Reflection on critical incidents provided them the opportunity to learn and redesign their activities and project.

The critical question faced during the project also influenced their attitude and thinking. Fida from Sindh, Pakistan reflected after completing the clean-a-park project with school children ‘Why do we keep our environment clean? Why do we do not care about it and make it polluted? Why it is our common attitude towards our environment?’ His reflection led to his conclusion that ‘education based on environment-rich content knowledge leads the students to learn the skills needed to work for society and environment and is focus[ed] on action [rather] than only on class room activities.

Wassef faced challenges during implementation of his compost-making project when students of the school were throwing rubbish in the place where he was making compost. He had to convince the students about the usefulness and purpose of the activity. Reflecting on the challenges he wrote “I realized that it is important to convince others what you do to let them help you and get good results”. Children must learn to control their own thinking in order to develop their thinking beyond the context of their immediate environment (Nicol, 2002).

Project work provoked Sadaf to think beyond her immediate project. She reflected on the experience and wrote:

The experience of working on the project was challenging but interesting. We as a teacher should not limit our work within single organization rather, we must try to work collaboratively and expand our activities of environmental education beyond it.

For me project was a practical learning experience where I got an opportunity to apply my knowledge, my skills of identifying and resolving environmental issues and my caring and concern about the quality of environment.... I feel ownership of project as I was responsible for my own learning and most importantly I feel confidence that my action can make a difference. (Sadaf)

Doing a conservation project was one of the most valuable experiences for learners. This experience also allowed independent learning with real context and experience. Learners were able to build relationships with stakeholders and to collaborate with each other. The project provided them the opportunity to reflect and face challenges and to address them. The project was about change in the environment through learner's action. This experience changed their attitude towards the environment.

### **Face-to-Face Session**

Issue-based discussions about environmental issues were recognized as useful by learners. They also found the 'hands-and-minds-on' experiences through various activities like "apple activity" and "interdependence activity" as very useful. Discussion in the class and presentation, which was followed by questions, was considered an effective teaching strategy.

Wassef noted that:

Face to face session encouraged me to learn more from my colleagues and facilitators as well and to share my ideas about the discussion concept. I can clarify points which were not clear in my mind. It was very good strategy especially for weak learners whom have less knowledge about the topic.

Face-to-face sessions supplemented learner knowledge about themes related to the environment and new concepts. It allowed learners to share their experiences and issues. They were a very useful source of support for the students, especially

since the course was in open and distance learning mode. These eight sessions allowed all learners to gather and share information about topics, clarify ideas, listen to other views and remove misconceptions.

## **Teaching in Schools**

Learners considered teaching to be a rich and rewarding experience. In teacher education, attention to pedagogy is critical; *how* one teaches is part and parcel of *what* one teaches (Loughran & Russel, 1997). The process of self realization involves identification with, empathy for, and heightened expansion of concern for non human beings. Self realization depends on the individual's own experiences (Nicol, 2002) and teaching in the school provided learners the opportunity for self realization. Learners viewed it as a way of transforming the knowledge, skills and attitudes of future generations in order to create awareness for future actions to conserve the environment.

Learners realized that teaching was possible through infusion in different subjects. Learners were able to integrate and infuse environmental education themes and concepts in English, Science and Social Studies. The integration was innovatively done through incorporating the learning from the course. For example in science, it was integrated through relating ecosystem, human needs and relationship of humans with nature.

Hart et al emphasized the importance of providing experiences in the natural place, of feeling of earth (1999). Integrating and teaching environmental education in school has its challenges. Addressing real life issues develop critical thinking skills but also create challenges in teaching. Environmental education helped citizens, young and old, explore their own question (Hart et al, 1999). Sadaf faced a challenge when one student asked her that "Miss you told us not to pollute water so if some one is polluting then tell me what I can do? She had to look for the social context and action appropriate for the age of learner to respond to the query. Sher Azim reflected on the challenges of in-serve teacher education based on his experience. He reflected that Teacher also confronted the challenges of planning, like selecting the topic for the lesson and designing activities without knowing the level of students.

Alfred faced the challenges of understanding students' prior knowledge, lack of teaching resources (video, color photograph etc), time constraints and difficulty in using the actual environment (like taking students to the zoo) as a visiting in-service teacher attempting to introduce infusion of EE. Alfred reflected on his teaching experiences despite all the challenges he faced "The students were eager

to learn although I was new to them. They participated fully to the activities I had planned and were ready to ask for assistance whenever they encountered difficulties". Alfred concluded in his reflection "to create awareness, positive attitude, skills and action, environmental education teachers should use various teaching strategies like field visit so as to relate it to the students own environment".

Integration of EE into teaching with the learners' context had immediate impacts. Bahrome from Central Asia reflected on a critical incident and said,

I realized that my lesson was delivered well, because students were very active while discussing the topic of the lesson. One girl suggested social action to save environment by creating green clubs volunteers who will look after the cleanliness of streets all over Pakistan.

Learners were introduced to the local issues through effective and quality teaching, which impacted the learners and they were able to see the bigger picture.

Teaching through infusion of environmental education in different disciplines was an effective strategy in delivering content of EE in learners' own area of specialization (subject) in a real life setting. Despite the challenges they faced, they used innovative strategies to deliver environmental education content to school children. This was possible due to the practicing of integration and teaching of EE content during the course. They got the confidence that it was possible to teach and bring about small positive change in the attitude of future generations.

## **Online Discussion Forum**

The discussion forum was an ongoing process in which learners started reflecting from the beginning of the course. Based on their postings, we could see a change in their knowledge, attitude towards environmental issues, their own practices, beliefs and future roles.

The discussion forum was also used by learners to critique their peers, share views and exchange new information on environmental concepts, other than those needed for assignments. The discussion forum also provided facilitators the opportunity to gauge learners' understanding of the concepts. Facilitators were able to learn and interact with them in the virtual world. Facilitators also used critical questions to probe, guide, discuss and challenge learners' views (Shah 2005c).

Commenting on the gender aspect of the discussion forum, Humera posted

....I observed in discussion forum men view environment mostly for sustainable development and they emphasize on science. While women environmental view based on their beliefs and social interaction.

Similar views were posted by Sadaf, emphasizing the relationship of belief system and environmental protection. Her belief is that environmental protection is a context-specific issue and is surrogate to the needs of the people. She posted:

The hungry man will be interested to eat bread instead to think about the procedure how to grow wheat, and in contrast the farmer will be interested in getting huge quantity of crops by excessive use of fertilizers without caring about soil erosion.

Wassef felt confident that as a result of the course he could use the concept of sustainable development in his teaching. He wrote:

Now I am as a teacher I can use the knowledge and information about sustainable development in environmental education....

Sadaf reflected on the issue of sustainable development and how she could integrate sustainable development into her teaching. She also gave context-specific examples of how she could bring in sustainable development in her teaching. She wrote:

Now as a teacher what should I do? if I look deeply into my teaching practices I can find many ways to contribute. For example while teaching any environmental issue instead to just teach text knowledge, I can practically involve the learners because they want to take some action themselves and feel happy to take responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

Environmental education for in-service teacher educators is critical for developing teacher educators with context-specific learning experiences in a variety of environments. Teacher educators with knowledge, skills and attitudes to conserve the environment are able to teach conservation to future generations. In order to effectively deliver teacher education programmes, the 'IN, FOR and ABOUT' Environmental Education Framework and constructivist

teaching pedagogies are essential. Learning through the conservation project in the course provided learners the opportunity to learn conservation skills and take social action. Teaching in the real-life context with infusion of environmental education provided learners the opportunity to experiment with their pedagogy and the skills to bring about change in the school context. The field visit helped them to observe and discuss pristine and polluted environments with stakeholders and changed their attitude to care for and take social action. The discussion forum provided learners and facilitators the opportunity to reflect on their learning and to collaborate with each other.

According to learners, the two most profound learning experiences in the course were: (i) designing and implementing the conservation project in schools, which provided them contextually relevant experience; and ii) teaching to deliver content of EE in real context. These were also seen as opportunities to develop skills and knowledge for environmental conservation.

Based on the experience of this course, it is recommended that future programmes in EE in the developing country context, where AKU-IED and other teacher education institutes are working, should use the environment as a resource. The course may use a reflective constructivist approach and real life experiences to teach and provide opportunities to learners to take social action during their studies through a conservation project.

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# **Monitoring the Improvement of the Learning Environment of Government Primary School Achieved through the UEI-PDP for Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

*Quality issues, particularly professional development of teachers and administrators are major factors affecting the education system from moving ahead. Considering these constraints, the Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Primary School Teachers (PSTs) of Sindh was launched by the United Educational Initiatives (UEI), a consortium of five Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, working under the supervision of ESRA. Implementation of the UEI-PDP in four districts of Sindh, is ensured by a team in each district comprising of Programme Managers, Programme Associates, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers, Accountants and Office Staff. Recognising that capacity building of district education employees would contribute in the aim to improve the educational system in the country, 130 Master Trainers were selected, on merit, from the District Education Office for the training of 17000 teachers and 3000 Head teachers/administrators over a period of two years.*

*This paper focuses on a professional development programme which is different from other teacher training programmes in the following ways:*

- 1. A Consortium with public private partnership with the aim to promote collaboration using the combined assets of this partnership.*
- 2. Training modules which are prepared by indigenes according to the realities of the local context.*
- 3. A programme which encompasses intermittent theory and field work over a period of eighteen weeks for primary school teachers. The field work is enhanced by ensuring support in schools by school support trainers who mentor and monitor the UEI trained teachers.*

4. *Capacity building of some private and public educational institutes by developing resource persons, master trainers, school support trainers, monitoring and evaluating team members.*
5. *Addressing the need of multigrade teachers in Government Primary Schools.*
6. *Development and utilization of low cost teaching aids by the participating government school teachers.*
7. *Focus on reflective practice and mentoring as a training technique.*
8. *A Whole District Initiative to train 17000 teachers and 3000 head-teachers within two years.*

*A systematic study of the professional development programme is undertaken by the Monitoring and Evaluation Units. Data is collected through Pre- and Post-observations, interviews, questionnaires and reports. Such tools make it possible for the monitoring teams to observe, to inquire further and, along with the managers, master trainers, field workers and teachers, seek to explain the progress of the programme and take corrective action where indicated. Both formative evaluations as well as summative evaluation techniques are utilized for evaluating the programme.*

*The course participants (both PST & Head Teachers/Administrators) are assessed by the Master Trainers at each Training Center during each of the training phases using an assessment criterion. The PSTs are also assessed in the field phases of the training cycle by the School Support Team.*

*The monitoring and evaluation tools and assessments of teachers reveal that there is some positive change in the attitude and belief patterns of teachers. Additional outcomes that have been observed are that teachers have started planning lessons and using student-teaching approaches in their classrooms.*

*One of the intended outcomes of the programme is to assist in developing and implementing a comprehensive and sustainable professional support system for quality (primary/elementary) education at the district level. This has been achieved to some extent since the inception of the programme a year ago including the capacity building of different professionals involved in implementing the UEI Professional Development Programme.*

*A few lessons have been learned and are enumerated here:-*

- 1. Changing the belief patterns and attitude of the teachers in the beginning of the training cycle ensures that teachers are ready to learn new concepts and teaching strategies thereby ensuring the sustainability and implementation of student-centred teaching.*
- 2. Ownership of the programme by the District Education Office is imperative to ensure the sustainability of the professional development programme.*
- 3. A total change as envisioned will take more than two years and will require further interventions.*

## **Introduction**

Local newspapers often decry the dismal standards of education in the public sector (“Gap widens,” 2003; “Academics concerned,” 2005). This is stated by notable scholars associated with educational institutions in the country, who have organized forums to find the means for a solution. Concern about the quality of education has been acknowledged in the educational plans (Ministry of Education, 2003) and in studies conducted by various researchers (Shah, 2003; Hussain, 2005). Previous National Educational Policies have been formulated using a top down approach. To address this top-down approach, the present government devolved power to the local governments in the year 2001, which led to the decentralization of the education system.

Nevertheless, studies (Farah, 1996; Simkins, Garrett, Memon & Nazir-Ali, 1998) indicate that in spite of substantial foreign and local financial assistance, there appears to be no significant change in the quality of the overall education system in Pakistan (Hoodbhoy, 1998; Hoodbhoy, 2004; National Education Policy, 1998-2002). Consequently, Pakistan has continued to search for ways to address the issue of quality in its education system (Rizvi, 1999; Hashim, 1999).

Quality in education means a substantial continuous effort to research and document both the negative and positive outcomes, and effect changes accordingly. It could be argued that since 1952 with the setting up of first Educational Conference up to and including the current National Education Policy, Government educational plans and the people of Pakistan have continuously acknowledged the need to address the quality of education (Malik, 1992). Educational reviews have been conducted to find ways to bring this about and educational innovations have been introduced directly in both the

government and private schools. However, efforts have failed and the finger of accusation points directly to a lack of commitment and the highly centralized decision making of the bureaucrats (Ranis & Stewart, n.d; Rampal, 2000). This is in spite of the transfer of decision-making power to the provincial educational authorities (Shah, 2003).

Primary education is the foundation of a child's success and ensuring that children want to come to school requires quality teachers with sound pedagogical skills and knowledge (Academy for Educational Development, 2006; Mohammed, 2004). '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). However, quality teachers can only produce quality when working in collaboration with quality leadership on the part of the head teachers (Winch, 1996).

In order to bring desired change and improvement in the education system of Pakistan, educational leaders (Teachers, Head teachers, District Executive Officers-Education, Executive District Officers-Education) need to 'play an important role and also need to be trained first in team building, reflection and the collaborative culture' (Kazilbash, 1998 p.134). A readiness for change in both teachers (Calderhead, 2001) and also for head teachers is critical for reforms to be implemented at the grass roots level in the Pakistani context (Fullan, 1998; Fullan 2001). For this to transpire, teachers will have to be encouraged by the head teachers, District Executive Officers-Education and the Executive District Officers-Education to transfer their learning into the classroom. The head teachers with leadership qualities and a vision for quality education will actively participate in improving the teaching and learning environment (Del Cotto-Kaminski, n.d; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995). Furthermore, teachers will be able to transfer their learning into the classroom situation when they receive follow-up support after their training (O'Sullivan, 2002).

The focus of this paper is on the monitoring mechanism designed to measure the performance of the United Education Initiative-Professional Development Programme (UEI-PDP). The UEI-PDP includes training to enhance pedagogical skills and content knowledge with follow-up support to facilitate the transfer of acquired skills and knowledge of teachers in their classrooms; and to enhance the development of the head teachers as leaders of primary schools. The study is not only significant for UEI and the stakeholders, but will be helpful in gaining an understanding of the strengths and limitations of an innovative approach within the Pakistan education system. This innovation may later be replicated in other districts in Pakistan.

## **Education in Pakistan**

The formal schooling system in Pakistan is marked by its multiplicity. There are government schools, semi-government institutions, independent private schools and private school systems. However, only around 50% of the school-aged children are attending schools (Saleem, 1999)

On the world scale, Pakistan has one of the highest number of illiterate individuals per head of population. The situation is especially alarming for women. In 1951, the overall literacy rate was 16.41%. After 50 years in 2001, it was 49.51% (Ministry of Education, 2002). The male literacy rate is currently around 60%, while the female literacy rate is only 36% (Gap widens in male, female literacy rate, 2003).

With an intention of implementing the objectives stated in the National Education Policy (1998-2010), the Education Sector Action Plan (2001-2005) of the Government of Pakistan envisages improving the quality of education through teacher training, use of innovative programme and public-private partnership (Shah, 2003).

### **United Education Initiative-Professional Development Programme**

The United Education Initiative (UEI) is a product of the government's initiative to encourage public-private partnership. It is a consortium of five organizations that have pooled their resources to assist in the professional development of teachers. UEI believes in improving the quality of education for the masses through independent educational organizations forming a partnership; by setting up viable institutional structures that focus on planning, implementing and assessing educational activities; and the professional and personal development of individuals involved in the programme. A constructivist approach is envisaged where individuals are actively involved in building or re-inventing knowledge construction to make meaning.

UEI has been engaged in implementing the Whole District Initiative (WDI) in regard to Primary Education on behalf of ESRA (Education Sector Reform Assistance). The study will explore the contribution of the UEI Professional Development Programme, now in its 2nd year, in bringing about improvement in the education system in the four districts of Sindh (Hyderabad, Khairpur, Sukkur and Thatta). This is brought about through professional development

programmes for primary school teachers and head teachers held at centres in several talukas of the four districts.

Figure 1 highlights the implementation strategy of the professional development programme. The professional development programme (PDP) for teachers consists of 2 weeks of workshops, plus 4 weeks of field work, 2 weeks of workshops and the training concludes after a further 10 weeks of follow-up.

The PDP for Head Teachers/Administrators consists of 4 weeks of workshops, plus 2 weeks of field work, concluding with another 4 weeks of workshops.

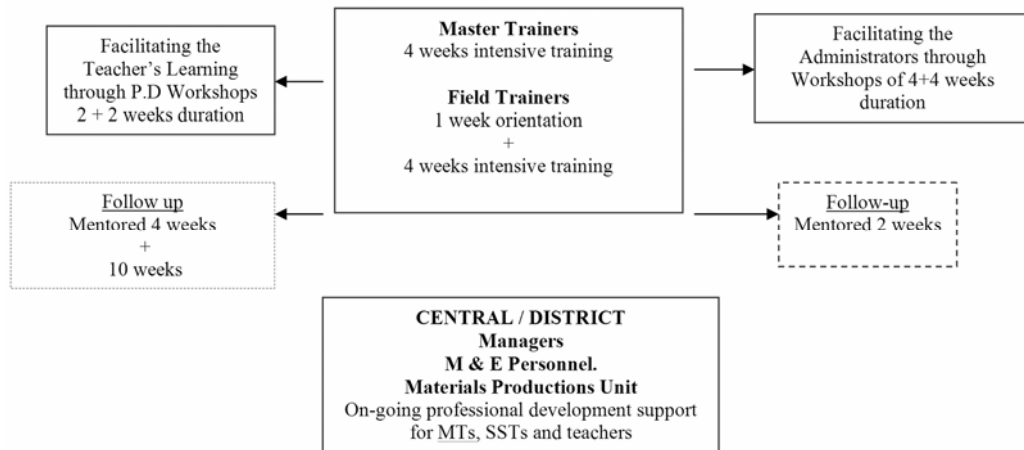


Figure 1: Implementation strategy of the UEI-PDP

## Purpose of Study

The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classrooms. The academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and the subsequent commitment of teachers have an impact on developing students' learning (Arcaro, 1995). It is the teacher who is a crucial factor in implementing all educational reforms at the grass roots level. Thus for educational reforms to be implemented, changing the thinking patterns of the teacher about his/her teaching practices (Calderhead, 2001) and the professional training of the teacher with follow-up support is essential (Siddiqui, 2003).

Due to the recent emphasis on ensuring massive access to 'Education for All', the teacher education system has quantitatively expanded to keep a reasonable balance between demand and supply. On the contrary, the qualitative dimensions of teacher education have received minimal attention resulting in a mass



production of teachers with shallow or no understanding of subject knowledge and teaching techniques (Jalalzai, 2005; Khan, 2003; National Education Policy 1998-2010).

Many of the primary school teachers in the rural areas of the Sindh Province are not trained before becoming a school teacher (Jalalzai, 2005). They have taken up this position through political interference or obtaining certification through unfair means (Ali, 1998). Pakistan's various educational policies emphasize dedicated and trained school principals, but this is not observed as being the case within the reality of the schooling system (Simkins, Sisum, & Memon, 2003). The teacher educators in the public educational institutions are not trained to deal with the high demand of quality teacher training, professional development of potential leaders and have no culture of research at all (Ali, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2002).

Due to the failure of the public system to provide quality teacher education and proper leadership programmes, a number of private and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have emerged in order to initiate and sustain quality teacher and leadership education programmes in Pakistan with the encouragement of the Government (Shah, 2003).

The question arises as to how these programmes are influencing their local participants. How successful are these programmes in bringing about positive changes in the lives of teachers, students and in the society?

This study will focus on the UEI-PDP implemented in four districts of Sindh, (Hyderabad, Khairpur, Sukkur and Thatta). Little or no research has been done in the Pakistan context on the area of follow-up support provided to primary school teachers after their in-service training. Therefore this study will explore the contribution of UEI-PDP to the development of the school support system to ensure the teachers transfer their acquired learning into their classrooms. Therefore the purpose of this study was to find out:

“How and to what extent does the UEI-professional development programme has had an impact upon its primary school teachers to implement their learning in the classrooms, so as to improve the quality of teaching within the Pakistan education system.”

## **Significance of the study**

This study is significant as its findings suggest alternative structures and strategies for improving the quality of professional development programmes within the local context.

Relatively little has been written or researched on the role and impact of follow-up support for teachers after undergoing a professional development programme especially in the case of Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2003). This paper seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge related to the impact of teacher education programmes in developing countries.

Future educators, researchers and educational authorities can be informed by the study on the benefits of follow-up support after professional development programmes for teachers in Pakistan. It may also signify the weaknesses of such programmes. Insight can be gained into factors that influence the process of transferring ideas and methodologies from one educational context to another and their successful application in another very different context.

The study will demonstrate the monitoring and evaluation mechanism that was set up to help ensure quality control and quality improvement through the design of a monitoring process, tools for measurement and evaluation.

## **Review of the Literature**

The review of literature has a focus on the importance of a follow-up in the field after training and the importance of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess to what extent the intended outcomes of the professional development programme are achieved.

### **Follow-up support for in-service teacher education**

Hayes (2003) suggests that pre-service teachers need to be guided on how to survive and prosper as teachers. Teachers with some experience also need to be provided with refresher courses in order to learn new techniques. UNESCO PROAP (cited in Rarieya, 2005) states that professional development activities in the rural areas of Pakistan are rare and of poor quality. In addition, female teachers have less access to these professional development activities.

Halai (cited in Rarieya, 2005) adds that family commitments and social expectations for females in Pakistan, especially in the rural areas, often clash

with professional development opportunities. To address this issue, functional female teachers training centres were needed and female school support trainers were appointed to provide support to these teachers. Haberman (cited in Kent, 2005) asserts that providing pre-service teachers in low-socioeconomic schools with more field experience and a mentorship team, will address the issue of teachers quitting the profession and will enable them to transfer their learning into the classroom situation.

O'Sullivan (2002) adds that functions of follow-up are supportive, with monitoring leading to identification of positive and negative outcomes of training which points to areas for further support or training. This directly affects the quality of learning as improvements in the learning process (Motola, cited in O'Sullivan, 2005).

To ensure that professional development activities are meeting the intended outcomes of the UEI-ESRA programme, a monitoring mechanism was designed.

## **The Monitoring Mechanism**

The monitoring mechanism, highlighted in Table 1 on the opposite page, was designed to monitor professional development practices; to provide an authentic base to improve the programme (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004; Valadez & Bamberger, 1997); and to deduce whether or not the programme was successfully implemented. Both formative as well as summative evaluation techniques were considered to be the effective methods for evaluating the programme. Monitoring activities (formative) were undertaken throughout the programme whereas summative evaluation will be done at the end of the project.

Although monitoring of activities was undertaken as indicated in Table 1, the focus of this paper is on the monitoring mechanism designed to monitor the performance of the school support team (SSTs) and to assist them in mentoring the primary school teachers in their schools, and on the teachers return from the formal training sessions.

O'Sullivan (2005) and Rarieya (2005) both contend that on-going support to teachers after training, especially in their schools, helps to improve the transfer of acquired learning. In addition, reflective dialogue with the school support team (Martin, 2005; Parieya, 2005) underpins good teaching practice leading to professional growth and personal development.

Table 1

Monitoring Level	Level 1: 1st & 3rd Phase of the Training	Level 2: 2nd & 4th Phase of the Training (Field work)
Activities/Resources to be monitored	Handbooks and/or unit plan of the teaching modules to be taught in the first phase of training. Master trainers professional development activities according to the objective and planning in the handbook unit plan. Availability of required resources. Time commitments (MTs and participants). Attendance (MTs and participants). MTs' assessment of CPs.	Lesson plan and classroom teaching (teachers applying what they learnt). Monitoring by the SST. Students' responses and learning outcomes in the classroom. Teachers' and SSTs' time commitment (regularity and punctuality).
Monitoring Strategies	Reviewing the handbook and/or unit plan by the specialists prior to the beginning of the training sessions. Work samples.	Review teachers' lesson plans and SSTs' action notes. Classroom observations Interviews
Outcome	Written records and the district units' as well as central unit's written report for evaluation.	Written records and documents of the outputs for evaluations.

An assessment criterion was developed for quality assurance in the PDP (Appendix A). Both teachers' and head teachers' performances in the classroom at the training centers were monitored by the Master Trainers (MTs) who graded the attendance and performance of the participants. Each teacher's performance was also monitored by the School Support Team during their follow-up visits (Figure 1) using the assessment criteria. Support was provided by the SSTs to the teachers in their respective schools in lesson preparations, teaching strategies and in the development of low cost teaching aids. Tools (Pre-observation and post observation) were designed by the monitoring and evaluation central coordinating unit (M&E-CCU), to collect data on classroom performance. Quality control was maintained through frequent meetings and feedback sessions between the M&E-CCU, M&E-DU, Programme managers, MTs and SSTs. These meetings and discussions provided insights into the strengths and weaknesses during the implementation of the programme and enabled corrective measures to be put into place. An example of a corrective measure would be the in-house professional development activities for the SSTs to bridge the gap in their understanding of certain concepts.

## **Theoretical perspective**

From a theoretical perspective, the constructive approach guided the programme. Thus the aim was to make the PDP meaningful by building on what the teachers and head teachers already knew, through extending their knowledge and skills, acknowledging their strengths and naming what could be improved as well as identifying their existing values, skills and capabilities. Challenges were provided in the training sessions and participants were encouraged to change their views and to reflect critically on their actions in order to continually improve them. The objective was to extend their skills and acquire new skills for student-centred teaching and school improvement.

## **Methodology**

The methodology defines what the activity of the study is, how to proceed, how to measure progress and what constitutes success. Both quantitative and qualitative methods (Patton, 1990) were used to monitor, record and evaluate the UEI-ESRA programme. Quantitative methods involved measuring to what extent the training targets that were set at the beginning of the programme were met; data was collected through the use of tools (pre-observation and post-observation checklists; pre-conference forms, target setting forms; school monitoring forms and training centre monitoring forms) that were developed and pilot tested in the districts.

The study included analysis of documents; while data collection was through observations and recording the perceptions of primary school teachers, master trainers and school support trainers of the UEI-PDP in the four provinces of Sindh. Data was also gathered through semi-structured interviews and informal discussions conducted during M&E-CCU field officer visits to the districts twice a month. The aim was to determine the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation and to find solutions to challenges experienced. On site visits to the schools and training centres by the monitoring and evaluating team served as a rich source of primary evidence which helped to triangulate data for verification procedures.

## **Participants**

As it is a Whole District Initiative, the participants included 17,000 primary school teachers and 3000 head teachers for the districts of Thatta, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Khairpur.

## Insights into the Follow-up

1. The difficulties inherent in a whole district initiative with schools widely spread out were one of the major difficulties that had to be overcome. This was overcome through clustering of the schools for training and support purposes.
2. In some districts, support was provided by employees of the district education office who were deputed to the UEI-PDP as SSTs. Changing their mind-sets from their previous practices directly impinged upon the success of the follow-up programme.
3. The follow-up was also affected when the deputed SSTs and teachers were called in by the District Education Officers for administrative duties on ad-hoc basis.
4. Teachers were appreciative of the support system as they said that this support helped them in transferring their learning into their classes. Support was provided in lesson planning, teaching strategies and developing low cost materials.
5. The success of the support was dependent on a number of factors enumerated below:
  - Some of the SSTs needed professional development in critical analysis of lesson plans.
  - Teachers received 10 weeks of support. However, some teachers were found to be weak in content knowledge and required more support. Literature reveals that 10-15 practices with teaching strategies builds confidence of teachers and eight months of support is required for a teacher to become proficient in utilizing the new methods of teaching with their own initiatives.
  - Political and sectarian affiliations affected delivery of support.
  - Professional attitude of SSTs as well as their dedication and commitment to the success of the follow-up provided to teachers.

## Lessons Learned

- Change in the belief system of the participants in the training program is imperative for transfer of learning to occur. A positive change was seen in the teachers who changed their attitude and reflected on their methods of practices.
- Some teachers required more support and financial implications and occasionally this was made impossible as the distance to be covered, or the roads to these schools were impassable.
- Provision of transport to pick and drop the SSTs and the M&E-officers is important for authentic visits to teachers and schools.
- Ownership by the District Education Office, the Assistant District Education Officers and Supervisors is essential for the sustainability of the Professional Development Programme.

## Conclusion

Monitoring a professional development programme in four districts of Sindh, especially where the infrastructure (regular electricity supply, working telephones and access to internet facility) is ineffective was a challenge. This challenge was further enhanced in parts of some districts which were labeled as 'No Go Areas' by some influential individuals.

However, it was satisfying to observe teachers with limited resources making an effort to improve teaching and learning environment in their classrooms. The teachers demanded further professional development opportunities. The importance for female students to improve their completion rate to enable them to be the future teachers and head teachers in their environment was a commonly heard phrase both in female government schools and co-educational schools.

It is hoped that with the support of donor agencies UEI-ESRA PDP will be able to provide continuous professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of teachers, especially female leadership, in order to thread the path for quality in education.

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## Appendix 1

Table 2: Criteria for assessing performance of course participants (teachers)

S#	Grade	Deliverables	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		Attendance	95% to 100%	90% to 94%	85% to 89%	80% to 84%	Below 80%
<b>Class Participation</b>							
1							
a		Actively participated in the workshop activities	74 – 78 hrs	70 – 73hrs	66 – 69hrs	62 – 65hrs	Below 62 hrs
b		Wrote reflections of workshop sessions	6hrs (half an hr for 12 days)	5.4hrs	5.1hrs	4.8hrs	Below 4.8 hrs
c		Home assignments	6hrs	5.4hrs	5.1hrs	4.8hrs	Below 4.8 hrs
d		Presentations	6hrs	5.4hrs	5.1hrs	4.8hrs	Below 4.8 hrs
2			<b>*Report from SST on whether the CP:</b>				
a		Has taken help from MPU resource material	5 out of 5 times	4 out of 5 times	3 out of 5 times	2 out of 5 times	1 or not at all out of 5 times
b		Shows critical analysis of the teaching learning process	"	"	"	"	"
c		Identifies strengths and weaknesses of his/her own teaching	"	"	"	"	"
d		Identifies strengths and weaknesses of his/her students' learning	"	"	"	"	"
e		Identifies factors that contribute to the strengths or weaknesses of both the teaching learning in the classroom	"	"	"	"	"
f		Uses classroom management strategies	"	"	"	"	"
g		Uses motivational strategies	"	"	"	"	"
h		Prepares and uses teaching aids	"	"	"	"	"

Table 2 (Contd.)

Achieving change in the classroom						
3	Ten lessons to be planned and taught by CP should fulfill following criteria:	10 out of 10 times	8 out of 10 times	6 out of 10 times	4 out of 10 times	3 or not at all
a	Planned lessons covering sufficient amount of content	"	"	"	"	"
b	Stated lesson objectives	"	"	"	"	"
c	Lesson plans include: Warm-up/Review, Introduction, Development and Conclusion	"	"	"	"	"
d	A variety of relevant activities to teach his/her lessons	"	"	"	"	"
e	Lessons ensure active participation of students	"	"	"	"	"
f	Used a variety of relevant assessment techniques	"	"	"	"	"
g	Referred to the Teachers' Resource Book	"	"	"	"	"
h	Planned lessons which ensure effective utilization of the class time	"	"	"	"	"
i	Critical reflection on these plans of SST with CP	"	"	"	"	"

Table 2 (Contd.)

4 Observe 5 of the lessons being taught					
	5 out of 5 times	4 out of 5 times	3 out of 5 times	2 out of 5 times	1 out of 5 times
a	Lessons cover sufficient amount of content, clearly highlighting all aspects of a lesson plan and has prepared teaching aids to teach lessons	“	“	“	“
b	Prepared and placed useful charts on the classroom walls, prepared and displayed models, praised students, reviewed classroom rules, avoided punishments and encouraged student participation in the lesson	“	“	“	“
c	Demonstrated command of subject matter, prepared and used a variety of relevant student-centred activities and assessment techniques to assess students' performances.	“	“	“	“
d	Demonstrated a willingness to utilize his/her personal and professional strengths to enhance teaching and learning conditions and to overcome his/her professional weaknesses.	“	“	“	“
e	Used strategies suggested in the Teachers' Resource Book	“	“	“	“

Table 2 (Contd.)

S #	Grade	Deliverables	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1		<b>Training sessions (attendance)</b>	95% to 100%	90% to 94%	85% to 89%	80% to 84%	Below 80%
2		<b>Reflections</b>	22 out of 24 times	19 out of 24 times	16 out of 24 times	13 out of 24 times	10 or not at all out of 24 times
		<b>Wall charts</b>					
		<b>Presentations</b>					
3		Planning & conducting meetings	5 out of 5 times	4 out of 5 times	3 out of 5 times	2 out of 5 times	1 or not at all out of 5 times
4		Assigning duties to teachers and other staff members	“	“	“	“	“
5		Observing teachers' teaching	“	“	“	“	“
6		Writing reflections	“	“	“	“	“
7		Resolving issues	“	“	“	“	“
8		Creating supportive learning environment in school	“	“	“	“	“

# Beginning Teachers' Professional Socialization in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: The Challenges and Coping Strategies

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## Abstract

*This qualitative study examines and develops an in-depth understanding of two beginning teachers' professional socializations in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. The study is a historical and descriptive account that provides insights into the impact of socio-political upheaval on the lives of two beginning teachers. The study focuses on the challenges the teachers faced in their initial stages of work and on how they addressed these. The teachers' professional socialization stories are described in three realms: classroom, school and community. The study examines in greater detail the professional and relational challenges that the two beginning teachers faced while interacting with their pupils, administrators, colleagues, pupils' parents and education officials.*

*In addition to the typical challenges of adjusting to school culture, rules and regulations and classroom management faced by beginning teachers, these individuals had to deal with additional tribulations that have manifested after and because of the collapse of the former USSR. These include insufficient resources for schools, inadequately qualified and inexperienced colleagues, high student drop-out rates, a constantly changing curriculum, lack of textbooks, low salaries with frequent delays and deductions.*

*These young teachers, despite their circumstances, emerge as caring and considerate individuals who adopted a variety of responses, including maintaining their values and performance, while at the same time attempting to influence others as they protected themselves from criticisms. The combination of social strategies and micropolitical tactics proved useful in examining the beginning teachers' broader positions and specific tactics of addressing the crucial challenges.*

*The study offers insights for school administrators, experienced teachers and education authorities at district, provincial and national levels. It points out the importance of assisting beginning teachers in improving performance, retention and long-term personal and professional well-being. The thesis also highlights some of the major challenges of conducting qualitative studies in the Central Asian context. Finally, the study also revealed that there is a need to develop educational research*



*capacity in Kyrgyzstan, a situation which must be addressed in order to improve the educational system.*

## **Introduction**

The paper reports a qualitative case study of beginning teachers in secondary classes of general schools in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, it presents the beginning teachers' experiences, beliefs, practices, the challenges they come across while working in their initial stages at school, and how they address these challenges. In addition to the typical personal and institutional challenges of adjusting to school culture, rules and regulations, dealing with children having various individual needs, or managing classrooms, beginning teachers in Kyrgyzstan now face the challenges that have emerged after the collapse of the former Soviet Union i.e. socio-political and economic upheavals. The beginning teachers, through their unique perspectives, provide insights not only into the normal pressures faced by the beginning teacher, but also into such an experience when it is compounded by the challenges of post-Soviet realities. Thus, the paper provides unique insights into the plight of beginning teachers operating under severe duress in a unique historical period.

## **Challenges Faced by Beginning Teachers and Their Coping Strategies**

The Kyrgyz beginning teachers' prior education, experiences and beliefs, which they brought to their workplaces and to the social context of becoming teachers, were extremely important in shaping their professional socialization stories. These professional socialization stories have a complex interplay between themselves, their workplaces, the socio-economic context and its cultural history (Lacey, 1994; Zeichner, 1993). Their professional socialization took place in a context of socio-political, economic and political realities and changes (Arfwedson, 1979; Lacey, 1994; Jordell, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). In many ways, these wider forces helped them in shaping their careers, facing challenges by developing coping strategies and tactics in them. The beginning teachers' personal characteristics and biographies also played important roles in their professional socialization (Bliss & Reck, 1991; Constance, 1997; Kuzmic, 1994; Zeichner, 1993). Their formative years and the debut of their careers occurred during a period when their lives were significantly changing.

The beginning teachers joined and became members of their school organizations and acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to participate as members of

their new workplaces. The cherished beliefs and practices that they had developed earlier on in their organizations (Thiessen, 1996), were challenged due to the demands that the new work place placed on them and were a source of tension. Consequently, they further developed and modified their beliefs and practices to accelerate their careers.

Though the beginning teachers in Kyrgyzstan faced many challenges in their initial period of work, their struggles were multi-layered in comparison to their Western counterparts because of Kyrgyzstan's particular socio-economic and political difficulties (Bullough, 1997; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Gold, 1996; Knowles, 1988; Kuzmic, 1994; Lacey, 1977; Loughran, Brown & Doecke, 2001). They experienced frustrations and fulfillments, discovered shortcomings and strengths, and learned to celebrate the highs and accept the lows of their professional lives realistically (Cole, 1996). The Kyrgyz beginning teachers worked in a context of rapid and complex changes, economic crisis, unemployment, poverty, dislocated civilians, poor living conditions, worsening health situations and other social problems precipitated by the break-up of the former Soviet Union (Avalos, 1993; Heyneman & DeYoung, 2004; Niyozov, 2001). Teachers were generally considered scapegoats for the society's problems (Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 1994). They struggled with low teacher prestige (Hurst & Rust, 1990), increasingly worsening work and life conditions, impoverished schools and dwindling resources (little or no teaching resources including textbooks), low salaries, changes in curriculum, high rates of pupil dropout ratio, and little support and lack of professional development opportunities. The beginning teachers also worked with poorly qualified colleagues, because of their exit from the work force due to the low salary and difficult working conditions, leading to a serious teacher shortage particularly in rural schools.

Thus, beginning teachers struggled with meeting and confronting the demands and constraints presented by the people at their workplaces (Kuzmic, 1994). The teachers faced micropolitical struggles for power, control, autonomy, position (status), and resources.

The challenges can be categorized into three realms: classroom (pupils), school (administrators, colleagues) and community (parents, officials; cf. Jordell, 1987; Pollard, 1982; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Zeichner & Gore, 1999). The realms framework offers a more comprehensive and complex lens for understanding the lives of the beginning teachers.

## **Working with Pupils**

The beginning teachers interacted and dealt with many challenges presented by their pupils such as: conducting lessons effectively, dealing with discipline and upbringing (tarbia) issues (Bullough, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), lack of strong content knowledge or a wide repertoire of pedagogy to teach effectively and to adjust to their schools well (Roehrig, Pressley & Talotta, 2002). The pupils played a crucial part in shaping the path of the beginning teachers' socialization (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). They influenced the beginning teachers' selection and use of teaching approaches, classroom management and discipline strategies (Blase, 1997; Thiessen, 1992; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The beginning teachers faced serious classroom management and discipline issues in interacting with their pupils because of their own lack of experience and skills (Bullough et al., 1989; Brock & Grady, 2001; Lacey, 1977; Roehrig et al., 2002; Veenman, 1984). They struggled to establish a good rapport with their pupils on one hand and tried to establish authority or a degree of formality on the other hand (Brock & Grady, 2001; Tubbs, 1996).

The beginning teachers had the authority to educate, control and discipline their pupils, not only as teachers but also as elders to their pupils, which made them adopt more assertive and proactive strategies and tactics (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). The beginning teachers worked on these challenges in ways that maintained their own priorities or preferred practices. In a few instances, the beginning teachers complied with the pupils' demands in order to avoid tensions. They influenced their pupils to learn (Beauchamp & Parsons, 1992; Bullough et al., 1989) by attending to their individual needs. Besides learning the content knowledge in the curriculum, they also encouraged students to adopt good behaviour, keep good company and respect elders.

The beginning teachers had more autonomy regarding what they did and how they dealt with the challenges presented by pupils in the classrooms. But they often needed to comply strategically and demonstrate to those outside their classrooms (administrators, colleagues, parents and officials) that they could teach well and control their pupils (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Lacey, 1977; Olson & Osborne, 1991).

## **Working with Administrators**

The administrators presented serious challenges to the beginning teachers (Brock & Grady, 2001; Duckworth & Carnine, 1987; Veenman, 1985), because their expectations, reinforced rules and control over the beginning teachers was not in

accordance with what the teachers themselves expected or wanted (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1997; Sparkes, 1988). Beginning teachers face the risks of being judged as disrespectful, of losing one's job, of being penalized, of getting their salaries docked up, etc. from the administrators' side.

In spite of the norms of respect for authorities and elders, the latter did not benefit much from the advice and feedback on their practices from the administrators due to their protectionist and reactive strategies and tactics at the time of class observations (Kamins & Dweck, 1999; Watkins, 2000). Thus, theirs was an isolated struggle to address challenges predominantly through the process of trial and errors (Dollase, 1992).

They often passively complied with their administrators' definition of a situation, even when they did not agree with it, because they wanted to avoid conflicts with the administrators. They refrained from expressing their views and resentments so as to avoid creating a negative image of themselves. In the absence of induction programmes and support, many of the potentially good young teachers abandoned teaching out of disappointment (Cole, 1996).

The beginning teachers wanted to establish good relations with their administrators, make a good impression of their capabilities, gain their support, and thus, get a more suitable timetable arrangement, better resources and more teaching hours (more salary) in the future in return (Ball, 1989). They also did not want to expose any possible weakness to their administrators and instead tried to show their best practices (Bullough, 1989).

Only in exceptional situations did the beginning teachers confront the administrators openly such as when they felt they were being treated unfairly. For example, a young female biology teacher confronted her vice-principal despite the possible repercussions when her integrity was questioned.

## **Working with Colleagues**

The beginning teachers also faced challenges from their colleagues such as competing for resources and facilities, and the inherent cultural expectations of having respect for elders and gaining colleagues' recognition. The beginning teachers were assigned and expected to assume the same responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues (Brock & Grady, 2001), yet they were not always recognized and accepted by their senior colleagues (Tubbs, 1996). The new teachers were given poorer materials and facilities in comparison to their senior colleagues (Bullough, 1997; Roehrig, Pressley & Talotta, 2002). The new teachers

faced their colleagues' resentment because they were giving them competition for teaching hours and salary.

Due to the prevailing teacher culture of individualism, the teachers usually worked in isolation and didn't find many cooperative, qualified colleagues at schools to act as their mentors (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Issues such as their colleagues' lack of cooperation, lack of support, gossip and criticism made the beginning teachers' experiences working with colleagues very difficult.

The beginning teachers also did not want to expose any weaknesses to their senior colleagues by asking for help (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Jordell, 1987; Rust, 1994). Instead, they learned to address challenges on their own through trial and errors rather than relying on others (Hannam et al., 1984). The prevailing belief that teaching should be learned by independent trial and error was reflected in (and sustained by) norms that constrained the interaction between the beginning teachers and their experienced colleagues (Saraco, 1994).

The beginning teachers curbed their disagreements and criticisms and complied when dealing with their senior colleagues in order to avoid tensions and conflicts, and to get accepted as worthy colleagues (Ball, 1987; Schempp et al., 1993). They protected themselves from their senior colleagues' criticisms and acted cautiously to avoid make a bad impression (Goodman, 1988). They accepted the fact that their senior colleagues had access to better resources and facilities (Bullough, 1997; Brock & Grady, 2001) which they eventually hoped to secure with more work experience (Dolmage, 1996).

## **Working with Parents**

The beginning teachers needed to deal with demands from pupils' parents (Blase, 1997; Brock & Grady, 2001; Rust, 1994; Veenman, 1984). Though the parents had no formal authority, they could still put pressure on the beginning teachers by challenging their decisions and actions (Lortie, 1975) and interfering in the beginning teachers' practices and actions.

The teachers worried about establishing a good rapport with the parents, gaining acceptance and getting support from them (Reay, 2001; Veenman, 1984). Having their own perspective about their children's schooling, the parents questioned, challenged and interfered with the beginning teachers' practices, selection and use of instructional or disciplinary strategies, and ways of marking (Blase, 1997; Lortie, 1975; McIntosh, 1976; Roehrig et al., 2002; Tangri & Moles, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The parents exploited the beginning teachers'

inexperience by trying to influence their teaching strategies more vehemently than they did with senior teachers especially with the amount of homework to be assigned or the marking criteria to be relaxed in individual cases.

In addition, although all the teachers in Kyrgyzstan were involved in collecting money from parents for school building repairs due to funding constraints, it was a more exhausting experience for the young teachers (DeYoung & Santos, 2004; Karim kyzy, 2003; Reeves, 2003). The parents, who had more than one child in school, hugely resented the money collection, as they had to pay money per child.

The parents' socio-economic backgrounds also influenced their relationships with the beginning teachers (Arfwedson, 1979; Jordell, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Town parents, who lived in relatively higher-status communities, could spend more time and money on their children's schooling and frequently visited the town school and interacted with the teachers (Blase, 1997; McIntosh, 1976; Roehrig et al., 2002; Veenman, 1984).

On the other hand, village parents, being too preoccupied with their household or farm work, didn't take an active interest in their children's schooling (Reay, 2001; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). They avoided visiting the schools frequently or interfering with the teachers' practices, but didn't offer any support either, because of their overall grievances against the educational system. These resentments included: having to pay the repair-related expenditures to the schools in spite of their dire circumstances, disappointment with the poor quality of education in the village schools, and the slim chances of their children being admitted to the institutions of higher education due to the corruption prevalent in society.

The beginning teachers often compromised their actions and behaviours to meet the parents' demands, and refrained from confronting them or expressing their own views (Blase, 1997). They had to withstand parents' demands that challenged their core beliefs and practices, especially when the parents asked for special favours for their children, 1980). The new teachers, at times had to protect themselves and their practices from the parents' views of how they ought to work by using protective strategies (Gold, 1996; Tangri & Moles, 1987). For example, Ainura, a young biology teacher handling the gymnasium activities, faced a lot of pressure from the well-off parents, as they were spending extra money for the gym classes; and thus, wanted exclusive attention to be paid to their children (Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984). But Ainura resisted the pressures and didn't compromise her teaching practices.

## **Working with Officials**

Due to the shortage of teachers and lack of qualified colleagues, the beginning teachers in Kyrgyzstan were often treated just like their more experienced colleagues in terms of the inspection of their practices by education officials. Thus, the teachers had to show the officials good practices and comply with their demands in order to avoid getting negative feedback and reprimands from the officials as well as their own administrators.

In addition, the teachers, as state employees, were exploited by the officials to participate in state-initiated activities like elections, referenda, and jubilee celebrations etc. as ballot counters, promoters of election candidates, and distributors of election promotional materials (Dukenbaev, 2004). Moreover, all the teachers were also obliged to subscribe to government publications, costing up to a third of their salaries; purchase books by officially endorsed poets, writers and politicians; and raise money for lavish meetings between local education officials and school inspectors.

In addition, the practice of the use of schools as polling stations, especially in rural areas, disrupting classes and other school routines, was fairly common. Only in exceptional cases, as Kleine-Kracht and Wong (1991) observe, the beginning teachers confronted the education officials collectively, so as to not to get penalized individually. For example, the teachers of a village school collectively boycotted teaching when their salaries were docked for newspaper subscriptions, so as to not to get penalized individually.

## **Summary**

The beginning teachers' responses to the challenges varied according to circumstances and contexts they worked in. The study confirmed the importance of the particularities of the local contexts that enabled or constrained the beginning teachers to adopt certain kinds of strategies or tactics over others. The beginning teachers were confronted with a micropolitical reality in their job situation; each school as an organization functioned by certain traditions and habits and there were different power relations between various individuals and groups at any school.

This study also showed that the local culture and traditions played important roles in shaping the new teachers' relations with other people. The new teachers respected their administrators, colleagues, pupils' parents and officials as elders, and hence, were compliant while interacting with them. Because of respect for

these elders, they often could not practice or express many things that they wanted to say or do.

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# **Emerging Roles and Relationships of Teacher Leaders for School Improvement in Pakistan: A Case Study**

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## **Abstract**

*The paper reports a case study of teacher leadership in Great Minds School (GMS) which is part of a large school system in Pakistan. A team of seven Learning Area Coordinators was appointed in GMS, one for each learning area program, to support the teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum at the classroom level. Similarly, at the systems level, a central education office was established with a Program Officers and seven Program Associates to support the curriculum development and implementation work in the network schools. Research findings indicate that the three factors, i.e. construction of the professional role of teachers, organizational environment and personal capacity, identified by Frost and Harris (2003) are the key determinants in the nature and extent of the roles played by LACs in the school improvement efforts in the Great Minds School. More specifically, the emerging roles and relationships of the two teacher leaders in the study indicate that while the explicit aim of creating teacher leadership positions may be to develop horizontal relationships, varied role perceptions, lack of adequate facilitating conditions as well limited personal capacity could be potential threats for teacher leaders to work effectively for school improvement. These findings have implications both for policy and practice in; a) clearly delineating the roles of teacher leaders and; b) building appropriate context and conditions for them to develop collegial and trusting relationships with teachers and other stakeholders at the school and systems level. It is, therefore, recommended that teacher leadership be given an explicit focus in all teacher education and leadership training programs.*

## **Introduction**

Recently, the position of heads of department and subject coordinators, have been instituted in many schools in Pakistan. This is in the wake of the current interest in the concept of teacher leadership and practices internationally. Located within the theoretical concept of distributed leadership (Harris, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2005), the aims of teacher leadership varies from teacher empowerment and their increased participation in decision making to facilitating the head teacher in playing his/her role as an instructional leader.

This current trend of developing teacher leadership in different school types in Pakistan raises several questions: Are teacher leaders selected on the basis of certain predefined criteria, e.g. personal characteristics, professional knowledge and expertise, credibility with colleagues etc.? What roles do they play? What roles are they expected to play? How are they developed to play these roles and what challenges do they face in the process? What kinds of relationship do they need to build, with different stakeholders in the school and the wider school system for working effectively? What processes and strategies are used to facilitate teacher leaders in their work? And last but not the least: What is the impact of teacher leaders on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools? This paper aims to address some of these questions, particularly those pertaining to the emerging roles and relationship of teacher leaders in the specific setting of a non-profit private school in Pakistan. More specifically, the paper focuses on the work of two teacher leaders in one section of the Great Minds School, which is part of a network of schools run by a large non-governmental organization in Pakistan (henceforth referred to as SCP).

The data for this study was collected as part of a larger case study on the impact of the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) on school improvement in selected schools in Karachi, Pakistan.

## **Defining Teacher Leadership**

Teacher leadership has been defined variously in the literature according to the purpose and variety of role(s) teacher leaders are expected to play in school improvement. York-Barr & Duke (2004) identifies ‘three waves’ in the development of the concept of teacher leadership. These are as follows:

1. Teacher leaders as managers,
2. Teacher leaders as curriculum leaders, staff developers, and mentors of new teachers,
3. Teacher leaders as central to the process of reculturing schools.

According to York-Barr and Duke, it is now widely accepted that, “Teacher leadership reflects teacher agency through establishing relationships, breaking down barriers, and marshalling resources throughout the organization in an effort to improve students’ educational experiences and outcomes” (p. 263). Thus teacher leadership involves playing a set of roles, at both formal and informal

levels, and establishing a network of relationships throughout the organization for school improvement.

The aim of this paper is to describe and discuss a case of teacher leadership, with a focus on the emerging roles and relationships of two teacher leaders, in a private school in Pakistan. The next section begins with a brief description of the study context and the motivation for instituting teacher leadership in the school. Next, the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders are outlined. This is followed by a critical examination of the role enactment of two teacher leaders called learning Area Coordinators (LACs) in the school. The focus is on investigating the perceptions of different stakeholders on the role of teacher leaders within the specific context of school and the larger context of the school system of which it is a part. The section ends with a brief discussion of factors that were found to facilitate or constrain the LACs in playing their role effectively in the school.

## **Case Study of Teacher Leadership in Great Minds School**

### **The Context of the Study**

The case study was conducted in the girl's junior secondary section (GJSS) of the Great Minds School, which in turn is part of a larger school system, henceforth referred to as SCP.

A new curriculum comprising of seven Learning Area Programs (LAP) was launched in the three network schools of SCP, including the Great Minds School in Karachi, at the beginning of the academic year 2003-2004. The change in curriculum included all grade levels from early years to grade ten. A major change in the new curriculum was the shift of focus from subjects to learning areas and from teaching to learning. In addition, there were related developments in learning material, pedagogy and assessment practices. Likewise, the suggested classroom activities for each learning area program and teachers' professional development were linked to the teachers' needs in implementing the new curriculum; the aim was "to prepare teachers according to the [given] content and context" (Interview, Manager Academics, SCP).

A major reorganisation of the school structure was undertaken along with the change in curriculum: ECD section was expanded from two to four years (K-2), while grades three to ten were included in the junior secondary section of the

school. In addition, the school budget was aligned to identified needs [of the school] for effective implementation of the learning area programs, for example, “labs were identified as an area that if we really want to put that program [LAP for science] we need to update them earlier” (Interview, Program Officer, education office).

Changes were also introduced in the school organisational structure to support the implementation of the new curriculum at the classroom level. Under the new structure the academic and administrative functions in the school were divided between the school principal and an administrative officer respectively. A section head and seven Learning Area Coordinators (LACs), one for each learning area program, were appointed in each school section. The section head along with her team of LACs formed the academic leadership team responsible for managing, monitoring and supervising the academic program in his/her section of the school. In addition, the position of a faculty coordinator was created in each school section to help the section head in the day to day functioning of the school, such as in arranging for substitute teachers and providing logistical support for conducting exams

At the system level, the Education Office, South, was formally established in 2002 with a Manager Academics and four Program Officers. One Program Officer was entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the network schools in curriculum development and its effective implementation at the classroom level. The Program Officer was supported in her task by seven Program Associates, one for each learning area program. The Program Associates were given the responsibility of leading the work of curriculum development with the school heads, organizing ongoing needs-based professional development sessions for teachers and for providing school-based support to teachers and teacher leaders in the network schools (Bano, 2002).

Overall, as shared by various stakeholders, these ‘reforms’ were motivated by a concern for student learning outcomes. It was envisaged that these changes would lead to the development of a school culture characterised by openness to sharing and learning with and from each other, and continuing professional development of teachers for improved student outcomes.

## **Learning Area Coordinators as Teacher Leaders in GMS**

Seven Learning Area Coordinators, one for each learning area program, were appointed in different sections of the Great Minds School including GJJS. The new position of LAC replaced the earlier Head of Department position. More



importantly, the role of the LAC was defined with a clear focus on supporting the teachers in implementing the new curriculum at the classroom level. This was a major departure from the previous authoritarian role of heads of department with a focus on administrative functions only. Teachers, who were appointed as LACs, were allocated fifty percent of their time for playing their now role as teacher leaders. The LACs had a longer work day compared to other teachers in the school. However, this increase in workload was compensated for with a number of incentives and rewards, such as improved working conditions (a separate room for LACs with computers) and an enhanced salary package. As mentioned earlier, this paper focuses on the emerging roles and network of relationships of two LACs or teacher leaders in GJSS, a section of the Great Minds School.

It seems that several ‘unwritten’ criteria were used for the appointment of LACs, such as expertise in the content area, skills to guide and support teachers at the classroom level in their learning area program, and skills and ability to work collaboratively with colleagues. For example, Hadia, LAC for the learning area program titled ‘English Language Development’, had a Master’s degree in English Literature. At the time of the study she had three and a half years of teaching experience, but no formal professional preparation for the teaching of English. However, after joining the school she had attended some in-house workshops during the summer break. In contrast, Saira, LAC for the ‘Mathematics and Logical Thinking’ learning area program did not have any post graduate qualifications. Saira had approximately 10 years of teaching experience. More importantly, she had completed a certificate and an advanced diploma program in Math from a highly reputable private university in Pakistan. Both the LACs had no preparation for leadership prior to their appointment. Saira reported that she was appointed as LAC soon after she joined her advanced diploma program. The program provided her with various opportunities to extend her learning beyond the immediate course requirements, in preparation for her new role:

So I focused my learning not only on things I felt were relevant for 9th and 10th, the classes I was teaching, but on everyone’s problems. So I would think these are her problems in teaching ratio- I will also have to guide my teachers so I can do this-so this has been very helpful for me. Now when I am guiding my teachers, suggesting an activity or giving comments on their lesson plan I find it easy to see that it would be helpful to do this step first and do this later. (Interview, Saira)

## **Roles and Responsibilities of LACs**

A review of the documents including terms of reference of LACs and interviews with different stakeholders revealed that the LACs in GMS were expected to perform the following roles and responsibilities:

- Reviewing and developing weekly plans with teachers;
- Giving feedback on lesson plans and learning activities;
- Classroom observation, giving feedback on lessons observed;
- Co-planning, co-teaching;
- Demonstration lessons (if required);
- Discussion and feedback on test items;
- Discussion with teachers/head for resource identification and development;
- Discussion about students' work in their exercise books and their overall performance with teachers/other LACs;
- Organizing reading sessions/seminars and workshops for teachers;
- Teacher appraisal.

Thus the major role of the LACs was that of a guide and mentor to support the teachers in implementing the new curriculum at the classroom level with its associated methodology and assessment procedures. For this purpose the LACs were required to observe teachers' classes twice in each term; the first time with prior information to the teacher, and the second time 'unannounced' for monitoring the teacher's progress and use of innovative methodology in teaching the new curriculum. However, another role was that of an evaluator of teacher' performance for merit pay etc.

## **LAC Role Perceptions and Experience**

The leadership at both the school and system level was clear in their view that LACs formed an important part of the academic leadership team in the school, for example, in leading curriculum implementation and sharing the responsibility for teacher appraisal with the section head. Accordingly, they expected high

standards of performance from the LACs. In fact, it was pointed out by the school principal that the LACs were expected to act as role models for other teachers.

The LACs' viewed their role mainly as facilitators to support teachers at the classroom level. This was evident in their interaction with teachers as follows:

**Vignette 1: Meeting of an LAC with a teacher in her learning area program- the meeting was held in the LAC room.**

[Prior to the meeting, the LAC shared with me that out of the two teachers who were supposed to meet with her- they teach two sections of the same class- only one teacher, Rana, would be there for the meeting today.]

Rana briefs the LAC about what she has done in her classes till now and what she intends to do in her future classes. She shares some issues regarding work on computers and which program to use. She tells the LAC that her lessons of both classes 3 & 4 are in her planner. [The teacher seems to be quiet comfortable with the LAC.] Rana shows her future planning.

The LAC comments on a worksheet 'a tough one but a good one'. The LAC asks Rana for class IV syllabus. She shares that the Program Associate for math had suggested that teachers should do factors and prime and composite numbers together. They look at the syllabus together referring to the given time for teaching each topic.

Rana disagrees with the given time estimates in the handbook giving the reasons, quite confidently, from her point of view. The LAC refers to a class she had observed and comments that the children seemed to be doing well 'but there was no copy work'. The LAC refers again to the suggestions by the Program Associate. They together review the topics left from the first term. The LAC encourages Rana to be flexible in her plan as "you have enough time. It's your choice what you consider easy to do. What children feel easy about?"

Rana explains the procedure she and her colleague teaching another section of the same class, had used for teaching a particular topic. She tells the LAC that she has planned another topic but does not have her plan at this point to share with her. The LAC tells her, "Doesn't matter, but show it to me later". The LAC shares something she had observed in another class that was very good. The LAC makes some suggestion about how to teach another topic.

The LAC discusses problems in accessing a book. Rana insists that the book is so good that they must get it. She also mentions that her VT material [material from the course done at AKU-IED] is also very good. The LAC demonstrates something for Rana saying she had learnt it during her Advanced Diploma Program [at AKU-IED]. Rana listens attentively and says that she understands it well. The LAC mentions again that it was done in their Advanced Diploma class. Rana notes it down in her planner.

The interaction between the LAC and a teacher in vignette 1 indicates a culture of collegiality and team work. The interaction takes place in an atmosphere of

mutual trust and support. The teacher seems to be comfortable in discussing issues with the LAC in regard to implementing the new curriculum in her classroom. The focus is on ways of enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom. However, as will be discussed in the next section, issues of limited time and opportunity for holding these meetings on a regular basis were raised by both LACs and the teachers.

While novice teachers were appreciative of the support they received from LACs, other teachers - mainly senior or experienced teachers- shared a certain level of skepticism about the role of LACs. In particular, in cases where the earlier heads of department had been appointed as LACs, these teachers shared that the change was evident only in the paper work, which in their opinion, had increased substantially for the LACs.

To summarize, the senior management and school leadership considered the LAC's role mainly as two-dimensional: 1) appraising the teachers for development and supporting them in implementing the new curriculum; and 2) appraising the teachers' performance for annual increment in salary and merit pay. This perception of the LAC's role—supportive and evaluative at the same time— had the potential of creating tension amongst the LACs and the teachers. It was interesting to note that the LACs, in contrast, considered their role to be that of a mentor, mainly to support teachers in their efforts to implement the new curriculum in their classrooms. This was clearly evident in their interactions, particularly with novice and relatively junior teachers in their learning area program. This could be due to the fact that teacher appraisal was only one of the jobs mentioned in their role description. It may also be due to the guidance they received on an ongoing basis from the Program Associates in their learning Area programs. Teachers seem to have mixed views about the benefits of the LAC position created to support their work and continuous professional development in the school. More specifically, teachers' understanding of their own expertise and experience relative to that of the LACs seems to affect their perception of LACs as teacher leaders.

## **Network of Relationships**

The LACs, to play their role effectively, were involved in a network of relationships at different levels both within and outside their section of the school. First, they worked closely with 6-7 teachers in their learning area program in their school section. As members of the academic leadership team, they also worked in close association with LACs of other learning programs in their section of the school. Additionally, all the LACs met formally with the

section head in a coordination meeting held every week. The LACs were also expected to liaise on a regular basis with the LACs in their learning area program in other sections of the school. They also had opportunities to discuss their issues with other LACs in the network schools, particularly during the 'Professional Development Day' organized on a monthly basis for the teachers of the three network schools in Karachi by the education office. Additionally, the LACs interacted regularly with the Program Associates for their learning area program in the education office for ongoing support and guidance in the performance of their role as teacher leaders.

During data collection, it was pointed out by various stake holders that the new structures were non-hierarchical and put in place to support quality teaching and learning. Mutual trust and respect for each other was also observed in interactions amongst the LACs, and LACs and teachers in the LAC room. There was also evidence of collaborative team work in the LACs meeting with their section head.

The two teacher leaders in the study were involved in relationships at all levels. However, the scope of their role was mainly confined to the school and classroom level. A major benefit of this was an intended focus on student learning outcomes through improving the curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment practices at the classroom level.

For a better understanding of the role of LACs in school improvement, we need to review the factors, both at the level of Great Minds School and the larger school system of which it is a part that either facilitated or inhibited the two LACs in the study to play their role effectively as teacher leaders. This is what we turn to in the next section.

### **LAC Role Enactment: Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors**

Frost & Harris (2003) identify three factors that "determine the extent and nature of leadership that can be exercised by the teachers" (p.487). These are: the construction of the professional role of teachers, organizational environment and personal capacity. These factors were also identified as key factors in the role-enactment of LACS as teacher leaders in the Great Minds School.

In GMS, the role of LAC was a formal teacher leadership role. The LACs perceived their role as non-hierarchical and sharply focused on supporting the implementation of the new curriculum in the school. This role definition was helpful in focusing the work of LACs on developing procedures and practices,

such as the use of innovative methodology and assessment tasks, and for implementing the new curriculum to improve learning outcomes. The LACs shared that their role carried no authority as compared to the earlier roles of Heads of Department. This lack of authority sometimes created problems for them in negotiating time for development work with the teachers, particularly when they or the teachers working with them were assigned odd jobs such as accompanying the students to another school for a co-curricular activity. Some lack of clarity about the two dimensions of the LAC's role, i.e. supportive and evaluative, was evident amongst the senior leadership at both the school and system level. This lack of clearly demarcated role boundaries had the potential of creating a conflict between the supportive and evaluative dimensions of their role.

Gonzales and Lambert (2004) discuss the emergence of the teacher leadership identity in professional development schools in the US as a function of the evolving roles of teacher leaders in these schools. More importantly, these roles were "formal and carried more authority than the teachers had traditionally enjoyed, and gave them a unique access to staff and administrators" (p 12.). Similarly, the emerging roles of teacher leaders in the study enabled them to see themselves no more as a person 'in-charge', but unlike the earlier Heads of Department, "as a person who assumes responsibility for initiating collegial conversations that lead to the development of plans to improve the school community" (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001, p. 20).

Managing a complex network of relationships posed some challenges for the LACs in their role enactment, particularly as they did not have any prior training for leadership. However, it allowed them the opportunity to participate in decision making about curriculum implementation issues, resource identification, development, teaching and assessment practices at the classroom, school and system level.

Organizational factors that facilitated both at the institutional and system level included a shared understanding of the context and motivation for change, and an institutional policy of 'pressure and support'. The school head and staff of the SPC education office had developed the curriculum along with the LACs. The LACs were therefore, aware of the need for change, and the focus of the new curriculum on enhancing student learning outcomes. This helped them in understanding their key role in the whole process of school improvement currently underway in all the network schools in the system. Under the policy of 'pressure and support, on one hand, support was available to the LACs from the section head and the Program Associates in the education office. On the other,

as designated teacher leaders they faced higher levels of accountability than the teachers, for maximizing the impact of their work on qualitative improvements in student learning outcomes. At the same time the LACs were aware of the school leadership's high expectations of them in terms of their key role in school improvement.

There were also a number of organizational factors that prevented the LACs from playing their role effectively. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, there was a lack of clarity about their role 'boundaries'- supportive and/or evaluative. Secondly, the LACs faced problems in their role implementation due to both the teachers and the LACs being assigned other jobs during their 'free' time, such as substitute teaching or organizing fieldwork and students' participation in co-curricular activities in other schools. In the absence of any strategic planning to deal with these issues, often the LACs could not follow their scheduled plans for classroom observation and follow-up development work with the teachers. More importantly, it was observed that as there was no protected time for pre and post conferencing with teachers, the post-observation meetings were either very hurried, or postponed to several days after the classroom observation. Thus day to day school pressures often turned their teacher development work into a mere formality. For example, some LACs were observed giving teachers the feedback sheets for signing (another formality!) a couple of days before their monthly reports were due to be submitted to the section head. Thirdly, the increased amount of paper work, such as submitting monthly reports, took a lot of time. The LACs felt, rightly in my view, that this time could be spent better in providing one-to-one support to teachers in their classrooms.

The limited personal capacity of the two LACs in the study also affected their role-enactment in the school. At least one LAC had inadequate content and/or pedagogical knowledge and skills to act as a mentor. Both the LACs did not have any prior training or preparation for academic leadership. This lack of adequate knowledge and skills and professional preparation for leadership led to credibility issues, particularly in terms of their capacity to lead and support the relatively experienced senior teachers in introducing innovative methodology in their classrooms.

Thus while the explicit aim of creating teacher leadership positions may be to develop horizontal collegial relationships for collaborative learning, lack of clarity in role definitions, inadequate facilitating conditions and limited personal capacity of teacher leaders could be potential threats to their working effectively for school improvement.

## **Teacher Leadership in School Improvement in Pakistan**

The emerging roles and relationships of teacher leaders in the context of a private school striving for increased student learning outcomes has important implications for both policy and practice in Pakistan. First of all, there is the issue of formal vs. informal roles of teacher leaders. Generally, the organizational culture of schools in Pakistan is both bureaucratic and hierarchical (Simkins et al, 2003, Shamim & Farah, 2005). This implies that by instituting formal teacher leadership positions, another tier might be added to the existing school hierarchies. On the other hand, it can be argued that teachers with all the other pressures in their lives (cf. Ashraf, 2001; Huberman, 1993) will not assume leadership roles unless there are incentives and rewards for them to do so, such as those associated with formal leadership positions in a school. What seems important at this point is the need to have a shared understanding of the concept of teacher leadership and the purpose for formally appointing teacher leaders, if required, in a school. Second, it might not be realistically possible to find teachers with good content and pedagogical knowledge and leadership skills in a school. Similarly, it might not be possible for the school and/or school system to provide adequate personal and/or professional preparation to teachers prior to taking on teacher leadership roles in the school. Hence, teacher leadership should be seen both by the teachers and the school management as an opportunity for on-the-job training and continuous professional development for teachers who have shown initiative and/or excellence in teaching, and are highly motivated to enhance their current level of knowledge and skills. At the same time, teacher leaders should be encouraged to see themselves as learners with other teachers in their team, and not as role models only. It is possible that exemplary teachers in mid-career positions might be more suitable for teacher leadership positions, as they are often looking for opportunities to enhance the scope of their work. Becoming a teacher leader would enable them to share their expertise with their colleagues while learning from them at the same time. Proven excellence in teaching might also address the issue of credibility faced by LACs in Great Minds School!

Third, while the policy of pressure and support may encourage teacher leaders to strive for excellence in their work performance, if the culture of the school is bureaucratic and hierarchical, as is normally the case in schools in Pakistan and similar contexts elsewhere, the pressure on teacher leaders of becoming role models might lead them to act as ‘all-knowing’ and, therefore, authoritarian rather than developing an openness to learning with and from their colleagues (cf. Shamim & Farah, 2005). This would certainly hinder the development of a culture of teamwork and collaboration with colleagues both inside and outside



the school. Similarly, if the focus is shifted from the teacher to ways of enhancing student learning, as was the alleged aim of the new curriculum in Great Minds School, the discourse of teacher leadership will also shift from being predominantly evaluative and judgmental of teachers' practice, to that of support and facilitation of student learning, thereby leading to teacher empowerment.

Fourth, the organizational structure needs to accommodate varied teacher leadership roles as central to the process of reculturing schools in Pakistan

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The teacher leaders faced some problems in playing their role effectively in Great Minds School. However, the findings of the study indicate that despite some 'teething' problems, which are common when introducing an innovation, teacher leadership has great promise for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools in Pakistan through developing a collaborative school culture and openness to learning with and from colleagues both inside and outside the school. At the same time teacher leadership can be an important avenue for teacher leaders' own personal and professional development, including the development of leadership skills. There remains a need to a) clearly delineate the roles of teacher leaders as being supportive of teachers' ongoing professional growth development; and b) build appropriate context and conditions for teacher leaders to develop collegial and trusting relationships with teachers and other stakeholders at the school and systems level. For teacher leaders to play a significant role in school improvement in Pakistan, it is recommended that there should be an explicit focus in teacher education programs, and on the personal and professional development of skills and competencies required for teacher leadership. Additionally, the concept of teacher leadership should be introduced in all leadership training programs as central to the process of school improvement and for enhancing the quality of student learning outcomes.

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# **Practitioners' Views on Changing School Culture: Leading towards School Improvement**

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## **Introduction**

What is school culture? How does cultural change happen? What are the implications of changing a school culture? These are questions that have perplexed many researchers and academics. In this paper, a theoretical framework of school culture and the factors that create school culture is being presented. A detailed background of the “Former Soviet School Culture” has been described in terms of the values, beliefs and organizational practices that governed the school during Soviet occupation. Moreover, by using practitioners' views as a major source of evidence, this paper makes certain claims regarding the change in school culture. The cultural change processes are described under the categories of “Transformative Changes, Additive Changes and Evolutionary Changes” (Rossman et al., 1988, pg. 89). These categories represent a continuum and have been explained according to the degree of explicit, conscious, focused, and planned efforts towards cultural change in one of the schools in Tajikistan. Finally, this paper analyzes the impact of conscious and unconscious changes in school culture on the quality of education in the school.

## **School Culture**

The term ‘school culture’ has been defined in various ways by many authors. According to some authors, school culture is defined as a complex web of norms, values, beliefs, assumptions, traditions and rituals that have been built-up over time as teachers, students, parents and administration work together, deal with issues and develop unstated expectations for interacting and working together (Shein, 1983; Deal and Peterson 1990). They further expand the definition by adding metaphor; customs, rituals, ceremonies, myths, symbols and humor are also facets of culture. Stoll highlights the implicit aspects of school culture by manifesting custom, rituals, symbols, stories, and language as ‘artifacts’ of school culture (Stoll, 1999). He further illustrates that school customs and historical accounts; stated and unstated understandings; habits, norms, and expectations; common meanings; and shared assumptions are part of school artifacts.

To recapitulate the above mentioned definition, school culture can be viewed as the interplay between three factors: the attitude and beliefs of persons both inside the school and in the external environment, the cultural norms of the school, and the relationship between persons in the school.

All these factors that comprise school culture may present barriers to change or a bridge to long-lasting implementation of school improvement. As Fullan notes, factors affecting implementation “form a system of variables that interact to determine success or failure” (Fullan 1991, p.67). Deal and Kennedy claim that culture can assist school improvement efforts or act as a barrier to change (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). The more understood, accepted and cohesive the culture of a school, the better able it is to move in concert toward ideals it holds and objectives it wishes to pursue (1995).

## **Some General Knowledge Regarding School Culture**

### **School culture is evolving**

Once an organization’s culture is formed, does it become fixed? This paper views culture as both product and process. As a product, culture embodies the accumulated wisdom of those who were members in creating the culture of the past and recognizes the efforts of the founders of the new culture. As a process, culture is continually renewed and recreated as new members influence it. Nias argues that if new members have no means of influencing culture and merely rely on the old ways, this could be taken to imply that an organization’s culture does not really change (Nias et al 1989, Hopkins et al 1994). Culture is created by its participants; it inevitably changes as its participants change. But the process of change is highly dependent on what norms exist in school culture. Rossman argues that if the norms are ‘Sacred’ or ‘unquestionably true’ then it is less likely to change or may take a long time to evolve (Rossman and colleagues, 1988). But if the norms are ‘Profane’ they are more ‘open to debate’ refinement and change. It is fact that changing a school’s culture takes a long time and altering a school’s culture is a slow process but it is also a fact that it constantly evolves.

### **School culture is elusive and implicit**

Culture is not visible; it is made visible only through its representations (Van Maanan, 1988:3). We only see surface aspects of school culture; often we only begin to know a school’s culture when we break one of its unspoken rules. Fink

and Stoll argue that culture is extremely subtle and yet powerful in the way it permeates the life of a school (Fink and Stoll, 2002). Deal and Peterson have offered the most succinct definition of school culture; they simply state that it is an “inner reality” (Deal & Peterson, 1993). Robbins and Alvy expand the definition by stating that “The inner reality reflects what organizational members care about, what they are willing to spend time doing, what and how they celebrate and what they talk about” (Robbins and Alvy, 1995, p.23).

Schein further argues that culture is the deeper level of *basic assumption* and *beliefs* that are shared by members of an organization that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic “taken for granted” fashion an organization’s view of it self and its environment (Schein, 1985). Though culture is implicit, it provides a focus and clear purpose for the school. Culture becomes the cohesive force that bonds the school together as it tries to accomplish its mission.

### **School culture is a shared experience**

Wagner conceptualizes school culture as the shared experience both in school and out of school through the school’s various traditions and celebrations, its sense of community, of family and team. Wagner feels that “interaction is particularly important, as culture is a product of social interaction.... It is by taking part in the communication system of a group that one learns its culture” (Wagner, 2000). So, having learnt that interaction plays a vital role in shaping the school culture; as stakeholders talked, worked and relaxed together, they began to negotiate shared meanings which enables them to predict each others’ behavior (in Nias, Southworth & Yeomans, 1993).

The culture of the school also reflects the local culture in many ways. Sarason suggests that when schools seek to improve, focusing on the values, beliefs and norms of both the school and the environment outside the school, a school culture is created and thus can be manipulated by the people involved in it (Sarason 1982, Deal and Peterson, 1996).

The attitudes and beliefs of persons in the school shape the culture. It creates a mental model of what schooling is and how others in the school should and will respond to events and actions. School cultures lies in “the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students and principals” (Heckman, 1993). Furthermore, school culture includes values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of the parents, students, teachers and others conceived as a group or community (Turner, Crang, 1996).

## **The power of history in forming school culture**

Various research presents school culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meaning which is explicitly and implicitly articulated. School culture is mostly defined as deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of the school's history (Geerts 1973; Deal and Peterson 1990). The people who study and work in the school create the school's culture; they are therefore, the only ones that are able to understand the origins of and justification for the customary patterns of behaviors prevalent in the school.

## **How does cultural change happen?**

Cultural change occurs in different ways and for different reasons. Some pertinent questions that have been raised by various researchers are: 'Does culture 'change' or does it 'evolve' (Turner & Crang, 1996)? Is cultural change a process of explicit conscious efforts or is it more implicit and unplanned? (Rossman & colleagues 1988). One idea that is echoed by many researchers is that culture is a process that evolves and changes as time progresses. But another school of thought argues that a school is only able to change the direction in which it is headed through social, contextual, political, or economical reasons. These reasons lead schools to direct cultural change in the way that best meets the demands of the time. Donahoe contends that there are two essential factors that influence culture change: *time and communication* (Donahoe 1993). He further explains that when time is allocated for stakeholders to meet and share in decision making, and the channels of communication are open so that everyone has a voice, cultural change happens effectively.

Stolp refers to another very important aspect of culture change. He argues that leaders who are interested in changing their school's culture should first try to understand the existing culture (Stolp, 1994). He suggests that by analyzing the positive and negative aspects of the existing culture and making the "thought[s] visible" of how the change will affect the existing culture of the school, one will have a culture that is holistic and open minded (Stolp, 1994). Similarly, Fullan writes that creating a healthy culture should be a collaborative activity among teachers, students, parents, staff and the principal (Fullan, 1992).

## **Historical Background- A Soviet School Culture**

This section briefly shares the historical underpinnings of the school's culture and articulates the key features of the culture of the school that existed during the soviet time. Furthermore, it highlights the way that the history of the school

impacted the culture of the school at that time, and how this history has impacted the current culture of the school.

## **The school**

This paper focuses on the Aga Khan Lycée (AKL) established by the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES) in Tajikistan. AKL was built on the grounds of a government school in 1998. This government school was the only school in Badakhshan that had two mediums of instruction: Tajik and Russian. The influence of the Russian medium on the school culture was very strong because many of the teachers and students enrolled in the Russian medium classes had migrated from Russia. Therefore, the “Russian way of thinking” or Soviet sensibility, was a dominant factor of the school culture at the time. The significant elements of that school culture were a lack of empowerment for the stakeholders, rigidity towards change, and limited opportunities for professional development of the teachers. Medlin echoes this culture by saying, “the ultimate purpose of soviet education was to produce an obedient, docile, loyal citizen, rigid in his behavior and thinking” (Medlin et.al, in Niyozov, 2001). Niyozov expands on this argument by saying that Soviet culture believed that adults have a higher capacity for knowledge and that this fact should be accepted, often without question (Niyozov, 2001). The Soviets silenced religious and class aspects of Tajik culture, but left the notion of the adult’s, particularly the teacher’s superiority not only untouched, but enhanced.

This notion of rigidity and lack of empowerment was highly observed in the soviet school system. The soviet culture was a great hurdle to any change and new initiatives. The soviets saw preserving one’s particular cultural construct and adult authority, as a tool for both social change and reproduction of state socialism. So they invested in teachers, indoctrinated them in the Soviet “truths” and tried to change their mentality so that they in turn could change their students’ and their community’s superstition-dominated beliefs into scientific communist ones (Gidden, 1984). At the initial stage, the approaches to education changes mainly remained outside-in, top-down, centralized, and tightly controlled by the ruling ideology (Niyozov 2001). And it took a long, planned and conscious effort by all the stakeholders to revive the culture that existed prior to Soviet occupation and to initiate change in the school.

## **Teaching and Learning Practices Dominated by Soviet Style**

Soviet schooling systems were deeply affected by stagnation, inertia and apathy (Dneprov 1987 cited in Ekloff 1993).

Instruction from the first grade on was characterized by fairly rigid pattern of rote mastery of text, oral recitation by students and teacher dominance of classroom activity. Although special schools with more flexible approaches served the children of the elite and the especially talented. The typical soviet school was often a dreary place: a decrepit building with few textbooks, outdated equipment, alienated students, bored teachers and authoritarian administration. The students graduated with very little understanding of the concepts or principles they had studied, or with narrow, outdated occupational training that was often useless in practice. (Kerr, 1990, p.27)

Kerr describes a typical soviet scenario of teaching and learning in the school and highlights cultural problems of the education system of that time.

The role of students was not more than mere followers of the given knowledge, they were demoted to dependent followers, receivers of external wisdom and solutions, providers of raw material, fields of experimentation and buffer states between the strategic zones of interests of the larger forces (Bacchus, 1981, Glen, 1999, Keshavjee. 1998. Cited in Niyozov, 2001).

The given background strongly displays the dominance of teacher-centered instruction and the transmission mode. The picture clearly depicts that the teaching and learning practices during soviet culture was primarily transitive.

### **Professional Development Opportunities – Missing Elements**

Various studies, including an access study conducted by AKF Tajikistan in 2004 (other studies include a Humanitarian action study by UNICEF in 2002, A United Nation Assessment of Development Challenges in Tajikistan in 2003 and Strategic Direction of the Long-Term Education Sector Reform Strategy in the years 2004 - 2015), validate the theory that low professional development opportunities were the primary issue in the quality of education provision in Soviet time. The soviet period offered professional development opportunities to the teachers once in five years by the regional or central Teachers Professional Development Institutes. Mostly these courses focused on the current curricular content, in an effort to update teachers' subject knowledge.

Teacher education would basically end after graduation from the university. This was encouraged by the system as it enabled them to control the education from



the top level. Any changes to the system were made at the ministry level and then ready-made decisions were given to the school. Though many of the teachers were unhappy with this situation they felt helpless to change it (Practitioner Report: Teacher).

## **Performance Appraisals**

Performance Appraisals were held once a year from 1998 to 2004, and designed to test the teachers' skills as educators and their ability to adopt the new method of education – a child-centered approach to education versus the soviet top-down learning method. The new child-centered methodology of education stimulated a definition of knowledge beyond the Soviet conception of the Educator as the exclusive holder of all known fact, and it was this notion that the Performance Appraisals were designed to change.

## **A Politicized Education System**

The government had a strong influence on the school during the Soviet time. The Soviets' main aim was to remain the controller of the education system. One of the control mechanisms used by the government was school attestation, where each school in the country was tested once every five years and the school that could not pass was severely criticized and punished accordingly. Teachers still fear inspectors and any visitors, for they remember the soviets who used to judge them according to their lesson plans and how well they follow a prescribed schema (Niyozov, 2002). This system led the teachers to prepare themselves only according to the government's demands. The teachers were so involved in trying to meet the standardized requirements that their teaching practices suffered and caused a cycle of fear of authority amongst both the teachers and their students (Niyozov, 2002. pg 30).

Another significant aspect controlled by the government was the curriculum and assessment of the students' learning. The curriculum framework, the curriculum grid and the time allocation of each topic was provided by the government to the school, the inspectors used to check and ensure whether schools were following the given grid by the government. Teachers had to mark students' performance every period and the record used to be maintained in the government department.

Hence, schools were the main sources of driving the government agendas. Teachers were the role model for good behavior within the society; they even had to dress according to the government requirements.

## **Management structure**

Teachers' were not involved in school management and it was very seldom that teachers would get top management positions. The soviet government instituted the exact same structure in all its schools giving no flexibility to the individual school to make any changes. The only difference between the schools was the number of the Deputy Directors (DDs) each school had, as the DD position was based on the number of students in the school.

## **School vision and profile**

Sharing a vision creates a feeling of belonging for all stakeholders, however in the Soviet system the school vision was not only unclear but it was also mandated to each school by the government (Smith and Stolp, 1995). There was no room given to the school staff to change the vision and most were not even aware that a "school vision" existed (Practitioner Report: Teacher).

## **Process of Culture Change: Major Indicators**

The following section identifies three processes that led to a cultural change in AKL according to the different degrees of explicit and conscious focuses in the school.

### **Transformative Changes in School Culture**

Transformative change in School culture is "an explicit and conscious [change], with deliberate attention to changing norms, values and beliefs" (Fink and Stroll, 2002, p.89). In order to transform the culture of any institution, however, a major change must be implemented in all aspects of the previous establishment. Furthermore, the indoctrination of new norms, values, and beliefs can only be upheld if there is a complete buy-in from the beneficiaries. Consequently, in order to instigate a buy-in, one must be able to show the benefits of the new system coherently and efficiently, thereby creating a cohesive flow from the old institution to the new one.

### **The Systemization of Meritocracy**

The first step in creating change was the privatization of the school. After the acquisition of the school by the Aga Khan Education Services' (AKES), the institution's primary effort was the creation of a system of meritocracy that

promoted excellence in teaching and encouraged an active student learning environment. In order to achieve this end, AKES conducted a series of Performance Appraisals for the educators, restructured the existing Professional Development for Teachers Programme, instituted English and Russian as mediums of instruction, constructed a system of student empowerment through club programmes and the student committee, and finally realized the need for community development through the Allied Schools and Partnership Programme.

## **Professional Development of Teachers**

The new Professional Development for Teachers Programme was in itself a huge change from the common Soviet practice. In Soviet times it was a process held once every five years in order to justify an increase in salary. AKL conceptualized a systematic approach to providing professional development opportunities to the teachers that was based primarily on the enhancement of the educators' performance within AKL.

The trainers are all AKL staff members that have graduated from the Aga Khan University's (AKU's) Masters' Programme through the Institute for Educational Development (IED); the trainers are known as Professional Development Teachers (PDTs). One of the most major influences of the PDTs' trainings has been the AKU-IED Certificate Programme; the first Certificate Course was held by AKU-IED in Tajikistan, in which thirty teachers participated. PDTs conduct regular Critical Thinking Workshops for the teachers of AKL and this is an ongoing activity that is well integrated with the school curriculum. Curriculum Development Trainings in conjunction with the Institute for Professional Development (IPD), and the construction of a project-based Research course are some additional significant initiatives of AKL.

All these initiatives have been held to enable teachers become reflective in their teaching, enhance their subject matter knowledge and develop their repertoire of instructional strategies. "The AKL professional development initiatives are field-based, we learn theory and practice, they are quite different from the ones we used to attend during Soviet time which was mainly 'knowledge given' (Practitioner report: Teacher). Another teacher commented, "When I came to AKL, I hardly knew about new methodology, but today I am confident in my approach, my students admire the way I teach because they enjoy and learn too". Furthermore, it allows teachers to move within the three mediums of language instruction; thereby creating upward mobility within AKL and an avenue to enhance their careers outside as well.

## **English and Russian as Mediums of Instruction**

Currently AKL is the only institution to offer instruction in English, Russian and Tajik. With the PDT offering English courses, the idea will be that in time any Educator at AKL will be able to teach in any of the three mediums of instruction. Furthermore the addition of English and Russian qualify the students at AKL to participate in academia on an international level.

## **Student Empowerment**

The idea of student empowerment is an explicit goal for AKL. Constructing a system where students feel free to “debate with [their] teachers” and one where they can freely state their opinions is a priority. “Previously there was fear, we had to respect our teacher and sit silently. Now we are more involved in the learning process, we feel involved in our school. This is a high achievement to our institution” (Practitioner Report: Student). The process through which these feeling was attained is mainly due to two avenues: the Student Committee and the Student Clubs Programme.

The Student Committee is made up of representatives from each grade level who meet and vote on different aspects of student life; from school policy and conduct codes, to the creation of a new School Vision. The Student Clubs Programme is a new addition to the school and consists of twenty academic and sports related clubs that each member of the student body is invited to participate in. The clubs promote access to knowledge through activity and hands-on based learning projects, and these projects are generally initiated by members of the club.

## **Allied Schools Project/Partnership Programme**

AKL has instituted a standard for excellence so wide-based that it has faced an influx of applicants from all over GBAO. The idea amongst all parents, families, and students alike, is that AKL will afford their children opportunities that are unavailable in other institutions. In response to this and in an attempt to improve the quality of education throughout GBAO, AKES constructed the Allied Schools Project (ASP). ASP is an avenue through which AKL teachers share their expertise and mentor other teachers within the government schools of the GBAO. The further dissemination of resources and materials from AKL to the Allied Schools has raised the quality of education throughout the region thereby creating a standard of excellence throughout GBAO.

Similarly, AKES created the Partner School System, a programme that donates books, materials, and allows AKL teachers a chance to mentor and encourage the educators of the thirteen surrounding government schools in Khorog. This programme institutes a similar effect in raising the overall quality of education in the region and further impacts AKL teachers by raising their sense of community awareness and empowers AKL teachers to be mentors and leaders in the community.

## **Creating a Culture of Excellence**

AKL has now become a hub of new information. The idea of access has become a common and attainable attribute of the learning process. AKL now boasts a 95% matriculation rate to accredited universities both within Tajikistan and internationally. In 2004, two students won ACCESS scholarships to study in American Universities and in 2005, three students won the scholarship. All these facts have helped in establishing a culture of excellence in every aspect of the school. From the drive that students have to extract the most they can from their education, to the drive that teachers have to enhance their teaching abilities so that their students gain the benefits of teaching practices that are of an “International Standard” (Practitioner Report: Teacher).

## **Additive Changes to School Culture**

The availability of new resources and the restructuring of the management system enhanced the creation of the School Culture as holistic and open to new ideas. These changes are considered Additive Changes, changes that “may or may not be explicit as norms, beliefs, and values become suddenly modified when new initiatives are introduced” (Fink and Stroll, 2002, p.89). These resource and structuring initiatives have resulted in reshaping the culture of the school, into one of a collegial environment for students and educators and one that encourages learning through new media.

## **Culture as related to Structure**

“Cultural change is at least in part achieved through structural change” (Fink and Stroll, 2002, p.84). At AKL, it was the case that the establishment of a new management structure was an integral piece of the Cultural Change that has taken place. The new management structure consists of two Deputy Directors rather than the Soviet four, and six Heads of Department, each of whom are responsible for maintaining the quality of education in their department.

The construction of middle management has made for a more collegial work environment as each staff member is clearly aware of whom they are responsible to and whom they are responsible for. Furthermore, the creation of Heads of Department allows teachers an avenue to express themselves to the management (Practitioner Report: Teacher). Educators are comfortable in the knowledge that that the Heads of Department's primary interest is in the teacher and in creating an environment where he or she is best able to serve the student. And while the change is new, and it is somewhat disconcerting to be constantly in the public eye, the scrutiny has caused a subculture of self-management (Practitioner Report: Teacher), where each staff member feels responsible for producing the best results for their Head of Department since they recognize that these results are a reflection of their own teaching practices.

## **Resources of Cultural Change**

At AKL, there are two resources that have most contributed to the cultural change of the school. First, the creation of a Computer Lab and the subsequent encouragement of teachers to use computer-based, and Internet-based learning tools established a connection to the international community and allowed for information sharing all over the world. This resource not only helped to connect AKL students and faculty to the world but also put them on par with students internationally; on the basis of their knowledge of technological resources and their ability to practically apply those skills. Additionally, AKL's conversion of the Soviet school's Library into the new Learning Resource Center (LRC), constructed a culture of learning and access to knowledge that was previously unknown. At the LRC students do not merely check out a book for research purposes, they are encouraged to access information from different media, creating a culture of awareness and access to different sources of information.

## **Evolutionary Changes in the School Culture**

Evolutionary Change in school culture is most often caused by "an implicit, unconscious, and unplanned" event (Fink and Stroll, 2002, p. 89). The privatization and systematic change to all former methods of teaching, learning, and behaving at AKL constituted a spiral effect in the culture of the school itself. Teachers found themselves acting more collegially to one another. They became more open to student ideas, they encouraged the students to act and think in a manner that was individualized (Practitioner Report: Teacher). Parental involvement was encouraged and a Parents Committee was created. Parents became involved in all co-curricular activities, from arranging for celebrations, preparing for the first and last bell festivities, to being active members of both

the Admission and Scholarship Committees. Parents have also become active participants in their children's learning process from being involved in homework to classroom involvement. As parents come into the classroom and speak about career enhancement and the roles of their particular careers, as well as being actively involved in instigating conferences, where they can arrange to speak with their child's teacher about the child's progress and development needs, therein stimulating an environment of responsibility within the parent and the educator for the well being of the child.

When evolutionary change is set in motion "...norms, values, and beliefs are introduced as others steadily fade" (Fink and Stroll, 2002, p. 89). The norms, values, and belief systems that were being implemented in the school were, and in some cases still are, inherently Soviet; and the effort to change them proved to be an enormous, but not an insurmountable task. In the words of our educators, "we are always ready, and we should step forward to follow the new period of life" (Practitioner Report: Teacher).

## Conclusion

School culture plays a powerful role in changing our understanding of school culture as a vital part of school improvement.

An examination of school culture is important because, as Goodlad's study points out, 'alike as schools may be in many ways, each school has an ambience (or culture) of its own and, further, its ambience may suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making it a better school' (Goodlad, 1984, p.8). Researchers have compiled some impressive evidence on school culture. Healthy and sound school cultures correlates strongly with increased student achievement and motivation and with productivity and satisfaction.

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# Integrated Approach in Comprehending and Teaching Physiology and Biochemistry

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## Abstract

*Teachers, in all fields, are leaders of the new generation. The ability of a teacher to impart knowledge to the students effectively is the hallmark of his quality. The impact which a teacher leaves on the students in the beginning of their education has lasting effects. Just like the beginning of schooling, where the impression of the teacher lasts for their remaining life, the impact/methodology of a teacher in the beginning of professional education (masters or MBBS/BDS) is detrimental in the personnel who would be assuming the role of teachers of future scientists and doctors. Educating personnel in the field of health sciences, who will be either be teaching medical/dental undergraduate students, as well as the postgraduate university students, in the basic sciences (physiology/biochemistry), is of prime importance. The effectiveness of these teachers to communicate with their students would result in clearing the concepts in the mind of these young professionals, who would have to apply these in comprehending the diseases for therapeutics, situation analysis for research and also in imparting further training to the next generation. In order to impart quality training to prospective teachers, our department has provided training to around seventy postgraduate students, through which they have been able to develop a command over the integrated study of human physiology and biochemistry, specially for reproductive health associated problems, using the contemporary techniques available. Many of them are now teaching in postgraduate institutions as well as medical colleges. Teachers already working in postgraduate institutes as well medical colleges are also being provided training to comprehend the integrated approach. In addition to learning the theoretical and practical aspects of human physiology and biochemistry through interpretation of the clinical picture of patients with their diagnostic profiles, additionally, these prospective teachers have also been taught data analysis and interpretation, which has led to publication of their research findings which were carried out under our supervision. In order to improve their interpersonal communication skills, our emphasis has*

*been in making these teachers make effective presentations. For improvement of their written expression, they were encouraged to write for medical journals. The broad areas covered for educating the present and prospective teachers include infertility, tumors and metabolic disorders associated with reproductive health functions of both genders. Such specific programmes for post graduate students lead to improvement in quality of teacher education, which in fact is going to benefit the future generations of Pakistan.*

## **Introduction**

Pakistan is rated among those countries of the world that have a high population growth rate coupled with low literacy. This has placed great pressure on the scarce economic resources of the country, which are being channelled towards achieving economic development; and subsequently results in lesser funds being directed towards the social sector, such as education and health (Tahir et al., 2003).

The main purpose of a physician is to provide an accurate diagnosis, and failure to deliver results in the people losing confidence in medical science, and losing themselves to quacks as a result (Tahir et al., 2004). In the health sector of Pakistan, there are a number of medical and dental colleges, both in the public and private sector, which are imparting professional education (MBBS/BDS). These institutions are the prime areas where the future health care-givers of the country are being groomed. The knowledge that these young future doctors acquire, will form the basis for the health of the country in coming years.

According to the syllabi of these colleges, as prescribed by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, the students have to study biochemistry and physiology during their first professional. Being subjects of basic sciences, mostly these are taught by Master's/PhD degree holders. Since the medical student has to grasp the subjects with complete integration of all the pathologies, it is essential that the teacher should be aware of teaching the subjects in an integrated fashion, for these are the formative years of the medical student. After completion of his education, the doctor has to practice evidence based medicine, which requires his complete understanding of the human body (Baig, 2002).

Rising to the need of the hour, our department has contributed to the said by producing trained manpower, which is contributing towards an integrated manner of comprehending and teaching of biochemistry and physiology.

# **Methodology**

## **Importance of the Trained Manpower**

The quality of diagnosis is a key indicator to the performance of the physician. Through the integration of physiology and biochemistry that he/she acquires during the first professional is very important in the future doctor's comprehension of the human systems. The teachers of these basic sciences are the main forces behind this acquisition of knowledge. The personnel who have to manage the patients need to be fully aware of the physiological/biochemical inter-relationship of all the symptoms/lab reports and only then they can be able to form the accurate diagnosis.

## **Training Programme**

Our training programme is based upon the Physiological and Biochemical aspects, specially applied to Reproductive Health. The trainees require a simple understanding of human physiology/biochemistry.

## **Training Imparted**

The training imparted can be divided into the following spheres:

- Handling of specimens (blood)
- Using dispensing equipment
- Hands on training on analyzers
- Analyzing LJ-QC Charts
- Defining a specific research problem
- Critical analysis of research problem
- Statistical Data Analysis
- Writing a research paper

## **Rationale behind Integrated Training**

The purpose of our training programme is to harness the potential of young scientists. These personnel are trained to not only comprehend and teach physiology and biochemistry with an integrated, evidence based approach; but also to generate data on our population, which can provide useful insight for our policy makers and health service providers.

## **Areas of Study**

Our trainees are trained in the following areas of integrated physiology/biochemistry:

- Hormonal control of fertility
- Thyroid activity
- Tumour markers
- Insulin
- Metabolics

## **Dissemination of Research Findings**

Our trainees have presented their work in the conferences of the following:

- Pakistan Physiological Society
- Pakistan Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- Zoological Society of Pakistan

Research papers have been published in:

- Pakistan Journal of Medical Research
- Hamdard Medicus
- Scientific Sindh

## Discussion

Even at the advent of the new millennium, a multitude of health related problems faced by human societies the world over have remained unsolved. The effects of spiralling population, especially in developing countries, on human health through environmental degradation are frightening. The world population has now crossed the 6 billion peak figure, which was reached in the last year of the previous millennium (1999). Of the various deleterious effects caused by the population explosion, one is the masking effect on the prevalence of infertility.

A significant portion of the global population, including Pakistan continues to try desperately to conceive. Infertility, in the form of primary infertility, which is the complete inability to conceive, ranges from 2 to 5%. Secondary infertility, which is the failure to conceive for a second or subsequent time, has a prevalence rate of 20%, globally (Fathalla, 1992). According to the 1984 statistics (Menning, 1984), out of 28 million couples of reproductive age in the United States, 3 million have been found to be conclusively sterile, 2.8 million sub-fertile and 1.2 million have had to wait for long periods for conception to occur. It is enigmatic that due to strategic emphasis on small families in population control programmes, infertile couples are considered to be an asset as they are considered to be the proponents of the concept of small family norms, especially those with secondary infertility. Thus, infertility never gets due recognition as a state of suffering of the afflicted couples (Menning, 1980; Domar and Seibel, 1990).

Although Pakistan is currently among the most populous countries of the world and has a population growth rate of around 2%, it also has high rate of infertility (21.9%); 3.5% primary and 18.4% secondary (Khan and Qureshi, 1983). This signifies that more than one fifth of the country's married population is directly associated with this problem and are passing through the mental agony associated with being infertile. However, the high population growth rate subdues this fact. According to statistics on married Pakistani women, the average number of children per woman has reduced from 6.5 in 1992 to 4.1 in 2001 (Arnold and Sultan, 1992; Hakim et al., 2001).

We have now made the practicing health practitioners comprehend the significance of fertility assessment tests through an integrated approach. This is now being taught to the young students of the medical colleges. The female hormones exhibit a cyclic pattern, with three distinct phases, the follicular phase, mid-cycle and the luteal phase (Guyton, 1991; Subhan et al., 1998). The major thrust of diagnostic tests for women encompass the three pituitary hormones

(LH, FSH and Prolactin), and the two principal female steroidal hormones, Estradiol and Progesterone. Even then, the usually prescribed tests are evaluation of LH and FSH in either the follicle phase or during mid-cycle. Estradiol assessment is carried out during mid-cycle alone, and the luteal phase Progesterone is only assessed to ascertain its deficiency. Testosterone, mainly considered to be a masculine hormone, is often sidelined (Subhan et al., 2000b; Zaidi et al., 2004). With regard to the male, the semen examination forms the primary test, and in case of an abnormal semen picture, analysis of only LH, FSH and Testosterone is carried out (Subhan et al., 2000a).

All the six hormones of the pituitary-gonadal axis are in fact, deeply inter linked. It is due to this specific reason that a delicate balance exists among the hormones through feedback mechanisms that control the release of the pituitary peptides and the gonadal steroids. The dynamic status of these hormones during the various phases of the cycle itself is ample proof that changes in the level of any one hormone alters the physiology, and hence it is important to ascertain the level of all hormones simultaneously (Subhan et al., 1998). Similarly, the presence of the predominantly female hormones within the male also signifies that these hormones play a significant role in affecting the fertility status of the male.

Unless a proper scientifically managed diagnostic profile is carried out, a significant population would be lost to quacks; and instead of gaining any benefit, these innocent and disturbed individuals can end themselves up with irreparable damage. In Pakistan, the number of quacks offering solutions to fertility related problems is uncountable. The roads of various cities, small/large as well as the Urdu newspapers/magazines are full of advertisements of such personalities that offer all kinds of solutions to fertility/sexual problems. The effectiveness of any population control programme depends upon its reputation with respect to being people friendly, and by providing a choice to determine the size of the family, which includes giving a choice to the infertile of having a progeny. Thus, much burden lies on the government to prevent people from falling into the trap of the quacks, who not only drain these poor people out of their health, but their wealth as well. South Asia needs to establish people-friendly population programmes to establish the confidence of the people in order to effectively bring about a balance in the demographic picture of the region.

## Conclusion: Our Contribution

More than 70 post graduate students/clinicians have benefited from our training. These personnel are now working as excellent teachers in various medical/dental institutes, as well as Universities of Pakistan, and also have had research publications credited to their names.

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# Change Agents' Orientations to Change

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## Abstract

*This study explores five field education officers' (FEOs) understanding of their dual roles as educational reformers and community developers in the rural, mountainous district of Chitral, Pakistan. In particular, it examines their specific actions and methods (strategies) and their underlying assumptions and core values (orientations) of change. These FEOs work as change agents in schools and in the local communities where schools have been established by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P).*

*The study's findings derive from empirical data collected through qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews (individual and focus-group), non-participant observations, post-observation discussions, informal conversations and analysis of relevant documents.*

*The findings capture three realms of the FEOs' world: a) The FEOs' role as external change agents; (b) their daily practices of change, and (c) their conceptual underpinnings of change. In the first realm, the study finds that the FEOs play a unique role, that of educational reformer and community developer, stimulating change in both schools and in local communities. These FEOs are authorized by AKESP's district management; therefore, it is mandatory for AKESP schools and schools' communities to accept their interventions. In the second realm, analysis of the FEOs' specific actions and key methods for change reveals four distinct strategies the FEOs adopt for school change –Teacher-Centred, Moral Persuasion, Pragmatic, and Leadership– and three main strategies for community development –Participatory, Training, and Power-Laden. All seven strategies illuminate the FEOs' understanding of change at the level of practice. In the third realm, this study explores the FEOs' underlying assumptions, core values, and key concepts of change; it reconstructs three broad change orientations –Political, Technical, and Spiritual– into which each FEO's theoretical understandings and conceptual frameworks of change are categorized.*

*Examining the interrelatedness of the FEOs' roles, strategies, and change orientations reveals that each FEO's change orientation serves as a lens through which that FEO views and approaches change, defines his role, and shapes his strategies for change. Despite their distinct orientations, unique role, and particular*

*strategies, all five FEOs operate within a common broader framework of socio-educational change or more, specifically, community-based school change.*

## **Introduction**

During the last four decades, educational researchers and practitioners have intensively engaged in bringing about positive changes in schools. Therefore the kinds of changes introduced to schools have become complex in nature and overwhelming in number – from improving teachers’ professional knowledge base and teaching repertoires to developing innovative curricula to changing the organizational structures and cultures in schools. The skills required by schools and teachers to implement these changes have also become more complex. Consequently, a large number of external agents – variously referred to as consultants, linking agents, education officers, or supervisors – have mobilized themselves for building schools’ capacity and knowledge utilization at the local level. As a result, there is a growing recognition that change in schools will not last long until the voices and view points of both internal and external agents are not heard and valued (Fullan, 2001; Tajik, 2004; Thiessen, 1989).

As these external change agents engage in a systematic and deliberate effort to conceptualize, plan, implement and examine change in schools, they develop a personal understanding of change – what change is and how it ought to occur. Different researchers have referred to this personal understanding as “change perspectives” (House, 1981; Miller & Seller, 1985), “approaches to change” (Erchul & Martens, 1997), “change knowledge” (Fullan, 1982, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Frankel, 1997), “school improvement models” (Anderson, 2002; Farrell, 2002; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999), and “change orientations” (Favaro, 1983; Miller, 1988; 1983; Thiessen, 1989, 1990).

In this paper, I report on a qualitative study conducted in the rural, mountain district of Chitral, Pakistan. The study examined 5 Field Education Officers’ (FEOs’) specific actions and methods (strategies) and their underlying assumptions and core values (orientations) of change in schools. These FEOs work as change agents in the schools established by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) in partnership with local communities. The FEOs’ mandate from AKES,P insists that educational change and community development must go hand-in-hand. They therefore play a unique role as both educational reformers and community developers, stimulating change in schools on the one hand and in local communities on the other. The study’s findings captured three realms of the FEOs’ world: a) the FEOs’ evolving role as external change agents; b) their preferred strategies for change; and c) their conceptual

underpinnings of change in schools. However, in this paper, I discuss only one realm of the FEOs' world, i.e., their change orientations. I, therefore, first describe the research methods employed in this study highlighting the research paradigm, inquiry question and theoretical framework, and research participants. I then discuss the FEOs' conceptual orientations to change.

## **Methodology**

I chose the qualitative paradigm of research to explore how the FEOs understand and explain the strategies they use and the conceptual orientations through which they operate their actions in order to bring about positive changes in schools and local communities. The rationale for choosing the qualitative research paradigm and more specifically the qualitative case study approach was to gain a wider, holistic, and context-specific picture of the FEOs' interpretations of their experiences, strategies, and orientations to change. In order to understand the FEOs' meanings of their experiences, actions and justifications for those actions, I needed to carry out an inquiry of multiple cases embedded in the qualitative paradigm, which could allow me to look into the FEOs' world through their own eyes and perspectives.

To explore the FEOs' change orientations, I needed to set the inquiry in a way which: a) took account of the multiple realities of their social world; b) was intensive in its pursuit of meaning; and c) was sensitive to the contextual influences on their constructs, meaning and reasoning (Janesick, 2000). In this way I was able not only to probe into their personal understanding of and beliefs about school change and community development, but also to elicit their rationales and observe their preferred change practices adopted within their particular context.

While choosing the qualitative research paradigm, I employed an eclectic set of strategies drawing from different traditions within the qualitative paradigm. The use of multiple strategies and ways of collecting data such as semi-structured interviews (individual and focus-group), non-participant observations, informal conversations, and document analysis helped to capture a broader picture of how the FEOs' world looks like, what they say about it, how they feel about what they do, and why they do the way they do (Atkinson et al, 1988; Burgess, 1984; Charles, 1995).

I selected two different categories of participants: a) Five FEOs as the principal participants, with whom I had intensive interactions in order to explore in depth their experiences, meanings, practices, and rationales, and b) Four individuals

and 13 focus-groups as secondary participants, whose participation was limited to a two-hour individual or focus-group interview. I selected the participants in both categories through a negotiated process based on their willingness to voluntarily participate.

Since I obtained much of the data from the principal participants (the five FEOs), and they represent the change orientations I discuss in this paper, I therefore provide in Table 1 a brief profile of these principal participants using pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 1: Summary of Principal Participants

Particulars	Ahmed	Ali	Faisal	Karim	Khan
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	40+	38	40+	46	39
Started Career in Education	1985	1986	1986	1981	1986
Academic Qualifications	M.A in Islamic History	B.A (General)	M.A in Urdu	B.A (General)	B.A (General)
Professional Qualifications	B.Ed., M.Ed.	B.Ed., M.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.

## The Framework and Focus of the Study

This study was guided by a core research question, “How do the Field Education officers of the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan understand their role as educational reformers and community developers?” Specifically, the research question concentrated on exploring the FEOs’ conceptual orientations to change.

A change orientation, as Thiessen (1989) defines it, is a position the change agent takes to explain why change ought to occur in particular ways. It is a combination of the key assumptions and core values that guide the agent’s

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At the time of entry negotiations, there were only 4 female FEOs at AKES,P Chitral who already had committed to a two-year professional development programme and therefore could not participate in this study

actions and practices of change. The assumptions frame how the agent views change, and values justify why certain actions and interpretations are more important than others to bring about change.

Miller and Seller (1985) define a change orientation as a particular worldview or model of reality that shapes each change agent's personal belief system about the purpose and methods of change. Miller (1983) calls an orientation a "map of reality" and Hjelle and Ziegler (cited in Thiessen, 1989) term it a "template of reality", which is a mixture of our values, attitudes, and perceptions. Our map or template of reality is shaped by our background, experiences, and distinct ways of seeing things.

In the context of this study, a change orientation refers to the FEOs' personal understandings, lived experiences, beliefs, key assumptions, core values, and preferred practices of change in schools and communities. It comprises the kinds of knowledge, assumptions, values, perceptions, and practices that the FEOs possess, develop, and use in their classrooms, schools, and communities.

In order to explore and develop the FEOs' change orientations, I first explored their change strategies – the specific actions, methods, and techniques that they employed to bring about positive changes in schools and local communities. I then looked beyond their specific actions and methods of change in order to explore their conceptual underpinnings of change – the key assumptions and core values behind their actions and methods. Thus, their change strategies are the daily manifestation of their change orientations. By exploring the FEOs' change strategies and change orientations, I intend to capture a personal understanding, examining the nature, depth, and variability of how the FEOs understand, interpret and facilitate change in schools and communities.

To conceptualize the FEOs' change orientations, I examined the methods and techniques that each FEO used during his interventions in schools, and his rationales for his actions. In doing so, I explored the interrelatedness of the FEOs' stated and enacted beliefs about change.

I also concentrated on the depth of the FEOs' articulation of their actions, and the consistency in their key assumptions and core values of change. Table 2 juxtaposes the FEOs' underlying assumptions and organizes them into three groups based on common concepts operating behind their change strategies.

Table 2: Common Concepts amongst the FEOs

Group	FEOs	Underlying Assumptions		Common Concepts
		Educational Change	Community Development	
Group 1	Ali	Educational change is best affected by empowering teachers and developing their repertoires	Community development is best affected by increasing SMCs' active participation in education	Power, Authority, Empowerment
	Ahmed	Educational change is best affected by empowering head teachers	<i>Falls into Group 2</i>	
	Faisal	Educational change is best affected by empowering head teachers	Community development is best affected by the power and authority exerted by local leaders	
Group 2	Khan	Educational change is best affected by enhancing teachers' technical knowledge, expertise and skills	Community development is best affected by increasing SMCs' active participation and enhancing their skills	Efficiency, Knowledge, Skills Development
	Ahmed	<i>Falls into Group 1</i>	Community development is best affected by enhancing knowledge and technical skills in SMCs	
Group 3	Karim	Educational change is best affected by awakening teachers to their moral obligations	Community development is best affected by developing the moral dispositions of local leaders.	Spiritual being, Moral Development

As shown in Table 2, Ali, Ahmed, and Faisal fall into the same group in respect to educational change, because they hold common concepts and assumptions about educational change. The underlying assumption behind their emphasis on the empowerment of key change agents is that change is best affected by raising the authority and voices of teachers and school heads. In addition, Ali and Faisal value the independence of the key agents of change—local leaders and SMCs—in community development and respect their rights and ideas about the change. Thus these FEOs deal in one or both contexts with the political concepts of power, authority, influence, voices, and rights, and therefore form a “Political Orientation” to change. The second group of the FEOs includes Khan and Ahmed. Khan believes in the technical proficiency of both teachers and SMCs as the key agents of change at the school and community levels respectively. Ahmed

emphasizes enhancing the SMCs' skills for community development. The common assumption through which these two FEOs operate is that change is best affected by enhancing technical knowledge and skills in key agents of change. They concentrate on technical concepts such as efficiency, skills development, technical know-how, and better techniques for change, and therefore have a "Technical Orientation" to change. Karim alone makes up the third group; he believes in the moral disposition of the key agents of change (teachers and local leaders). He operates through the assumption that change is best affected by awakening teachers and local leaders to their moral obligations of change. He therefore emphasizes moral and spiritual concepts such as commitment, honesty, compassion, fairness, accountability, sacrifice, and dedication towards change. These concepts place him in a "Spiritual Orientation" to change.

### **Political Orientation (Ali, Ahmed and Faisal)**

The Political orientation views change within a political context and deals with such issues as power, authority, influence, policies, interests, and competing groups that have a direct bearing on the development of change in that particular context. The political context (whether school or community) comprises different people or subgroups, of which one influential person or one group support a change and take the lead in implementing it (House, 1981). This may, in turn, provoke a competing group within the context; thus, the legitimacy of authority may become an issue. The success of the change then depends on negotiation, cooperation, and compromise amongst the groups. At the individual level, the change process is fostered by one person influencing another person through exerting authority, persuasion, or inducement. The underlying assumption in this orientation is that the power and authority delegated to and exerted by the people who are closest to a change and its implementation will stimulate the change process in the context. Guided by this assumption, the appropriate actions include empowering the key agents and respecting their rights, voices, and ideas about change. The core values in this orientation are power and independence.

The FEOs who share the Political orientation mainly concentrate on who should have the authority and right to decide what changes are desirable in schools and communities and how those changes ought to occur. They therefore invest most of their energies in empowering teachers, headteachers, SMCs, and local leaders who they think are the key agents of change in schools and communities. These FEOs argue that these change agents must have the authority and freedom to determine the agenda for change for their schools or their local communities.



Their voices and ideas about change should be respected, but at the same time, they must be engaged in a process that enhances their professional capabilities. Thus, this orientation takes the position that political factors, such as the freedom, authority, rights, voices, and interests of teachers, headteachers, and SMCs must be considered in educational change and community development. These actors should have control over change processes and work effectively in schools and communities (Hales, 1997).

The conceptual basis for the Political orientation embraced by Ali, Ahmed and Faisal comprises a number of dimensions: how they view change; who are the primary agents of change; how they perceive the context of change; what key concepts they deal with; and what actions they take. In this orientation, change is a political phenomenon dependent on the authority and influence exerted by those who are closest to its implementation. The actions and decisions that these primary implementers make inevitably influence the process of change. These actions and decisions are, in turn, influenced by the amount of power and authority delegated to the implementers. In the school as the context of change, the primary implementers are the headteacher and teachers; in the community, the SMC and local leaders are the primary implementers. The image of the agent is that of an activist who has the authority, ownership, and capacity to bring about positive changes in schools and communities.

The image of the school in the Political orientation is that of a socio-political institution which empowers teachers, headteacher, and SMCs to make independent decisions about what changes are desirable in their school and how those changes ought to occur. Behind this image of an empowering school lie the core concepts, legitimacy of power, authority, influence, right, voice, freedom, choice, interest, advocacy group, competing groups, negotiation, cooperation, and compromise. As a result, politically-oriented FEOs' key actions include the decentralization of power structures, the creation of a non-hierarchical and collegial environment, the building of relationships, and the empowerment and capacity enhancement of key agents. More generally, they encourage teachers and SMCs to make independent decisions where appropriate. Key skills required by these change agents include, for example, good intra- and inter-personal skills, competence in groups, conflict mediation skills, decisiveness, collaborative and collegial, and ability to develop trust and good rapport with their clients.

The core emphasis in the Political orientation is to change the power structures in schools and communities in a way that would raise the status, voices, and authority of teachers, headteachers, and SMCs to work independently. The Political orientation focuses on the interest of the key change agents, assuming

that the ultimate success of a change resides in how motivated and empowered those agents are to implement the change. Their motivation and empowerment, as Ali, Ahmed, and Faisal believe, can be achieved when their voices are heard and their ideas are valued in the process of change. Thus, these FEOs place huge emphasis on negotiations with and empowerment of key implementers, such as teachers, headteachers, and SMCs, in order to effect changes in schools and in local communities. Such negotiations between the FEOs and the key implementers allow both parties to share with each other their concerns, views and ideas about the change and its implementation. As a result, the key implementers feel empowered because their voices are heard and because the FEOs respect their ideas about change.

The Political orientation is remarkably close to House's "political perspective on school reform" (House, 1981; House & McQuillan, 1998), and generally related to Erchul and Martens' (1997) "normative-reeducative", and Thiessen's (1989) "teacher-centered-adaptation" orientation to change. These orientations have in common such concepts as negotiation, power, authority, influence, relationships, and interests. However, Ali's, Ahmed's, and Faisal's Political orientation differs from these authors' categorizations in certain respects.

Basically, House's (1981) political perspective and the FEOs' Political orientation share an underlying image of negotiation. Both primarily concern themselves with the issue of delegating authority to the key implementers of change; they ask the basic question, "Who should have more authority than others in order to make independent decisions about change?" House captures a broader picture of political concerns in relation to educational change (such as competing interests of groups, arguments for or against policies, and distribution of power and resources). The Politically-oriented FEOs primarily attend to micro-political issues, such as the legitimacy of authority, power, and influence in relation to changes in schools and communities; more specifically, these three FEOs are concerned about giving more authority and resources to schools and local communities so that teachers, SMCs, and the FEOs themselves can have greater influence on change. Similarly, the three FEOs' Political orientation and Erchul and Martens' (1997) normative-reeducative orientations both recognize the importance of empowering key agents of change through creating conditions for both individual and organizational change in schools and in other contexts. The normative-reeducative orientation assumes that change in a school is likely to occur when it is attempted at both personal and organizational levels. At a personal level, change should occur in teachers' attitudes, values, feelings, and knowledge base; at the organizational level, change must happen in the school's established norms, relationships, power structures, and socio-cultural

environment in the school. The FEOs who have the Political orientation primarily concentrate on raising the status of teachers, headteachers, and SMCs, respecting their voices and ideas about change.

Thiessen's teacher-centered-adaptation and the three FEOs' Political orientation share the underlying assumption that change will succeed when its key implementers have freedom and authority to make independent decisions about the change and its implementation. However, change agents in the teacher-centered-adaptation orientation see change as a classroom phenomenon, dependent on the teacher's decisions and actions; they therefore concentrate on teachers' empowerment. The three FEOs with the Political orientation view change as a political phenomenon, dependent on the actions and decisions taken by teachers, headteachers, or SMCs. These FEOs are therefore concerned about the legitimacy of the authority system in both schools and local communities.

These three FEOs holding the Political orientation are concerned not only about empowering the key agents of change in schools and in local communities but also about their own political location within the hierarchical structure of their organization. They feel that they themselves do not have enough authority to work independently in schools and local communities. In order to empower teachers, headteachers, and SMCs, the FEOs themselves need more freedom and authority. These three FEOs say that most of the key decisions about what should change in schools and in local communities are taken by the district management and passed on to them; they then pass those decisions on to the teachers and local communities for implementation. These FEOs therefore argue that change is less likely to occur unless their status is raised, their voices heard, and their ideas about school improvement and community development respected.

### **Technical Orientation (Ahmed and Khan)**

The Technical orientation takes efficiency as its underlying image and core value, and sees change within a context where the development of skills and techniques is more important than anything else. It addresses technical concepts such as skills development, technical know-how, and development of better techniques and tools that play a pivotal role in the development of change in that particular context. The success of a change in the Technical context (whether the school or community) depends on the skills, knowledge, expertise, and techniques of those directly involved in the change process. The underlying philosophy in this orientation assumes that the FEOs can best effect change in schools and communities by enhancing the skills and technical knowledge of the key agents

and by developing better techniques and methods for change. Guided by this assumption, technically-oriented change agents' actions include the inculcation of procedures and development of skills in the primary implementers of change.

Ahmed and Khan's key assumptions and core values of change share an underlying concern about how to do the job or how to get things done efficiently. These two FEOs therefore concentrate on enhancing the technical proficiency of teachers, head teachers, and SMCs as the primary facilitators of change in schools and communities. The expansion of technical knowledge, skills development, and production of better techniques and materials play key roles in their Technical orientation.

The Technical orientation offers a particular view of the different dimensions that provide a conceptual basis for an orientation at both the theoretical and practical levels. The Technical orientation views change as a technical phenomenon dependent on the effectiveness and technical proficiency of the people directly involved in the planning and implementation of the change. Change is likely to develop when its key implementers are equipped with advanced skills, wider knowledge, and better techniques. In the Technical orientation, teachers and SMCs are the primary implementers of change in schools and communities respectively, because they are closest to the actions and implementation of the change. The image of these agents is that of technicians or engineers who have the technical know-how, practical skills, and effective techniques for stimulating the change. Thus, the Technical orientation sees the school as a training center or workshop where teachers and SMCs are prepared to develop the knowledge, technical skills, and the tools and techniques that they need in order to bring about positive changes in schools and communities.

The Technical orientation addresses the key concepts of efficiency, techniques, tools, technical knowledge, skills, creative thinking, reasoning, training, task, information, and communication. For the Technically-oriented FEOs, key actions involve developing the change agents' skills through training, preparation of tools and materials, demonstration of techniques, and inculcation of policies and procedures. The desirable skills include good command of the content and pedagogy of change, efficient problem solving, articulate communication, and effective use of technologies.

These dimensions establish the parameters distinguishing the Technical orientation from the Political. The Political orientation is concerned about the legitimacy of authority; the Technical orientation lends considerable attention to development of technical proficiency. It advocates that empowerment of the key change agents comes from their technical efficiency in affecting the conditions,

situations, and processes important to change. The agents need to have practical answers to the issues inherent in the change process and have the skills to use the most effective means and ways to affect change in schools and communities. Thus, the efficiency engineering or scientific management of change (House, 1981) becomes a fundamental principle in this orientation. The efficiency engineer, as House describes, turns the change into separate tasks and analyzes the performance of those tasks; each task involves technical questions and unforeseen challenges, which the change agent as an engineer or technician must address in a logical and systematic way.

The Technical orientation shares with the “technological perspective on school reform” (House, 1981) the basic principle that change can best be achieved by employing technical skills, creative thinking, logical reasoning, and techniques relevant to the context. The Technical orientation also has some similarities to the empirical-rational orientation (Erchul & Martens, 1997); both assume that people are essentially rational and are likely to change when the change is justifiable to them on an intellectual level. In other words, the chances of an innovation succeeding increase when the implementers have a clear vision and in-depth understanding of the innovation. The Technical orientation has as its core focus teaching key implementers practical skills and better techniques for change; whereas the technological perspective and the empirical-rational orientation, besides skills development, additionally focus on producing a wider theoretical knowledge base for change so as to intellectually justify the change.

### **Ahmed’s and Khan’s Technical orientation also resembles Thiessen’s (1989)**

“structured direction” and Favaro’s (1983) “objectivist” orientation. These orientations view knowledge and efficiency as powerful forces to stimulate change in schools and in other contexts. All three orientations emphasize providing key implementers with a recipe for change; they differ only in the nature of the recipe and how it is transmitted to the implementers. The structured direction and objectivist orientations emphasize the importance of setting out explicit directions and prescribing structured procedures for change. Together these two orientations see the change agents as technical experts who give clear instructions and directions for how to approach a change, whereas the implementers of the change become mere recipients of the experts’ knowledge. The two FEOs who operate through the Technical orientation help teachers and SMCs improve and renew their knowledge and develop in them the skills to participate in and implement change. The interactions between the two parties are more didactic and instructive than facilitative or transactional; the FEOs

tend to direct the teachers and SMCs about the rules and procedures they ought to follow and the technical skills they need to develop in order to implement a change.

### **Spiritual Orientation (Karim)**

The Spiritual orientation regards change as more of a moral enterprise than a political or technical endeavor. This orientation sees change in the context where moral knowledge, moral reasoning, moral feelings, and spiritual consciousness are considered to be the most powerful forces to affect change. The Spiritual orientation takes self-transcendence as its underlying image. Self-transcendence means going beyond one's predefined professional tasks through one's own intuitive thoughts, consciousness, creativity, and dedication in order to fulfill not only professional but moral obligations. The underlying assumption in the Spiritual orientation is that change is best achieved by developing the moral dispositions of those directly involved in the change. In line with this assumption, actions concentrate on awakening moral and spiritual awareness and developing moral virtues in the key agents of change.

The analysis of Karim's espoused beliefs and action theories makes it apparent that he embraces a Spiritual orientation to change in schools and communities. He stresses the importance of a change agent's spiritual being or innerself; thus, change agents (teachers, local leaders, and SMCs) must take change as a sacred calling, a moral responsibility, and a spiritual endeavor. They therefore need not only technical proficiency and authority but also a strong spiritual force igniting them from within so that they can persist in the change. Karim's Spiritual orientation therefore pays considerable attention to evoking the spiritual aspect of teachers and others involved in change.

While political autonomy and technical proficiency enable one to make independent and informed decisions about change, spiritual conscientiousness allows one to judge one's actions and decisions bearing on others and not to surrender to the complexities, eventualities, and challenges inherent in the change process. Karim feels that if a change agent has the belief that he has a moral responsibility to change, he will acquire the freedom and technical proficiency that he needs to bring about the change, even if he does not have them at the beginning.

Karim's strong allegiance to the moral and spiritual underpinnings of change reflects the conceptual basis for the Spiritual orientation. First, this orientation views change as a moral and spiritual phenomenon dependent on the moral

dispositions (commitment and perseverance) of those who implement it. A change will succeed when its key implementers have a strong moral stance, conscience, and spiritual force, which in turn strengthen their determination to persistently engage in the change. Teachers, SMCs, and local leaders have the potential to serve as the moral agents of change in schools and communities. The image of the change agent in the Spiritual orientation is that of a missionary or moral educator who transcends beyond the “professional-self” in order to bring about positive changes in schools and communities – a person who inspires others through modeling good behaviors and devotion to both professional and moral obligations.

These change agents therefore need a moral anchor and spiritual conscientiousness to justify how their actions and decisions affect others in schools and communities. To develop such change agents, the Spiritual orientation perceives the school as a moral agency, which promotes moral virtues, such as compassion, honesty, dedication, fairness, and commitment in teachers, SMCs and, by implication the entire community. The Spiritual orientation deals with the key concepts of moral disposition, spiritual awareness or consciousness, self-transcendence, devotion, honesty, compassion, inspiration, persuasion, and awakening. Karim therefore relies on lectures, augmented by citations from the holy *Quran*, *Hadiths* and sermons of the *Imam*, to inspire and persuade teachers and local leaders to become role models (virtuous and righteous) by adhering to the moral aspects of their role in schools and communities. To foster change this way they also need key skills, including intuitive thinking, tolerance, positive role modeling and ability to inspire others.

These principles reveal that the Spiritual orientation concerns itself with developing the moral disposition of teachers and local leaders than with raising their authority and power. Power and authority, according to this orientation, come from the agents’ moral and spiritual dispositions rather than from their political independence and technical proficiency. If they are morally developed and spiritually strong, the change agents will acquire the power, authority, and technical skills through their own creativity, intuitive thinking, and perseverance. As change agents, teachers, SMCs and local leaders can influence others through inspiration and persuasion, rather than by political power or technical tips. Thus,

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‡ Sayings of Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him.

‡ His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary *Imam* (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

Karim relies on using religion (the *Quran*, *Hadiths* and sermons of the *Imam*) as a means to inspire teachers, SMCs and local leaders towards change in schools and communities.

The Spiritual orientation is closely related to Miller's "transpersonal or holistic" orientation to curriculum (1983). Both orientations recognize the importance of one's spiritual being or inner self as a source of creativity, compassion, openness, and dedication to one's professional and moral responsibilities. These two orientations share the underlying assumption that compassionate and dedicated teachers or other change agents see themselves in others and others in them (Miller, 1983). Thus, they attend to how their actions and decisions bear on others. They recognize the fluidity of the change process and can diligently engage in that process. The Spiritual orientation also has some links to House's "cultural perspective" on school reform (1981) in that it recognizes the importance of shared values, sense of community, and adherence to common principles and norms resting on a particular ideological or socio-cultural vantage point. However, it differs from the cultural perspective in certain respects. The cultural perspective emphasizes the importance of cultural integration, adaptation, tolerance, and socio-political cultures and relationships in the wider society. The Spiritual orientation focuses more on moral virtues such as honesty, compassion, fairness, and dedication as core principles to bring about positive changes in schools and communities. It recognizes the importance of one's conscience and of the feeling of being emotionally moved (Schiendlin, 2003), which one needs in order to engage in an intensive process of change. Karim tends to persuade teachers and leaders to work beyond their official responsibilities. Becoming a role model himself, he encourages the teachers and leaders to be virtuous (compassionate, honest, tolerant, devoted and perseverant) and serve as role models in their schools and communities (Campbell, 2001; Fenstermacher, 2001; Saskin & Saskin, 1990). His persuasive and mesmerizing lectures aim to increase the teachers' and local leaders' motivation and commitment to persist in change.

## **Comparison of Change Orientations**

The five FEOs share three distinct change orientations: Political, Technical and Spiritual. Each orientation is formed by a different set of beliefs, assumptions, values, and practices embraced by the FEOs. While the political orientation takes the authority system as its root image, the technical orientation rests on efficiency as its underlying principle. The spiritual orientation, on the other hand, takes moral disposition as its core foundation. Table 3 juxtaposes the core principles and dimensions that provide a conceptual basis for each orientation:



Table 3: Comparison amongst Change Orientations

Orientations	Political	Technical	Spiritual
Key Emphasis	Legitimacy of authority system	Technical proficiency	Moral and spiritual disposition
Core Values	Power Independence	Efficiency Inculcation	Inspiration Self-transcendence
Conception of Change	Political Phenomenon	Technical Phenomenon	Moral and Spiritual Phenomenon
Conception of Change Agent	Activist	Technician Engineer	Missionary Moral Agent
Conception of School	Socio-political Institution	Training Centre Workshop	Moral Agency
Key Actions	Empowerment	Skills development	Moral development
Key Concepts	Negotiation Influence Power and authority Rights and voices Freedom and choices Interests	Production of Tools and Techniques Technical Know-how Practical Skills Efficiency Logical Thinking	Intuitive Thinking Creativity Commitment and Loyalty Fairness and Honesty Inspiration Persuasion

Each orientation is concerned about certain conditions, situations, and apparatus that the change agents need in order to affect changes in schools and communities. The Political orientation concentrates on getting the agents equipped with power and authority so that they can make independent decisions and have control over the change processes in their schools and local communities. The Technical orientation focuses on instilling better techniques, technical knowledge and practical skills in the change agents so that they are able to plan, implement and effectively manage changes in their schools and local communities.

The Spiritual orientation, on the other hand, is committed to developing moral virtues and igniting the spiritual force in the change agents so that they are self-

motivated and able to inspire others towards change in schools and local communities.

The Political orientation sees power in the empowerment and autonomy of the key agents, the Technical orientation locates power in the professional expertise and efficiency of the agents; and the Spiritual orientation situates power in the moral and spiritual dispositions of the agents.

Although the five FEOs represent three apparently distinct change orientations, some common elements still emerge across these orientations. For instance, Ali's and Faisal's dominant orientation is the Political orientation. However, in the background, they also seem to have some features of a Technical orientation. For example, their underlying assumptions and core values of change reveal that some of their specific actions and key methods include helping teachers, headteachers, and SMCs improve their knowledge and technical skills. Thus, their overriding orientation is Political, but they also use some aspects of a Technical orientation.

In other words, they use the Technical orientation in the service of their Political orientation. They assure that teachers, headteachers, and SMCs are likely to have more authority, freedom and empowerment when they develop in-depth understanding of and technical skills for change in schools and communities. Ahmed, on the other hand, operates through a Political orientation to change in schools and a Technical orientation to change in communities.

This raises the possibility that his initial dominant orientation was Political one, but in community development work the Technical orientation dominates as a means of serving Political ends; namely, he believes that developing SMCs' knowledge and skills will empower them to take on a greater role in schools. Karim holds the Spiritual orientation as his superseding orientation, but still helps teachers improve their knowledge base and practices of change in schools. He also tends to mobilize local leaders and use their authority and influence in order to affect change in local communities. Thus, Karim's interactions with teachers and local leaders also include some aspects of the Technical and Political orientations respectively.

Similarly, in the background of their overarching orientations, each FEO has an Islamic perspective about change. Each of the five FEOs works with a religiously motivated community and therefore makes reference to religion and religious authorities during their interventions in schools and local communities. For example, all five of them affirm that they have both professional and religious responsibility to help teachers and SMCs bring about positive changes in their

schools and communities. “I work even on weekends because I am accountable to my Imam”, Ahmed says. However, such religious perspective and devotion to change is more prominent in Karim’s Spiritual orientation than in the other FEOs’.

## **Conclusion**

My analysis of the FEOs’ change orientations leads to a number of conclusions, deriving from the FEOs’ change strategies, orientations, and their overall role in school improvement and community development.

First, the five FEOs have particular orientations which define their roles and shape their specific actions and methods for change. Each FEO’s change orientation serves as a lens through which that FEO sees and approaches change. For instance, Ali, Ahmed and Faisal operate through a Political orientation, which guides their main role and shapes their strategies for change. These politically-oriented FEOs therefore see their role as that of facilitator and take such specific actions as engaging key implementers (teachers, headteachers, SMCs, and local leaders) in negotiations and respecting their voices and ideas about what to change and how to implement the change. Ahmed and Khan embrace a Technical orientation, which provides a backdrop to most of their actions and methods for change. These two FEOs see their role as that of technical expert and therefore invest most of their energies in developing skills in teachers and SMCs. Karim’s Spiritual orientation defines his role as a critical friend and guides his actions to focus on teachers’ and local leaders’ moral development.

At the level of practice, there are a number of similarities in the FEOs’ main roles, strategies and specific actions. For example, all the FEOs use workshops, dialogues, observations, and conferences with teachers, headteachers, SMCs or local leaders. Similarly, two or more FEOs assume the same overarching role or employ the same broad strategy. However, at the theoretical and philosophical level, each FEO remains distinct from the others in terms of how and why he enacts a certain role and adopts a particular strategy. When I probed why the FEOs choose certain roles and prefer certain strategies, I discovered that, even though two or more FEOs assume the same role or use the same strategy, each has a different explanation and reason for his role and actions. Thus, what appear as similar roles or strategies are still distinct, because each FEO’s ultimate objective and rationale for adopting those roles and strategies differ from the others’. For example, Ali and Karim both play the role of a critical friend, but differ in that each has a different reason for becoming a critical

friend. Ali feels that becoming a critical friend of teachers allows him to engage the teachers in systematic and critical analysis of their practices so that they can improve their professional repertoires through self-reflection (MacKinnon, 1996). Karim thinks that, acting as a critical friend, he can help teachers reflect on and improve their actions and decisions on moral and ethical grounds. Thus, Ali sees his role as a critical friend in the light of his Political orientation; when teachers develop their analytical and pedagogical skills, they will become more empowered and have a greater influence on change in their schools, he believes. Karim perceives his critical friend role through his Spiritual orientation, believing that, when they become reflective and conscientious, teachers will continuously examine their actions in order to have a positive impact on their students' moral and intellectual development. Although Ali and Karim both engage teachers in "reflective practice" (Schon, 1983), each has a different meaning of and reason for adopting such a practice, as MacKinnon (1993) argues: "Slogans about reflective practice hold all sorts of meanings for different people" (p.261). Thus, Ali's and Karim's explanations and justifications for assuming a critical friend's role and adopting reflective practice are deeply connected to and guided by their particular orientations to change.

The second conclusion I derive from the five FEOs' underlying concepts and practices of change. The FEOs' Islamic beliefs and values provide the foundations for their professional pursuits and, more specifically, for their approach to school change and community development. These FEOs have a wider religious and socio-cultural perspective about not only what should change in schools and in local communities but also how and why the change should occur. This religious perspective is explicitly embedded in Karim's change orientation and practices; however, the other four FEOs also operate through some implicit Islamic beliefs and values about change. These five FEOs draw their Islamic perspectives about education and change mainly from three sources: the *Quranic* injunctions about knowledge and education; the Prophet's role as a teacher and His *Hadiths* about education; and the tradition of Ismaili *Imams'* initiations to improve the quality of education and life for the Ismaili community in particular and other communities in general.

The *Quran* clearly underlines the importance of education, for example, "*Allam-al-insaan-a- malam ya'lam*" [96:5] (He has taught man that which he knew not), meaning that mankind is destined to know the unknown. Islam encourages the spirit of inquiry and recognizes its virtues; in fact, the *Quran* suggests that the whole universe is the subject of observation and knowledge (Mondal, 1997). Islam emphasizes that a society cannot be developed unless its human resources are properly utilized through cultivation of knowledge. The Holy Prophet

declared education the foremost duty of every Muslim man and woman. Therefore, Islam considers teaching a sacred religious obligation which every literate Muslim should undertake, even without any remuneration (Baloch, 2000).

Similarly, the Ismaili *Imams* have always regarded education as the most urgent and essential duty of the community. The *Imams* have not only urged their followers to get better education but have also devoted their time, energies, resources and wisdom to establishing schools and other educational institutions. For example, in 970, the 14th *Imam* (Al-Muizz) established the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, which has since been an internationally recognized center for Islamic education. The 48th *Imam* urged the Ismailis and other Muslims to see education as the only sound foundation for any prosperous society (Aziz, 2000) and established schools in the Indian sub-continent and Africa. Continuing the Ismaili tradition of making education a top priority, the present *Imam* Aga Khan IV has established more than 300 schools and other educational institutions in most of the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa.

Inspired by these Islamic traditions and their *Imam's* passion for education, the FEOs feel a great sense of obligation and moral responsibility to bring about change in their schools and communities. In fact, their Islamic perspectives about education in general and Karim's in particular resemble Catholic teacher educators' perspectives on education and change. In Catholic education, religion has been historically a major dimension of the humanities (Sloan, 2002). Sloan argues that, "Without a study and understanding of religion, the understanding of philosophy, history and the arts would all be impoverished" (p.12). Sloan further suggests that a broadly conceived religion could provide "an integrated curricular core for the otherwise rudderless and drifting modern university" (p.12). Similarly, Islamic education advocates that there should not be divisions between religious, moral, and secular values. Rather, all of these should be integrated into a common faith and common goals of education (Baloch, 2000; Khan, 1993). Thus, teachers and teacher educators in both the Catholic and Islamic education systems tend to perceive their roles not only as paid employees but also as leaders and guides who promote the common good of their societies; they care for their students in such a way that the students' physical, intellectual, and moral talents develop in a harmonious manner (Baloch, 2000; Buetow, 1988; Carter, 1984; Pocock, 1984). Such religiously-oriented teachers and teacher educators work with deep faith and with ardent love for their God. Like Karim, they see their role as inspired by Jesus Christ or Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Them) and therefore search for a spiritual meaning in their professional endeavors. For such teachers and educators, educational experience is incomplete unless it has a spiritual dimension and purpose (Dunne,

1998). Commenting about the unwavering commitment of lay teachers in a Catholic school in Newfoundland, one inspector says:

...in the ordinary (lay) schools too, I have met with teachers whose zeal, intelligence and tact it would be hard to speak too highly of and who are an honor to their profession, no one could expect to witness greater devotion or under the circumstances, better results [Punctuations as in the original text]. (Dunne, 1998, p. 80)

This kind of religious, socio-cultural perspective and devotion constitutes an important aspect of an orientation towards change. It appears especially relevant in situations which bring religious orientation, school change and community development together. For example, the FEOs recognize the importance of the Islamic values of social solidarity, mutual responsibility, and brotherhood in facilitating both personal and collective development in schools and communities. Historically, the Islamic view of change has been participatory in nature and revolutionary in approach; the sense of brotherhood and community in some, if not all, Muslim societies has therefore provided a powerful impetus for both educational and social changes. The spirit of self-help and collective approach to socio-economic and educational development remains alive in many Muslim societies. Indeed, it now seems to fit a recent trend in social and economic development. Such participatory and community-based initiatives have acquired much momentum in the late 20th century, not only in Muslim communities but also in other religious and secular community development movements around the world (Bacchus, 1983; Jamil, 2002; Poster, 1982, 1990; Rennie, 1990). Thus, the FEOs' conceptual frameworks and practices of change raise the possibility that school change and community development in Muslim societies are likely to succeed if approached with an Islamic spirit and views of change. However, it is important to note that such Islamic perspectives should not be taken as rigidly doctrinal approach, but a broadly conceived framework for change.

The third conclusion I draw is that the FEOs operate within one broad framework for change: broadly "Socio-Educational Change", and specifically "Community-based School Change". Although different FEOs have particular orientations, assume various roles and use certain strategies at different times and situations, all five of them actually operate through a Socio-Educational Change framework, stimulating school improvement on the one hand and community development on the other.

The Socio-Educational Change framework is an overarching orientation within which the FEOs operate through Political, Technical, and Spiritual orientations. This broader orientation sees school change and community development as

mutually supportive courses of action. Change in one context influences change in the other context. For example, school improvement is stimulated through increasing communities' awareness about education and their active participation in school management and resource generation.

When they engage in the day-to-day management of their schools, community members develop their own administrative, technical, and leadership skills. The underlying principle in the Socio-Educational Change framework is that the stronger the coordination and interactions between the school and community, the greater the chances for change in both contexts.

While operating through a Socio-Educational Change framework, the FEOs assume a broader role, encompassing the roles of both educational reformers and community developers. In other words, the Socio-Educational Change framework defines the FEOs' role as agents of educational and social change. Keeping in mind this broader orientation, I thought of various metaphors to describe the FEOs' role and chose the metaphor of "bridge" because it best describes the FEOs' role as agents of both educational and social change.

This particular metaphor, which most FEOs used to explain their roles, captures the nature and scope of work that the FEOs do in schools and in communities. They play the roles of bridges between schools and local communities; between schools and district education authorities; between local leaders and community members; between the AKES,P and public educational stakeholders. Figure 1 graphically represents this metaphorical description of the FEOs' role.

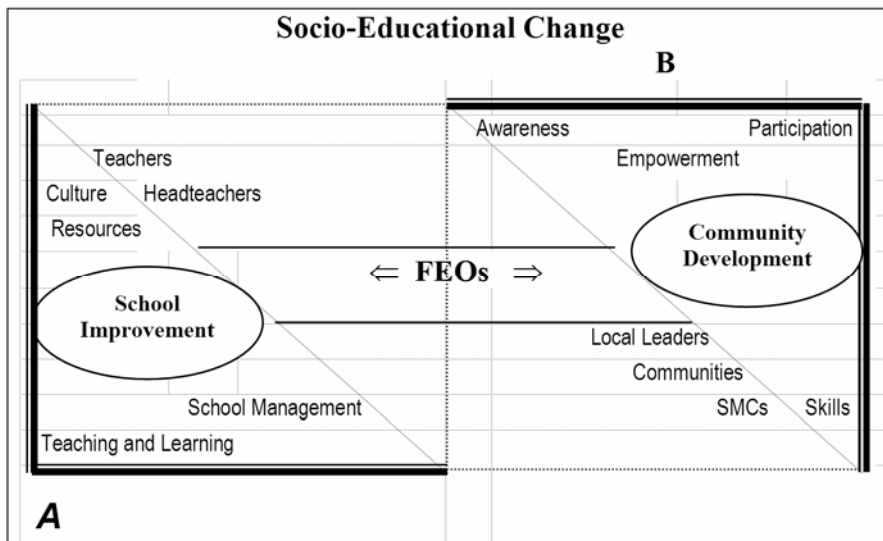


Figure 1: The FEOs' Role as a Bridge

In Figure 1, I try to portray the FEOs' model of change and their own role as a bridge between the two contexts of change.

The two symmetrical triangles, A and B, represent the two contexts of change: school and community respectively. The circle in the center of each triangle highlights the FEOs' broad agenda for change: school improvement and community development.

Each of the elements listed inside the triangles illustrates the areas that the FEOs attempt to improve in order to achieve the broad change in the inner circles. Similarly, each of the elements outside the triangles A & B specifies the stakeholders whom the FEOs see as key agents of change in the respective context. The FEOs move between the two contexts of change, thereby playing the role of a "bridge" in order to strengthen relationships and coordination between the school and the community.

Thus, within the Socio-Educational Change framework, each FEO operates through his particular orientation to change. In other words, the five FEOs have three distinct orientations to a broader Socio-Educational Change, more specifically a Community-based School Change agenda.

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# **Factors that Inhibit Middle and Secondary School Teachers in Pakistan from Adopting a Student-Centred Approach towards the Teaching and Learning Process**

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## **Abstract**

A growing awareness among educationists about necessary changes in the field of education has motivated and encouraged them to devise ways of bringing about positive changes in the process of teaching and learning. For developing realistic mechanisms to bring about positive changes in their local school settings, educationists tend to reconsider ideas, concepts and theories presented by various authors and researcher and generalize them for their local settings by conducting researches. However, Saad (1999) noted that education in Pakistan has been considered only as a topic to be discussed at different occasions. But it is sad to mention that very little has been done to improve it in practical terms. As a result, education in Pakistan suffers on both counts of quality and quantity.

To improve quality, schools in Pakistan need to take a deep approach that concentrates on the quality of students' understanding rather than the quality of information presented (Nayak & Rao, 2002) and student-centred approach (Piccinin, 1997) which encourages students' enjoyment of school, classroom participation, independent development, individualized instruction and self-perception (Lambert & McCombs, as cited in Tan, 2001).

When speaking about suitable approach towards teaching and learning, condition in Pakistani schools is not as it should be. Rather than using a deep approach or a student-centred approach, the teachers in Pakistani schools generally use a teacher-centred or a content-centred approach. Most of them acknowledge the positive impact of the student-centred approach on students' overall development but are not motivated to use them in their own classroom practices. As a result, the quality of education in Pakistan has been declined.

Two factors have generally been considered as responsible for the poor quality of education in Pakistan by the writers and reporters who are concerned about it. These factors include: (1) lack of required physical, financial and human resources in schools and (2) lack of teacher motivation.

To highlight how far the factors mentioned above were considered as the factors that inhibit teachers from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process, a research study was undertaken. The factors mentioned earlier were further divided and categorized into internal and external factor. Some of the major factors were selected and teachers' perception of some internal and some external factors was investigated. The factors which were explored include: (1) Internal Factors (classroom teaching and student learning), (2) External Factor (class size and principal's leadership) and (3) Internal as well as External Factor (student assessment).

Based on the internal and external factors, five hypotheses were formulated. In order to collect data, 130 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in 15 schools selected from various cities of Pakistan. These cities include Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad, Gujranwala (near Rawalpindi) and Multan. In addition to grade levels (middle or secondary), the target population had one of the characteristics in each of the three categories. These three categories included: (1) Type of school (government, private), (2) Gender in school (Girls, Boys, Co-education) and (3) Medium of instruction in school (English, Urdu). The sample was selected by using the convenience sampling technique (Gay, 1992) and teachers were categorized into trained and untrained groups. The data gathered from the sample was tabulated and analysed. The hypotheses were tested using Chi Square method.

Except a few differences, the result of this study revealed no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of the factors inhibiting the selection of a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.

The study opens up an issue, "whether or not the teacher training has a significant impact on teachers in Pakistan." Hence, it was recommended that educational institutes should reconsider their teachings and there should be more professional development activities inside schools to encourage teachers to equip themselves with contemporary approaches towards teaching and learning.

## **Introduction**

Research reveals that even with the provision of good instruction, many students, including academically talented ones, understand less than we expect from them. They usually reproduce whatever they have been taught, but demonstrate a limited understanding of the concepts taught (Nayak & Rao, 2002). Similar conditions can also be found in schools in Pakistan. Students

qualified from educational institutions in Pakistan have not been able to reach the level where they can think abstractly and reason logically. They have demonstrated an inability to be problem-solvers or creative and critical thinkers; hence they find difficulty in fulfilling the requirements of the complex world. This is one of the reasons that have brought about a high unemployment rate in the country. Subsequently, the masses have lost their trust in education as a solution to solving the economic problems of the country.

Pakistan has had a very slow pace of progress in education when compared with other developing countries that received independence in more or less in the same years as Pakistan (Saad, 1999). The quality of education in Pakistan is affected by a variety of factors. Two of the major factors that are generally considered by writers and reporters as responsible for poor quality of education in Pakistan include (a) lack of basic facilities such as electricity, drinking water, school building, play ground, furniture and so on (Haq and Haq, 1998 & Staff Writer, 2004a), financial resources (Staff Writer, 2004b) and human resources (Correspondent, 1998), and (b) a lack of teacher motivation (Staff Writer, 2004 b). Due to the factors indicated above, teachers in Pakistan tend to adopt the teaching approaches that require less physical, human and financial resources. In addition to utilizing a lesser amount of resources, these approaches require less expertise and time. One such approach to teaching is the teacher-centred approach.

Some teachers in Pakistan acknowledge the positive impact of a student-centred approach (Piccinin, 1997) on the overall growth and development of students. They understand that this approach helps in developing an open and flexible classroom environment, which consequently enhances students' intrinsic motivation (Lambert & McCombs, cited in Tan 2001) and encourages teachers to establish strategies that match the students' needs and learning styles (Tan, 2001). However, these teachers are not motivated to use the student-centred approach during their classroom teaching, as they feel that there are many inhibiting factors that prevent them from adopting this approach towards their teaching.

## **Statement of the Research Problem**

The research presented in this report was conducted to determine “Factors that inhibit middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process”.

Independent and dependent variables that are clearly indicated in the above research problem were: inhibiting factors, and the selection of a student-centred approach by teachers respectively. The subjects for the research study were middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistani schools.

## **Review of Literature**

It is generally noted that teachers focus on what to teach rather than how to teach. However, recent research in education reveals that 'how' a teacher teaches is as equally important as 'what' he or she teaches. Indeed 'how' largely determines effectiveness. The 'how' depends upon the teacher's teaching ability, his or her self-esteem, teacher's awareness and adequate knowledge in practices of classroom management approaches. Furthermore, the 'how' is influenced by the whole school management style and by effective leadership within the school (Humphreys, 1995).

From the above explanation one can conclude that 'how' teachers teach depends upon internal factors (such as teachers' perception of their personal abilities and their professional abilities) and external factors such as school management and the leadership provided by the school (Southworth, as cited in Behar-Horenstein & Seabert, 2002). It is thus important to consider both internal and external factors. However, some of the factors in the specific context are more influential than others. If not effectively managed, these factors can work as hindering factors. Some of these factors are explained below.

### **Classroom Teaching: An Internal Factor**

Teachers' beliefs, attitudes and educational philosophies influence their instructional approach (Baer, as cited in Tan, 2001; Fernstermacher & Soltis, as cited in Tan, 2001). On the other hand, teachers' beliefs attitudes and philosophies also influence the classroom climate and the roles that teachers may adopt (Simonton, as cited in Tan, 2001). Educational philosophies of teachers change over a period of time as they gain more professional knowledge and skills. Therefore Darling-Hammond (2000) suggests proper training of teachers. According to him, usually trained teachers perform better in classes, especially at the tasks that require higher order thinking and problem solving. However, difference between the performances of the trained and the untrained is contradictory. For example, Shim; Popham; and Cornett (cited in Jones, 1997) found no significant differences in the classroom performance of trained and untrained teachers. By contrast, Fogarty, Wang and Creek (cited in Jones, 1997) found a significant difference.

Some researchers believe that with the passage of time student-teachers, during their training, move from a student-centred view of teaching to a teacher-centred view of teaching (Fuller & Brown, as cited in Wilson & Camerson, 1996; McCullough & Mintz, as cited in Wilson & Camerson, 1996; McDermott et al, as cited Wilson & Camerson, 1996). Therefore many people believe that any one can teach (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Others believe that teaching is best learned by trial and error on the job (Lortie, as cited in Wilson & Camerson, 1996; Placeck & Dodds, as cited in Wilson & Camerson, 1996). However Wilson and Camerson (1996) found that with the passage of time, student-teachers move from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach.

Amabile (cited in Tan, 2001) looks at the other side of the teaching skill. He indicates that there is a positive relation between domain-specific skills (skills of a specific subject) and creativity. Therefore, to be able to uncover children's creative potentials and to nurture children's creative competence, teachers are encouraged to acquire domain specific skills. By contrast, Abbott-Chapman et al. and Hughes (cited in Wilson & Cameron, 1996) assert that very effective teachers are seen to be effective through their interpersonal skills rather than their management or content expertise. Therefore, Killen (1996) suggests for teachers to acquire both content as well as pedagogical knowledge. Both Killen (1996) and Yadav (1992) are in favor of a student-centred approach to teaching.

### **Student learning: An Internal Factor**

According to Earl (2003), learning is intellectual, social as well as emotional. It is ordered and it is unpredictable. It takes place by design and by chance. In other words learning is complex in nature. Therefore, teachers, educators and students have multiple conceptions of the nature of learning. According to some teachers, learning is something that happens to the learner, with knowledge being the "stuff" that fills students' minds. Whereas some believe that learning is a completely unique experience of constructing reality for each individual.

According to Haworth (1998), learners hold a certain amount of expectations from teaching and learning. Similarly, teachers also hold many expectations about the nature of teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom. These expectations have a profound influence on the teaching and learning process. Therefore, both the teacher and students should get familiar with each other's expectations and beliefs and try to develop commonality between their expectations and beliefs about learning.



While a trained teacher may have a clear understanding of the theories of learning, students may have a different view of learning. According to Haworth (1998), when learners and teachers hold conflicting beliefs about what is good education, negative judgments may result on both sides. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a common understanding of learning among all those working for student learning.

### **Class Size: An External Factor**

Common sense suggests that smaller classes can offer teachers the chance to devote more time to each student so as to improve their learning, and a number of research studies support the small size class view (Archived information, 1999). For example, Salvin and Robin and Wittebols (cited in Archived information, 1999) noted a clear evidence on the positive effects of reduced class size. However, the effects of reduced class size were also influenced by the teacher's instructions. The said effects were less effective if teachers did not change their instructional methods and classroom procedures (Bohrnstedt & Stecher, as cited in O'Connell & Smith, 2000; Gilbert, 1995). But on the other hand, Achilles (as cited in O'Connell, & Smith, 2000) contends that, because classroom management is easier with fewer students in small sized classes, teachers do not need to change their instructional practices, the benefit comes automatically.

Brain and Achilles (as cited in O'Connell, & Smith, 2000) are of the view that smaller classes increase the teacher's ability to monitor student behavior and learning, and helps them to match their instruction with each child's ability and needs, and allows them to use a variety of instructional approaches to meet learners' needs. However, Gilbert (1995) found students in higher grades were supporters of large classes. According to Gilbert, as there is less pressure on individual students, large size classes can help in producing independent, self-directed and lifelong learners. However, classroom assessments are found to be negatively related to class size if the teacher is inexperienced. In large classes, students prefer experience, qualified and knowledgeable teachers. Therefore, he concludes that smaller classes are more effective than larger ones, particularly in using a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.

### **Principal's Leadership: An External Factor**

According to Leithwood, (cited in Brinkley, 1997), much of what happens in a school, including the way people act and react, is dependent on the culture that evolves in the school. The school culture includes the underlying assumptions,

norms, beliefs and values that guide the behavior of teachers, parents, administrators and students in a school. Thus Brinkley (1997) suggests that a school culture should have a collaborative relationship among its staff members.

The principal is the most important person in developing collegiality among the staff members (Sidhu, 1996). The leadership of the principal affects both the teacher's teaching and the student's learning directly or indirectly. The teacher's classroom decision making is highly influenced by how the teacher perceives the principal's leadership. Positive teacher perception of the principal's leadership can encourage the teacher to take initiatives to adopt student-centred approach; whereas a negative teacher perception of the principal can inhibit teachers from adopting student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process. A negative image of the principal's leadership according to Wallace and Wildy (1995) is that of a bureaucratic administrator, whereas a positive image of the principal's leadership is that of an educational leader. Brinkley (1997) identified three positive images of principals among teachers, which include (1) being supportive of teacher decision-making, (2) being a facilitator of shared values and (3) being promoters of mutual respect.

### **Student Assessments: An Internal as well as an External Factor**

Earl (2003) defines three approaches to classroom assessment which include: (a) Assessment of learning: This is a summative assessment (Cole & Chan, 1987) and can pressurize teachers to encourage students to practice prior to tests in order to raise their scores (Popham, cited in Behar-lorenstein & Seabert, 2002). (b) Assessment for learning: This assessment shifts the focus from making judgments (at the end of a unit or course) to create descriptions (such as keeping portfolios, keeping records of reflective interviews and keeping anecdotal records of students). (c) Assessment as learning: In this type of assessment the student is actively engaged in making sense of information, and relating it to his or her prior knowledge and in mastering the skills involved. Making sense of the process is called meta-cognition. It occurs when students personally monitor what they are learning, and use the feedback from this monitoring to make judgments, adaptations and even major changes in what they understand (Earl, 2003).

Wolfendale (cited in Earl, 2003) concludes that assessment should not be dominated by someone for the purpose of accountability. Rather it should be considered as a collaborative activity of teachers, students, management and parents. Hence, Smith, Smith and Lisi (2001) suggest student-centred assessment techniques such as performance assessment and portfolio assessment.

With the help of the literature review, five null hypotheses were drawn to compare differences between two categories of respondents.

## **Methodology**

### **Subjects**

The sample for the study consisted of selected teachers from 15 schools ranging from middle to secondary schools in the various cities of Pakistan (namely, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Multan and Gujranwala near Rawalpindi). From the sample (teachers from 15 schools), two groups of trained teachers (those who have completed any regular training that includes: PTC, CT, Dip Ed., B.Ed and M.Ed) and untrained teachers (those who have not done a regular training) were formed.

The two groups of subjects included 88 trained teachers (71.54% of the total number of the sample) and 35 untrained teachers (28.46 % of the total number of the sample), from middle to secondary schools. The opinions of the subjects from both groups were compared and hypotheses were tested using the Chi Square technique.

### **Research Instrument**

A questionnaire was developed to determine the opinions of middle and secondary school teachers regarding five factors. The samples for the research were scattered all over Pakistan. Therefore, in this situation, a questionnaire was considered to be the suitable tool for data gathering (Burns, 1997). The questionnaire was a combination of true and false statements, and the respondents were required to give their opinion about each statement on a Likert Scale.

The expected number of the sample was 130 teachers (65 trained teachers and 65 untrained) but only 123 questionnaires were returned back. 88 of these questionnaires were completed by the trained teachers, and only 35 by the untrained teachers.

### **Research Procedure**

The research procedure was started with a Pilot Study conducted in the month of April, 2004 in one of the schools in Karachi. This pilot study was followed by

different activities including the distribution of questionnaires, collection of questionnaires, analysis of data and compiling the report. The whole study was completed in the month of October, 2004.

### **Limitations of study**

There were some limitations that may have influenced the results of this research study. They were: (1) the usage of only one type of data collection tool (questionnaire). (2) the difficulty in getting an equal number of trained and untrained teachers due to the low number of untrained teachers in some schools (particularly in government school) and due to the inability of some untrained teachers to complete the questionnaire. (3) Due to the time constraints stratified sampling was not used and finally, (4) the questionnaire was not translated in Urdu, therefore some teachers might have misunderstood some questions.

### **Results**

The Chi Square (!!2) test was used for determining whether the two artificial categories (Gay, 1992) namely, trained and untrained teachers were significantly different from each other in terms of their opinion about the five factors that could presumably inhibit them from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process. For this reason all five null hypotheses were tested by using the Chi Square test.

The results of the study supported all the hypotheses. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinions of trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of all five factors on the selection of a student-centred approach by the teachers towards the process of teaching and learning.

To draw out conclusions from the study, teachers' responses were arranged into three categories, namely the high level of agreement/disagreement (above 60%), the moderate level of agreement/disagreement (between 50% and 60%) and the low level of agreement/disagreement (below 50%).

### **Class size: An external factor**

The data gathered for this study supported the first hypothesis (Ho1) [calculated !!2 = 1.3 whereas Tabulated !!2 at  $p < 0.05 = 3.841$ ]. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinions of trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of class size as an inhibiting factor towards the

selection of a student-centred approach by the teachers in Pakistan towards the teaching and learning process.

### **Class size and student achievement**

The data gathered for this study confirms that both trained and untrained teachers disagree that in large size classes, teachers devote more time to each student. The level of disagreement among trained teachers is moderate, whereas that among untrained teachers is high (58% and 69% respectively). Similarly, both trained and untrained teachers disagree that large a class size ensures higher student achievement at all grade levels. The level of disagreement among trained teachers is 50% (a moderate level of agreement) and among untrained teachers is 63% (a high level of agreement).

It was expected that trained teachers would show a high level of disagreement with the statements, but unexpectedly in both cases untrained teachers have exhibited a higher disagreement than trained teachers. However, the disagreement among both trained and untrained teachers is consistent with that of Brain and Achilles (cited in O'Connell & Smith, 2000). In larger classes, the student-teacher ratio is high; therefore teachers are unable to devote more time to each student. By contrast, in smaller classes the student-teacher ratio is low and therefore they can devote more time to each student. In large classes teachers spend more time on non-instructional activities, such as managing students' behavior, whereas in smaller classes the time for non-instructional activities such as managing student behavior decreases from 20% to 14% (archived information, 1999). Thus teachers have more time to pay individual attention to each student. According to Achilles, (cited in O'Connell, & Smith, 2000) smaller classes increase teachers' ability to monitor student behavior and learning.

When contrasted with the similarities between trained and untrained teachers presented in the above paragraphs, there appeared to be some differences between the responses of the trained and untrained teachers. 50% of the trained teachers believe (a moderate level of agreement) that the students who experience small size classes demonstrate low academic achievement when they are sent to large size classes. By contrast, 56% of untrained teachers disagree with this statement (a moderate level of disagreement). The opinion of trained teachers regarding this statement contrasts with the literature; whereas the opinion of untrained teachers is consistent with the literature. According to archived information (1999), effects of the small size class experience on students persists even when they go to the large size classes. When compared

with students from the large size classes, students from the small size classes outperform the others in all academic subjects.

### **Class size and high-order thinking**

Surprisingly, 54% of trained teachers agree (a moderate level of agreement) that large size classes help teachers in enhancing students' high-order thinking abilities, whereas 44.1% of untrained teachers agree (a low level of agreement) with the statement (41.2% disagree). It was expected that trained teachers would disagree that large size classes help teachers in enhancing students' high-order thinking abilities, but unexpectedly they exhibited a moderate level of agreement. Similarly, untrained teachers showed a level agreement with the statement. This result is in contrast with that of Gilbert (1995). According to him, if higher-level thinking, application, motivation and attitudinal change are the primary concerns, then small size classes are the best.

It can therefore be concluded that the trained teachers believe that high-order thinking can be developed even in large size classes. This is because they are pedagogically equipped, and can perform better in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and is also due to their qualification, knowledge and experience, which are preferred by the students (Gilbert, 1995).

### **Concluding Remarks**

From the results it can be concluded that both the trained and untrained teachers believe that small size classes are more suitable for implementing those teaching strategies that require individual attention and high-order thinking skills. Out of the three approaches towards the process of teaching and learning, namely, the content-centred approach, the teacher-centred approach and the student-centred approach (Piccinin, 1997); the student-centred approach is the top priority of contemporary research. This approach encourages teachers to promote the student's qualities such as task commitment, persistence, determination, curiosity, adventurousness, tolerance, independence, self-confidence and willingness to take risks (Cropley, as cited in Tan, 2001). However, middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan usually keep their classrooms teacher-centred from the teaching perspective. This may be because a vast majority of schools in Pakistan are overcrowded, (Staff Writer, 2004 b) having large classes. Therefore class size is a factor that inhibits middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.

## **Teacher perception of classroom teaching: An internal factor**

The data gathered for this study supported the second hypothesis (Ho2) [calculated  $F = 0.117$  whereas Tabulated  $F$  at  $p < 0.05 = 3.841$ ). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinions of trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of teacher perception of classroom teaching as an inhibiting factor towards the selection of a student-centred classroom approach.

### **Trained teachers and classroom teaching**

According to the data collected for this study, both trained and untrained teachers believe that trained teachers teach well in the class (the agreement among trained teachers = 96.5% and among untrained teachers = 68%); the problem-solving method teaches students to develop new knowledge for themselves (the agreement among trained teachers = 94% and among untrained teachers = 87.5%); and the project method enhances students' research skills (the agreement among trained teachers = 92% and among untrained teachers = 73.5%). This agreement among trained and untrained teachers is consistent with the opinions of Killen, (1996) and Yadav (1992).

However, the trained teachers believe that knowledge of subject matter is enough to enable a teacher to teach well [54.1% (a moderate level of agreement)], whereas the untrained teachers disagree with the statement [56% (a moderate level of disagreement)]. Trained teachers' beliefs are a result of their dissatisfaction with teacher education institutes. Over the past decade, teacher-training institutes have been criticized, as being ineffective in preparing teachers for their work. Therefore, many teachers believe that it is not compulsory for a teacher to have training. One can teach well even without training (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Trained teachers' responses are inconsistent with the opinion of Killen (1996). According to him, having content knowledge is simply not enough for someone to teach effectively unless he or she knows how to engage students in the process of learning and knows how to organize information so that others can learn it.

### **Teachers and teaching methods**

There are two interesting responses: (1) the untrained teachers believe that the lecture method makes the students active participants [48.5% (a low level of agreement) disagreement among untrained teachers = 39.4%] whereas the trained teachers disagree with the statement [48% (a low level of agreement) agreement

among trained teachers = 43%]. (2) The trained teachers are of the opinion that the discussion method creates a disciplinary problem in the class [61% (a high level of agreement)], whereas untrained teachers disagree with the statement [48.5% (a low level of disagreement)].

It was expected that trained teachers would be in favor of using discussion in the classroom and reject the lecture method, but interestingly untrained teachers supported the discussion method rather than the trained teachers. However, the trained teachers have rejected the lecture method. Teachers' support for the discussion method is consistent, whereas their support for the lecture method inconsistent with the opinions of Killen (1996) and Yadav (1992).

The untrained teachers supported the discussion method because all of them were from private schools. Private schools are usually better than government schools in terms of providing education in line with modern techniques. Therefore, private schools according to Staff Writer (2004 a), have become an alternative for those parents who are serious about educating their children despite their personal constraints.

### **Concluding Remarks**

As a result of this study it can be concluded that both trained and untrained teachers believe that student-centred methods (such as the problem-solving and the project methods) are more effective for developing higher order skills among students. However, the untrained teachers also support some teacher-centred methods of teaching such as lecture method. On the other hand, trained teachers show reluctance in dealing with classroom management problems that can occur when some student-centred teaching methods (such as discussion methods) are used. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers in Pakistan are not well equipped with the knowledge and skills required to teach well in the classes. Therefore they do not adopt a student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning. Hence, teacher perception of classroom teaching is a factor that inhibits middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.

### **Principal's leadership: An external factor**

The data gathered for this study supported the third hypothesis (Ho3) [calculated  $\chi^2 = 0.003$  whereas Tabulated  $\chi^2$  at  $p < 0.05 = 3.841$ ). There was found to be no significant difference between the opinions of the trained and untrained teachers



regarding the impact of the principal's leadership as an inhibiting factor towards the selection of a student-centred approach by the teachers.

### **Images of principals**

Both trained and untrained teachers agreed that principals do support teachers in planning the classroom activities that involve students. The agreement among trained and untrained teachers for this statement was 84% and 94.3% respectively. They are satisfied with the provision of teaching resources for them to implement student-centred methods of teaching (agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 77% and 85.3% respectively). It is quite obvious from the teachers' responses that both trained and untrained teachers hold a positive image of principals, such as facilitators of shared values, supportive of collaborative decision making and promoters of mutual respect (Brinkley, 1997). Hence they believe that the principals engage themselves in discussing classroom matters with other teachers (agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 89.4% and 73% respectively). They also believe that the principals empower teachers to make decisions about their own classroom teaching (agreement among trained teachers = 75% and among untrained teachers = 71.4%).

Both trained and untrained teachers disagree (the percentage of disagreement among trained and untrained teachers is 59.3% and 71.4% respectively) that the principals discourage teachers from adopting a student-centred approach. They also disagree that principals discourage teachers to talk about their classroom practices (the level of disagreement among trained and untrained teachers is 58.3% and 51.4% respectively).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the opinion of trained and untrained middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan regarding the impact of the principal's leadership on the selection of a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.

There can be a psychological effect on the responses of teachers, as the questionnaires were distributed and gathered through the principals. Nevertheless, the data suggests that the principals support teachers in adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process. Hence, it is not an inhibiting factor.

## **Teacher perception of student learning: An internal factor**

The data gathered for this study supported the fourth hypothesis (Ho4) [calculated  $\chi^2 = 0.012$  whereas Tabulated  $\chi^2$  at  $p < 0.05 = 3.841$ ). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinions of trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of teachers' perceptions of student learning, as an inhibiting factor towards the selection of a student-centred approach by the teachers in Pakistan towards the teaching and learning process.

## **Learning and cultural backgrounds**

The data suggests that both trained and untrained teachers are of the opinion that students from different cultural backgrounds learn differently (the percentage of agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 84% and 69% respectively). They also believe that teaching strategies that are preferred by the students, maximize students' learning (the level of agreement among trained and untrained teachers is high and the percentage is 77% and 89% respectively). Agreement among the teachers is consistent with the literature. For an Asian learner, rote learning is a valued method of learning. By contrast, for a learner from New Zealand or Australia, enquiry learning is more valuable (Haworth, 1998; Purdie, Hattie & Douglas, 1996).

This data gathered for this study clearly indicates that both trained and untrained teachers are in favor of student-centred learning, which encourages teachers to consider individual differences that persist among students due to the difference in their socio-cultural background (Haworth, 1998; Purdie, Hattie & Douglas, 1996; Woolfolk, 1997).

## **Learning as a transmission of knowledge from expert knower to an inexperienced learner**

There is also an indication that both trained and untrained teachers perceive learning as a transmission of knowledge from an expert knower to an inexperienced learner. The agreement among both trained and untrained teachers is high and the percentages are 92% and 83% respectively; both trained and untrained teachers disagree that students are responsible for their own learning. The disagreement among trained teachers is of a low level (disagreement = 45.3% and agreement = 35%) and among untrained teachers is high (disagreement = 63% and agreement = 17.1%). The two categories of trained and untrained teachers also believe that teachers should choose the teaching techniques which they themselves enjoy using. The level of

agreement among trained teachers is high (73%) whereas the level agreement among untrained teachers is moderate (59%).

Opinions of trained and untrained teachers indicated above are in contrast with the literature. The student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning suggests that the student should be in the centre of all those activities, which are designed to help students enhance their learning (Killen, 1996). Hence, teachers should select activities according to the students' rather than the teachers' enjoyment and preference.

### **Concluding Remarks**

It can therefore be inferred that apart from some positive views that both trained and untrained teacher have about student learning, they perceive that student learning is in the control of the teacher. In other words they hold a view of teacher-centred student learning (Killen, 1996; Yadav, 1992). It can therefore be inferred that teachers' perception of student learning is a factor that inhibits teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning.

### **Student assessment: An internal as well as an external factor**

The data gathered for this study supported the fifth hypothesis (Ho5) [calculated  $t = 0.1$  whereas Tabulated  $t$  at  $p < 0.05 = 3.841$ ). Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinions of trained and untrained teachers regarding the impact of student assessment as an inhibiting factor towards the selection of a student-centred approach by the teachers in Pakistan towards the teaching and learning process.

A pattern of similarity between trained and untrained teachers is quite obvious in the responses collected from trained and untrained teachers. Both the groups (i.e. trained and untrained) are of the view that assessments, which take place informally in the class are the best ways of assessing students' performance (the percentage of agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 70.1% and 59% respectively); they disagree that these types of assessments are a waste of teaching time (disagreement among trained and untrained teachers is 55% and 68.6% respectively); both trained and untrained teachers consider that the assessment is a joint venture between teachers and parents (agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 80.2% and 73.5% respectively).

It is quite obvious from the analysis given above that both trained and untrained teachers consider assessment as 'assessment for learning' (Earl, 2003). According to Earl, assessment for learning shifts the focus from summative to formative, from making judgments (at the end of a unit or a course) to creating formative descriptions (such as keeping records of reflective interview and keeping anecdotal records of students). Hence, it suggests the teachers gather a wide range of data concerning students' needs; along with their strengths and weaknesses, so that they can modify the learning work for their students and gather sufficient amount of data to make judgments about students' performances and achievements.

It is also appeared from the responses that both trained and untrained teachers believe that assessment encourages students to look critically at their own classroom performances (agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 87% and 77.1% respectively). This belief is consistent with the concept of 'assessment as learning' given by Earl (2003). In this type of assessment, students are actively engaged in monitoring and making judgment of their learning (Earl, 2003). Assessment for learning and assessment as learning can be considered as student-centred assessment, (Smith, Smith & Lisi, 2001) as they keep the student in the centre and encourage the assessment that does not take place only at the end of the learning process, but occurs at different occasions through out the learning process.

However, misconceptions about some student-centred assessment techniques (such as direct observation) are also evident among trained teachers. Trained teachers agree that assessments in the form of direct observation, reduces students' academic achievements (agreement = 41% and disagreement = 39.5%). Untrained teachers on the other hand, disagree with the statement (disagreement = 62%). However, both the groups agree that assessment pressurize teachers to complete their syllabi. The percentage of agreement among trained teachers is 48.2% whereas disagreement = 39%. Among untrained teachers agreement is 44.1% whereas disagreement = 41.2%.

Agreement among trained and untrained teachers clearly indicates that both the groups are dealing with pressures that force them to complete their syllabi. The pressure on teachers is increased when the school or system's policy or practices are to use summative assessment (in the form of formal tests) (Cole & Chan, 1987) or assessment of the learning (Earl, 2003). The purpose of this assessment is to certify learning, and to report to the parents the students' progress in school. It usually identifies the student's relative position compared to other students. This kind of assessment pressurizes teachers and encourages them to

exclude those topics from the syllabus that are not included in the test, and to over-emphasize those topics that are included in the test (Earl, 2003). Hence, both trained and untrained teachers are of the view that the assessments in the form of formal tests make a negligible contribution to student learning. The percentage of agreement among trained and untrained teachers is 53% and 45.5% respectively, whereas percentage of disagreement among trained and untrained teachers is 32.2% and 39.4% respectively. Teachers' agreement with the concept of assessment as formal tests is consistent with that of Popham and Trucker and Clark (cited in Behar-Horenstein & Seabert, 2002). According to these authors, assessment that is used to evaluate overall performance of students, and consequently to evaluate teacher performance, has not been proven to be an effective measure of student, teacher or school accountability.

It can be concluded that because teachers in Pakistan are pressurized by the system of formal assessment, they tend to complete the prescribed syllabus and overlook the assessment of the students' knowledge and skills. The teachers over-emphasize on some parts of the syllabi, therefore claim they do not get time to use other student-centred techniques of assessment. Therefore, student assessment is a factor that inhibits teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

### **Recommendations for Teachers in Pakistan**

- It is suggested that teachers ensure that they have acquired a mastery over the content knowledge as well pedagogical knowledge and skills. Only knowledgeable and skillful teachers are preferred in large as well as small classes.
- Students need to be actively participating in the classroom activities; therefore, teachers should avoid using teacher-centred methods such as lecture method that limit student participation.
- Teachers need to prioritize classroom activities on the basis of students' needs, preferences and learning rather than on their own individual interests. Teachers should seek enjoyment in the success of activities rather than in recreation created by activities.

- Teacher should use student-centred techniques of assessment as they focus on holistic development of the student rather than focusing on rote memorization.

## **Recommendations for the School Management in Pakistan**

- The school management needs to provide opportunities for their teachers to take part in various professional development workshops, seminars and in-service programmes. These programmes should particularly focus on helping teachers to realize the importance of using a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process, while at the same time developing skills among teachers to work collaboratively with each other in order to improve conditions for the use of a student-centred approach and to encourage parents and students to contribute towards the use of the said approach.
- Principals should provide opportunity for teachers to utilize each other's expertise in envisaging plans and procedures for a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process.
- Principals themselves should be well aware of the advancement in the field of teaching and learning process and have a skill to motivate the staff to use a student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning.

## **Recommendations for the Further Research**

Those who are interested in conducting further research in this area may consider the following suggestions.

- It is suggested that researchers use a random or stratified sampling technique while replicating the same study or conducting a similar study. This kind of sampling will improve validity and reliability of the research study.
- The instrument that was used to collect data for this research study was a questionnaire but it would be more effective if future researchers conducted observations after the questionnaire is filled by the subjects.

## Concluding Remarks

This research study focused on the determining of factors that can inhibit teachers from adopting a student-centred approach towards the process of teaching and learning.

The aim was to provide a research base to the prevailing assumptions among educators (teachers, school administrators and policy makers) about the factors that affect the teaching and learning process, particularly in the Pakistani context.

It was found that out of five internal and external factors, two internal (teacher perception of classroom teaching and teacher perception of student learning), one external (class size) and one internal as well as one external factor (student assessment), are the factors which inhibit middle and secondary school teachers in Pakistan from adopting a student-centred approach towards the teaching and learning process. If not handled properly, these factors will cause education in Pakistan to suffer in both counts of quantity and quality.

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# Globalisation and Education Quality in Low Income Countries: Towards a Research Agenda

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## Abstract

*The aim of the paper is to set out a research agenda for implementing quality education in low-income countries. The paper will report on initial findings from the inception phase of a new research programme consortium (RPC), funded by DFID. The aims of the RPC are to generate new knowledge to assist governments in low-income countries, DFID and the international development community to implement initiatives that will improve the quality of education in ways that will benefit the poorest people in the world. It aims to promote gender equity as well as develop the capacity of partner institutions in Africa to become regional centres of excellence in one or more areas of education quality.*

*The paper commences with a resume of recent research into the links between education quality, poverty reduction and gender equity in low-income countries. It then reports on the outcomes of a series of national consultative workshops with key policy stakeholders in four African countries. The purpose was to determine the underlying view of education quality, key indicators of quality, and research priorities for improving education quality, particularly for the most disadvantaged learners in overcrowded, remote and otherwise difficult delivery contexts. It will use the findings from these workshops as a basis for a critical evaluation of the broader literature and for setting out a new research agenda.*

*It will be argued that an emerging agenda must take account of a changing global context and regional context as well as ongoing processes of decentralisation which place increasing demands on organisations at a local level to lead quality improvement initiatives and to encourage community participation. The outputs of research must not only address the need to create sustainable livelihoods but also the creation of a skills base that can support global integration. Research needs to take account of differing views of quality, including those that emphasise the achievement of higher learning outcomes within a more efficient use of resources and those that adopt a more capability and rights based approach. We argue that an appreciation of education quality means paying attention to learner characteristics, including socio-economic and cultural background, gender, ethnicity, urban or rural location.*

*Further, research must take account of enabling inputs in the areas of the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies and assessment, the role of ICTs, medium of instruction, the use of the built environment and resources to support quality education and leadership, management and community involvement. We are interested in the relationship between these and a range of outputs relating to cognitive and affective goals, including achievement in core subject areas, awareness of risks associated with HIV/AIDS and attitudes to work and community. The paper will conclude with a consideration of implementation issues and of research evidence relating to strategies to overcome these.*

## **Introduction**

The aim of the paper is to set out a research agenda for implementing quality education in low income countries. The paper will report on initial findings from the inception phase of a new research programme consortium (RPC) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID) on *Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries* (EQual). The paper commences with a brief description of the RPC and of the inception phase activities. The paper will then set out our emerging framework for understanding education quality in low income countries. Attention will then turn to an account of the African context which forms a central (although not exclusive) focus for the work of the RPC and in particular, the implications of globalisation and of the MDGs for education quality issues on the continent. This will provide a basis for discussion of our research priorities as defined in the original proposal and developed during through a series of focused literature reviews and consultative workshops during the inception phase.

## **Background to the RPC**

A consortium of six university departments, led by the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, will be conducting a five-year research programme entitled *Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries* (EQual) with £2.5 million of funding from DfID. This programme with its focus on education quality is one of three RPCs in the area of education, the other two being in the areas of education access and outcomes. Other consortium members in the EQual RPC are:

- Department of Education, University of Bath, UK
- Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast, Ghana

- Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), Rwanda
- Education Policy Unit (EPU), University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

As the list of consortium institutions suggest, the EQual RPC will have a central but not exclusive focus on Africa. However, the knowledge generated is intended to be of global relevance and we will collaborate with other, non-African partners from South Asia and Latin America on many of our research projects. Our additional research partners are:

- Aga Khan University, Pakistan
- PROEIB-andes, Bolivia
- Univesidad de la Frontera, Chile

## **RPC Purpose**

The purpose of the RPC is to generate new knowledge to assist governments in low income countries, DfID and the international development community to implement initiatives that will improve the quality of education in ways that will benefit the poorest people in the world and that will promote gender equity. Special attention will be given to:

- remote, overcrowded and otherwise difficult delivery contexts; and
- to meeting the educational needs of the most disadvantaged groups.

The consortium will also aim to create a sustainable resource through:

- supporting African partner institutions to become regional centres of excellence in one or more areas of education quality; and
- through strengthening capacity at government level and within organisations to successfully implement change.

## **RPC Research Objectives**

The objectives of the RPC are:

- To develop an understanding of education quality and to develop education quality indicators that are relevant to the needs of low income countries and especially to those of disadvantaged learners in difficult delivery contexts.
- To identify examples of effective practice in implementing education quality through an evaluation of existing initiatives in the areas of curriculum change, teaching, learning and assessment, ICTs in education, languages and literacy and leadership and management.
- To develop, pilot and evaluate new, practical initiatives in the area of education quality and to evaluate their impact on different groups of learners.
- To determine effective practice in mainstreaming education quality policies and initiatives.

## **Inception Phase Activities**

The RPC will have an inception phase running from September 2005-March 2006. The major outcome of the inception phase will be the development of detailed research proposals in each of the areas identified in the proposal. However, these will in turn be based on the development of a collective understanding of the meaning of education quality and of research priorities, particularly relating to the needs of disadvantaged groups and to the realities of difficult delivery contexts. The main activities during the inception phase will be a series of focused literature reviews and national consultative workshops. The overall aim of the literature reviews is to determine in more detail global priorities for raising education quality and indicators used to measure quality; to consider the relevance of these for RPC objectives; and, effective practice for mainstreaming improvements. The workshops will seek to consult with government policy makers and other key stakeholders in each of the partner countries on the major priorities affecting education quality in general and in relation to the areas covered by the large-scale projects. The findings from these activities will in turn feed into a programme design workshop in Johannesburg to which our international partners will also be invited.

## **Education Quality**

In this section we present our emerging framework for understanding education quality that is derived from our review of the international literature. This

literature review was undertaken with the aim of identifying interpretations of educational quality in the academic and development literature from a wide range of sources. The particular emphasis in our search for relevant material was on notions of quality in the context of low income countries and disadvantaged groups within those countries.

It was quickly realised that the volume of literature addressing the concept of quality in education, either as its prime focus or as a component of a wider focus, is vast. Within the time and resources available it would be impossible to produce a comprehensive or exhaustive review at this stage. Instead, it became clear that a more realistic initial target would be to identify dominant definitions and uses of the concept of educational quality that appear in this literature and to place these within some analytical frameworks. These might usefully frame our discussions and the ongoing development of our understanding of the concept to inform our research over the next five years. Here we present our main 'findings' in the form of our emerging conceptual framework. It must be emphasised that the broader literature review that this summary draws on (Barrett et al, 2006), remains 'work in progress' that will take on board more of the literature and thus develop over a period of time, both feeding into our research programme and being informed by it.

The literature contains recurrent references to various components of educational quality that can be taken to form a useful analytical framework for the concept. These components (which receive different degrees of emphasis from different authors) are identified as:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Equality
- Relevance
- Sustainability

These components are often in tension with each other so that actions to improve one may have negative effects on another. In particular, attempts to increase the equity of a system may be in tension with concerns over efficiency. Some analyses of quality treat equality as a distinct issue and suggest that there are inherent contradictions in attempts to address both quality and equality (Welch, 2000). It is our contention that these tensions are inevitable and

unavoidable but that a research framework must first understand them, if they are to be successfully addressed. We also argue in this section that although aspects of education quality and some of the underlying tensions are ‘universal’ in nature, understanding quality and how the tensions are played out in relation to the different research foci is very much dependant on a careful analysis of context.

**Effectiveness** refers to the degree to which the objectives of an education system are being achieved and it is conventional to distinguish between internal and external effectiveness (Hawes and Stephens 1990; Tibi 1985). External effectiveness refers to the degree to which the education system meets the needs of individuals and society as a whole. In this sense it is closely linked to the above discussion of the role of education in development. Educational economists will naturally tend to emphasise the links between education and individual income or national economic development, perhaps most clearly discussed by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985). A broader consideration of effectiveness will include considerations of personal fulfilment at the level of the individual and issues such as social cohesion, participation and human rights with respect to nation states (Chitty 2002; Delamonica et al 2004).

The term internal effectiveness is most properly applied to the functioning of institutions and appears primarily in the vast literature on school (or sometimes other institutional) effectiveness. This literature is so vast that it must be left to a separate review.

Whereas effectiveness is concerned with the outputs of education, **efficiency** brings in considerations of the inputs required to meet those outputs. These inputs may be measured in monetary or non-monetary terms but whichever is used, efficiency refers to the ratio of outputs to inputs. That is, efficiency measures the extent to which we make best use of inputs to achieve our educational goals. The literature commonly refers to different aspects of efficiency and, confusingly, some of these are used interchangeably with ‘effectiveness’ (see Lockheed and Hanusheck, 1988).

The external efficiency of a system refers simply to the ration of monetary outputs to monetary inputs and appears in the well known calculations of personal and social rates of return to education (e.g. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985; World Bank 1990). Technical efficiency, on the other hand, refers to the organisation of available resources in such a way that maximum feasible output is produced (Windham 1988) and operates with non-monetary measures such as number of teachers, examination results, classroom facilities, etc. To add further confusion, the term internal efficiency of a system looks at

the ratio of non-monetary outputs to monetary inputs. Lockheed and Hanushek (1988) attempt to distinguish the various terminologies in the table below.

Table 3: Internal and external effectiveness and efficiency of education systems

How are inputs measured?	How are outputs measured?	
	Non-monetary (#) terms (e.g. learning)	Monetary (\$) terms (e.g. earnings)
Non-monetary (#) terms (e.g. number of textbooks, classroom organisation)	Internal effectiveness (technical efficiency: #/#)	External effectiveness (\$/#)
Monetary (\$) terms (e.g. cost of textbooks, teachers' salaries)	Internal efficiency (effectiveness-cost: #/\$)	External efficiency (benefit-cost: \$/\$)

An unusual variation on these considerations of outputs to inputs, which brings in the notion of 'quality' more explicitly, appears in Heyneman and White (1986). This begins by asking the question: How much money is available (or is actually being spent) per primary school pupil? It then goes on to suggest 'how much quality' can be bought for such an input. That is, it takes the definition of efficiency in terms of outputs per unit of input but assumes that the available inputs are pre-determined, or limited by other considerations, and states the limit of what can be achieved for any given input. Or, putting it more bluntly, it adopts the position that 'the most you can get is what you pay for'.

**Equality** as a component of educational quality commonly arises from a position that takes 'quality education' as a human right (see, Sayed 1997, UNESCO 2000). This in turn builds on the relationship of education to development models based on human development and poverty reduction, social cohesion, social diversity, peace, and so on. (Michaelowa 2001; Chapman et al 1996). A key element in the discussion of equality in education is the identification of groups that are disadvantaged in terms of access and achievement. Although certain groups can be identified as being commonly disadvantaged across a range of countries (e.g. girls, the poorest, the disabled), it is important to analyse each context and understand both the sources of disadvantage and their complex interaction (e.g. between gender, ethnicity and social class) (UNESCO 2000; Watkins 2000). A tension between concerns over efficiency and equality appear in the literature (Welch 2000), often in relation to the high costs of bringing education to disadvantaged groups such as those in remote areas.



Consideration of the **relevance** of education inevitably brings us back to the earlier discussions of the relationship between education and development and the central question of the purposes of education. A synthesis of various sources in the literature brings us to a brief categorisation of the educational quality concerns of different categories of nation states, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 4: Priorities in educational quality by level of national development

<b>State</b>	<b>Emphasis within the quality debate</b>
Post-conflict; newly founded states	Subsistence, security, trust – school system, curriculum
Low income countries	Access, livelihoods (coping; lasting; flexibility) – primary schools
Middle income countries	Continuation – secondary schools, disadvantaged groups
OECD countries	Competencies, responsibility, lifelong learning, sustainability

Synthesised from: McDowell (2002); Michaelowa (2001); Akkari (2005); Romano (2002); Kagia (2005)

The fifth element in our framework for educational quality, **sustainability**, is probably the least addressed in the literature, both in terms of its meaning and how it is to be achieved. Sustainability essentially implies that all of our considerations in relation to the other elements must bring in thoughts not just of the present but of the future. The UN MDGs (UN, 2000) emphasise the need for sustainability in all development options, but even what this might look like in broad terms remains an area of debate. Its translation into educational systems and practice remains even more in its infancy (UN 2003). Some possibilities are, however, outlined by Lawrence and Tate (1997), building on capability and livelihood approaches to development and drawing on Chambers (1993, 1997). From these perspectives, quality education emerges in the context of ‘the obligation to establish and sustain the conditions for each and every individual, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, race, or regional location, to achieve valued outcomes’. A suggested aim to quality education is given as building ‘human capacity not only for employability, but for broader lifelong learning as well as for adaptive and ‘coping’ livelihood strategies in a fast moving and complicated world’.

# The African Context of Education Quality: Globalisation and the Fight Against Poverty

In this section we identify some of the key challenges facing education in Africa in the global era. This will provide a basis for contextualising the context for discussing research priorities in subsequent sections. The recent report of the Commission for Africa (CFA, 2005) has provided an account of the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa in the global era. This is summarised below:

## Poverty and hunger

1. Poverty and hunger are deepening in sub-Saharan Africa with the number of poor people expected to rise from 315 million in 1999 to 404 million by 2015.
2. Some 34% of the population are malnourished – almost double the figure in the rest of the low-income world and hunger kills more people than all of the continent's infectious diseases put together.
3. Average life expectancy in Africa is only 46 years compared to 63 years in South Asia and 69 in South East Asia.
4. Whereas thirty years ago the average income in Africa was twice that of both East and South Asia the situation is reverse now and the average African income lags behind that of people in all other regions of the world.
5. Despite an overall gloomy picture, there is considerable diversity between African countries. 24 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had 5% or more economic growth in 2003 and falls in poverty are directly associated with growth.

## The causes

### Political causes

1. **Poor governance.** Africa's dramatic economic decline has coincided during the 1970s and 1980s with undemocratic governments, widespread corruption and ineffectual states. Although Africa still lags behind the rest of the world, governance has improved significantly in recent years with more than 2/3 of the countries in the region having multi-party elections and improvements too in indicators of economic governance.

2. **Civil conflict.** War and insecurity has been a major factor behind poverty on the continent with conflict causing as many deaths each year as epidemic diseases and more deaths or displacement than famine or floods. Between 1998 and 2002 four million people died in civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone. There are 13 million internally displaced people in Africa and 3.5 million refugees.

### **Structural causes**

1. **A weak investment climate.** Investors are reluctant to invest where governance is weak, corruption is prevalent and infrastructure is poor.
2. **Dependence on primary commodities.** Africa has been vulnerable to declining and volatile commodity prices, especially given its dependence on a narrow range of products. In the past three decades, export prices for sub-Saharan Africa were twice as volatile as those of exports from East Asia, and nearly four times more volatile than the exports of western industrialised countries.
3. **Transport costs and other colonial legacies.** The transport infrastructure in Africa continues to reflect the colonial imperative of extracting Africa's natural resources rather than on linking the continent. Illogical political borders including land-locked countries and poor administrations are other legacies of the colonial period in Africa.
4. **Late entry into manufacturing.** Africa has fallen behind in the diversification of exports and will find it increasingly difficult to break through into manufacturing markets. Countries in Asia and Latin America are well ahead of Africa in having developed the industrial infrastructure, skills, and learning culture needed for rapid advances.

### **Environmental and technological causes**

1. **Low agricultural productivity.** The agricultural sector suffers from high transport costs and low levels of irrigation. There is a lack of supportive research, innovation and agricultural extension initiatives; a poor post-harvest infrastructure; a need for better developed local markets and institutions; and improved security of land tenure. African farmers often cannot access closed agricultural markets in high income countries and regions.

2. **Climate change.** Africa's reliance on agriculture and low levels of irrigation makes it extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of its highly variable climate and this vulnerability is exacerbated by climate change. Africa has also experienced over the years growing environmental degradation.

## **Human Causes**

1. **The impact of poor health and education.** During the economic crisis and structural adjustment years of the 1970s and 1980s, investment in health and education suffered in much of Africa. The costs of debt servicing brought cuts to budgets in clinics and schools. The HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as diseases such as TB, malaria, gastrointestinal diseases and the other diseases of poverty put a huge strain on health services. Enrolment in primary schools in Africa increased by 38% between 1990 and 2000 with impressive gains in literacy although huge challenges remain. 47 million children are out of school and only one in three children who start primary school finish it. The secondary and tertiary systems have atrophied.
2. **The pressure of population growth and urbanisation.** Between 1980 and 2002, sub-Saharan Africa's population grew from 2383 to 689 million people – an increase of 80%. This population is moving into towns at a very rapid rate placing a huge strain on infrastructural investment for housing, water, supply and sanitation.

## **Africa's relationship with the developed world**

1. **Foreign direct investment.** Flows to investment in Africa by foreign investors are average for all low-income countries if measured as a percentage of Africa's income (2-3%) but are low in absolute terms. It is strongly focused on high value resource based industries like oil and diamonds.
2. **Capital flight.** Large sums of money depart Africa in the form of capital flight estimated at \$15 billion a year. About 40% of the stock of African savings is held outside the continent.
3. **Remittances.** As a percentage of GDP, Africa's share of remittances is higher than that of either the East Asia or Pacific region or the Europe or Central Asia region. However, in cash terms, Africa receives less in remittances than does any other low-income region.

4. **Debt service.** Over the last few years, nearly half of all aid money to Africa has returned to the developed world in debt repayments; that is to say that for every dollar received in aid, nearly 50 cents has gone straight back to the developed world in debt payments.
5. **Aid.** Measured as a share of donor countries' incomes, aid has halved since the 1960s. However, Africa now receives around 5% of its income from aid, which is a much bigger proportion than other low-income regions get.
6. **Trade.** Africa has seen its share of world trade fall from 6% in 1980 to less than 2% in 2002. Africa has suffered because developed countries restrict Africa's ability to sell its products in their countries as well as other 'supply side' barriers.

Education is seen by the CFA, by other initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and within the broader literature as having a key role to play in assisting low income countries to face up to the challenges of globalization. A recent state of the art literature review on globalization and education in low income countries (Robertson et al, 2006) has identified the following twelve themes and tensions facing African education systems in the global era:

1. **New understanding of the role of education in development.** The new role of education is defined in relation to poverty alleviation, improved health and security of populations and supporting good governance as well as promoting economic growth.
2. **The MDGs and beyond: new directions in the debate about access.** Current debates on access focus on strategies to meet the MDGS but also on the increasing significance of secondary, vocational and tertiary and non-formal education in the global era.
3. **The ever-increasing importance of education quality.** Improving education quality is critical for poverty reduction and for promoting global competitiveness and growth.
4. **The new meaning of 'relevance'.** The curriculum must address new risks to health and security, support sustainable livelihoods and provide the skills needed for development in the global era.
5. **Developing the gender debate and recognising other forms of social exclusion in the global era.** Globalisation is impacting on the gender

debate in education and drawing attention to the social exclusion of groups such as orphans and vulnerable children and ethnic minorities.

6. **Addressing the digital divide and creating knowledge economies.** Education has a key role in reversing the growing digital divide and creating knowledge based economies.
7. **Globalisation and an African cultural renaissance.** Education has a role to play in reasserting African cultural values on the global stage.
8. **The burning language question.** Globalisation highlights old tensions in the debate about medium of instruction.
9. **New approaches to education policy making.** Globalisation demands an increased capacity for national leadership and policy making, coherence across sectors and stakeholder participation in key areas.
10. **Emerging approaches to education funding.** Meeting the demands of globalisation requires additional investment in education, greater accountability in the use of funds, coherence and predictability in donor funding to support national priorities.
11. **Forging new partnerships to make things happen.** The private sector and civil society organisations all have an increased role to play in the provision of education and training within well-regulated systems.
12. **Growing importance of the regional dimension.** Globalisation demands improved capacity at regional level to support learning, research and innovation, policy coherence and quality assurance.

It can be seen that many of these themes and tensions relate directly or indirectly to issues of education quality not only at basic but at higher levels of the system as well. They call for rethinking existing frameworks for understanding education quality and for a reappraisal of existing priorities. Issues relating to the effective and efficient use of human and physical resources, to curriculum change, pedagogy and relevance, to language of instruction, citizenship and human rights, to addressing new forms of educational disadvantage and to the use of ICTs in African schools, all take on a new urgency in the global era. All however, remain relatively under-researched, particularly for the most disadvantaged groups and in the most remote, overcrowded and otherwise difficult delivery contexts.

## **Towards a Research Agenda**

We conclude our paper by elaborating on the five major research areas that were identified in the proposal and developed during the inception phase. Discussion of these areas is also very much work in progress and will lead the development of worked-out research proposals for the next five years. The RPC will conduct five large-scale projects and several smaller-scale projects. These were originally outlined in the proposal on the basis of an initial review of the literature and a discussion of national priorities identified by consortium partners during a proposal development workshop. These original ideas have subsequently been developed and refined during the inception phase.

### **School effectiveness and education quality in low income countries**

Lead institution: University of Bristol

Purpose: To understand the in-school and out-of-school quality factors that impact on improved learner performance and school effectiveness in low income countries.

Method: Secondary analysis of existing data sets (collected by SACMEQ (Southern and East African Consortium of Monitoring Educational Quality)) using multilevel modelling techniques; pilot cross national study of school effectiveness using value added measures of learner progress.

Sample: SACMEQ data covers 2,300 schools in 14 countries; pilot value-added study will use thirty schools in three countries (South Africa, Tanzania, China) gathering assessment data for two cohorts of learners over a three year period.

### **Implementing curriculum change to fight poverty and promote gender equity**

Lead institution: Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand

Purpose: To identify effective practice in the teaching of science, mathematics and life skills to reduce poverty and promote gender equity including raising levels of scientific literacy within communities to fight HIV/AIDS, raise awareness of nutrition and fertility issues and support environmental sustainability; to understand the barriers to achievement for disadvantaged groups in core subjects and strategies to overcome these; develop curricula to

promote cultural diversity and social cohesion and to support conflict resolution; to establish effective practice for quality assurance; and, to develop sample materials and detailed guidelines for mainstreaming initiatives.

## **The use of ICTs to support basic education in disadvantaged schools and communities**

Lead institution: Kigali Institute of Education

Purpose: To identify existing effective practice in the use of ICTs to support basic education in schools and communities including the use of ICTs to support teacher and educator training; to design, implement, mainstream and evaluate new initiatives; to identify effective practice for quality assurance; and, to develop sample programmes and support materials and guidelines for mainstreaming initiatives.

## **Language and literacy development**

Lead institution: University of Dar es Salaam

Purpose: To identify effective practice in the teaching of basic literacy in schools and in the community in the first language; effective practice for teaching through the medium of L1, L2 & L3; effective forms of embedding bilingual education; to develop and pilot initiatives including new learning materials, teaching strategies and related school based professional development; to develop sample materials and guidelines to support mainstreaming of initiatives and to develop policy options.

## **Leadership and management of change for quality improvement**

Lead institution: University of Cape Coast

Purpose: To identify effective practice in leading and managing change and encouraging community participation to improve education quality; mobilising resources to support quality improvements at the local level; management of staff (absenteeism, motivation); pilot use of evidence from school effectiveness research to support evidence based practice in school improvement; to develop leadership training materials and guidelines to support mainstreaming of initiatives.



## **Small projects**

Consortium members and research partners will develop proposals for smaller-scale projects running for between 12-18 months linked to priorities identified during the inception phase but not covered by the larger projects. Special consideration will be given to proposals that will add value to the larger scale projects. Collaborations between partners within the RPC and institutions which have no direct connection with the RPC will be welcomed as will proposals that seek parallel or co-funding from other sources. An indicative list of areas in which proposals for smaller-scale projects will be invited is:

- The contribution of the built environment to quality improvement;
- Increasing the relevance of the secondary school curriculum to labour market needs;
- Parental attitudes, household structure and its impact on achievement;
- Developing capacity for science and technology research to fight poverty including strategies to reverse the brain drain and increasing access of girls and women;
- The use of technologies to support quality distance education including the fight against HIV/AIDS;
- Raising the quality of education for refugees, orphans and vulnerable children;
- The quality of Early Childcare and Development;
- Improving the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET);
- Raising the quality of teaching and learning of management and commerce.

## **Methodological Approach**

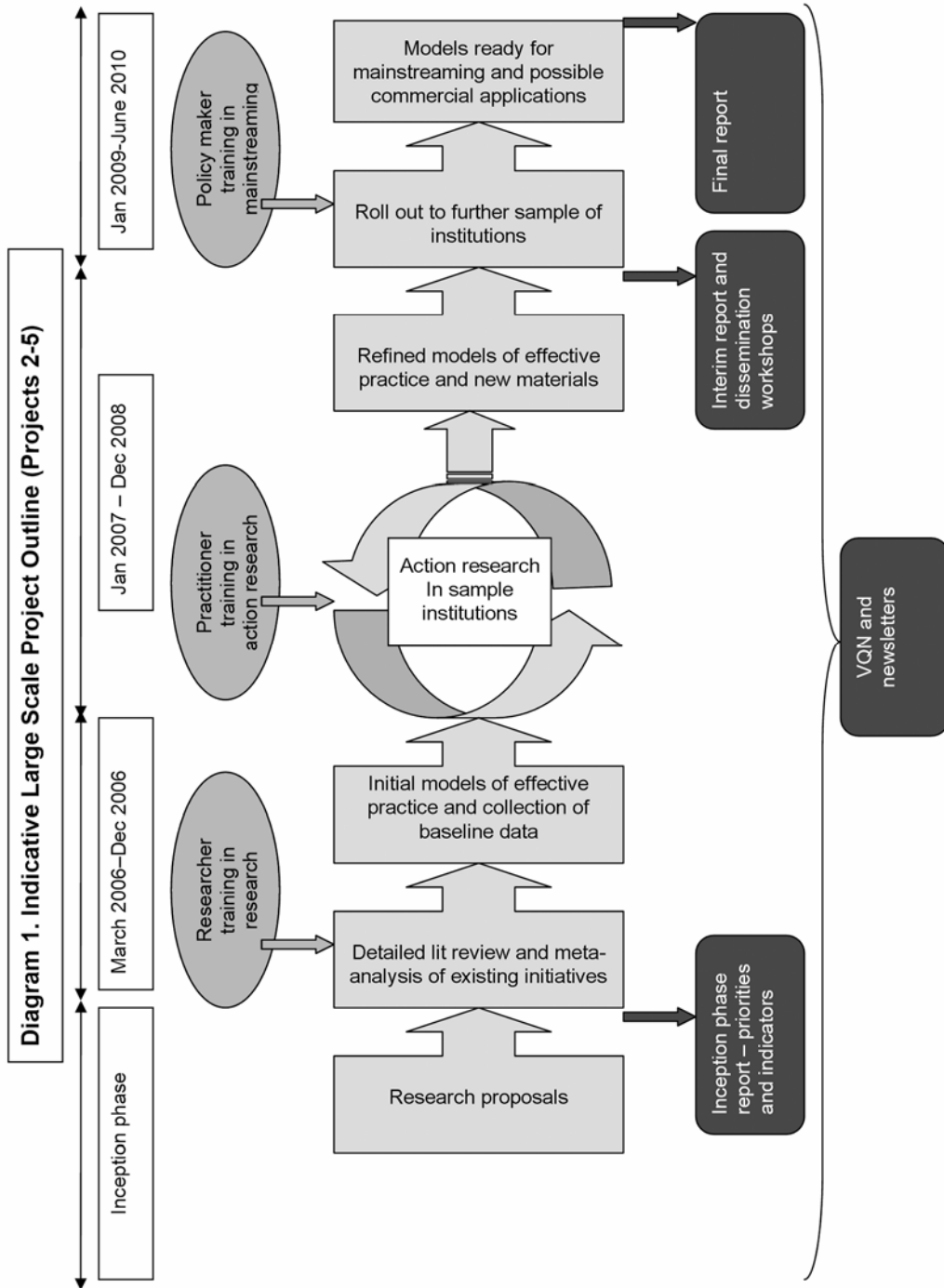
Quantitative and qualitative approaches will be used to complement each other. For example, state of the art multilevel analysis on how school effects impact on different groups of learners with the school effectiveness study (study 1), will feed into qualitative analysis of processes and contexts. Within large-scale projects 2-5, action research techniques will be used to develop locally relevant initiatives at the same time as strengthening the capacity of practitioners with

whom the RPC works. An indicative approach and timescale for conducting the largely qualitative studies (2-5) is given the diagram on the opposite page. The diagram seeks to show how capacity strengthening activities (indicated in the diagram in the oval shapes) will feed into the large-scale projects. It also shows how each project will attempt to include a coherent communications strategy, elements of which are indicated in the blue rectangular boxes.

## **Implementation**

The research programme will be designed to have maximum practical value. A key stumbling block identified in the literature, however, has been the implementation gap. The RPC will seek to address this gap by:

- Working with policy-makers to identify issues to which practical solutions can be sought through research;
- Involving practitioners in action research to identify and to develop practical interventions;
- Findings will be presented in a way that is accessible to policy-makers and practitioners and supports the development of evidence-based practice;
- Providing sample materials, guidance and training to assist government officials to implement and mainstream initiatives;
- Seeking commercial applications, e.g. approaching publishers with materials developed.



# **Capacity strengthening**

## **Capacity strengthening of consortium institutions**

Capacity strengthening is a key part of the RPC rationale and included in its purpose. Capacity strengthening is conceived as not just addressing weaknesses but putting in place sustainable structures, devising plans for achieving institutional aspirations and building inter-institutional links that will outlast the life of the RPC.

With respect to consortium member institutions, the RPC will aim to support, most especially, our African partners, to achieve their long-term institutional goals and vision. We will develop a skills base in research methods, administrative support for research and project management and leaderships. Where there is a gender imbalance, there will be a focus on developing the skills of women, particularly to lead and manage project activities.

The RPC will aim to make UK-based researchers aware of the contexts in which issues of education quality in low-income countries are embedded. Where possible, experienced researchers will be paired with inexperienced researchers within South-South as well as North-South collaborations.

Findings from the research will be fed into the design of Higher Education courses and teacher education and development programmes.

### **Examples of specific capacity strengthening activities**

1. An audit of capacity strengthening needs and opportunities of each of the consortium institutions will be carried out in October – November 2005.
2. A workshop for administrators will be conducted in November 2005 to train administrators employed by the RPC in Africa in the financial management of research projects.
3. A project management workshop for leaders of the large-scale projects will be carried out in January 2006.
4. Bespoke training in quantitative and qualitative methods will be provided as needed by researchers working for three or more months in the year on any of the large-scale projects.

5. 10 PhD studentships linked to the large-scale projects will be funded by the RPC.

## **Capacity strengthening of policy-makers and practitioners**

The capacity strengthening rationale extends to educational stakeholders with whom the RPC works. This includes policy-makers, with whom will be in dialogue from the inception phase onwards, and practitioners involved in the research projects. With respect to policy-makers, we will conduct dissemination workshops focused on mainstreaming and implementing change. Training will also be provided, in collaboration with UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) for key government technical personnel in education management systems and quantitative methods for evaluating education quality. As far as possible, action research techniques will be used that provide institution-based professional development for participants and nurture the local roots of African innovations. The fifth large-scale research project is dedicated to leadership and management of change and will produce training materials as an output.

## **Communication**

The DfID sees communication as key to the usefulness of any research and requires that not less than 10% of the grant be spent on this. In the inception phase, between October and December 2005, the RPC will develop a Communication Strategy, which will be reviewed as the RPC progresses. Key to the communication strategy will be the development of a Virtual Quality Network (VQN – see diagram 1 above), to be used for external communication (dissemination) with potential users outside of the consortium and internal communication within the consortium.

A range of avenues for external communication have been identified. Key policy-makers, including staff from ministries of education, donor agency staff and representatives of civil organisations, will be invited to consultative and dissemination workshops. The first consultative workshop for each country represented in the consortium will be held in November 2005. We will maintain contact with the local and national media through inviting media to the RPC launch in each country and issuing regular briefings as findings emerge. As findings emerge, newsletters will be used to reach practitioners and to keep action researchers in contact with the wider community of participants in RPC activities, in other countries and other projects. The international education development community will be reached through existing networks and

structures, through regular communication with UNESCO, DfID and regional structures. Articles will be targeted at popular websites such as id21 and UNESCO's website. In addition, we will establish our own website for publishing emerging findings and advertising our findings. Findings will feed into teaching within consortium and partner institutions and researchers will be encouraged to produce traditional academic outputs, i.e. articles in international and regional refereed journals, conference papers etc. At least one book will be written reporting findings from the programme as a whole, which is targeted at the general public, along the lines of the influential Public Report into Basic Education in India (PROBE, 1999). We will be in communication with private publishers to explore the commercial potential of materials generated through the research projects.

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# Improving Multi-grade Teaching: Action Research with Teachers in Multi-grade Settings in Rural Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

*The term 'multi-grade' generally refers to situations where a single teacher has to take responsibility for teaching pupils across more than one curriculum grade within a timetabled period. Like in most countries in the world monograde teaching is the accepted practice for formal school education in Sri Lanka. Multi-grade teaching has not gained recognition as an option for instruction in Sri Lanka although the necessity is felt by most rural schools in the country. This paper presents an action research on multi-grade teaching in Sri Lanka conducted during 2000-2002. The study focuses on prevalence, problems and effective strategies for multi-grade teaching. Through an intervention, planned and implemented collaboratively with teachers, the study contributes to the improvement of multi-grade teaching and status of primary education in Sri Lanka as there is the need for finding suitable alternatives in order to yield the fullest benefit of extension of educational opportunities, and achieve the targets of 'Education for All'. Multi-grade teaching is as an under researched area in Sri Lanka.*

*Multi-grade teaching was found to be a necessity in a range of school contexts and their quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. During the intervention the innovative lesson planning strategy accompanied by a reorganisation of mathematics curriculum was adopted by multi-grade teachers over a period of seven months. In-service support was provided through workshops and school visits. The impact of the intervention was positive.*

*The study recommends policy adjustments for reorganisation of the national primary curricula to facilitate multi-grade lesson planning, capacity building of teacher educators on multi-grade teaching, incorporation of multi-grade teaching in teacher education curricula accompanied by the use of collaborative frameworks in teacher capacity building. The recommendations for research include follow-up studies on the intervention, studies on prevalence of multi-grade teaching, and small-scale action research to evolve successful multi-grade classroom practices.*

*In most of the world's education systems, formal education is imparted in a monograde teaching environment, where age and grade are the decisive factors for forming a structure for formal schooling. In spite of these attempts, multi-grade*

*classrooms are found in many countries in the world (Little, 1995). Similarly in Sri Lanka the schools are organized for monograde instruction, where each grade is expected to be instructed by a single teacher. Although prevalence of multi-grade teaching has been reported (Baker, 1988; Ekanayake, 1982; Abhayadeva, 1989; Sibli, 1999) it has not been considered as an option for providing education within the primary education context in Sri Lanka.*

*The purpose of the study was to raise awareness regarding improving multi-grade teaching in policy makers, curriculum developers and teacher educators in Sri Lanka. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to investigate the status of multi-grade teaching and then to make a suitable intervention to improve the quality of multi-grade teaching. Hence, the study needed to be designed with an action-orientation.*

## **Research questions of the study**

Five research questions were formulated to guide the study.

Firstly, to position the study appropriately in multi-grade contexts, and to understand the characteristics and conditions under which multi-grade teaching occurs; the first research question is hence formulated, “What are the contextual characteristics of multi-grade teaching schools in rural Sri Lanka?”

Secondly, in order to understand how teachers handle multi-grade classes, the second research question is formed “What are the current practices of multi-grade teaching and the challenges faced by multi-grade teachers in rural Sri Lanka?”

Arising from research questions 1 and 2, the third research question is “What innovations can be planned to improve multi-grade teaching?”

Attempts to establish interventions to improve multi-grade teaching, give rise to the fourth research question, “What is the nature of the intervention that could be made in collaboration with teachers to improve multi-grade teaching?”

Following on from issues of intervention, the fifth question arises: “What is the impact of the intervention?”

## **The Design of the Study**

The multi-phased design was developed basing on the design of Elliott's model (1991). The final design comprised three main Phases with two main Steps within each Phase. It is as follows:

### **Phase 1: Fact-Finding about Multi-Grade Contexts and Teaching**

Step 1: obtaining an understanding about the characteristics of multi-grade teaching school contexts and multi-grade teachers

Step 2: understanding multi-grade teaching practices and the challenges involved

### **Phase 2: Intervention on Multi-Grade Teaching.**

Step 1: visualisation and developing an innovation for multi-grade practice

Step 2: implementing the intervention in collaboration with teachers

### **Phase 3: Assessment of the Intervention.**

Step 1: assessing the impact on the students

Step 2: exploring teacher satisfaction

## **Phase 1: Fact Finding**

### **Step 1 of Phase 1**

Step 1 of Phase 1 comprised of a three month long 'condensed fieldwork' to survey the contextual characteristics of multi-grade teaching schools. The Dehiowita education zone was selected as it had a high prevalence of schools with four or less teachers among the zones of the Sabaragamuwa province.

The sample comprised 38 schools having permanent multi-grade classes. The proportion of 'partially' multi-grade schools was larger (60.5%) than the proportion of 'fully' multi-grade schools (39.5%).

The field visits revealed that access to multi-grade schools was difficult because of the distance and/or difficult terrain and/or poor/irregular public transportation facilities.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of sample schools by the number of primary students.

Table 1: Students in the primary grade span.

<b>Students number of primary grade span</b>	<b>No. of schools</b>	<b>%</b>
< 25	7	18.4
25-44	12	31.6
45-74	8	21.0
75-114	5	13.2
115-164	5	13.2
165-199	1	2.6
	38	100.0

Table 2 shows that the sizes of the schools with multi-grade teaching needs, range from less than 25 primary students to 199.

Table 2: Student numbers of sample schools.

<b>Number of students in the school</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 50	19	50.0
50-100	7	18.5
101-200	9	23.7
201-300	1	2.6
301-350	2	5.2
Total	38	100.0

Of the 38 sample schools, 17 had post primary classes as well. This finding suggests a prevalence of multi-grade teaching in about 40% of schools in Sri Lanka.

In these schools, multi-grade teaching was a necessity that arose for three main reasons:

1. non-entitlement for teachers for implementing mono-grade teaching due to smallness of the student enrolment,
2. teacher deployment disparities due to teacher deficits and a reluctance of teachers in serving some of the remote schools and a high frequency of ad hoc transfers,
3. teacher absenteeism due to personal problems, lack of residential facilities, transport failures, rain and/or teachers taking long term-leave for maternity, study leave and medical leave.

## **Step 2 of Phase 1**

Step 2 of Phase 1 was designed to study multi-grade teaching practices in three schools selected from among the 38 schools studied in Step 1.

Within-case and cross-case analysis showed that the quality of teaching in the three schools was poor. The common approach to multi-grade teaching adopted by teachers may be considered a 'quasi-mono-grade' type (Little, 2004). Through this approach, each grade was addressed separately by the teacher and addressed one after the other. The lessons were limited to brief instructions on textbook assignments. The students spent a larger proportion of school time remaining idle. The low quality of teaching effected teacher and student motivation and attendance negatively.

A definition for multi-grade teaching formulated was:

Multi-grade teaching is a teaching situation where a single teacher is responsible for instructing more than one grade level, either adjacent or discrete, on a fixed or temporary basis, depending on the needs of the school, with or without teachers recognising themselves as multi-grade teachers.

The analysis of the three cases indicates that there is an urgent need for equipping teachers with multi-grade teaching skills.

## **Phase 2: The Intervention on Multi-Grade Teaching**

### **Step 1 of Phase 2**

The Phase 2: Step 1 was the development of the innovative strategy. The outline of the strategy was to include a whole class introduction, a gradual development of the lesson to suit the grades and to assign different grade level assignments in teaching a single subject across two or more grades.

An analysis of the primary curriculum was done in order to visualise the possibility of developing an innovation to address the problems of the quality of teaching, which partly resulted out of non-planned lessons. The innovation was focused on mathematics. This innovative strategy was planned in collaboration with the curriculum developers at the NIE.

### **Step 2 of Phase 2**

The second step of Phase 2 involved a small-scale intervention with 18 teachers in 10 rural multi-grade schools over a period of seven months. The intervention was made in two consecutive cycles following the action research cycle designed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988).

The Planning stage involved organising workshops and field visits. The action was mediated through workshops held at the Teacher Centre of the Education Zone, and via teachers implementing the lessons planned at the workshops at their respective schools. In order to support the teachers in lesson planning in mathematics, a co-facilitator, who is a primary mathematics curriculum developer, was invited for the workshops. All workshops were observed by an observer who was not a participant in the intervention. The monitoring and facilitation was carried out by the researcher through several rounds of visits to intervention schools and also during workshops. Each cycle ended with individual and group reflections.

The typology of action research by Carr and Kemmis (1986:136) on the relationship between outside facilitators and practitioners was helpful in collaborating with the multi-grade teachers during the intervention. The 'technical action research' model is where practitioners test the applicability of findings generated elsewhere, while the researchers provide practitioners with ideas and strategies for improvement and further study of the situation. This was a starting point for the intervention in the present study.

## **Cycle 1 of the Intervention: Introducing the Lesson Planning Strategy and Making Individual Attempts to Plan Lessons**

In order to implement the strategy, the following is the sequence of activities that were agreed in collaboration with the teachers.

1. Familiarising with the subject content of the graded syllabi pertaining to the grade combination of the multi-grade class.
2. Selecting similar topics from the graded syllabi of the grade combination.
3. Selecting the objectives under the specific topics to be covered for each grade.
4. Re-sequencing the two or more sets of objectives selected from different grades in a logical sequence, where a gradual advancement of the lesson could take place.
5. Clustering the re-sequenced objectives for a suitable number of lessons considering time allocations and students' ability levels.
6. Organising the content of the re-sequenced objectives to include an introduction to the lesson at a level suitable for grade combination, and to develop the lesson while deviating sequentially to meet the different needs of the grade levels.
7. Allocating suitable assignments for different grades/ ability levels.
8. Concluding the lesson by directing the students of different grades to extend the learning depending on their different levels.

The observations made during the school-based facilitation and reflections during Cycle 1 revealed that the teachers appreciated the usefulness of the innovative strategy and were enthusiastic in adopting it. However, the number of lessons each teacher planned was quite small and they indicated that they were unable to manage lesson planning as the adaptation of mono-grade curricula was difficult. The following example highlights one of the specific difficulties faced by a teacher in planning lessons adopting the innovative strategy.

In School 3, Sumanawathi explained her difficulty in adopting the innovative strategy due to a mismatch of the sequence of topics in different grade level syllabi. The example she forwarded was the topic 'two dimensional shapes' for Grades 2 and 3. The advice she has received at the in-training sessions was to implement the curricula sequentially. However, when trying to combine similar topics according to the study intervention, she faced the difficulty

of a mismatched sequence of the topics across the grades. The topic sequence of Grade 2 syllabus indicates topic 2 as three-dimensional shapes and topic 8 as two-dimensional shapes, whereas in Grade 3 syllabus, both two and three dimensional shapes are included in topic 11.

The problem she raised was important as it brought to light the need for support in selecting and combining objectives from graded syllabi which do not have the same topic sequence.

## **Cycle 2 of the Intervention: Collaborative Lesson Planning to Prepare Exemplary Lesson Plans**

The Cycle 2 of the intervention commenced with a collaborative lesson planning workshop. The teacher group with the support extended by the facilitators prepared a set of lesson plans based on the innovative strategy for the forthcoming school term. Out of the set of the lesson plans a selected one is given in figure 1.

The team implemented the lesson plans in their respective schools during the two and a half month school term. The researcher made one round of visits to schools for monitoring and facilitation.

### **Grades: 4 and 5**

#### **Topic: Addition**

#### **Specific objectives:**

Grade 4: Add two numbers sum not exceeding 999 with carrying over at units and ten's places

Grade 5: Add two numbers sum not exceeding 9999 with carrying over at units and ten's places

**Resources:** Dienes apparatus or Ekels (singles and bundles of ten), number cards, Place value charts and Assignment cards

#### **Step 1:** Whole-class introduction:

- Recall addition by writing single digits on the board up to sum not exceeding 50.
- Group the class into about four groups disregarding the grade level. Give each group a Place value chart with two columns, Dienes apparatus (small cubes and rods) or Ekels (singles and bundles). Encourage a competition between groups where one group shows two numbers with number cards while the other group adds them.

#### **Step 2:** Teacher led lesson development sequentially to meet different needs of grade levels:

##### **Sub-step 1:**

- Write three digit numbers which will add up with carrying over at unit's place on the board.



- Ask a volunteer to come up and add them. Repeat this three or four times.
  - Discuss with the students.
- Sub-step 2:**
- Write three digit numbers which will add up with carrying over at unit's place and ten's place on the board.
  - Ask a volunteer to come up and add them. Repeat this several times.

Figure 1: A section of a lesson plan developed by the team on the topic of addition for grades 4 and 5.

## Phase 3

### Step 1 of Phase 2

In Phase 3, the impact of the intervention was assessed in two steps over a period of seven months and across two dimensions. The first was its effect on student achievement.

A quasi experimental model was adopted to assess the impact on student achievement. It involved a pre-and post-one-control group design. Three mathematics achievement tests were constructed using questions from the NIE item bank, in collaboration with the leader of the curriculum development team. A linear regression analysis of mathematics 'gain in score' was also performed (Plewis, 1997). In the regression model, the 'gain in score' was considered as the response variable. The linear regression analysis was performed using SPSS version 7.

The most salient finding of the quasi-experiment was that on an average the students of Grades 4 and 5 of the intervention schools made significantly better progress in mathematics after seven months of instruction, than the students of the control schools. However, there was an improvement in the Grade 3 of the intervention schools over the control schools although not significant. An unexpected finding was that in Grade 3, the control group post-test mean score showed a decline from the pre-test mean score (figure 2).

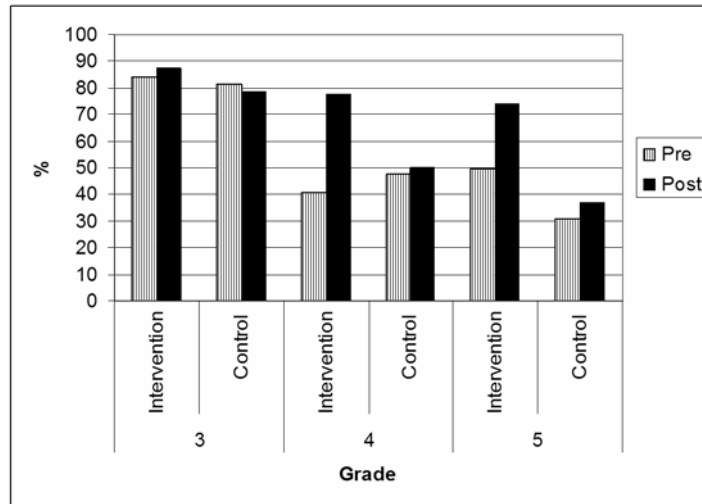


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the percentages of pre- and post-test mean scores

A post-hoc analysis was done to explain the unexpected outcomes of the study. The non-significant effects of the Grade 3 scores could be explained with the ‘ceiling effect’ of the test instrument due to their high performance levels in the pre test. The relatively high attainment levels shown by Grade 3 would have been a result of the implementation of primary education reforms, of which this particular Grade 3 was the first grade group that was exposed when they passed through Key Stage 1.

However, it is interesting to note that while the achievement levels of Grade 3 intervention group showed an increase at the post test stage, the control group showed a decline in the same. This difference could be explained as a result of the intervention. The teachers in both intervention and control schools responsible for Grade 3 faced problems in implementing the new Grade 3 curriculum in a multi-grade mode. This was because the curriculum was new to them, and also as they were not conversant with the multi-grade teaching methods. However, this problem was eased out in the intervention schools through the support of the intervention made through the present study, whereas the control schools did not receive any such support. Therefore, it is possible that the students who got the guidance from the teachers of the control schools did not benefit as much as the students of intervention schools while they were in Grade 3. This could be the main reason for the decline of the achievement level at the post-test in the Grade 3 students in control schools.

## **Step 2 of Phase 3**

Teacher perceptions on the interventions were analysed in step two of the Phase 3. The outcomes of the impact assessment on the teachers indicated that the intervention was a success. The teachers found the innovative strategy for multi-grade teaching was effective and that it addressed their problems related to the instruction of two or more grades simultaneously. More importantly, it helped to change their negative beliefs in multi-grade teaching. All the teachers indicated that they were highly satisfied with the understanding and skill in multi-grade practice, which they acquired through participation in the intervention.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for policy**

#### **Policy recognition as a teaching option**

This study bears evidence to justify a claim, which recognises and supports multi-grade teaching by education policy, as an option for teaching in Sri Lankan schools due to its de facto prevalence.

#### **Teacher capacity building**

If multi-grade teaching is to be implemented effectively, it needs to be introduced to the initial and continuing education courses. The following structure is proposed for a modular course for teacher development:

**Module 1:** Multi-grade concept

**Module 2:** Managing structural aspects of multi-grade settings

**Module 3:** Managing procedural aspects of multi-grade settings

**Module 4:** Learning-teaching Materials Development

**Module 5:** Practice teaching in a multi-grade school

## **Recommendation for research and development**

### **Re-sequencing the topics of the syllabi and preparing exemplary lesson plans**

The significance of the pedagogical innovation suggested by this study reveals the necessity to adapt existing curricula. This could address the long neglected need to address multi-grade teaching in the school curriculum.

Towards this objective, the first step is the re-sequencing of the curriculum content by Key Stages and preparing exemplary lesson plans.

### **Capacity building of the teacher educator in multi-grade teaching**

Capacity building of teacher educators is a necessity, as multi-grade teaching has not been a recognised teaching strategy in Sri Lanka, and hence has not received emphasis within any teacher education course.

### **Researching multi-grade teaching**

Since multi-grade teaching is an under researched area, both large scale and small scale research has to be carried out. Large scale research can focus on the prevalence of issues, while small scale studies can be used to identify 'good practices' of multi-grade teaching and learning. Conduct of small scale studies should be encouraged among teachers facilitated by Teacher Centres.

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# **An Action Research at San Francisco State University/San Francisco Head Start: A Continuous, and Effective Improvement Plan for Early Childhood Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

*The San Francisco State University (SFSU) Head Start programme provides services to a total of 1,404 children in the city and county of San Francisco, California, USA. The model that the programme implements consists of 8 Grantee Operated Centers serving 312 children, two Delegate Agencies serving 640 children, 5 partnership agreements with 6 private centers serving 188 children; 1 partnership agreement with the San Francisco Unified School District serving 234 children; and, 5 partnership agreements with Family Child Care Providers serving a total of 30 children. This paper deals with action research conducted during the last 4 years at 8 grantee operated centers and involve a total of 54 teachers. A similar longitudinal study by Stephen Herzenberg, Mark Price and David Bradley (2005) shows that the early childhood education (ECE) industry has, indeed, been unable to attract and hold onto qualified teachers over the past two decades. Hiring qualified and professional ECE staff that has a thorough understanding of assessment and evaluation is not only a demand, but has become a paramount challenge at San Francisco State University, Head Start Program. In my experience as an education / ECE manager at SFSU, I have observed that there are multiple factors responsible for the decline of ECE teachers' professional standards. This paper intends to explore and share with participants the continuous and different levels of professional development processes carried out to address the pedagogical needs of teachers at San Francisco Head Start Program. I strongly endorse that this model of action research has global implications to make investments now in ECE workforce to prepare us for years ahead.*

## **Introduction**

In present times, the field of early childhood education has experienced more social transformation than any period in history. Every early childhood institution is unique in how it is affected by diverse factors such as experience level of the early childhood teachers, the socioeconomic levels of families, the conditions of the child development centers, the diversity of languages and

ethnicities in the preschool community, and new local, state and national mandates.

In my ethnographic, action inquiry, I will first focus on the constant challenges faced by Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programme managers at San Francisco State University (SFSU) Head Start programme with regards to hiring, retaining and training of ECE teachers. The San Francisco Head Start (SFHS) is a federally-funded programme, providing an array of free services related to health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, social services and education to a total of 1,404 children in the city and county of San Francisco, California, USA. In this participatory active and reflective model, the focus of the project will be the grantee-operated centres, although the programme serves delegates and partner agencies as well. The eight grantee operated centres under this project serve 312 children in high need communities of San Francisco. A total of 54 teachers deliver services to children and families.

I would like the audience to experience with me the multi-dimensional issues that the early childhood education field is going through. Many experienced professionals working in the field are faced with a conundrum; while they prepare early childhood teachers to teach in a continually changing multiethnic American society, the gap between theory and practice is widening. Academic knowledge, for some, does not have the same currency as practitioner knowledge. The tension between content knowledge and practitioner knowledge becomes more critical when teachers from diverse cultures

This paper chronicles my journey into early childhood education, teachers and their pedagogical practices, a journey that involved learning through my cultural lens. In the introduction, I share some information about the San Francisco Head Start programme. In section two, I discuss the issues from literature and research in the early childhood teacher education. In section three, I provide readers the rationale for my living inquiry. Section four illuminates the action research methodology undertaken. Section five deals with the different levels of inquiry needed to address the research questions. Section six is a discussion that reveals the continuous programme analyses. The paper concludes with implications for global investment in Early Childhood Education.

## **Literature Review**

Parents can't afford to pay, teachers can't afford to stay, there's got to be a better way." This is a common sentiment held by professionals in early childhood education. A longitudinal study by Stephen Herzenberg, Mark Price and David

Bradley (2005) states that the ECE field in United States has, indeed, been unable to attract and hold onto qualified teachers over the past two decades. The data from a quantitative study by Stephen, Mark & Bradley (2005) shows that a lower share of centre-based early childhood educators in several states of America have a four-year college degree than in the early 1980s. By the year 2000, less than a third of centre-based early childhood educators had a college degree in the United States. Education levels are even lower in home-based ECE. The story that emerges from the data indicates that college graduates have enjoyed expanding career opportunities in other disciplines. As a result, programme managers often find that individuals with low education levels and no specialized training are joining the field of early childhood education. The qualifications of early childhood teachers matter, first, because high-quality early childhood education improves long term academic outcomes for children and delivers benefits to the community that far exceed programme costs and, second, because high-quality ECE requires educated and experienced teachers (Burton Alice, Marcy Whitebook, Marci Young, Dan Bellin, Claudia Wayne, Richard Brandon & Enn Maher, 2002).

High quality early childhood education programmes improve reading, arithmetic and language abilities (Lynch, 2004). Researchers have cited the absence of data as a central reason for lack of knowledge about the ECE workforce. For example, Burton et al. (2002) states that data sources offer little information about the size and composition of this complex ECE workforce, including educational qualifications and other demographic characteristics (Burton, Whitebook, et al. 2002). The research cited above also shows that high quality early childhood education programmes improve outcomes for children and the society and emphasizes the importance of improved quality of staff for achieving those long-term benefits.

Based on longitudinal studies, Lynch (2004) argues that the benefits of high-quality preschool programmes occur with increasing adult-child ratios. Delivering high quality preschool education requires high-level skills and abilities of ECE teachers. Consistent with the complexity of work, Lynch also demonstrates that the quality of ECE hinges on teacher experience and qualifications. In light of the research evidence, concern has grown across the United States about the difficulty of attracting and retaining experienced and educated teachers in the ECE field. Despite this concern, no data exists that tracks the educational qualifications of early childhood educators over time.

Coping with staff turnover in early childhood programmes is a constant struggle, not only for administrators but also for children and their families and the staff



who remain behind. Losing staff can have a detrimental impact on programme quality, leading to negative developmental outcomes for children (Whitebook, Howe, & Phillips 1990; Howes & Marx, 1992; Kagan, Brandon, Ripple, Maher & Joesch, 2002). Both administrators and teachers, by examining the climate of their organizations can effectively strategize to improve staff retention. In the writer's experience, issues of compensation, professional development, and working conditions for staff are critical components of the struggle to retain teachers and increase quality in early childhood programmes.

Teachers of young children are increasingly challenged to gain more sophisticated knowledge of the children's capacity to learn and to strategize to help each child in their learning and development. Bowman, Donovan, & Burns (2001) state that there exists a serious mismatch between the preparation of early childhood teachers and the expectations for their jobs: i.e., individualizing teaching strategies for young children. Moreover, according to recent Federal and State mandates, preschool teachers are required to have bachelor's degrees by 2007. This legislation has created an implementation goal for San Francisco Head Start programmes and similar organizations.

Presently the San Francisco Head Start programme has ECE professional development opportunities that are provided mainly through City College of San Francisco (CCSF). The city also counts on a number of different agencies providing small grants that support the individual's efforts to continue his/her education in Early Childhood Education. This approach has resulted in a number of Head Start and other Preschool teachers who, while making the effort to attend school and continue their education, find themselves with a high number of ECE courses yet unable to obtain their AA (Associate of Arts) or BA (Bachelors of Arts) degree because of the lack of adequate general studies classes, such as Math and English, that meet the needs of English Learners. Other challenges that hinder Head Start and other early childhood educators efforts to obtain their AA or BA degrees is the fact that most of them are women working full time for low wages and having to take care of their own families, while most institutions of higher education offer limited skills on connecting theory to practice.

The need for the inquiry was also driven by the results of two needs assessments conducted with teachers in the programmes of city and county of San Francisco. These two assessments included, firstly, the San Francisco 'Pre-School for All Plan', and secondly, the Head Start Community Assessment 2004, (self-assessment of the programme) and 'Achieving a High Quality Preschool Teacher Corps: A Focus on California' (National Council of La Raza, brief report 2005).

## Rationale of the Study

Hiring qualified and professional ECE staff that has a thorough understanding of child development, assessment and evaluation is not only a requirement, but has become a challenge at San Francisco State University, Head Start programme. In my experience as an ECE manager at SFSU, I have experienced that there are multiple factors responsible for the decline of ECE teachers' professional standards as discussed in the introduction and literature review of this paper. When the study started in June 2002, out of 54 teachers, only 9 teachers had their B.A. The demographic profile of the centres and educational levels of these teachers is as follows

Each centre has four, three or two classrooms. Each classroom consists of 16 children with two adults or teachers. One is a lead teacher with usually an AA or a B.A. working with an assistant teacher, who has completed a minimum of 6 to 20 ECE units.

The growing ethnic, racial, and economic diversity of our classrooms is demanding new strategies and skills in communication, instruction and curriculum development. At the same time, Head Start performance standards (rules and regulations mandated by Federal Head Start Bureau), budget cuts, Federal and State mandates, child outcomes as the measure of programme success places higher benchmarks that may overwhelms teachers, managers and parents. As we think systematically about the centre, it is important that the centre is as good a place for teachers to work in, as it is for nurturing children.

The current broader goal of improving the quality of child development centres has led to additional standards for higher levels of practice. Like other innovative programmes, the San Francisco Head Start uses the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R, 1998), to measure quality of the centre. The social-emotional environment of a workplace defines organizational climate. It includes the ways in which co-workers and supervisors relate to and communicate with each other. Our agency thrives on good communication systems and as a result of having a well-defined programme philosophy, encourages professional commitment and thus has higher expectations of its employees. My working relationships with teachers are based on these principle

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1 The Environment rating scale (ECERS) comprehensively assesses day-to-day activities that occur within a particular classroom. The 37-item scale is organized under seven categories.

values of respect, trust, commitment, appreciation, honesty and responsibility to serve children, families, staff and the community.

I believe that recognizing the importance of early learning experiences for young children's school readiness and lifelong success is dependent upon the premise of best practices and best outcomes in early education – particularly in the area of professional preparation of teachers and involving parents in their child's classroom. The conceptualizations of child development courses in ECE programmes in North America have been purported to provide a universal basis for professional practice with children without considering the alternative existing curriculum contents and research methods that critically ask more than the understanding of child development and diversity. However, the challenge faced by every teacher is to ensure that each child reaches her or his fullest potential. Often we cannot view what that potential is at preschool age, but it is still our responsibility to coach, guide, train, encourage and support teachers to achieve the knowledge and skills to work with culturally diverse children.

The current version of the federal education law, “No Child Left Behind,” has created many challenges for educators. Helping young children meet all the above stated standards has become a central activity in our lives. Within our agency, we use curriculum and assessments that are part of each teacher's daily practice. Furthermore, clarifying what is meant by specialized training in early childhood education and child development, and under what circumstances it advances teacher behaviour, is of the utmost importance in this inquiry. This inquiry raises questions that require investigation, particularly with regard to the following

1. How can San Francisco Head Start grantee level teachers be retained?
2. What methods should we implement to provide professional growth?
3. How can the gap between theory and practice be narrowed: different training models?
4. How can the ECE teachers be assisted by providing specialized trainings in early childhood development and education to impact pedagogical practices?

Therefore, one of the primary objectives of this research was to develop and implement a professional academic and training model to increase teacher's practical

knowledge, their understanding of San Francisco Head Start performance standards, policies and procedures, therefore improving the quality and long term effectiveness of programme services to children and their families.

## **Action Research Methodology**

Building on the work of Dewey, (1933), Donald Schon (1983; 1987), Grimmet, Riecken, MacKinnon & Erickson (1987) Head Start has developed a form of ethnographic action research as our programme operates through a monitoring system and programme systems that encompasses planning, implementation, evaluating and modifications that formulates reflective inquiry. It is a collaborative inquiry that aims to address its mission and serves the needs of the targeted population, solving practical problems in organizations and communities. This form of research employs a variety of methods for generating data, including, observations, interviews, parent and teacher surveys, coaching/mentoring, and double loop learning.

All the steps in the action inquiry aim towards improvement and involvement. Involvement refers to the social inquiry in which participation of teachers in all phases of planning, acting, observing and reflecting leads to an improvement in their daily practice. In my existing role, I am also a trainer and mentor. This is a three-fold task: first to make sense of and respond to the substantive issue of learning/teaching in the situation at hand; second, to enter into the teacher's ways of thinking about and understanding the situation; and third, to do these things through encouragement, advice and motivation to make

defensiveness less likely. Moreover other specific duties include providing programmatic support to in-service teachers, coordinating continuous planned trainings and technical assistance for the implementation of the San Francisco Head Start programme performance standards for quality guidelines; collaborating with community agencies and providing leadership in the development and implementation of recommended procedures and programmes.

Although this action research model is now also being implemented with our community partner agencies, at this time due to space and time constraints, this systematic action research focuses on work with 54 ECE in-service teachers.

## **Action Plan for Teachers**

This action approach was founded on the epistemological view that knowledge and understanding are transferable and individual teachers will improve practice

through knowledge and understanding. In our agency the variety of efforts established to work actively with all 54 participants individually are

- Helping teachers seek their teaching credentials
- Offering free ECE courses in the evenings and at a central location
- Courses offered at City Colleges are reimbursed
- Teachers stepping-up in their teaching/professional career ladder are promoted and their salaries package are improved.

Next, the different service area systems were developed (Community & Partnership with Families, Health and Nutrition, Disabilities and Mental health, Early Childhood Development and Education, Facilities, Information Technology, Monitoring and systems created by Programme operation managers), as an agency requirement and implemented to provide technical assistance for centre staff (teachers, family advocates, enrolment/ recruitment workers and centre directors) for the purposes of providing direction on all matters related to programme performance, accuracy, compliance with applicable standards, policies and regulations.

Moreover, teacher training and a technical plan were established with objectives, timelines and responsibility, and the audience for the training, based on staff survey and staff performance evaluations. The training plan included large group training workshops and small group trainings depending upon teachers and centre needs.

## **Analyses and Discussion**

In the collaborative inquiry that took place at different levels of programme operations, a high level of correlation was found among teacher formal education and enrolment in further ECE courses and specialized trainings. Most of the teachers were supported and received their teacher credentials (site-supervisor permit, teacher permit, associate teacher permit) that required taking ECE courses and in-service trainings.

Among the findings, factors that motivated teachers to advance their education were: ‘providing professional growth opportunities’; ‘raising the standards for teaching positions’; ‘providing continuous in-service and pre-service trainings’; and ‘coaching and mentoring on site’. Currently we have 18 lead teachers with their B.A. and seven lead teachers with A.A. Out of seven lead teachers with A.A., currently four teachers are enrolled in general ECE courses and are working to receive their B.A. A total of six assistant teachers have 24 ECE

course units who are working towards their A.A. degrees. Those teachers with B.A. and A.A. degrees and years invested in SFHS have played a prominent role in predicting centre quality. Notably, it would be reasonable to say that B.A and A.A. degrees were not the only factors for centre quality, in-fact, the retention of staff and their specialized ECE in-service trainings and better salary structure was also instrumental in programme quality.

An effective course of action was developed that included: group conversations / meetings for reflective practice; preparing clear accurate and well-organized reports in a timely manner; developing communication skills, listening and encouraging questions and effectively eliciting information; and establishing and maintaining effective relationships with children and parents. Observation and monitoring analyses indicate that all teachers in the centres that received session trainings, on-site individualized coaching, supervision, feedback and trainings improved their teaching skills and interactions with children.

Results of the Children Outcomes/Desired Results Developmental Profile Plus (DRDP+) over the past four years have also shown that the training strategies and actual content of trainings, focusing on different aspects of the service area system and its curricula have provided support to teachers understanding of child development theories and practice by narrowing the gap between the preparation of ECE teachers and the expectations for their roles and responsibilities. These selected teaching approaches, which combine developmentally appropriate practice along with teacher-centred practices, have been productive in gaining positive child outcomes. However, some components of this model are still under consideration, for example, teacher language and communication skills to speak with a child who has a different language and culture than the teacher.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Throughout this action, ethnographical inquiry at San Francisco Head Start, we have learnt that the impact of this project is multi-level and transformational. It affected the children, the early childhood teachers, the families and the community. The children benefited by being taught by certified early childhood educators, which prepared them to succeed in preschool. The training plan

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<sup>2</sup> DRDP+ is a legislative mandate based on Head Start Programme Performance Standards, Head Start Performance measures, provisions of the Head Start Act as amended in 1998, advice of the Head Start Bureau Technical Work Group on Child Outcomes.

constituted Head Start standard requirements, different curriculum theories and approaches, alternative teaching strategies, classroom management, time management, team building and behaviour management that provided a solid understanding of sound ECE practices. It was discovered that this action research invoked participants' critical thinking, improved reading and writing skills that made them effective in their jobs.

As I continue on my social research journey, I strongly endorse that this model of action, ethnographic research be used because it has global implications: it is important to make strategic investments now in the ECE workforce to prepare future generations of ECE professionals. This model of collaborative action inquiry at San Francisco Head Start has provided a living research platform for teachers, parents and children that provide a framework, which can be accessed by any other Head Start or ECE educational institutions locally, nationally and globally. This is largely a question of resources and community will. We should set preschool teacher qualification standards and put together resources to make educational opportunities available to current and prospective ECE teachers, clarify the teacher training and compensate teachers sufficiently to retain them in service. The question of higher standards in early childhood education will remain an academic one.

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# **Rethinking Quality through Components of Teaching Process in Teacher Education**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper stresses that quality in education depends heavily on quality of teachers and the quality of teaching. It emphasizes on re-strengthening the teacher factor, viewing it as a catalyst in bringing about quality in education. The paper looks at teaching as a three-stage process with a number of components marking each stage. The paper also seeks to establish the cyclical nature of the education process and considers curriculum, the teacher, and students as the principal agents in this process. The paper then develops a Teacher Education Model and describes the results of a teacher training programme based on that model. The programme resulted in a number of improvements and strongly established the fact that all education reforms aimed at improving quality in education must strengthen teachers and that all teacher education programmes must be well-grounded in an understanding of the education process and the cyclical nature of teaching.*

## **Introduction**

Any policy, procedure or endeavour that aims to induce or enhance quality in education needs to focus on the teaching-learning situation. It needs to fully comprehend and analyze teaching activity and the mandatory factors that govern this engagement, along with an appraisal of the important agents that are instrumental in making this process effective. This paper aims at reaffirming the fact that in order to improve the standards of local education and to make education more purposeful, we need to shift our focus from curriculum, students and other agents to the teacher. The paper also asserts that the means to empower teachers and make them the principal agents of quality in education should be through training in the theories and practices of education as “it makes good sense for professional teachers to have engaged in some disciplined reflection upon the essential nature of the enterprise in which they are occupied... before teachers are certified... to teach they ought to have done some study of education” (Kimball, 1986, p. 17).

## Teaching—the Activity; Teacher—the Agent

Teaching is an activity that is carried out in a particular context with the purpose of inculcating knowledge and skills. The principal agents of this activity are curriculum, the teacher, and students. Recently, efforts in bringing about and improving quality in education have revolved around two educational goals: to provide a more challenging, rigorous, and thoughtful curriculum in all subject areas; and, to ensure that all students are supported in developing their full intellectual potential (Wasser, 1998). A few decades ago, all academic improvisations and attempts at raising the standards of education focused on strengthening the curriculum, resulting in more challenging, diverse, and practical subject matter; more recently, all such efforts have been directed towards the students through the famous needs-based and learner-centred approaches. However, the most crucial factor amongst the trio of agents, the teacher, was largely ignored and received relatively less focus despite the fact that students' interaction with the curriculum or subject matter is only possible because of the teacher. It is the teacher who establishes a meaningful link between the students and the curriculum. The teacher is the instrument that imparts subject knowledge or skills to students through the process of teaching. It is not teaching devices, but rather teachers, who are the principal agents of instruction and more importantly, learning. Therefore policies and procedures that aim to improve educational standards should consider the teacher factor before considering any other. New courses, tests, and curriculum reforms can be important starting points but are meaningless if teachers cannot use them productively. Policies can improve schools only if the people in the schools are armed with the knowledge, skills and supports they need (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 5).

The quality of our nation's schools depends on the quality of our nation's teachers. What students learn is directly related to what and how teachers teach; and what and how teachers teach depends on the knowledge, skills and commitments they bring to their teaching (Nemser, 2001, p. 1013). There is strong research evidence in support of teacher quality being a more powerful factor in students' learning than socioeconomic factors (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Reeves, 2000). In addition, effective teachers are capable of making even a less challenging curriculum more knowledgeable for their students, resulting consequently in developing greater skills in students and leading to an increased satisfaction in them about the teaching-learning experience. Quality of the teacher and quality of teaching are undoubtedly among the most important factors shaping the learning and growth of students (Ingersoll, 2004, p. 1).

At the heart of our educational problems lies the reality that the most significant factor of the educational trio, the teacher, remains untapped. We now hear calls for improving teacher quality; however, efforts in exploiting the curriculum to the greatest advantage for students, all attempts at making student factor play a role in the teaching-learning activity, and all other plans to raise quality standards of teaching end in futility because of problems arising due to “teachers’ immaturity at entering the profession, the unevenness of their preparation, the complex nature of the work that must be entrusted to even the poorest teacher, the profound injury that results when the work is badly done and the constant change in methods and curriculum.” (Lowry, 1908, pp. 15, 64).

Teachers occupy a position of low priority in the planning and policy making quarters but continue to be convenient scapegoats to be assigned major, if not total, responsibility for low educational standards and all other related problems. At the same time, we also look to teachers as a solution to these very problems (Smylie, Miretzky & Konkol, 2004, p. 34). In our efforts to enhance the standards of teaching-learning, both at the government policy-making levels and at the administration and management levels, we need to resort to these very scapegoats, teachers, with the intention of re-evaluating their significance, resolving their deficiencies and re-establishing their role. In the local context, teachers not only have incomplete knowledge and skills in the subject domain, but also lack awareness of the arts and strategies of teaching.

Members of a profession must therefore keep in active touch with the centers of teaching and research from which their specialist knowledge emanates... they have to keep in touch with developments in the subjects which they teach... and also with developments in the methodological aspects of their task.

(Peters, 1966, pp. 309-10)

Teacher Education is a means to strengthen teachers and to make them true agents of teaching; teachers can take control of the teaching enterprise and constitute a beneficial interaction between students and the curriculum, and ensure successful and meaningful completion of the latter. Virtually all books, reports and researches on recommendations for improvement in education have put training of teachers on top priority (Kimball, 1986; Goodland, 1984). However, the teacher education scenario does not reveal a pleasant picture. Apart from resistance of teachers who are not convinced of the need and benefits of professional development and teachers’ training, education administrators are also not willing to spare time and efforts in this field, thereby making it impossible for quality of teaching to be raised. This attitude has

affected the development and effectiveness of teacher education programmes. On the other hand teacher training programmes that are available are also not helpful in assuring quality; evaluations of these programmes reveal a lack of planning, an absence of objectives, ineffective materials and instruments, a dearth of qualified teacher educators, and a failure in bringing about the desired change in the individuals being trained (AKU-IED report, 2004).

## **The Teacher Education Model**

Analysing the situation and realising the underlying principles of the teaching-learning process, a teacher education programme was created. The aim of the program was to develop a holistic view of the education process in teachers and to enable them to see that issues in the teaching process, for example the link between instructional objectives and lesson plan, or lesson plan and instructional method, or teaching and assessment, motivation and learning, and lesson plan and classroom management, are interdependent and interconnected. The program also encouraged the view that teachers must bring coherence to all activities related to teaching by consciously coordinating them. The basic assumptions of this course were that teachers needed to be aware of the methods of education and that this would enable them to plan, organize and evaluate the teaching stages and activities effectively for better transmission of knowledge and development of skills in their students, in their respective subject areas, consequently enhancing their professional image and developing their careers. The framework of the resulting Teacher Education Model (see Figure 1) is based on the following: (1) the teacher is the principal agent to ensure effective teaching and teachers should be equipped with professional knowledge and skills; and, (2) teaching is an organized activity that has three distinct stages with numerous interconnected and interdependent components marking each stage. Taking these as the two central principles and considering also other contextual issues like socioeconomic factors and time constraints, a nine-module, thirty-six hour long teacher education programme was developed that aimed at developing knowledge and skills about education.

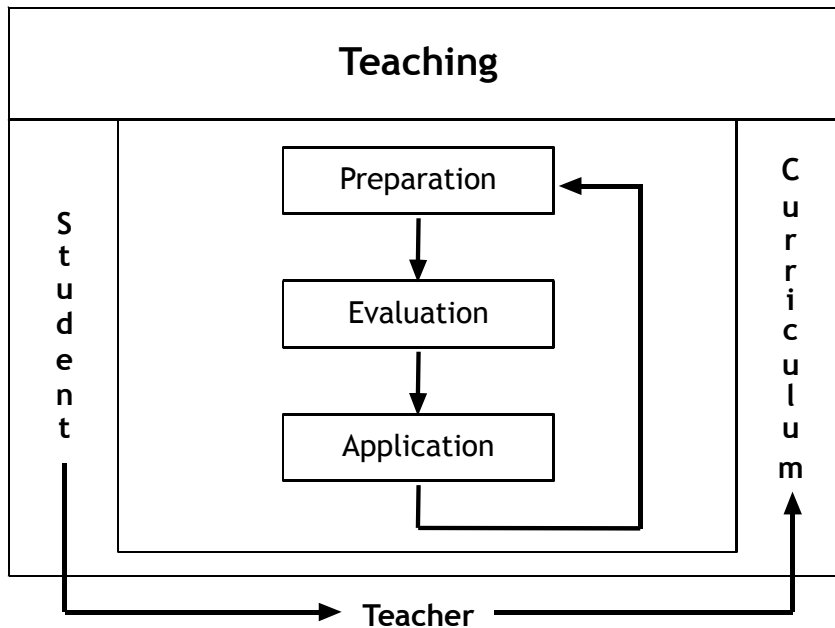


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the Teacher Education Model

## The Teaching Process

This Teacher Education Model is rooted in an understanding of teaching as a process as well as best practices of teaching-learning (Walston, 2001). The process has distinct stages marked with several unique components that ensure effective and smooth completion of this process. One may find disagreement amongst different authors and researchers with reference to the number of stages as well as the labels they have assigned to them; however, there is no dissention as to the presence of various stages. In our model, teaching is viewed as a three-stage process: pre, while and post. These are referred to as the Preparation, Application, and Evaluation Stages respectively.

The first two stages focus primarily on ensuring effectiveness of the teaching process, whereas the last stage is more concerned with raising the standards of the whole process and development of the teacher.

In the first stage—Preparation—an understanding of the teaching activity in terms of its philosophy and principles, objectives and focus, and nature and characteristic features is developed. Purpose, readiness, and motivation, both for the students and the teachers, become essential areas of exploration. The decisions formulated and the attitudes developed at this stage pave the

foundations for the whole scenario and even act as a catalyst in ensuring success or failure.

The second stage in the teaching process—Application—is where the knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in the previous stage are applied by translating them into communication and motivational techniques, instructional plans and methods, and classroom and interaction management strategies.

The last stage—Evaluation—is, firstly, about assessment of knowledge imparted or skills inculcated among students, and secondly, about reflection on the teacher and the methods and materials used to carry out the task of imparting knowledge or skill. It is this reflection and evaluation that makes the process recursive and dynamic, and spiralling upwards (Copeland, Birmingham, De La Cruz & Lewin, 1993; Pollard & Tann, 1993), and with each successful completion, the quality of teaching is enhanced.

## **Components in the Stages of the Teaching Process**

Certain components were stressed in each of the three stages and comprise the training areas in this model (see Figure 2). These components were identified after considering the problems in the local education set up and were seen to create serious problems or hindrances in teaching-learning contexts. The framework was also based on the needs identified from a survey conducted through questionnaires and interviews with the teachers and administrators.

During the Preparation stage, teachers were trained in aspects of teaching, the principles of teaching and learning, characteristics and skills of effective teachers, writing instructional objectives in three domains, and planning their orientations. During the Application stage, stress was laid on important components such as teachers' communication, teaching as an interpersonal activity, students' motivation for learning, translating instructional objectives into targeting academic and life skills in students, lesson planning, enhancing instructional style through diverse instructional methods, and classroom and interaction management strategies and tools. Assessment of students learning, evaluation and reflection on the teacher and the teaching process, and teacher development were dimensions explored in the final stage of the teaching process.

Preparation	Application	Evaluation
Aspects of teaching	Teachers communication	Assessment
Principles of teaching and learning	Teaching as interpersonal activity	Evaluation and reflection
Characteristics and skills of effective teachers	Students' motivation	Teacher development
Writing instructional objectives in three domains	Targeting academic & life skills	
Planning for the orientation	Lesson planning	
	Instructional methods and style	
	Classroom and interaction management strategies and tools	

Figure 2: Essential components targeted in the three stages of the teaching process

## The Model Implemented

The total duration of the course was 36 hours, divided into nine modules. Classes were offered once a week and the time of each contact session was four hours. Thus, the course was spread over a period of nine weeks to ensure that teachers were allowed sufficient time to process new information, apply them in their classroom situations, evaluate results and make adjustment. In addition, this time span was also essential for smooth transition from one component to the other and from one stage to the next with respect to the process of teaching.

This Teacher Education Model, which aimed at training the teachers to meet the demands of their profession, was launched by the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) in April 2005, following its pilot testing with a group comprising veteran teachers, teacher educators, and administrators to establish the validity and reliability of the objectives and the content. The course facilitators were individuals who were qualified in their respective domains and who were also completely familiar with recent research findings and developments pertaining to the chosen area as well as being experienced and active teacher educators. Participants who enrolled for the course were mainly senior and junior in-service teachers and staff coordinators, both from public and private sector institutions, teaching different subjects at different levels; besides

them, participants who aspired to join the teaching profession also enrolled for this programme.

The diversity of subject areas was not a constraint since the course content and objectives, as indicated earlier, were to train people into the knowledge and methods of education only. Data collected from the participants after each module and at course completion showed that the course content was considered relevant and meaningful, and that the course was successful in developing greater insight about the needs and challenges of the profession. In addition, the knowledge and skills imparted were stated as applicable and as leading to resolution of many of the problems confronting teachers that had earlier posed serious challenges because of a lack of awareness about the art and science of education.

The credibility of the course and its utility to the teachers is also established from the fact that since its launch in April 2005 up till January 2006, the course has been conducted five times and about 200 individuals, including master trainers, from schools, colleges and universities have benefited from this programme.

## **Conclusion**

Insight developed during the planning, implementation and evaluation of this teacher education programme makes a strong case for rethinking quality in education through teachers by educating them about how the teaching profession is established. The paper presents these findings:

1. Quality in education cannot be achieved without developing teachers in the arts and strategies of teaching.
2. Teachers must develop a holistic view of the teaching activity in order to see different interconnected and interdependent stages and components that result in lending effectiveness or failure to the teaching enterprise.

The results of this teacher education programme also signal the need for developing teacher education programmes that can be practical (in terms of the time duration and resources required) and beneficial (with respect to the immediate utility and applicability) to our teachers. The effectiveness and success of any teacher education programme rests heavily in its ability to analyze and consider contextual pressures during the planning stage and this ability will also be instrumental in developing a positive attitude towards such programmes.



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# Initiating Change in Classrooms: Pathways and Challenges for East African Schools

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## Abstract

This paper draws upon classroom-related findings from a set of impact case studies of whole school improvement in six primary schools that have been involved as “cooperating schools” in long-term school-university partnerships with the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (IED), and its Professional Development Centre in East Africa (PDC-EA).

The IED approach for school improvement involves participating schools in multiple strands of professional development, including: a two-year masters degree programme that provides selected teachers with the pedagogical and leadership knowledge and skills to serve as Professional Development Teachers in their schools; Certificate in Education programmes (CEP) for teachers focused on enhancing subject matter content knowledge and methods (English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, Primary Education); and a certificate programme for head teachers designed to develop their capacity to manage and lead continuous school development in coordination with the teacher development inputs. School participation in the IED and PDC-EA programmes is expected to result in positive impact in four areas: teaching and learning methods; academic coordination and leadership; professional collaboration amongst teachers; and student learning outcomes. IED and PDC-EA inputs into cooperating schools are not delivered all at once. The schools typically involve a few teachers and/or administrators over a period of years in the various programs. Thus, in order to assess and understand the “impact” of this multi-pronged approach to school improvement, it was necessary to select and study schools that had been involved with IED and/or PDC-EA over a long term (5+ years) and that had supported teacher and administrator participation in a variety of the IED and PDC-EA training programmes.

The case studies were conducted between August 2004 and March 2005 by a team of researchers from AKU-IED and PDCEA. Data sources included classroom observations, interviews with teacher leaders and teachers (trained

and untrained), interviews with school administrators, collection of relevant documents (lesson plans, sample of students' work, school development plan), collection and analysis of samples of student work and examination papers, and the collection and analysis of student academic results (e.g., in-school test outcomes) maintained by the school over the time frame studied.

Drawing upon rich illustrative classroom vignettes highlighting different dimensions of change initiated and related issues:

## **Activity Based Teaching and Assessing Students' Learning: Case of the Unity Primary School**

The Unity Primary School in Dar-Es-Salaam came into being in 1993 with 400 students across grades 1-4, following the liberalisation of the education sector in Tanzania. Prior to liberalisation, primary education was entirely in the hands of the government and no private organisation was allowed to run or operate a primary school. However, it went through rapid expansion and at the time of research the school was a thriving institution with a student population of 978 boys and girls and a teaching staff of 58, making the teacher pupil ratio app. 1:17. According to the document entitled "about us" provided in September 2004, by the deputy head teacher (administration) this student teacher ratio makes for effective monitoring of the progress of child and for effective group work. The school has made significant investment in teacher development for initiating change in the school and classroom. Provided below are two snapshots from lessons observed.

**Class: 5**

**Subject: Mathematics**

**Topic: Money**

The classroom was smallish and arranged for students to work in small groups of about 4. It was bright as most rooms I had seen so far and had soft boards along the wall. Very little if anything was there on the soft boards. The teacher started the lesson by telling the students that they would be doing a new topic Money. He then asked a series of questions related to the meaning and significance of money such as:

1. Do you know what is meant by money?
2. Why is money important?
3. Why do we need it?
4. How do we know that somebody has more money than others?

He called upon students to respond to the questions. They eagerly participated raising their hands or just speaking up. There was some discussion on question 4 and students' responses to it were:

S1: Counting (the number of poor)

S2: Observing personality

S3: If someone is in good health (they have more money)

S4: If someone has many things or someone wears clean clothes

One student raised his hand, "Sir, I disagree with Saima, even poor people can wash their clothes and be clean. Sometimes rich people also wear dirty clothes". Many students broke into this conversation.

After a few minutes the teacher announced that the class should turn to page 124 in the book (this was a Kenyan text book "Primary Mathematics for 5 Revised, Kenya Institute for Education"). He informed the students that they would work on addition of money.

He asked the class how many of them had bought something from the canteen in the recess. Taking some responses from the students he added the amount of money spent on buying things from the canteen. He pointed out that they added shillings to shillings and in case of some amount being in cents the other should be converted. He then worked through an example on the blackboard explaining the procedure of noting down shillings under shillings and cents under cents and the need to carry over from cents to shilling. Once the sample sums had been worked out the teacher asked if there were any problems. The class chorused "No sir". He asked the students to do the following in their note books: Page 124, Q1(a,b,c,e) and Q3 (a,b)

The class got down to work through the sums. The lesson ended.

**Class: 3D**

**Subject: Science**

**Topic: Reproduction**

The classroom was smaller than the other classes visited. The walls had students' work which included booklets titled "my autobiography" with students' pictures put in different shapes such as dress, hearts, bells and houses. There were small diaries, a project done on geometry, computer printouts of reptiles and amphibians.

The teacher began the lesson by grouping the class and told them to think about all the things that could be grouped into 'Living things and non living things' and asked students to give examples of living things. A girl interjected as she swung her body and said 'plants move like this'. Another student said they breathe in and out, the next one said they reproduce. This whole class interaction with the teacher continued for a few minutes. He told them that the topic for the day was reproduction in animals. The teacher wrote on the board "REPRODUCTION IN ANIMALS" He then explained that reproduction means the ability to give birth to a young one of the same kind.

He gave instructions to work in groups as a family and to have a role. A student gave examples of the roles as writer, presenter, leader and time-keeper. The teacher ensured that each group had a writer and work began. He then drew a table on the board to award marks. Each group had 100 marks to begin with but anytime they violated the teacher's instructions, they lost marks. It was time for group presentation. Each of the six groups did their presentation and the class discussed the list of the animals, removed those that were listed wrongly and the rest of the class awarded marks to the presentations. One presenter mentioned that another group had not read out some of the names on their list because they were wrong. The teacher confirmed by checking their list and reduced their marks but the boy shouted that it was unfair and that the teacher should take more marks from them. After agreeing on the marks for each group, the teacher told them to close their books and copy notes that he wrote on the blackboard. Some 5 minutes before the lesson ended he told them to stop writing, reviewed what they had done during the lesson and then the bell rang.

Observations such as the one shared above showed that there was a variety in the teaching learning activities including whole class, small group and individual work. Classroom seating was mainly for small group work with four to five students around a table. Even where furniture was not arranged for group seating, students would often be asked to turn their chairs and form groups.

Teachers played different and complex roles in the course of their teaching. These roles often overlapped and were not easy to delineate but certain patterns in behaviour showed three main roles that the teachers played to a varying degree: a manager/director; a guide; and facilitator. Evidence shared in the detailed report shows that this variety in the teachers' roles in the classroom emerged because of investment made in teacher development to promote classrooms where students participated actively and in a variety of ways to engage in the process of learning.

A close scrutiny of the change initiated in the classroom showed that teachers had accepted the activity-based teaching as evident from observable changes in the teaching methods, classroom settings, use of manipulative and other resources. But this change was not reflected in their assessment and evaluation practices. Hence, it was noticeable that students were set classroom tasks that were broader in nature but when it came to evaluating their learning they were asked to do individual work in their notebooks that was of routine procedural nature. For example in the mathematics lessons shared above, the teacher engaged the class in a discussion about the concept of money and related it to their experience of using money during recess to buy from the school canteen. But the assessment was based on the individual task which was a routine procedural task of adding different sums of money. In the science lesson there is an attempt to assess group work through group presentation but there was no evidence to show how these group presentations would contribute to the assessment and evaluation of each student's learning.

A key finding is an apparent lack of linking the processes of teaching and learning to assessment and evaluation of learning; students' learning outcomes were typically seen in the form of examination results. There was an examination committee in the school and the chair of the committee reported that in setting examination papers care was taken to include test items which were "very tight", he explained this to mean that those were questions that were not found in examination papers of other primary schools. However, preparation for examination was through an emphasis on drill, and practice. These practices were very much oriented towards getting "good marks" in the examination; alternate approaches to classroom assessment and evaluation were not seen in

the school policy and practice. Moreover, according to the information provided in the various school brochures, interviews with the head teacher, the teachers and other school leaders, the school results have always been good. But there was no evidence of a systematic analysis of school results and its linkage with the teacher development work and its resultant change in the classroom. Hence, the “good results” were more of a theoretical notion widely accepted but less of an evidenced-based reality. For example, in response to a question about the change in kinds of student outcomes and patterns in student outcomes a senior member of the lead team maintained that it would be difficult to make a comparative statement based on the examination results over the years but there was certainly improvement in students’ confidence. This apparent lack of linkage between classroom processes and evaluation of learning raises several issues.

## **Promoting Student Talk Through Cooperative Learning: Tensions in Quality & Quantity**

This section reports on the classroom findings from two of the PDC-EA cooperating schools in Kenya; one a private school in Mombassa and the other a government school based in Nairobi. Both schools have been involved in the Certificate in Education Programmes for teachers of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies conducted by the PDC Following is a brief comparison of the two schools.

The Nairobi school has been among the cooperating schools since 2001 when PDC-EA started conducting programmes in Nairobi. The school is situated in a low income area of Nairobi and majority of the students come from very humble socio-economic backgrounds. It was first established as a rehabilitation centre for street children. It eventually turned into a full school. Though it is sponsored by the catholic sisters of Mercy who play a very big role in the running of the school, it is also recognised as a public school. It gets funds and some teachers from the government.

The school has very high enrolment which has been made worse by the government’s introduction of Free Primary Education. Average class size ranges from 47 - 57. The Mombassa school was a government-aided private community school till 2002. Students come from average socio economic background and the class size is 40. In 2000, this school became a cooperating school with PDCEA. In both schools many teachers of Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies have attended the Certificate in Education Programmes offered by PDC-EA.

## **The Use of Cooperative Learning**

During the CEPs, teachers were introduced to child-centered teaching and learning approaches. Therefore cooperative learning was one strategy that was emphasized upon during the programme. During the study, it was found in both the schools that that many of the CEP graduate teachers used cooperative learning in their classrooms and had very positive remarks about this strategy of teaching and learning. They maintained that cooperative learning enabled them to have children involved in the teaching and learning process. As one of them remarked; 'like there was this cooperative method, which I felt I involve children, I just act as a facilitator, to help them realize what is within them.' In fact by using cooperative learning strategy this teacher further realized that children do not come to school "empty headed... but there is something..." which needs somebody to help them "build on it." In a way of reiterating the above sentiments another teacher said that with the use of cooperative learning, the children do most of the work in the classroom. She said, "At least majority (sic) of the work they are doing, they discuss, they come to conclusions. Mine is only to conclude and give more information if at all it is needed" From these teachers' sentiments, there seem to be an improvement in the teaching and learning process since the children are actively involved in the teaching and learning process.

Our observations also confirmed that the teachers gave tasks to the learners in groups which encouraged them to discuss and come up with answers. This in one way or another encouraged student talk in the classroom, so that the quantity of student talk increased. This was similar in the classrooms in both the schools.

However, there were two major challenges that emerged in the use of cooperative learning. One was how to structure and manage the cooperative learning groups. For example, due to many children in small rooms, the classes were very much crowded. In most cases the groups had 8-12 pupils. These were very big groups, so that the children would crowd over the task that was given, some leaning over the others. Some of them would not participate at all. They would just remain seated and not bother to see what the task on the piece of paper or manila that had been given by the teacher was all about. Such children would actually be shut out of the discussions thus inhibiting the learning that was supposed to go on within the group. This actually defeated the purpose of cooperative learning where children are supposed to learn from one another. These were management related issues and could be resolved relatively easily. The other issue which was deeper and raises questions about the nature and



meaning of classroom change pertained to the quality of student interactions as they worked in groups. While the management issue was more pronounced in the Nairobi school as compared to the Mombassa school, the issue of quality was common. The teachers mostly appeared to be focused on the structural issues of group work and not with what was being said in the groups.

## **Creating a Learning Environment Through Resources**

The Bondeni Girls school is a private school in Dar-es-Salam. Most learners come from middle to upper social economic status families. The fact that all of them live in the urban area of Dar Es Salaam, specifically in the city center, they have great advantage of social and economic facility.

On the part of the teaching staff, the school has good quality teachers who come from diverse areas of the country and outside the country. These teachers have different abilities that draw from their diverse experiences and background, which adds value to the quality of education provided in the school. It should be noted that the nature of school management together with the teaching force has a great contribution to the type and quality of resources used in the school.

Bondeni school administration claimed to understand the value of using resources to provide a stimulating, interactive learning environment that caters for learners' needs in different ways.

To promote the creation of learning environments the school also sent teachers for professional development programmes offered by PDC-EA, and conducted in-house programmes to include teaching and learning material development. In these, the emphasis was to enable teachers to make and use resources effectively and teachers are also introduced to different ways they can access internet material and also to be able to teach using computer technology.

My observations showed that the school surrounding was full of posters, pictures and colourful educational and religious messages that apart from making the school look attractive and lively, they taught about values and foster a positive attitude towards learning. For example I read a poster portraying a message that the one who does not make a mistake does not learn. This makes the school a friendly place.

There were also informational updates on the bulletin boards about school activities and special events. The whole surrounding was clean and full of flowers and other decorations that were well managed by a support staff.

Bondeni School had also established a moderately rich resource room that stored models and realia that were collected by both teachers and learners. The study found that the school also purchased some of the material present in the resource room.

The above factors showed a great possibility for the school to have a positive, stimulating and professional teaching and learning environment through the use of a rich array of available resource materials.

## **Use of Resources for Promoting Learning**

As a result of the rich array of resources that the school had made available to the teachers, learning corners were present especially in the lower grades classrooms. In class one and two, learning corners acted as reference points through and across the teaching and learning process. The upper grades had wall displays to supplement textbooks. Classroom displays were commonly used by teachers.

A closer investigation on the regular use of the resource room showed that the material in the resource room were collection of displays meant for events like parents' day and other schools' special events. There was no evidence of the use of resource room as a regular school agenda.

The study also showed that most items in the resource room were meant for science concepts, which reflects the imbalance between subjects. Like any other facility, the resource room was found to be a place for teachers to plan for their lessons and other individual work.

To conclude, in order to create a learning environment through resources at Bondeni primary school, the school management would need to consider strengthening the utilization of present resources like classrooms, the library, the resource room, IT facility and sports grounds, through a better organizational framework that would fully utilize them. Detailed findings suggest that school improvement initiatives need to focus on resource utilization as one way towards school improvement.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The above findings showed that all classrooms showed observable changes in classroom environment and teaching practices as seen by the use of teaching methods, classroom setting, richer curriculum materials and use of resources.

However, closer analysis revealed that there were several issues in the nature of change. These include: linking classroom learning with assessment and evaluation of learning; focus on quality of student talk along with the quantity; and ensuring that resource material usage becomes a fabric of the regular classroom activity. These issues raise the following questions which will be raised for discussion in the symposium:

- What is meant by meaningful classroom change?
- When is classroom change meaningful?
- What more can teacher education do to make classroom change meaningful and sustainable?

We acknowledge the contribution of team members Janet Okoko, Samuel Musoke, Moshi Mwenema.

# Leadership Programme Learning to Lead: Assessing a School-Based Teacher

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## Abstract

*The Teacher Leadership Programme of the Kindergarten and Junior Section of the Karachi Grammar School is a five-year old initiative added to an already existing Professional Development Programme, comprising of monthly workshops, peer observation and mentoring. The administration of this section of the school was of the belief that teacher leaders required support to build on their skills of decision making and collaborative inquiry, in order to mobilize others to closely examine their practices and the contexts in which they work. To fulfill this need a programme was developed by the two Professional Development Teachers working in the school.*

*The theoretical framework guiding this programme is drawn from Schools That Learn (2000) by Peter Senge and his co-authors. The course is based on the premise that a school, like any other organization, can take on a learning orientation by developing five key disciplines: personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning and systems thinking. The methodology used for the course is collaborative inquiry and reflection. Required reading is discussed in the light of classroom practice and individual understanding of school culture.*

*This symposium will report on and assess the effectiveness of the programme. The data has been collected from the Team Learning Journal, which is a cumulative reflective journal maintained by all the participants of the programme, periodic questionnaires and personal experiences.*

*The following issues will be the focus of the discussion:*

- 1. The shift teacher leaders have made in their understanding of leadership*
- 2. How far the course has helped to develop*
  - personal competence (self-awareness, and self-management)*

- *social competence (awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns, and developing a rapport with others)*
3. *The development in teacher leaders' understanding of*
- *how teachers' beliefs, attitudes and values influence teaching and learning*
  - *how to build a sense of shared purpose among colleagues*

*The data points to the following as significant changes in teachers' understanding, attitudes and skills:*

1. *Educational leadership should not be equated with positions, nor is it about charisma. There are no ready-made solutions to teacher problems.*
2. *A key factor for any learning is the building of relationships through trust and openness.*
3. *Personal growth was recognized, especially in teachers' levels of patience and tolerance.*
4. *A conscious effort is being made to improve conversational skills.*
5. *Personal commitment, belief, energy and the ability to reflect and evaluate oneself are necessary for initiating change and sustaining its momentum.*

## **Introduction**

It is globally observed that educational leadership is becoming increasingly complex and that the role of the heads of schools is changing dramatically. Recent literature stresses that school leadership needs to extend beyond the person of the principal, and that leadership should be distributed among educators at the school site. However, teacher leadership is not simply about power. Rather, it is about mobilizing the still largely untapped attributes of teachers to strengthen student performance at ground level, and about working toward real collaboration, as well as a locally tailored kind of shared leadership. This concept was put into practice at the Kindergarten and Junior Sections of Karachi Grammar School, when its management team introduced the role of teacher leaders at these two sites. It was acknowledged that the school system had not been organized to build teachers as leaders. Thus the two Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) were entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the appointed teacher leaders to better understand the said role and

its responsibilities. Other than this no guidelines were specified. After much research and consultation with people in leadership positions, the Professional Development Teachers decided to use Peter Senge's book, *Schools That Learn*, as the theoretical basis for developing a course for the teacher leaders. *Schools That Learn* presents a model for educational leadership, which requires that all teachers 'act with greater autonomy, draw their own conclusions, lead as well as follow, question difficult issues in a safe manner, and risk failure so that they may build capabilities for future successes' (Senge, 2000, p.7).

The programme requires the teachers to study and apply five key disciplines, to not only the classroom and with their colleagues, but also with the other members of the school community. These are:

1. **Personal Mastery** – the practice of articulating a personal vision alongside a realistic assessment of the current reality of your life. The tension created helps in expanding a person's capacity to achieve more and make better choices.
2. **Shared Vision** – developing a sense of commitment to an organization by sharing images of a future that they hope to create together.
3. **Mental Models** – developing an awareness of attitudes and perceptions, one's own and those of others around you, examining these clearly and honestly and talking about them safely and productively.
4. **Team Learning** – developing skills of dialogue in order for the members of the group to learn from one another, and to collectively arrive at an understanding that is deeper than the sum of the individual member's talents.
5. **Systems Thinking** – using tools and techniques to understand interdependency and change.

*'Leading in a Culture of Change- Personal Action Guide and Workbook'* by Michael Fullan was used as a reference, but only with the third group of Teacher Leaders. The theoretical orientation of this book is so, that in order to face the complexities of life in an organization such as a school; a leader needs to develop a new mindset. This is referred to as a framework for leadership, and comprises of five key components: moral purpose, understanding change, building relationships, creating and sharing knowledge and making coherence. Fullan also underpins three personal characteristics that key leaders possess: energy, enthusiasm and hope.

## **Structure and Methodology of the Programme**

Each Teacher Leadership Programme is for a period of two years. Meetings are held once a week, after school hours, and each session is for an hour and a half. Initially, teacher leaders were selected from each year group along with leaders in the subject areas of Urdu, Art and Physical Education. Later, amendments were made and a leader chosen from among the science teachers also joined the programme.

Every week the teacher leaders are required to individually enter their thoughts about the session in a reflective journal. They respond to specific questions asked of them, considering how they are enacting, or will enact the ideas in their practical lives. These entries are then transcribed verbatim into a 'Team Learning Journal' (Senge, 2000, p. 353) and distributed to the team. At the end of every term the 'Cumulative Learning Journal' (Senge, 2000, p. 353) is used to help team members examine the trends and patterns they observe in the thinking of the group. Readings are intended to provide a basis upon which to build their reflections, analyses and critiques.

The programme uses the methodology of collaborative inquiry. Palmer's idea, as cited in Senge (p. 216) of 'a classroom being both bounded and open' is applied, and a structure for our conversation established. The leaders are encouraged to adhere to this structure in their dealings with groups of people, children or other teachers, and in order to develop a deeper level of conversation and hence a deeper level of thought throughout the organization. Building the capability for better conversation is key to developing a deeper understanding and in learning from one another. Teacher leaders are encouraged to apply their understanding in their practical lives, and to reflect on their levels of success the positive changes that are coming about in themselves, in others and in their environment. An attempt is made to integrate theory and practice so that teacher leaders use ways of thinking about educational leadership that are grounded in particular contexts. As a result of this effort, the teacher leaders have a visible presence in our schools, not as a controlling force but as genuine professionals.

## **The Larger Picture**

This programme does not stand in isolation. It is important to understand that it is only one component of the professional development at the Kindergarten and Junior Sections of the school. The diagram below shows various other

components of how teachers are helped in the honing of their professional knowledge and skills.

(diagram)

This paper now discusses the three issues highlighted in the abstract. Each section has been written by one of the participants of the symposium.

## **Shifts Teacher-Leaders Have Made in their Understanding of Leadership**

When I was entrusted with the responsibility of being a teacher-leader, I did not understand what the job would entail. I was working in a relatively isolated environment in which my classroom was my kingdom. I only shared my ideas with colleagues in the hour-long weekly planning meeting.

The idea of being leader was exciting, but brought with it a certain amount of trepidation. What was expected of me? Would I have to insist that my team follow certain guidelines? Was I to be a manager without any real power - a toothless tiger?

My apprehensions were allayed when I attended the first meeting of the Teacher Leadership Programme. I discovered that the other teacher leaders were in the same predicament, and that the two facilitators of the course would guide the group to help us understand and develop our roles as leaders.

Early on in the course, we learnt about the skill of team learning. We discovered that in order to be effective as a group, team members do not necessarily need to think alike. The concept of team learning accepts that even though people retain their individuality, their efforts need to move in a common direction. Dialogue is the most effective practice for team learning, and dialogue proved to be the cornerstone of our development as leaders.

Through productive conversation and collaborative learning, the group was able to develop a shared vision of what the qualities of a leader ought to be. As I wrote in my reflective journal,

‘A leader needs to have a clear vision of where he is going, and where he is taking the team.’

Another teacher leader wrote that ‘breaking the defensive walls around us and listening to others for meaning’ could achieve this.



A structure for our conversations was established and we were able to air our views and worries in a safe and unthreatening environment. Our group hence developed a shared vision that a teacher-leader's primary task is to develop collaboration amongst team members, and to be a source of support and motivation for the team.

We realised the need to become reflective practitioners, to think critically about what we were doing and where we were going. As one teacher put it, 'We need to question what we are doing and not accept passively what we are told.'

It became clear that a leader was different from a manager, and that charisma alone did not make an effective leader. The group came to the conclusion that, as a leader, each person had to 'look at things positively, start with small successes and have clear objectives.'

A journal entry stated: 'Only by being a thinker could one hope to develop as a teacher and a leader.'

Hours of productive conversation allowed the group to build a consensus about how teams and children learn, and what our goals ought to be. We realised that unless we went through the process of creating our own vision and set our own goals, we would not really come to enjoy a deeper understanding of each other. By developing an awareness of one's personal vision and then building on it with other people's vision, the group came up with a shared vision so that we could all move forward together.

An important step in understanding and building our vision of leadership was to have awareness in one's own assumptions and prejudices, being able to distinguish between managerial skills and leadership skills, and practicing critical reflection and effective conversation skills. The awareness that everybody has their own mental models helped group members examine and question their own, thereby being more receptive to their biases, which blocked the formation of new ideas. As one teacher noted, 'When writing rough remarks for report-books, one realizes the mental models one has. Often the marks a child obtains do not coincide with the picture the teacher has formed of the child's ability. The consequences of such mindsets can be many and far-reaching, as any judgements we make, or preconceived notions we have, effect how we interact with the children'.

For the teacher leaders this was a journey of self-knowledge, for according to her personality and the dynamics of the group she was leading, she discovered which leadership style she was most comfortable with. One of the leaders observed that

her particular area of the school was run through ‘a healthy balance between control and initiative, which has resulted in a sense of collective responsibility amongst teachers, administration and parents.’

Personally I adopted a democratic style in which each teacher’s ideas were valued and discussed using the skills of advocacy and inquiry. Planning meetings became a time when we could share strategies and discuss any problem areas. I aimed to be supportive and helpful in order to develop a rapport with each teacher. I felt that people should feel free to express their opinions in an environment that was safe and free from criticism. In this respect I tried to be a good role model by refining my own practice and reflecting on what I was doing.

By the end of the programme, the belief that leadership is a quality of one’s practice was firmly in place. As I wrote in my Reflective Journal at the end of the two-year course,

‘A change of any kind requires a personal commitment and the support of a network of people with whom one can share ideas and concerns.’

I came into the Leadership Programme with an open mind and few expectations. It was therefore doubly beneficial for me, as I became aware of my own strengths, and was also able to articulate my thoughts and clarify my thinking.’

I agree with Senge that ‘Effective leadership entails challenging people to think about what they do and what they create instead of telling them’ (Senge, 2000, p. 319).

## **Relationship Building and Changes in Personal Competence**

Building relationships is a key component of leadership. ‘The one factor common to every successful change is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better. If they remain the same or get worse, ground is lost. Therefore leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups, especially with people different from themselves” (Fullen, 2004, p.4). This programme helped in developing the interpersonal skills necessary for building relationships. In response to an assessment questionnaire, the teacher leaders wrote that they have learnt to: ‘think positively’, ‘be more patient, understanding and encouraging’, ‘listen without interrupting’, ‘respect individual differences’, ‘reflect on our practices’, and ‘resolve differences through dialogue’.

Skills of productive conversation, like the check-in. and balancing inquiry with advocacy, consciously practiced during the leadership sessions, taught us to walk the ladder of inference slowly and to make our own thinking process visible.

Responses to assessment questionnaires were evidence that interpersonal skills were being honed. Teacher leaders saw themselves as 'more receptive to the ideas of others, the staff, the administration and the students in an effort to build a shared vision'. Discussion was encouraged and they refrained from forming mental models without inquiry. They were now more able to appreciate 'people as people'.

A very valuable contribution that this programme made was developing in teacher leaders an awareness of their core beliefs about learning and change. A big step forward was that they could now identify areas in which they need to grow and how they would go about doing this. This indicates a growth in self-confidence, a belief in one's own competencies and judgements, and an ability to be more self-analytical. Some of the perceived needs, as expressed in the assessment questionnaire, were:

- Read and research more.
- I need to help teachers with organizational skills, time management skills and prioritizing.
- I need to develop creative skills through which children can develop their interest in the subject.
- Develop a more positive attitude.
- Develop strategies of building curriculum.

Personally, this programme alerted me to an opportunity through which I could enhance my own knowledge about teaching and learning, and to bring to the surface and scrutinize the belief system underlying my classroom practice. It also urged me to communicate and share my learning effectively with others in order to create a school that learns, the philosophy that underpins the programme.

This motivated me to initiate a programme in the Kindergarten Section, which is now the basis of our Behaviour Policy. Together with the Assistant Headmistress, the PDT and a core group of teachers, workshops were conducted to carry the staff through the stages of learning, understanding and internalizing, 'The Quality Circle Time' (Mosley, 1996). This core group continues

to identify circle time activities every week. I ascribe this ability to lead a group forward to a renewed confidence in my self and my abilities.

Similarly, other teacher leaders have also shown the ability to tailor for themselves a path towards professional growth and professional satisfaction. One teacher leader went on to take a course in Montessori methods, and yet another is being trained as a counselor.

## **Developing a Shared Purpose**

One of the basic aims of the teacher leadership programme has been to support the teacher leaders in acquiring the skills needed to be effective as leaders. This programme has been non-evaluative by nature as far as the participants are concerned. No mechanism other than the personal reflective journal was developed to identify the progress of the teacher leaders. However, the effectiveness of the facilitators and of the programme was periodically evaluated with the help of assessment questionnaires. As the teacher leaders became aware of this approach to the programme, they automatically relaxed with frank and open discussions and honest reflections. To complement this, the programme taught them different skills needed for a dialogue, which, according to Senge (2000), is a sustained collective inquiry that opens new grounds to examine our daily practices. In the practice of dialogue this course taught the participants not only to pay attention to the words, but to the tone of the voice and the body language. As a response to a question on an assessment questionnaire, the teacher leaders wrote that ‘they have learnt to listen without interrupting’, ‘share freely and seek solutions’, ‘resolve differences through dialogue and accept differences without getting agitated’. The teacher leaders further reported that ‘they have learnt to value each other, which was more than just thinking together to analyse a problem’. A collective sensibility and sensitivity started to evolve as a result of these candid conversations and active listening by the participants. The emotions, values, beliefs and attitudes didn’t simply stay with the individual but belonged to the whole group. The journal entries of different teacher leadership groups repeatedly emphasized that the major shift that they experienced was in their improved methods of communication, which resulted in creating a shared vision for the improvement of teaching and learning. This progress was not restricted specifically to the teacher leadership groups; it also had a trickle down effect. The leaders shared their learning with their teams and demonstrated the newly acquired skills in their daily practices with children and colleagues. Another reported outcome was in the form of “better managed, well-organized and focused weekly planning meetings” (journal entry). The feelings of

one leader: “more is accomplished now in the planning meetings as compared to the past” (journal entry) were actually voiced by many.

Efforts were made to build a shared purpose among the teachers and for them to translate this understanding in their classrooms. The teacher leaders were encouraged to open discussions with their students on topics like “What would you like the classroom to be like?” “What classroom rules should be followed?” The teacher leaders reported a shift in their attitude towards their students. The teacher leaders were now ‘refraining from making mental models’, ‘dealing with children as individuals’, ‘encouraging children to question and inquire’ and ‘being more patient’ (journal entries). A list of intellectual behaviours was offered as an observation of students’ growth in creativity and intelligence so that paper and pencil tests do not stay as the sole criteria for students’ assessment. The intellectual behaviours were discussed in the light of the varying age groups in school. Their relevance and effectiveness was attested to by the fact that they were later shared with the whole school in a monthly workshop.

Exercises in mapping mental models helped the teacher leaders in realizing the differences and similarities in their beliefs, attitudes and thinking as compared to their colleagues. ‘These exercises are having an impact on the culture of our (year) group’ (journal entry). Internalizing the benefit one teacher leader was experiencing from these, she wrote that, ‘We need to break the defensive walls around us and listen to others for meaning’.

A deeper understanding of each other’s beliefs and practices resulted in mutual respect. A journal entry expressed this in the following way, ‘The wealth of experiences available is clearly visible in all our discussions, so far’.

Sessions designed to analyse our system of education resulted in the realization of the extent of our rigidity in following the principles of industrialization, such as uniformity, punctuality, standardization, routine, drill, training and conformity. ‘The schools of today are like an assembly line’ and ‘we are under a stress which we are passing on to our children’ were two of the journal entries in this regard. These lead to an awareness of ‘how entrenched we are in a system’ (journal entry), and blindly follow some of our existing practices; for example, “labeling children as smart and dumb” (journal entry).

The sessions on *developing guiding principles for preparing transformative educational leaders, developing a covenant of beliefs about learning and examining current reality* lead to generating commitment and energy. The long conversations and reflections resulted in examining these principles, and relating them to our current practices. These were effective exercises in trying to develop

a shared professional purpose. Similar exercises were done with each teacher leadership group, as this was considered a continuous process; something that needs to be revisited regularly as it guides our daily practices.

In a nutshell, “this course is not something done to someone, but a platform for *real discourse* about *real issues*” (journal entry).

## **Closing Remarks**

It is imperative to share with the reader the aspects of the course for which we are still looking for solutions.

Throughout this programme the teacher leaders have been expected to voice their opinion regarding improvements for this programme. The following suggestions were beyond the scope of this programme: individual evaluation by the facilitators, external assessment of the teachers, seeing of videos to improve classroom practice and observation of teachers in other schools. However, some of the recommendations were addressed. These included: changing the timings of the sessions, discussing the reflections, tackling the key issues in school, observing the teachers in their classrooms, offering simpler readings and providing equal opportunity to all the participants.

In turn, the PDTs tried to encourage the teacher leaders to take on more responsibility for their own learning by initiating ideas for sessions and sharing reading material. They were also urged to be more critical of the methodology used by the facilitators of the course. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

In order to sustain the change process, the PDTs devised a structure whereby a monthly meeting with the leaders and the Headmistresses of the two sections would replace the session. This also could not be sustained. Another structure that petered out was to arrange a once-a-term meeting between the present leadership group and those who had previously held that position. The PDTs realize that unless ways are found of providing leaders with a forum where real issues are discussed and where ideas are shared, the momentum of the programme might be lost. There is need now to ‘concentrate more on leadership activities in sustaining deep change processes, and less on leadership characteristics.’ (Senge, 1999, p. 19)

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# Teacher Education and Research in Central Asia

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## Abstract

*This is a collection of three papers presented as a symposium. It examines current conditions of teacher education both pre-service and in-service teacher education, as well as issues related to conducting research in education in Central Asia. The presentations are based on qualitative studies by Niyozov (2001), Joldoshalieva (2004) and Shamatov (2005). In addition, the presenters rely on personal professional experiences and comprehensive review of literature on teacher education in Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia. The symposium presents issues of teacher education and seeks implications and recommendations for further improvement of quality teacher education in Central Asia.*

*After the break-up of the USSR, Central Asian states started experiencing serious problems in teacher education. The quality of teacher education both at pre-service and in-service levels has been deteriorating remarkably due to the governments' inability to finance, lowering prestige of teaching profession and lack of innovative ideas for improvements and sustainability. There is considerable decrease in the number of young people choosing teaching profession. The great majority of students in pre-service teacher education programs in higher educational institutions do not want to become teachers upon graduation. Those graduates who join teaching begin at the lowest salary scale and are assigned the most difficult assignments. In addition, due to low payment and harsh economic conditions, many qualified teachers have left the school system altogether and have taken better-paid jobs to provide their families with basic necessities. Thus, teachers in Central Asia struggle with many problems, including working with unqualified or poorly qualified colleagues, low payment, and shortage of resources including textbooks, unmotivated pupils and working and living in worsening conditions. Teachers have to supplement their income by taking up extra work in order to fulfill their material needs; many teach more hours or teach in more than one school. Furthermore, many teachers work on their farms or in household businesses after school to supplement their incomes. Thus, they have little or no time for*



*professional development. They can no longer attend professional development in-service courses or seminars regularly. The collection consists of three separate papers. **First, Jamal Papieva** (page 779) examines the issues of preparing teachers at pre-service teacher education. **The second paper is by Rahat Joldoshalieva** (page 788), who analyzes the in-service teacher education. **Finally, Sarfaroz Niyozov and Duishon Shamatov** (page 807) present their ideas of conducting educational research in Central Asia.*

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# **Pre-Service Teacher Education in Central Asia**

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This paper presents the nature of pre-service teacher education in Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia, a case of Kyrgyzstan; highlights the main issues and discusses the possibilities and approaches undertaken for improving pre-service teacher education.

After Central Asian republics gained independence, their higher education was challenged by broad changes in political and economic life, and by the destruction of their ideological values. In general, higher education was always part of the bigger Soviet system of education. All principles of higher education structurization, its missions and goals, its strategy and main curriculum requirements were centrally developed in Moscow, and then sent for implementation to the republics. This experience of living in a big system and its historical legacy left our institutions of higher education unprepared for independence.

## **Structure of Pre-Service Teacher Education**

Teachers of Central Asian schools are prepared in institutes and universities. During the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), all higher educational institutions were state-funded; which meant that students studied for free. Moreover, most students were also eligible for state stipends. Since independence, private institutions have been opened. In addition, contract education emerged within public universities, i.e. the state higher institutions also re-organized themselves into “budget” (no-fee) and “contract” (fee-paying) programs due to budget constraints.

Moreover, the number of higher educational institutions has been increasing: new institutions have been opened and also branches of institutions are opened in different districts, regions of the country. Although, this paints a picture of a more educated generation and of creating opportunities for the youth living in remote areas to get higher education, but the quality of education that these institutions and their branches provide is debatable. They compete with each other for students and constantly attempt to expand their enrolments. These institutions also “pump out” fees from people by opening market-oriented, fee-paying course specialties in haste without sufficient resources, thus offering

expensive but poor-quality education and graduating inadequately trained specialists (Beshimov, 2001).

Pre-service teacher education is normally for four to five years. Each academic year contains of two semesters: first is from September till January, the second from February till June (July).

## **Student Enrolment**

Pre-service teacher education institutions generally enrol students via entrance examinations.

School graduates mostly prefer to enter the department that are more 'prestigious': medical, law, foreign languages and economic departments. These departments are considered to be more 'prestigious' than others, because there is more demand for the specialists of these areas, the salaries are higher and also there are possibilities of being involved in international organizations. Thus, interest for studying in departments specialized to prepare teachers is comparatively low; and student enrolment in teacher education departments is decreasing.

Although, foreign languages departments are mostly aimed at preparing foreign languages teachers, most of the students who apply for study there do not have the intentions of becoming teachers; rather their purpose is to learn languages. Some students enter teachers' specialized departments, because it is relatively easier to get admission to those departments, and after 1-2 years they can get transfer to other prestigious faculties, just for the sake of getting admission in the university.

Entrance examinations to higher educational institutions have been surrounded by controversies related to the objectivity of examination questions and tests, nepotism, favouritism and corruption. Those who had connections or could offer bribes were in better positions to get enrolment in higher education institutions. Children from rural areas and from poorer backgrounds find it difficult to enter higher education institutions (Romanchuk, 2002).

Seeking to combat this desperate state of affairs in entering higher educational institutions through corruption, nepotism and favouritism, in 2002 the government of Kyrgyzstan called for the creation of an independent testing center that would design and conduct a merit-based National Scholarship Test for scholarship selection purposes. (Drummond & DeYoung, 2004). This

examination replaced the previous system of examinations administered by higher education institutions for applicants seeking government scholarships. The testing enables the deserving applicants to win government scholarships and thus get enrolled in higher education institutions. Teams of the testing center claim that despite the success of the testing initiative since the three years of its implementation, weak governance and widespread corruption fosters conditions that might continue to make sustainability of independent testing challenging for its proponents. An issue that continues to occur in this project is that some schools, usually in urban areas, are better resourced and have better teachers; and hence they invest more in students and are often quicker at introducing innovation, and hence may be better at preparing kids for the kinds of tasks faced on tests. Most of the schools of rural areas face the problem of teacher shortage, and a subsequent lack of teaching and learning resources, and this situation effects on the students' performance at tests. Moreover, there is mismatch between the test and nature of school education i.e. test items require higher order thinking to which the students are not trained at schools

## Curriculum

In pre-service teacher education programs, beginning teachers are introduced to theoretical and practical (formal) knowledge about teaching. As Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) write, student teachers “lay an intellectual and practical foundation for teaching in education courses and field experiences” (p.65). Student teachers learn about teaching, learning, pupils and subject-matter (Cochran-Smith, 1991). They also obtain moral and values education.

## Content

The student teachers study three interrelated disciplines (Kerr, 1990):

1. **Special Disciplines.** Student teachers study a particular subject such as Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, History and so on. This portion of the curriculum constitutes about 70 percent of the total course of the study.

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· See Drummond and DeYoung (2004) for a detailed discussion about the challenges of introducing national testing.

2. **Social Disciplines.** Formerly all social disciplines were heavily based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Nowadays, this portion of the curriculum is being replaced to focus on generic social disciplines including Basic Psychology and Sociology.
3. **Pedagogical Disciplines.** This portion of the curriculum includes Pedagogy, History of Education, Educational Psychology, Child Development, and Teaching Methods, in general and in particular to a specific subject (for example, Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages).

Although, Marxist-Leninist content is removed from the curriculum, still the content is overloaded. Some subjects taught in certain departments are not actually necessary for particular specializations. For example, the students of the foreign languages department have to study maths for one semester. There are no elective courses for the students, and all disciplines are compulsory.

Pre-service teacher educational institutions may not seem particularly attractive to prospective students, because the format, the methods and to a certain extent, the content of teacher preparation, have not substantially changed since independence. The system lacks student-centered orientation in methodological and academic training. Moreover, faculty staff of the higher education institutions is inadequate. As most of the teachers left teaching or changed their jobs for better paid ones, institutions have to hire young teachers - graduates who don't have teaching experience at all and school teachers who don't have enough experience working in the system of higher education. No professional support is structured and provided for them at the beginning.

## **Teaching Practicum**

During pre-service teacher education, the students are involved in student teaching practicum, which is regarded as an important stage in future teachers' development (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). Future teachers get opportunities to apply to their practice what they have learned in their formal training. During the initial years of their pre-service education, student teachers go to schools for a practicum focused on working with children to foster "upbringing" (Kerr, 1990). This school practicum is called 'passive practice'. Student teachers spend two weeks at school observing lessons conducted by senior students and teachers of the school. The purpose of this practice is to get acquainted with curricular and extracurricular activities of the school, the schoolteachers and the teaching in general. At the end of the practice the student teachers are to organize one activity in education / moral development. As a result of practicum, student

teachers get *zachet* (test-credit) based on the activity they conducted and according to their diligence. During the later stages of their teacher education, student teachers have a practicum of full-time subject teaching, for 6-8 weeks, supervised by both pedagogical institution faculty and school teachers. They carefully plan each lesson and conduct it under their guidance and supervision. They observe each others lessons and they are also given the responsibility for the students of one class acting as a class-tutor. It is good opportunity for the students to experiment with their learning and to practice them in real classrooms; to learn to deal with students' academic and non-academic matters; to realize the issues pertaining to teaching and seeking for their solutions or alternatives; and finally to learn how to design lesson plans and to prepare visual aids for teaching.

However, during teaching practicum the students face challenges with managing a classroom, applying the instructional strategies learned in their pre-service programs, and working under the close observation and guidance of their teacher education tutor and assigning school teacher. They worry about the pressures of the school and classroom culture; they feel insecure about their supervisors and their evaluation. Pupils also realize that student teachers are not their real full-time teachers, and consequently they may treat student teachers less seriously than they treat their full-time teachers. As a result, student teachers mostly complete their practicum as merely a formal degree requirement; some view practicum experiences as frustrating and fraught with unmet expectations. They feel that they are often not provided opportunities and freedom to practice as they wish, due to the constraints of their practicum, issues with their tutors' agendas and expectations, and because of the school teachers' views of teaching, which may vary from their own. Due to numerous pressures, student teachers aim to meet their supervisors' expectations, and at times may end up acting in ways that do not match their images of teaching; as a result, student teachers become vulnerable, conservative and unwilling to take risks.

## **Textbooks**

Since independence, education reform has focused on revising textbooks published during the Soviet times – particularly textbooks containing outdated information. Although the ideological stance has changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the legacy of an ideology that stressed the existence of one truth prevails, and most of the educators are still searching for the definitive textbook that will replace the old one. There are very limited skills in developing good quality textbooks that would be more comprehensive, be aware of age group requirements, be less abstract and fact oriented, and result in encouraging

critical thinking. Textbooks developed in past years are not linked to the new pedagogy and teacher training. Moreover, higher education institutions are mostly using textbooks that were published during the USSR, and as mostly books are in Russian there is huge demand for the textbooks in national languages. The situation of the students who study in departments with the Uzbek medium of instruction is critical. Textbooks and other resources used to be obtained from Uzbekistan, but due to a shift from Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet, which was introduced in 1996 in Uzbekistan; it became difficult for Uzbek students with textbooks. Because, mostly textbooks published in Uzbekistan are in the Latin alphabet, but Kyrgyzstan follows Cyrillic.

In general the shortage of textbooks and other learning materials ranges from significant to critical.

## **Assessment**

At the end of each semester the students have to take a number of examinations and *zachets* (test-credit) on the subjects they study throughout the semester. Corruption can also be seen in the process of the assessment. The students who fail exams and tests usually bribe faculty members to get passing marks and a promotion to the next level. Such cases discourage students to study, as they might think that if they can get marks easily then why waste time and effort in understanding the course work. For example, as the students of foreign languages departments study mathematics for one semester, they bribe teachers of maths to get marks for exams, as they do not study it, thinking they don't need it, however they have to pass that course because all subjects are compulsory.

Moreover, all examinations are oral which entail cramming and cheating, hence leaving no opportunity for developing the students' writing skills.

At the end of last semester of the final year, the students have to write diploma papers and have to sit for state exams. As the students are not encouraged to practice paper writing during the study and not offered the courses of academic writing, the quality of diploma paper is not up to the level. It looks like just literature review with image of plagiarism.

## **After Graduation**

It is very disturbing that a large number of teacher education graduates never become full-time teachers, because of the unattractiveness of the teaching

profession. The greater majority of students in pre-service teacher education programs in higher educational institutions do not want to become teachers upon graduation. Every year, between 1000 and 1500 people graduate from pre-service teacher education programs, both state-funded and fee-funded. Only about 30 percent of all these graduates take teaching jobs at all, further exacerbating the serious teacher shortage (Open Society Institute, 2002).

Teachers in Kyrgyzstan struggle with many problems, including teacher shortages, unqualified colleagues, low payment and a shortage of resources including textbooks, unmotivated pupils; along with working and living in worsening conditions. Therefore, the graduates of pre-service teacher education institutions are reluctant to work as teachers upon graduation. Instead, they try to get well-paid jobs, even if they are not in the specialized area.

To address the issue of teacher shortages, the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan issued a decree in 1993 which obliges the graduates from the state-funded “budget” programs, to be placed in a school to teach two years before they are awarded their teaching certificate (Kerr, 1990; Sweeney, 1993). However, only half of the graduates from state-funded courses go to the schools assigned in their placements (Bekbolotov, 2000). In addition, the placement program often allows new teachers to negotiate placement in preferred urban areas. For example, 1984 graduates from pedagogic institutions were assigned to schools in 2004, but only 270 of them were assigned to rural schools (*Kyrgyzinfo*, September 1, 2004). Moreover, the same issue of corruption can be observed here, graduates try to get their degrees before the two years and get assigned to rural areas through personal connections and bribing.

The government is trying to attract and retain more young teachers at schools to address the issue of teacher shortage. To encourage the new graduates of teacher education institutions into joining teaching, the government of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Education have been attempting to provide these young people with various incentives. As an additional inducement for new graduates to enter the profession, new teachers with less than 3 years of teaching experience are also entitled to location allowances in addition to their salaries; they get an extra 100, 200 or 300 *som* (Kyrgyz money currency) per month in town, rural and remote schools respectively. Especially, officials are trying to attract new teacher education graduates to rural schools by promising to create better working

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· Concessions are provided to married graduates as well as to those who got outstanding academic records. These graduates are allowed to choose their school of placement.



conditions, or by providing the teachers with land plots from the village governments.

With the purpose of retaining young graduates from teacher education institutions and colleges at rural public schools, the government of Kyrgyzstan introduced a new project titled “Deposit for Young Teachers” in 2004 with the help of grants from the International Financial Institutions (Kanimetova, 2005). To execute this program, the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic organized a competitive recruiting campaign for selecting beginning teachers. The main criteria for their selection were: a teacher education diploma, possession of cultural-ethical norms and a commitment to the teaching profession. For this program, 200 beginning teachers were to be selected, sign a contract and be credited 2000 *som* monthly in addition to their salaries, for a total of 76,000 *som* each that they can withdraw only after completing their contracts. Beginning teachers selected for this program will have undergone training and work three years at the schools to which they are assigned. The government officials believe that retaining these selected young teachers at village schools for three years will achieve its purpose, because after working in rural schools for three years the teachers will probably adapt to local conditions and continue to teach at the same schools.

Some measures and attempts have been undertaken to improve the quality of pre-service teacher education and higher education in general, by the governments and institutions. However, some of the approaches failed and some have succeeded. Even with success, the said measures have had to go through huge challenges and dilemmas, which have left a telling impact on the whole system.

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# Continuous Teacher Professional Development in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan

*Rahat Joldoshalieva, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

Учитель остается учителем до тех пор пока учится. Как только он перестает учиться в нем умирает учитель!

К. Д. Ушинский

A teacher is the one as long as he or she keeps learning. As soon as he or she stops learning, the teacher in him or her dies.

Ushinski, K. D.

## Background: In-Service Teacher Education in Soviet and Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan

Continuous teacher professional development was an important aspect of Soviet education. Termed as *perepodgotovka* [retraining] *i povyshenie kvalifikatsii* [qualification raising], in-service teacher education programs in Soviet Kyrgyz Republic were systematically implemented through the state-funded Kyrgyz Institute of Education and other *oblast* [province] teacher retraining institutes. In-service training courses both on-site and off-site were of different durations. The courses varied from full time to part time, from ongoing, problem-based and goal-oriented, to the thematic. Apart from this, different seminars, theoretical and practical conferences, research experiments, consultative meetings and competitions (Teacher of the Year, etc) were part of professional development programs. In spite of these, an off-site one-month course was the dominant practice in teacher professional development since the 1960's (Kibardina, 1997). In addition, the teacher professional development was also monitored and supported by city and district education departments under the supervision of Oblast Education Department. According to the policy, after 5 years of service,

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† I employ this term to describe all the programs/activities for serving teachers and synonymously using with 'in-service teacher education'. This excludes initial or pre-service teacher education programs.

every teacher was required to attend monthly courses in the Oblast Teacher Retraining Institutes.

During Soviet Union, 50% of the content of off-site courses was devoted to the ideological and political education where Marxist-Leninist ideology and Communist Party achievements were emphasized. This was because school teachers had the mandate to educate the “Soviet citizens”. The other 50% was concentrated on specific subject content and pedagogy development with the introduction to educational innovations (Kibardina, 1997). The pedagogy of these courses was lectures, discussions and problem situations. Kerr (1991) criticizes USSR teacher re-training,

...the opportunities teachers had been in fact quite limited: A few days of few years spent in a state Institute for Teacher Improvement (Institut Uovershenstvovania Uchitelei), an Institute for Qualification Raising (Institut povysheniia kvalifikatsii)... The faculty at these institutes were not (in general; there were exceptions) highly regarded by teachers, and the material they learned there often was not seen as very relevant to their daily concerns on the job. (p. 5)

In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, scholars like Babaev, Baltabaev, Bekboev, Timafeev, Palagina and Kibardina studied different teacher re-training program components. However, published in local languages (Russian, Kyrgyz) to many outsider-researchers this area appears as un-researched. Highlighting the issues of in-service teacher education practices in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, Kibardina (1997) stated that teacher professional development continues to be the responsibility of Kyrgyz Institute of Education, Oblast Teacher Retraining Institutes (OTRI), in collaboration with the city and district education departments. To add to her discussion, since independence, as similar activities to OTRI’s other institutions have been offering professional development opportunities for teachers. This compares favorably with the limited choices in the Soviet era.

Foremost, the disintegration of USSR has negatively affected professional development opportunities, and this is related to general economic decline. They became irregular and not affordable for teachers, as they were required to share some costs (transport, accommodation, etc) to attend these courses. According to OSI-Education Support Program Report (2002), “Professional support and recognition of teachers decreased as the state failed to fulfill their legal obligations to provide regular in-service training.” (p. 17).

Currently, imbalances and shortage of teachers in many subjects in rural locations are in catastrophic state. Due to difficult living conditions and irregularity in teacher salary distribution, rural schools do not attract fresh university graduates. Various mechanisms to address teacher shortage problem were implemented. Schools hired correspondence course and/or part-time university students, invited retired teachers and recruited fresh school graduates. However, by recruiting unqualified teachers, the quality of teacher performance also deteriorated. This situation emphasized for serious consideration of diversifying in-service teacher education to meet contextual needs within the realities of tight budgets.

Small scale exploratory study was conducted to investigate existing realities of in-service teacher education in the post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, by capturing the voices of serving teachers themselves, of their management and of the teacher educators. To do so, I employed semi-structured interviews. Overall, twenty seven individual semi-structured interviews from school principals and subject teachers of four city schools—two newly-opened private schools and two government schools—and teacher educators of oblast institute for teacher retraining and city education department master trainers in Osh oblast, southern Kyrgyzstan, were obtained. Data was collected between December 2003 and January 2004. In addition, I observed some teacher professional development at schools, sessions at teacher retraining institute and the city teachers' January *dekada*. As the data was collected from the city schools, the findings and discussion excludes the realities of in-service teacher education in the rural schools.

## Findings

### Existing Continuous Teacher Professional Development

Some structures and activities for school teachers' professional development reflected the activities of Soviet in-service teacher education, with the exception of the new opportunities provided by organizations other than the government. Three major approaches, namely the off-site courses, school-based and self-initiated activities for teacher professional development, co-exist and supplement each other in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan schools.

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° It will be discussed later in this paper.

The courses which were conducted outside the schools were defined as *off-site courses*. These included the courses by the government-run Oblast Teacher Retraining Institutes (OTRI).

In addition, the city education department, in collaboration with Kyrgyz Institute of Education, organized annual “January” and “August” conferences, mostly known as *dekada*. The following observation was noted in technical drawing teachers’ subject meeting during a January *dekada*.

The session started with a school teacher presenting her report on didactic methods of teaching this subject. This was followed by a city education department methodologist who informed teachers about upcoming inspection from Ministry of Education from Bishkek and gave a list of required documents to file. He dictated that calendar plans should be complete and neatly done, along with teacher resume (CV) and plan of club activities, monitoring and analysis of children’s learning of subject, classroom decorations, and notebook on self-education and teacher reports. Teachers requested to explain what resume meant. Head of this subject department for city schools shared the structure of the resume. Teachers further shared the concerns over lack of own classrooms for decoration and other resources. The methodologist further ordered teachers to share the classrooms with other subject areas and decorate and find resources for documentation and decoration. He stated, “Your students don’t know very simplistic skills in technical drawing because quality of teaching is not good. (Obs. January, 2004)

Other seminars were offered by international institutions (e.g. Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan). A teacher shared his experience from one of these seminars and courses.

I have attended the course on “Yiman ” in Jalal Abad. This subject is newly introduced to schools. The course was conducted by some Americans and our own educators. It was interesting course as they used many interactive methods. I am now trying to implement those learnings in my teaching. (Primary class teacher, School G)

Geopolitical interests in the region were also reflected in in-service teacher education. Some courses funded by countries with own political interests existed in the system. As for example, Russian Federation funded programs which

offered short term courses for Russian medium school teachers at one of the universities of Kyrgyzstan. For Russia, it was strategic to support the Russian language instruction in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan where Russian was recognized as an official language.

**School-based activities** for teacher development were *metod ob'edinenie*, mentoring beginning teachers, induction seminars for beginning teachers and a few others.

Methodological departments comprised of specific subject teachers, and were headed by an experienced colleague. An English language methodological department head explained this process in the government school:

In our English language methodological department we have divided one theme for each month and assign the said to the teachers. They plan and conduct the seminar to others. We discuss the issues and suggest the ways to improve the teaching of English language at school. Each class units are also divided into 9 parts and we usually discuss those with each other. Apart from this, experienced teachers observe and help beginning teachers. Each methodological department is responsible for *dekada* in their subject areas. There are 9 subject areas for 9 months. (English language teacher, School G)

Hence, teachers were encouraged to share innovative ideas with each other and discuss related issues. Control and monitoring of departments' activities was carried out by vice principal on academics. Inter-school methodological departments organized 'subject *dekadas*' at different times of the year. 'Hosting' school teachers prepared *otkrytie uroki*, extra - curricular activities related to subject area, and then organized a forum for joint discussion on observed lessons and on general issues of teaching. Three schools practiced *nadstavnichetsvo* (mentoring). In this, experienced teachers mentored beginning teachers. Many young teachers reported that mentoring enabled them to learn classroom management skills. A teacher had this to say,

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° It is translated as methodological department and is equivalent to subject department.

· The literal translation of *otkrytye uroki* is 'open lessons', similar to demonstrative lessons which were pre-planned and had specific purpose of showing the best practice.

Each beginning teacher is supposed to work with an experienced one. Mostly mentoring is conducted through encouraging beginning teacher to observe the experienced teacher's lessons. (English language teacher, School G)

Apart from mentoring, newly recruited teachers attended induction seminars organized by the school.

School documentations such as lesson planning and maintaining class register were the aspects with which the young teachers had difficulties. A vice principal of academics explained further:

The fact is that 25% of our teaching staff consists of beginning teachers this year. In the month of December, we are planning to conduct a seminar for newly recruited and beginning teachers titled "Help for young teachers". Experienced teachers will share their experiences with them and demonstrate some good teaching practices. They will also learn how to fill the class register and with other school documents. (Vice principal, School G)

In one of the private schools, seminars for newly recruited teachers were organized systematically with comprehensive syllabus/curriculum development exercises to encourage them to use a learner-centered approach and acquaint themselves to private school system nuances.

It was emphasized,

In our school, we emphasize teacher professional development. So we have created conditions for this. First of all, we have the special position of teacher educator who is responsible for planning and carrying out professional development activities. The person has required qualifications and rich experience of conducting professional development for teachers. She prepares an annual plan for teacher development, which we discuss and add or remove some according to the needs. Secondly, we have arranged one day for professional development that is Saturday. This day is used for seminar or courses or teacher independent development. Thirdly, we have funding for organizing seminars and inviting qualified specialists for this purpose. (Principal, School A)



Equivalent to the in-house teacher educator, in a government school the position of a vice principal of *vospitanie i nauki* [science] was newly introduced. The school was the first city school-gymnasium to have a vice principal of this kind. Another form of professional development was identified as teacher appraisal or known as *attestatsia*. Teachers usually organized compulsory demonstrative lessons for this purpose. In addition, city education department required teachers to maintain a portfolio of self-education which should demonstrate teachers' continuing professional development attempts. This included pedagogical *masterstvo* [craftship], development level of teacher's political knowledge, tolerance and pedagogical tact of the teacher and the cultural level of the teacher. Moreover, each teacher was required to observe other colleagues' lessons and record those in their peer-observation journals. School-based teacher professional development, considered useful in many respects, which allowed the teachers to learn specific aspects in teaching and utilized school-resources such as time and fellow teachers.

Diverse ways for teacher **self-initiated development** were shared. Teachers reported that they looked for outside school opportunities to develop professionally. An anecdote reflected,

During Soviet times, the government was after us, teachers, to attend the courses. Everything was paid by the government  
Nowadays, we are looking for the courses and pay for those ourselves. (Kyrgyz language teacher, School G)

Among many other opportunities, teachers mostly attended seminars organized by the Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan. In addition, different award-bearing or short term programs created a path for teachers to get experience of training outside the country. However, many of these programs were restricted to teachers who mastered the particular foreign languages (predominantly English). Unfortunately many teachers could not avail these chances.

Moreover, teachers consulted colleagues from other schools and/or university faculty to learn more.

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\* Shamатов (2005) explained this term broadly. He stated, " ... 'upbringing' [is] to refer to one of the main aims of education in Soviet and post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. "Upbringing" was a powerful socio-political socialization of the Soviet Education. It overlaps in a conceptual sense with "civics", but it is used to denote a much broader concept of social and ethical upbringing within and outside school."

I consult the teacher in X school who taught me mathematics if I have some problems in some aspects of teaching or the content itself. Even I had some problems regarding the calendar planning so I went to her as she is a very experienced teacher and soon she will retire. I go to her because there is nobody who can help me in my area at our school. I also phone my friend who teaches math in another school. We share our experiences and new methods. We both cannot meet often as I am busy at school till 4 in the afternoon every day. (Math teacher, School I)

Likewise, committed teachers organized workshops for colleagues to share their learning's from courses or from implementing ideas in their classrooms. However, they shared that they got de-motivated when their colleagues show little interest to attend and appreciate their effort.

Teachers' own individual and independent work in enriching or developing their own syllabus also created opportunities for teachers learn more. Teachers brought changes and enriched the syllabus within the school and classroom realities, and to suit to the students' diverse needs and styles of learning. Teachers were encouraged to disseminate their tested curriculum to other teachers by publishing in newspapers:

Nowadays all the teachers in government schools have had chance to develop their own, or 'avtorskyi' curriculum. They also can disseminate to others if they can. For instance, I have developed my own curriculum for primary classes and have given to "Osh janirigi" and I am expecting it to be published soon. I want to note that we can develop ourselves in this way too, but it depends on ourselves as teachers whether we are willing to work hard on those as it requires commitment and will. If work hard, we can achieve many things. (Primary class teacher, School G)

Teachers read literature subscribed by school or themselves; or by accessing the said in libraries to enrich their content and delivery. National educational newspaper of Ministry of Education, *Kut Bilim*, periodically published newly required documents for schools and teachers, and this further increased their knowledge of wider educational context. Hence, as discussed above and what EFA report (2000) reported that despite the hardships, teachers in Kyrgyzstan continue to improve their professional skills independently or gaining experience from each other's practices.

## **Issues of Existing Teacher Professional Development Programs and Structures**

Most of the above mentioned programs and approaches co-existed with each other as part of in-service teacher education. However, mostly they got criticism because of their low quality, difficult accessibility and a lack of supportive structures.

### **Deteriorating Quality**

Teachers are highly concerned of deteriorating quality of teacher professional development in terms content and pedagogy, structure and relevance. Most criticism was directed at the OTRI's programs. Among those were outdated, purely theoretical course content and authoritarian pedagogy, course insensitivity towards teachers' needs and teacher trainers' poor professional expertise.

With the poor quality of teacher training, OTRI was not able to attract private schoolteachers to attend their programs:

The courses in the Oblast Teacher Retraining Institute did not offer much support to my teaching. I just spent one month without any improvement. Although, I got theory in general, I did not learn anything new specifically about my subject area. (Math teacher, School D)

In the past, teacher trainers were expected to have classroom teaching experiences so as to allow them to work with school teachers. With this regard, some OTRI teacher trainers were critical about their colleagues who had no classroom teaching at schools. In addition, an unsatisfactory salary and a lack of supportive structure in the institute did not motivate them to develop professionally. The institute failed to recruit highly qualified professionals because of under funding.

Weighty emphasis on nation building to some extent had resulted in the creation of insecure feelings in other ethnicities like Russians in Kyrgyzstan after its independence. Profound migration figures in the country since its independence included the educators, who occupied most positions at the universities and other institutions. Replaced by non-Russians in their seats, the courses offered were often criticized because of the poor Russian language proficiency of the trainers.

City education department did not restrict private schoolteachers' attendance in annual subject *dekadas* in January and August. However, school management did not view it as something beneficial to attend:

All of our teachers previously worked in government schools and attended these *dekadas* and other gatherings. We know the process well and I did not get any greater extent of benefit from these. Except information dissemination, there is usually nothing there. They could disseminate those information in other ways to tell the truth. In addition, in these subject section or department activities, nothing is resolved or decided or worked. (Vice principal, School I)

Within school-based teacher professional development, mentoring practice was considered beneficial for the mentor and mentee teacher. Within the hardship, the mentoring was not a systematic and regular practice as opposed to Soviet times, and its quality worsened due to several factors. Firstly, teachers' heavy workload did not allow them to spend time in observing lessons and discussing matter with the mentees. Thus, with little support, mentee teachers struggled with school and classroom difficulties on their own. Secondly, due to fewer experienced teachers in the schools, two-year experienced teachers were expected to mentor newly joined teachers, thus both being inexperienced in many respects. Thereby, the practice of mentoring was questioned with regards to its quality and authenticity.

School-based courses of a private school with heavy content were questioned with regards to their impact on teachers' classroom teaching. Provision of immediate support within classroom application process was overlooked due to ambitious attempts to change the teachers' conceptions. Moreover, generic nature of seminars on methods of teaching did not allow teachers to be helped in how to implement in specific subject areas.

In the discussion on quality professional literature, teachers' concerns were associated with the inappropriateness of the literature to their specific needs and contextual realities. Teachers realized that the value of their own experience should be extended and they should take responsibility to disseminate that knowledge to other teachers. Unfortunately, directly or indirectly, the worsening quality of programs or activities reflected the overall economic crisis of the country and shrinking state funding on public education.

## Access as an Issue

Deteriorating situation of teacher professional development in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan was also associated with a lack of access to professional literature and quality teacher professional development programs. To sustain and raise the quality of courses at OTRI, teacher trainers required access to quality professional literature and supportive information technology. They explained the problem of outdated content through the institute's inability to find the financial means to supply up-to-date literature and equipment, and this made trainers continue their work using available resources that they had inherited from the Soviet era, which unfortunately could not satisfy modern requirements.

Teachers of core curricular subject areas (mathematics, languages, and history) had wider options in terms of participation in courses, which eventually generated disappointment among considerably less important subject teachers such as physical education, labor, music and drawing.

With the emergence of the private sector in an ex-public sector dominating society, the collaboration between the government and private institutions required considerate attention. Lack of structures for collaboration seemed to create the major issues and tensions. Private school teachers observed unfair treatment when special trainings was conducted for government schoolteachers, (as an example of ADB sponsored courses) and which excluded them from the opportunities and demanded from them payment for participation in those programs. With tight budgets, the needs of government institutions, which served wider population, became a priority for the state.

Teachers highlighted that access to professional literature was the major challenge. Given the low-paid profession, teachers cannot afford the lavishness of subscribing to professional literature as compared to Soviet times. In addition, prices for literature and periodicals went high with the emergence of the free market. The government schools subscribed to number of professional newspapers from students' fees for gymnasium classes or by sometimes deducting it from the teachers' 'already small' salary. Many teachers complained of being forced to subscribe to newspapers when their salary could not afford to feed their families.

Sometimes Soros Foundation gives us some literature, but they are so few. For instance, last year we got one edition of journal "Forum" and a single copy. We used to subscribe to the "Foreign languages at schools" journal during Soviet Union, something

which almost every foreign language teacher could do. But now each edition is 200-300 Kyrgyz *soms* [approx. US\$5 – 6], we cannot afford that. (English language teacher and Vice principal, School K).

Few other issues, along with the mostly low quality literature, did not help in resolving their need to learn new content and pedagogy. Some teachers even were of the opinion that Kyrgyzstan was isolated from information, especially in the Russian language. Moreover, teachers of newly introduced subjects into curriculum echoed that they did not get subject area methodological literature. For instance, gaining the official language status, the Kyrgyz language became a compulsory subject at non-Kyrgyz medium schools. Teachers complained about lack of specific pedagogy and articles related to the teaching and learning of the Kyrgyz language in non-Kyrgyz medium of instruction schools. Despite the said, some organizations continued to post some of its periodicals, but schools considered these as ‘gifts’ and expressed the need to have a country-wide thoroughly-systematized process of subscription to professional literature in the future.

Professional literature produced outside Kyrgyzstan was largely inaccessible. Teachers felt that in Kyrgyzstan, the situation of publication of professional literature was at critical stake.

Teachers need to actively subscribe to professional publications and journals. It is at least encouraging that the “Mektep” professional journal has started to be produced in Kyrgyzstan. We could look at the Russian publications and come up with similar or contextually relevant outlines for the publications. And if there is any foundation to support the people who can come together for this purpose, it will be so good for teachers to receive the information. I feel that schools should take this idea seriously. They can collect samples of good lessons. It is very important to note that it would encourage sharing of experiences which unfortunately is not happening to greater extent. (Vice principal, School I)

Initiatives were suggested for the encouragement of publications on professional innovations and ideas. In addition, involving the private sector into publication was important to consider. Not depending on printed materials only, many felt that with a growing community of internet users, teachers could develop professionally by accessing materials from World Wide Web. However, English

dominated sources, with little available in Russian, teachers could not utilize this chance to any great extent.

## **Lack of Supporting Structures for Teacher Professional Development**

School structures such as provision of time for development, reasonable teacher salary, and support in providing programs for development and creating teacher networks, were not well-thought through in the in-service teacher education system in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. Lack of recognition of their hard work affected teachers' low motivation to develop professionally. In this, one of the sources for motivation, namely the teachers' salary played an influencing role.

First of all, teachers need to be motivated through a raise in salary that acts as an incentive to develop professionally. When you don't have bread to feed your children at home for the salary you get at school, how will you think of developing professionally?  
(Primary class teacher, School G)

Government school teachers did not have time for their professional development because of a heavy teaching workload to earn more so that they could substantiate their income:

We also want to teach fewer classes and to develop ourselves. But I have to feed my children and help to support the family. Because of this, we teach more classes because in that way we can earn more. (Russian language teacher, School K)

Moreover, the system of differentiation of teachers' salary is according to not only experience, but to original and creative ways of teaching and learning.

In Kyrgyzstan, with the exception of English language teachers' association, there were no teacher associations.

I would like that a teacher center should be organized so that teachers could share their experiences and discuss issues of teaching and learning with each other. The center would make these more systematically as we as individual teachers find difficulty to go to each other and discuss those. (Math teacher, School I).

Thus, the need was identified by the teachers to form teacher associations to bring subject teachers together and to enable them to learn from each other. In order to establish a teacher network, they extended their willingness to be proactive in solving the issue of association formation.

For teacher professional development, we have only one institution as a 'monster' in the oblast. The teachers need to solve this problem themselves, I think. It can be an NGO type of organization or association. I communicate with university faculty; they have good knowledge, information and innovative teaching strategies to share. I think they should come together with school teachers to form an association so that to have the forum to share their experiences and knowledge. Another option is through Internet have online discussion forums... (Vice principal, School I)

Thus, vulnerable to speedy changes in their personal and professional lives, teacher networks could have helped teachers to work together for improvement and to voice their concerns collectively.

## **Discussion on Findings**

Market economy system, introduced since independence, has not been able to bring a positive effect on the professional lives of the teachers of Kyrgyzstan. Rather, it has resulted in uncertainties and multiple responsibilities, than the hope and support to teachers. Teachers identified the need for their professional development as an urgent issue to consider due to the change in goal of education, similar to what Mertaugh (2004) observed, "The content and delivery of education needed to be changed in order to make education responsive to the needs of the global economy." (p. 155)

Soviet in-service teacher education practices and policies were largely reflected in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. However, the issues raised above required critical attention of education policy makers. For instance, improving the teacher performance through the so-called reforms mostly lacked empirical evidence. Mostly teacher professional development activities lacked teacher-needs consideration thus did not directly respond to teachers' classroom realities. Moreover, they also devalued teachers' expertise in the courses like Niyozov (2004) noted, "They [teachers in Tajikistan] are subjected to top-down approaches and outside-in training, where their knowledge and wisdom are largely ignored." (p. 57) In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, some grand projects happened to be implemented without much consideration and discussion. With this regard,



DeYoung (2004) shared the argument around the fact that ADB funded a one-million 'distance learning' center initiative. This helped in the realization that blind policies were better explained in terms of a few people's own interests and power, which dictated and became the deciding factor, but what wasn't how reality reflected the scenario. As one of the trainers of this 'fancy' initiative, during the program I observed an overlapping approach of this initiative to OTRI one-month course program. In my opinion, this initiative appeared more of a 'lip service' that excluded field-based aspects and lacked transparency in financial management. Research continues to highlight that teacher-needs based programs make more impact on teachers' professionalism in practical terms. OTRI's teacher-needs diagnostic through questionnaire happened to be an excellent idea but it should be further improved to make the training relevant to teachers. The courses funded by different groups should be carefully analyzed. A report of OSI (2002) highlighted this, stating,

With increased presence of donor assistance, and co-operating partners who have their own intentions and interests around the in-service training of teachers, it is important to coordinate activities. Any activities in the field of teacher training should be based on the demands and needs of strategic reform and the overall system. (p. 23)

In the reforms to come, the importance of the 50-year experience of OTRI in this area should be considered. Using the said, the strategies they used can be improved within the realities of present conditions, rather than ignoring and leaving them out from the reforms. Thus, the already set up structure of the *vyezdnyie* seminars of OTRI (Kibardina, 1997) should be further improved, and the reforms should target similar activities so as to make the learning of the teacher professionals more practical and needs-based. I found the January and August *dekada* to be cost-effective within the tight budget of education, and what was discussed could be a creditable approach. But the very nature of the delivery and content should be extensively discussed further.

In the current situation, teacher trainers' own development seemed to be taken for granted. Some reports (EFA, 1999; OSI, 2002) pointed out the aging staff of teacher retraining institutes. Kabylov (2003) also noted this and suggested,

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° Vyezdnoi is translated as site-based seminars. These are seminars where OTRI's teacher trainers go to the schools and conduct the seminars on the needs of the schools and teachers.

“There is a considerable need for continuing training for the teacher educators themselves” (p.5) so that to offer quality trainings.

In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, off-site in-service teacher education courses continued to remain as panacea for low quality school education and school improvement. All the training emphasized teacher technical skills development, and did not move towards the development of their reflective teaching ability. Moreover, the possibility of teacher practice-centered approaches for teacher development did not usually get policy makers’ considerable attention. The policies and reforms towards school improvement and teacher education largely ignored existing self-initiated and school-based teacher development activities. To emphasize, all these activities and their structures required considerable and reformative attention in the light of the current realities and priorities. Practical approaches of teacher professional development, such as action research, reflective practice and others, still remained unknown, and were hence not reflected in the current practice of in-service teacher education. In addition, school-based teacher development did not have structured monitoring and evaluation, except for the fact that they reported to the vice principal on academics who usually criticized the work. When, supporting structures were absent in the schools, such as the provision for time for professional development, and technical resources and availability of the in-house teacher educators, it was unlikely to expect much from the teachers.

Meagre teacher salary has resulted in low social status and low motivation of the teachers. In this regard, Mertaugh (2004) argued, “Teacher salaries in the Kyrgyz republic, which averaged 857 *soms* per month in 2001, are low in both absolute and relative terms. In absolute terms, they are only half of the minimum consumption level for individuals, not to mention households. As a result, teachers lack motivation and are compelled to work other jobs in order to support themselves and their families.” (p. 173) Similarly, Niyozov (2001) emphasized Marx and Maslow’s proposal, “when basic human needs are threatened, talk about intellect and education makes little sense.” (p. 363) Thus their basic needs forced teachers to opt to what Shamatov (2005) describes as, “Teachers also have to supplement their income by taking up extra work in order to fulfill their material needs, many teach in more than one school.” (p. 116)

Raise in teacher salary and providing fringe benefits, such as being released from paying electricity bills, were considered to motivate teachers to retain their jobs and have motivation for professional development. Comparing this with the health service which brought several reforms to raise the salary of health workers in Kyrgyzstan, Mertaugh (2004) suggested his views with relation to a raise in teacher salaries as “...some activities such as mentoring new teachers or

providing community education or remedial education could and should be recognized and compensated through supplementary income.” (173) Although I recognized that a raise in teachers’ salary could motivate teachers to develop professionally, I realized that it would not affect the quality of teaching and teacher professional development to a great extent, especially if supportive systems for professional development are not considered as well as systematically implemented and monitored. Thus the improvement of existing supportive systems and establishment of monitoring and evaluation should equally be considered in the reforms.

At present, school teachers of Kyrgyzstan cannot access professional literature as sources for their professional development. The EFA Report (2000) also claimed that “There is unavailability of information related to modern teaching methods. Before 1991, every teacher could subscribe to a number of professional literature, magazines and manuals. Today though, low salaries make it impossible for them to do so, as the professional newspapers and magazines are costly, and few, particularly Kyrgyz publications.” Subscription to government newspapers was mandatory practice in Soviet Kyrgyzstan schools; however, within present circumstances, this seemed as a burden and not a solution. Many teachers resented this practice, as their salary was not enough to feed the families let alone buy and read the newspapers. On this issue, some teachers voiced their concerns by writing open letter to the president and minister of education at that time, which included stopping them from forcefully subscribing to newspapers.

Presently, teachers of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan seem to be caught in a dilemma. On one hand, their struggle for personal survival becomes a priority since the independence; but on the other hand, as professionals, their mission to educate better generation for the society continues to face hard conditions. Many government teachers voiced that they felt isolated and abandoned by the state. I found teachers who expressed the need for external help, but there were some who considered this situation as endless. They recognized their proactive role in solving their professional issues on their own. To provide an example, these teachers proposed ways such as using teacher developed and tested materials to support them in ‘methodological vacuum’ (Bekbolotov, 2000). Furthermore, suggested teacher networks happened to have great potential in preparing and facilitating the teachers in building a more just, fair and equitable society from the transition period.

## In Conclusion

Foremost demand for continuous professional development to raise the quality of education came from the emphasis on the democratic way of life spreading in the post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. This was reflected in the schools and it confronted previously authoritarian teaching. In the decisions regarding what reform to adopt and how, serving teachers' voices and similarly teachers' own expertise and attempts for innovations were largely ignored, thus bringing lip service approaches and not the reforms in the in-service teacher education. Thereby, for future teachers' self-initiated and school-based professional development, there is required to be a better consideration and recognition by the education policy makers and there must be found ways to improve them further. Thus this could enable diversification within in-service teacher education. Related to discussion, immediacy of translation and dissemination of local knowledge about pedagogy and content was acutely felt by the teachers in order to come out of their professional information vacuum. Ironically, with their meager salary and lower social status, I found teachers still motivated for further development due to their optimistic views for that future and for the betterment of their country.

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# **Researching Education and Society in Central Asia**

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## **Introduction**

Although researching of and publishing on different aspects of the society in Central Asia and the post-Soviet world has become a popular activity in the international context, little attention is paid to the concept, processes, and conditions of researching in Central Asia itself. Yet, the quality of the research outcomes, which depend on the above factors, and which constitutes a foundation for policy and practice decisions, including in education is of paramount importance. This paper is about themes, concepts, issues and challenges involved in the process of understanding and carrying out research in Central Asia. It draws upon the outcomes of a number of experiences, namely: (a) the presenter's personal experiences of conducting research in Central Asia, (b) interviews and informal conversations with a number of scholars involved in studying education and society in Central Asia, and (c) review of literature on research. The concepts and processes of researching are connected with literature on Soviet and post-Soviet research conditions. The paper highlights implications for the quality of research products, researching capacity, conditions of researching, and for training local and external researchers to undertake qualitative inquiry in Central Asia. Writing a paper on the challenges of educational research in Central Asia is a challenging task for a number of reasons, the most important of which is the dearth of reliable and valid data due to the underdeveloped research tradition in Central Asia, the lack of research facilities, critical scholarship and a lack of confidence in sharing the research data for identifying solutions to the problems.

## **Research in Soviet Central Asia**

During the Soviet times, the very little research on Central Asian education was conducted via Institutes of pedagogical research and departments of pedagogy and psychology in Higher Education Institutions. These used to be divided into two types: Training or education institutions and research scientific research institutions. Most of the research used to be conducted by the Moscow Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, which had ordained to be the sole authority in policy recommendations, educational change and innovations across the Soviet Union (Suddaby, 1989). As a result, in the Soviet era, advanced research on education,

curriculum policy discussion, and textbook preparation were for the most part done in Moscow, where most specialists with advanced degrees in pedagogy and academic disciplines were located. Thus, the research capacity in education, as in all fields, was relatively underdeveloped for the population of the republic. Curricula used in Central Asia were largely identical to those developed in Russian for the Russian SFSR.

Soviet-era scholarship has been criticized for its highly-politicized backdrop and reductionist projections (Brigel, 1996). Educational research was possibly the least developed area. It was formally guided by behavioural psychology and Marxist positivist epistemology, which was exhibited in the form of quantitative statistical analyses and quantified sociological surveys, aimed at proving and verifying Soviet educational theories and models underpinned by the Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism (Tillet, 1969). The pages of the local teachers' periodicals such as the journal of *Soviet school* and paper of *Teachers' Newspaper*, were usually filled with the translated directives of the communist party and examples of best practice, represented through opinion papers of the best teachers. These voices, though important, were filtered so as to avoid controversy and complexity and remain in line with Party directives. This trend at filtering, cover-up, and selective use of data has continued in the post-Soviet times. Thus, Soviet research studies were shaped by ideological imposition (Glowka, 1992) and often represented personal political interpretations rather than conclusions based on rigorous empirical fieldwork.

There is a paucity of in-depth studies of teachers in developing countries (Avalos, 1993). Most studies on teachers and teacher development are still conducted in the Western context and scholarly traditions, and mainly by Western scholars (see Vulliamy et al., 1990). Central Asian states are experiencing dramatic changes that make its case especially different from other developing countries; the changes are more rapid, more radical and more complex (Heynemann, 1998; 2000; Niyozov; 2001). Researchers have yet to conduct in-depth ethnographic studies with and about individuals in countries experiencing the transition from socialism to free-market democracies, focusing on how that transition effects the teachers' development (Reeves, 2003). Ball and Goodson (1985) comment that teachers are generally viewed as merely shadowy statistical figures on the educational landscape; any information on them, their views and their practices is amassed through large-scale school surveys only. Likewise, teachers in the former USSR were commonly studied and portrayed via conventional quantitative methods. Niyozov (2001) asserts, "The actual voices of the teachers and educational stakeholders are virtually fully absent" (p. 434) in the Soviet period studies.

## Post-Soviet Research

The post-Soviet period revealed a lack of skills in policy-making, ineffective information management, and non-participatory governance, as the major hurdles to the kind of management needed to move Central Asian education system out of its current malaise (ICG, 2003a; ICG, 2003b; WB, 2003). These shortcomings are pointed out frequently by external NGOs, without an analysis of the internal Soviet debate on education, or of the systemic factors leading to them (Landa, 1975; Skatkin & Kraevskii, 1981; Lysenkova, Shatalov, Volkov, Karakovskii, Shchetinin, Il'in & Amonvashvili, 1986). Largely based on surveys, group discussions, and statistical data; while being geared towards the needs, interests and preconceptions of donors and the international community; at the same time being led by comparative methods, the majority of these reports illustrate generalized trends and directions in education, whilst leaving out depth, complexity, issues and challenges that usually emerge from theorizing and discussions based on qualitative studies.

There is a shortage of mature senior researchers in the field of education, who are holders of degrees in education higher than the master's level, and are based in Central Asia. There is also no institution in the Republic of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that grants doctoral degrees in education, and can prepare the next generation of educational researchers and play a leading role in independent research on educational policy. Thus, these two shortages may lead to a continued dependence on outside expertise and research agendas in the formation of curriculum and the development of textbooks. Finally, policy makers may seek solutions to the current dilemmas of education policy from among the repertoire of known policy options that have been debated and even attempted within the history of Soviet education. As an example, the government recommends that schools in Tajikistan engage in agricultural activity involving children, for example, in the gathering of medicinal herbs for sale (UNESCO, n.d.). While largely inspired by the financial crisis of the educational system, such policies hearken back to the Soviet curriculum theory, which has at all times emphasized unity of theory and practice and the application of study to labour; on several occasions requiring children to learn practical skills through practical activity, such as keeping class garden plots. In the 1920s, it even affiliated many schools with actual enterprises (Holmes et al, 1995).

The consequences of the above discussion for educational research and practice in contemporary Central Asia are several. First, there is a shortage of skilled researchers, research centers, and conditions conducive for researching and dissemination in Central Asia. Without major development in these areas,



Central Asian states may remain dependent on outside expertise in the formation of education policy, curriculum and textbooks development.

There is a requirement for a needs-analysis of the current state of social research in Central Asia. It was noticed that there was very limited pool of scholarship resources and professional capacity to deal with the challenges of designing and conducting social research. So far many local scholars are involved in data collection and the transcription of outside researchers only. The role of the local scholars, who did the preliminary work, was not defined in the further processes. There is also a further need for developing local research capacity and for producing knowledge and research reports distinguished by quality and rigor that provide feedback to the work.

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# **Empowering Teachers to Solve their own Classroom Problems**

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## **Abstract**

### **Focus**

*The focus of this poster presentation is to share how a merger of the process of situational analysis and action research can help develop the curriculum within a school and improve the quality of teaching in a specific classroom or school setting. However, rather than concentrating on the conduct and outcomes of the action research, the poster will focus on the pre-research phase which for this paper is situational analysis. The poster will be presented from the perspective of the field experiences of the teachers who will share how situational analysis helped confirm the existence of the specific problem that persistently existed in their classroom and schools settings and how the methodology of action research helped to solve the problem to varying degrees bringing about positive changes in their educational settings. The process of conducting situational analysis and action research and their importance in developing the curriculum and improving teaching practice in the classroom will be shared.*

### **Lessons learned**

*The experience of action researchers at NDIE over recent years has confirmed their belief that a well structured and executed situation analysis undertaken as the determining method of isolating the research problem has resulted in a better quality action research outcome. In all cases, the outcomes of the situational analysis and the research helped to improve the educational setting and the MEd student as teacher and researcher.*

### **Findings**

*The approach has also brought about a positive change in the attitudes and belief systems of the teachers / MEd students. It has helped to develop their overall confidence and reveal to them aspects of teaching that they had never known previously. Personally, it has further developed their higher order thinking skills*

*and their abilities as reflective and reflexive teachers. Learning through doing the skills of Situation Analysis and action research has also been a means of developing their abilities to show leadership in quality teaching; been a means of empowering them to solve their own classroom problems; enabled them to be contributing and confident members of the school community; and encouraged them to be pro-active in efforts to improve the curriculum within the school.*

*It is a time consuming approach. In its initial phase it needs a facilitator, demands a diligent effort from the facilitator and the student teacher and has its moments of frustration, disappointments and breakthrough.*

*Furthermore the purpose of sharing this experience is to gain feedback from other educators and action researchers and to learn what can be done to further improve this approach.*

## **Introduction**

The Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) conducts a three year Master of Education programme, the first two years of which are a preliminary course. The preliminary 2nd year is an internship year in which the candidates are employed in an educational institution that is performing a role in teaching, facilitating or administration. The year is made up of four workshops of three days each, held on campus at NDIE. Attendance to all four workshops is compulsory. Curriculum development and research are the main foci of the studies during the year. In the first workshop, the student teachers are introduced to the idea of situational analysis and each is required to conduct a situational analysis in her/his classroom, school or place of work. In the other three workshops they are introduced and guided through the process of action research as well as further segments of the curriculum development processes.

This paper discusses the school as a social system in which happenings occur in a slow and natural way rather than suddenly. Schools are composed of people who mutually interact with each other, with the curriculum, and with the forces in the outside environment that is beyond the school. All these factors interact interdependently for their growth and development. If the said parts do not interact with each other as required, problems arise. If any one part is overlooked or neglected, the entire functioning of the school is affected. In the local context of Pakistan, it is often the teachers' professional development factor that is overlooked or neglected by both the teachers themselves and the school authorities. Experience shows that participation in any form of professional development does not automatically produce the desired results in terms of

change in the teaching and learning process. For this change to occur, especially in the teachers' professional attitudes and beliefs, teachers must become aware of the problems that exist in their classrooms and schools. Situational analysis is an appropriate and relevant process by which teachers can gain an objective critique of the situation in the classroom or school. Action Research has proved to be an effective approach to finding a solution to the problem. This paper elaborates on the approach and on the steps taken by NDIE with its second year Master (preliminary) students' in facilitating their identification, and addressing a problem area in their professional setup.

Participants in the Masters Preliminary II (M.Ed. P.II) have found themselves emancipated from the idea that someone will direct them towards the next step. They grow into being self directed, where their own teaching and learning is concerned. They become changed persons in terms of their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and hence move towards becoming effective change agents.

## **School as a Social System**

The focus of this paper is to share with teachers and educators the fact that situational analysis cannot be confined to a systemic or regional activity, but rather should be appropriately used within a school or a classroom. Curriculum researchers and writers consider it as a fundamental principle of effective curriculum development (Print, 1993). However the purpose of conducting situational analysis in a classroom or a school should not only simply be confined to the collection of useful data, which is to be used as a launch pad to devise other curriculum elements. It has to have an equal and even more significant purpose, because of the fact that during conducting situational analysis, the teacher undergoes and experiences personal and professional development. With multiple problems that continuously exist in today's classrooms and schools, it is even more essential that the teachers and administrators learn to identify, diagnose and solve classroom and school problem through their own efforts.

The school can be described or understood as an open system. According to Bellinger (2004) open systems are organic; i.e. they consist of different parts that are connected to each other and maintain their existence through mutual interaction with each other. Happenings take place in a slow and natural way rather than occurring suddenly. All parts must interact with each other and with the environment in order for the system to grow and maintain its existence. As an open system, a school is influenced by the culture, values and traditions of the society (the environment). It is composed of people such as students,

teachers, principals, administrators and office staff, who have specific roles and are expected to perform not only assigned duties and actions, but also provide an appropriate level of quality performance (Lunenburg and Ornstein 1991). They interact daily with each other and with the outside forces in order to improve the performance of the school. This growth and performance of the system depends on the individuals who fundamentally make up the system. In return, the system shows concern for and works towards the growth and development of all individuals. To see this quality of performance, ideally all individuals within the system must develop and grow professionally and socially. In this way they not only maintain their own existence, also maintain their individual and collective growth. The return contributes to the overall growth and development of the school system. As a result the school will be in a position to contribute information and educated members to the society.

Getzels as cited in Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991) states that when inconsistencies or incongruence exist between the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions of a school, it is either because of no interaction, or due to a lack of interaction between the two dimensions. This results in administrative failure, which then leads to a loss in individual innovation and institutional productivity.

## **School Situation**

Among the individuals who participate daily to improve the institution's productivity, students are the ones who gain the utmost attention from the administration and teaching staff. This is as expected, because it is the students for whom the school exists. The ultimate aim of schools is to promote students' learning and growth through academic and vocational programmes in which information is imparted and skills are developed; on the resultant performance, the students are awarded diplomas and degrees of mastery. To achieve this, aims and routes are deliberately set and well defined. Unfortunately, schools do not likewise cater to promote teachers' learning and growth. Any professional growth that does occur at the place of work can be described as marginal and is taken to be a personal rather than an institutional responsibility. Those desirous to grow, work hard to develop managerial skills, curriculum skills and do this through hit-miss, or trial and error attempts; or through some in-service programme (Johnson 1990).

Failure to address their own learning needs is observed by Johnson (1990) as a teacher's own responsibility, and he states that, with a few exceptions, they show little desire and a sense of entitlement about their right to grow on the job. They consider in-service training generic in character and not specific to their real

concerns. They often refrain from sharing their learning with other staff members. Their financial constraints impinge on their learning and growth, and at the end of the day, their resultant response to the endeavors of professional development is passive.

## **Teachers Learning and Growth**

Personal experiences as a teacher educator in Pakistan have shown that a combination of the processes of situational analysis and action research have the potential to address such complex situations. School authorities can empower teachers to solve their classroom and school problems by using the analysis-action process, and also give their teachers impartial support throughout. Such an initiative will combine teaching with teacher education. As teachers move through the analysis-action processes, a number of skills develop, their teaching improves and their own professional growth takes place. Furthermore the combined process has the potential to change the behavior and beliefs of the teacher regarding the teaching learning process.

### **Skills' Development:**

Outlined below are some of the skills that have been gained and demonstrated by M.Ed. PII participants, as a result of their taking the analysis-action approach to solving problems that exist in their place of work:

- The process demands reflection on practice and reflection in practice. These make their way into the professional lives of the participants in a profound manner. Teachers develop reflective skills and this reflective behaviour in turn compels them to be reflexive. They develop a temperament for critically examining what they are doing, become thoughtful, analytical and even self-critical about their own performance and then act on their critical evaluation.
- The skill to design and construct data gathering tools, such as interview and observation schedules and checklists are used to gather relevant information. The skills of reflection and decision making play a significant role while designing the tools.
- The skills to conduct interviews, take observations and appropriately use checklists develop.
- Some basic approaches to data analysis are learned.

- Higher order thinking and decision making skills are exercised.
- The ability to search out, select, analyse, evaluate, decide the relevant appropriateness and use the literary resources is basic to moving forward through the processes.

With this endeavour, teachers are the ultimate beneficiaries, but the curriculum improvement, which also takes place, cannot be ignored.

## **Mentoring the M.Ed. PII and the Process**

The mentoring process is vital to developing the M.Ed. PIIs' capacity to learn from new insights. The mentor has the responsibility to provide space and props for the teachers during their frustrations and disappointments, and also to help them to move on through the steps of the processes. The M.Ed. PIIs, thus learn the skill of conducting situational analysis not through a hit-miss or trial and error, but rather through a scientific approach.

### **The Process**

The analysis-action process in the local situation now used in the M.Ed. PII programme has evolved from the critical reflective evaluations done by the participants and the staff over a period of three years. The following nine stages make up the entire process which is used by the participants at NDIE.

- Identify problem(s) in context.
- Select appropriate factors.
- Design data collection tools.
- Collection and analysis of the data.
- Make recommendations.
- Literature review.
- Methodology of action research.
- Conduct action research.
- Report.



Needs assessment is a starting point of and facilitates a situational analysis. English and Kaufman, (cited in Marsh, 1992) have defined needs assessment as a technique by which educational needs or gaps between the current results and the desired results, can be defined, gaps or needs be listed, and those with the highest priority be selected. A need or gap is defined as a condition or situation in which there is a discrepancy between an acceptable state and an observed state of affairs in an educational institution (McNeil, cited in Print, 1993). A need assessment activity can occur within a single school, community of schools or across a region and district. The technique used at NDIE is subjective in nature, as participants are trusted to be the best judges in identifying needs and gaps within their teaching-learning areas or settings, from their experiences and observations. The procedure is explained below in stage one. It is fairly simple and has worked well for the participants in comprehending the starting point and in enabling the entire process of analysis to flow on.

### **Stage One: Identify Problem – Needs Assessment**

As a starting point, participants are asked how well they know the context or the situation in which they are working. To answer this question they have to reflect on what has been happening in their classrooms or school. Teachers, co-ordinators, heads and teacher trainers reflect and think of needs, gaps or problems in their own domain of work. The mentor's role is to facilitate this process. For example, M.Ed. PIIs holding a subject teacher's position, were encouraged to do the following

- Reflect on gaps that exist in students' performance;
- Describe the management of the classroom and the students' behaviour;
- Name the characteristics of the classroom learning environment;
- Isolate gaps in their own subject knowledge and teaching skills;
- Consider the assessment procedure used;

On a wider perspective and whatever their role is in the school, the M.Ed. PIIs consider and name what they see as hindering the whole school, sections, programmes, and so on, from operating at optimum or preferred levels.

These have proved to be very thrilling moments as participants eagerly name a number of needs. Some participants by nature and from experience have shown themselves to be very observant and conscious of the needs within their

contexts. Others being inexperienced, less observant and largely unconscious of needs or gaps; require more time to think of something real and substantial. Participants identify their needs and the discrepancies on the basis of what they have observed earlier during their teaching and management sessions. They then prioritize their needs in accordance with how they judge the needs, ranking them from the highest to the lowest priority. The facilitator's probing questions about their priority ratings help participants to argue and give reasons for their judgement.

Participants at this stage are asked to maintain a journal in which they record their daily learning and the happenings and events in their classroom or school.

### **Situational Analysis**

Naming the priority has been categorised in different ways by a variety of researchers Print (1993) has called it a context or initial state, while Marsh (1997) determines it as a school problem and Nicholls and Nicholls (1983) have named it as a situation in which the teachers and learners find themselves. The problem identified may be specific, general or fundamental. M.Ed. PIs usually identify a specific problem, which they then analyse within its context and situation. Situational analysis is a systematic detailed examination of a problem or a situation in a classroom or school. Skilbeck cited in Print (1993) has called it a 'critical appraisal' of the learning situation, and the application of the results of examination to the curriculum planning (pp.110, 116). It provides a clear understanding of the situation or the problem, and of the internal and external factors that constitute the problem and impinge upon the curriculum in action. If conducted in an appropriate manner, it exposes the true feeling of the stakeholders regarding school education, its characteristics and aims. Only when the situation is understood can a curriculum plan be developed and implemented in order to fulfill the potential of that situation. Situational analysis is a rational and sequential approach for scientific curriculum development (Taba cited in Print, 1993).

At NDIE the terminology adopted for the need prioritised is called "problem" from (Marsh 1997, p. 40).

Burns (2000) identifies Situational Analysis as one of the types of Case Studies in which particular events are studied in the form of a case study. It involves field work and the collection of views of all participants to provide an in-depth picture that can contribute significantly to producing an understanding of the event. Interview, observation and document analysis are the main tools used for

the data collection. While conducting situational analysis, all data collection is undertaken prior to any specification of a research question, although a generic framework of the situational analysis is created ahead of time. Such studies can be seen as a prelude to some other form of educational research.

## **Stage Two: Selection of Appropriate Factors**

Brady and Kennedy (1999, pp. 110-112), Marsh (1997, p. 40) and Print (1993, p. 115) have identified a number of external and internal factors that act as a valuable guide for the M.Ed. PIIs, who, after careful thought, select factors that are closely related to the problem they have identified. This selection of factors is not questioned, as they are trusted to be the best judges in knowing the factors that constitute the problem in a more befitting manner than the mentor. The mentor's critical questions compel the mentee to justify his/her choice of factors. Participants' reflective and critical thinking skills dominate, while identifying the internal and external factors. These factors are later investigated to provide useful information about the problem.

## **Stage Three: Learning to Design Data Collection Tools**

Learning to design data collection tools is tedious work; and requires time, effort and a commitment from both the mentor and the mentees. Tools appropriate for their needs are selected by the M.Ed. PIIs from resources such as Marsh (1997, p.41) and Print (1993, p.118). The tools include:

- structured and unstructured interview,
- systematic observation,
- focused observation,
- non-specific non-judgmental observation, and
- checklists.

Critical thinking is mainly practised while formulating questions for interviews and the items for checklists. M.Ed. PIIs have to be very clear as to what information is required from the interviewees and from the people and situation to be observed. Every question for interview and every item of the checklist is thus thoroughly reviewed by the participants, and checked repeatedly by the mentor before being used.

## **Stage Four: Data Collection and Analysis**

Once the tools are ready, the M.Ed. PII's use them to collect information about the factors identified earlier. These factors are usually internal to the school but external factors are also considered. Whatever the factor, three observations are made in order to collect and check the reliability of the information. For example, one of the M.Ed. PII's used observation as a tool thrice to record the behaviour of a special child in the class, and again three observations to record the behaviour of other pupils' with the special child. Interviews of parents and teachers identified the effects and causes of the problem. Use of checklists and observations helped her to identify the true nature of the situation in the class, and also provided some firm indicators as to what was the cause and nature of the problem. In several cases among the M.Ed. PII's, it has often been discovered that the problem initially stated was actually a symptom of a more fundamental problem. Analysis, backed by literary insights into the problem area, develops a far better understanding of the problem.

Print (1993) states that the information collected does not usually require sophisticated statistical treatment, but rather a systematic analysis and synthesis of the collected information to determine a pattern. The mentor guides the M.Ed. PII's about the ethical considerations while conducting interviews and observations.

## **Stage Five: Recommendations**

At this stage the M.Ed. PII's suggest recommendations for improvement on the basis of the information revealed from the analysis of the data collected. However these recommendations are considered incomplete without the assistance of literature review.

## **Stage Six: Literature Review**

The M.Ed. faculty conducts the second three day workshop for all of the M.Ed. PII's. During the workshop participants share their experiences about the journey they have been on, while conducting situational analysis. Their reflective journals help them to locate the milestones achieved, recall moments of disappointments and joy; and they share the recommendations made on the basis of their analysis. This activity is often a turning point in the whole analysis process as it provides opportunities for the M.Ed. PII's to

- Listen to and critique each other's work;

- Consider the process of situational analysis from the perspective of other participants;
- Reinforce their learning, and clarify misconceptions or confusions about the process of situational analysis;
- Learn the skill of being analytical;

They move through these facets of the process with the facilitation of the NDIE faculty who model ways of doing critical analysis.

Since the outcomes of the data analysis are largely subjective, the next stage of the workshop process leads them to literary sources. But, before searching out literature, they are introduced to reading strategies such as skim, scan, reflect, analyse, critique, review, referencing and note-making. Literature relevant to their problem enlightens the participant's perspective of the problem, provides insights and recommends ways of addressing the problem area. The theoretical insights from other local research are also used to confirm or challenge the tentative hunches that the participants have about ways to address the problems. During the literature review, tremendous learning occurs for the M.Ed. PII's in terms of the skills and knowledge, which they possess with regards to their problem in relation to the body of literature available, and the outcomes of other research conducted within their specific field of inquiry.

### **Stage Seven: Action Research Methodology**

Once the participants have explored literature related to their problem, they are in a position to state their hypotheses. Under the direction and facilitation of the mentor, they formulate their hypotheses. The next step is to explore a relevant and appropriate methodology, which has the capacity to address the problem in a disciplined and scientific manner within the specific context. For this purpose, the M.Ed. PII's are introduced to the methodology, nature, and characteristics of Action Research. The methodological approach of Action Research provides a disciplined and ethical way to study and search out ways to address and solve problems; and improve practice or bring about the change needed in their own context (Gay and Airasian, 2003). By adopting this method of research, the M.Ed. PII's learn to take well-planned and justifiable steps towards solving their problem. The students and other school personnel are thus protected from a trial and error approach to problem solving in the school or classroom. While there are several approaches to this method of research, the one followed at NDIE is the one based on Lewin's cyclic model, the Diagnostic and Therapeutic process

(Gay and Airasian, 2003; Burns, 2000) and the Spiral model with its four phases- Plan, Act, Observe and Reflect (Kemmis and McTaggart cited in Retallick, 2003, Quarterly).

M.Ed. PII's are also informed about the sources of assistance during the process of action research. These include,

- the role of the mentor and the mentoring process;
- the role of a critical friend;
- the importance and benefits of reflective and professional journals; and
- the role of literature.

## **The Mentor**

At this stage, the M.Ed. PII's are introduced to their individual mentors (NDIE faculty members). The role of the mentor becomes crucial as the M.Ed. PII's move to their action research phase. It is here that the mentors guide the negotiations of the ethical considerations and the practical issues associated with doing research in a school or a classroom. In consultation with their mentors, the action research process comes to life, which involves the following directive steps.

1. Clearly formulate the aims of the action research process.
2. Ensure the availability of relevant literary resources.
3. Plan action cycle I.
4. Implement the plan.
5. Monitoring the proceedings during the action.
6. Critically reflecting on the actions.
7. Evaluating the entire proceedings
8. Re-planning for action cycle II

In a time frame of approximately ten weeks, participants conduct action research over two or three cycles depending on their situation and the nature of their

problem area. They report the entire process with all evidence in their action research report. The research journal, which they have maintained throughout the research process, is fundamental to the formulation of the final stage of the research process – the writing of the report.

## **Findings**

The M.Ed. PII internship year has been a programme at NDIE since 1996. It has evolved to the current format from an annual process of critical evaluation by both students and faculty.

The current ‘marriage’ of situational analysis and action research is one that is working well. It has brought about positive changes in the attitudes and belief systems of the M.Ed. PIIs. It has helped in developing their overall confidence. Conducting of situational analysis provides a clear understanding and assuredness of the problem. It has helped to unfold and reveal those avenues, which they had never known before, and as a result they have become more active and conscious members of their schools. It has further developed some of their basic skills of observation, analysis, critique and decisions making, which are essential in equipping them to undertake action research that helps to solve problems and bring about change in the context.

## **Conclusion**

The school, as an open system, must provide opportunity and space for its teachers to grow professionally. Their growth and learning should now be seen at the heart of the teaching learning process. If the teachers’ professional development does not take place regularly, the efficient functioning of the school is questionable. Teachers need to learn to be more conscious and aware of problems that exist in their own context. They can consider taking up the analysis-action approach, which will not only help address and solve the problem and improve their situation, but also has the potential to professionally develop the teacher. If the organic nature of the school (education) as an open system claims mutual interaction among its organisms and interaction with the environment as fundamental, then it is all the more important for schools to develop their teachers professionally. If this does not happen, the mutual interaction between teacher-student, principal-teachers, teacher-teacher and the interaction with the environment will always be questioned. Situational analysis and action research both have the potential to change and improve interaction, because without interaction neither is possible. The change is two way. An

analysis-action approach contributes to the improvement of the curriculum, and also has the added capacity to develop the teacher as a change agent.

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# **The Learning Portfolio: A Process of Self-Assessment amongst Teacher Education Students**

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## **Abstract**

*Listening to teacher education students recounting their journeys into the formation of Learning Portfolios, has revealed as much about their own developing learning patterns as about the concept of portfolio learning itself. What their narratives reveal and how they visualise the happening of their learning are the components of this paper and its creative expression in the accompanying Poster.*

## **Introduction**

While undertaking their formal Professional Teacher Education Studies at the Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE), the participants of the Bachelor of Education (BEd), International Graduate Certificate in Education (IGCE) and Master of Education (MEd) programmes, are encouraged to pursue a breadth of intellectual tasks; be introduced to research skills; and assist in the development of a range of professional skills and techniques, while advancing their pedagogical knowledge at the same time. As “the call to prepare teachers reflective about their practice is a dominant theme in recent teacher education literature” (Borko, Michalec, Timmons & Siddle, 1997, p.345), the NDIE courses demand from the students and the academic staff a reflective approach towards their professional learning and teaching practices. This current work is an expression of the critical reflection of current and graduate students on their experiences of presenting a Learning Portfolio for *Classroom Teaching and Management (CTM)* - the integrative unit in the BEd/IGCE courses.

## **Portfolios**

The construction of portfolios has gained attention, particularly over the last decade, as a tool for promoting reflection among students and teachers (Borko, et al, 1997). The essence of the portfolio is its reconstructive purpose (Retallick n.d.), as it enables students to acquire reflective learning, which they derive from a careful consideration of prior activities. In this way, after considering activities that have already been undertaken, they are in a good position to make better sense of it for usage, amendment or otherwise, in the future. Richert’s offer of

the additional dimension of portfolio recording that helps students to remember classroom events more fully and accurately, can be extended further to include a range of self-directed learning experiences (cited in Borko et al, 1997).

A portfolio is a powerful medium of communication. When entitled as a *Learning Portfolio*, it is a container of documentation that provides evidence of the knowledge, skills, and disposition of a learner or a group of learners (Bird, as cited in Carroll, Potthoff, & Huber, 1996, p. 253). For NDIE teacher education students, it is a creation that has emerged from their need to think about what they are doing while they are doing it, in order to become effective teachers. Such reflective self-assessment has shown itself in the documentation of their attitudes, behaviours, achievements, improvements and thinking – all of which bring into view their personal growth and understanding of the profession for which they are preparing (Van Sickle, Bogan, Kamen, Butcher, 2005).

## **A Contextual Challenge**

The vast majority of teacher education students in Pakistan are the products of rote learning, catechism model of schooling, which stretches from early childhood to university levels. Summarized assessment, through written examinations, has been the norm by which students' achievements have been judged by others, namely teachers or external examiners. Testing of the memorised and limited text book knowledge is an all too regular feature of school life, and in the vast majority of schools, the only acceptable instrument of measuring students' achievements. School board and university examination questions have a predictable pattern, and those who mark the papers are content with awarding marks only for textbook answers, irrespective of whether they are accurate or inaccurate. Students sitting for secondary and higher secondary Board Examinations admit to writing on their examination papers what they know to be incorrect information, as they know that the correct answer will not gain them any marks (personal communications, 2005).

It is an enormous shift for students schooled in such a fashion to enter a different learning environment where the long term goal and the processes used to attain that goal, focus on enabling self-directed, independent learners, to emerge from their course of studies. Fifteen years of experience in working in such a milieu has revealed that a necessary first step in the learning transition process is to bring BEd/IGCE students to a point where they can trust their own words to explicate or describe their thoughts and knowledge, and dare to critique what they have read or heard. These are crucial first steps that they are taking after 12 + 2 years of school and university education.

When this contextual reality meets with the constructivist theory currently underpinning the approaches to teacher education programmes, there is initially an enormous gap. Teacher education students cannot be “trained” to be automatons in the classroom, equipped only with a textbook, chalk, blackboard and commanding voice. Nor will it suffice to “impart” content knowledge, lesson plans and “teacher activities”. The constructivist focus has moved from an emphasis on behavioural and skills attainment, to the formation or transformation of the individual teacher’s thinking and reflective processes, dispositions and beliefs (Wenzlaff, 1998). The construction of a learning portfolio enables the development of this process to be demonstrated. It also requires the development of thinking, judging and creative skills.

To demonstrate these, the contents of the learning portfolios at NDIE include self-selected artefacts that demonstrate the student’s naming of his/her own understanding and personal growth in attitudes, behaviours, thinking, critical reflection and achievements.

The journey into the unknown field of self-assessment is thus a frightening, tentative, hesitant, challenging, exciting, disappointing and rewarding one for this emerging generation of teachers. The narrative representation, as depicted in the accompanying poster, endeavours to capture some of the said “journey in progress” of current teacher education students. It demonstrates the process of their becoming confident and competent in assessing and exhibiting their professional capabilities as learners and as potential professional teachers.

## **Methodology**

A narrative approach was employed for this study of the impact of the construction of a learning portfolio by teacher education students. Critical reflection on the process, personal experiences and narratives of students and their lecturers, has been used to gain insight into their reflexive stories. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have expressed, stories identify or put language around the way people both experience and understand their world. From these has emerged the relevance and suitability of the Learning Portfolio, as a just and appropriate way of demonstrating and assessing the learning achievements of the BEd and MEd students.

The participants comprised fourteen (14) current and graduate students of the BEd/IGCE courses representing three (3) different student batches and covering a time span of five (5) years. Two faculty members were also involved in the

process, both as reflectors with the student participants and as teachers involved in the use of the learning portfolios.

Each student participant completed a questionnaire as well as participated in five (5) sessions where they told their stories and the group reflected critically on those narratives. Five students also shared insights during individual interviews. From this process emerged the poster whose narrative was imaged and constructed by the student participants.

## **Portfolio Learning Brought to Light Through Narratives**

The stories of the students raised issues from the anticipated to the revelatory. Most surprising was the passion with which they spoke of their experiences stretching from the “*What is it? What has to go in it? What do I have to do? How much work is entailed? I can’t assess myself!*” apprehensions of the beginning questions, to statements of insight into their own learning processes, achievements and limitations. Graduates recounted incidents of how the portfolio learning had influenced and resourced their professional practices and stretched their ideas regarding students’ assessment from early childhood to secondary school levels.

## **Learning About How Learning Happens**

The stories confirmed Vavrus’ perspective that a learning portfolio is not just a container full of “stuff” (1990). What it does demonstrate is that a student grows in his/her ability to systematically organize and monitor the theoretical insights gained into how learning happens, and is stimulated in the classroom setting. The students noted that it challenged them to record their attempts to apply and “test out” the theoretical knowledge they had acquired in the reality of the classroom both during the teaching practicum and micro teaching portions of their course. They stressed that in many ways it is easier to rely on their teachers either at the NDIE, or in the schools where their practicum takes place to provide an assessment and to give their reasons for such. The process of their own self assessment requires much more effort not simply to claim a movement in the process of learning, but also to demonstrate the said with reliable pieces of “before and after” evidence. In this way, keeping their own records helped them in identifying the movements in their own learning, although initially and at particular intervals throughout the year they required assistance and guidance by the academic staff to accomplish this. The students’ schooling years have not provided them with the foundation for identifying such developmental process that is occurring within themselves. Indicators of this development occurring

through the portfolio process were evidenced in the students' reflective statements.

I feel that a portfolio celebrates my achievements and gives me a holistic picture of my own strengths and weaknesses. And, this was new for me! It made me work out and trace back how I came to know a particular thing. That was a really interesting part ... I also tried to work out in the same way why I was finding it difficult in some areas, particularly content stuff ... was it me, was it the teacher, was it the resources, was it the way I was studying and that sort of thing... (Participant D).

At first I thought the folio was going to be great fun and easy to put together but then it took a long time to do and it was really difficult to provide the evidence at times. Sometimes I had to talk things through with someone else to help me sort it out. Even my mother got interested! I then worked out that if I lay things all over the floor I could sort it out and see the steps in how I came to know how to do or express certain things (participant G)

## **Learning How to Learn**

Reflective action on the individual student's part has led to an understanding and appreciation of his/her own learning style or preference and way of expressing it. The narratives indicate that such styles, with qualifying descriptors, ranged across:

- *the highly individualistic learner* - logical, methodical, critical and analytic, able to work within set time limits and visualise portfolio segments illustrative of learning that has occurred and still needs to occur.
- *the guided learner* - tentative, doubtful, "tell me what I need to find out and how to find it so I will be sure I am correct".
- *the creativity out of chaos learner* - use of a variety of mediums to learn and to express learning, insightful and imaginative.
- *the originator* - going beyond the norm, finding different perspectives, sceptical, analytic, challenging what is and eager to produce new knowledge.

- *the community learner* – “I discovered that I really do learn better when I am with others and can think out loud with them and listen to what they are saying, too” (Participant B).

What is highly challenging for the students is discovering ways in which to present and demonstrate what they know and what they are still to learn; what skills they have acquired and what they still need to practice; and what natural abilities they already possess. However, they find confidence in the freedom with which the portfolio affords them to express themselves in mediums that are most obvious in exemplifying what it is that they wish to convey to others, and whether they are their peers or their teachers or their mentors.

## **Learning How I Assess My Learning**

In this current study, self-assessment emerged as both the most exciting and most challenging aspect of portfolio learning, particularly in the Pakistani educational milieu, where passive, receptive learning and handed down assessments are entrenched. The portfolio concept and its related format have the potential to capture the essence of the learning journey. Students’ stories reveal that they have experienced it as the only tool, which evaluates them in a variety of settings, thus giving a comprehensive view of how far their learning has extended (Group Session 3). This alludes to its cumulative nature and its expansiveness in incorporating a range of settings from which and in which an individual’s learning or failure to learn has occurred. Thus the BEd /IGCE students can name the portfolio construction process as “... something that gave me an enormous shove into independent learning” (Group Session 2).

Such positive statements do not ignore the fact that some students struggle to present themselves through a portfolio. The decisions that have to be made in order to construct it are, at least initially, overwhelming for them (Group Session 5). The NDIE Guideline outlines the portfolio’s parameters as a container of evidence for a student’s knowledge, skills and dispositions, something that gets its vibrancy from the ever-in-progress story that puts on view a student’s efforts, progress and achievements in the preparatory journey of becoming a professional teacher (Carroll, et al, 1996, p.253). Faculty mentoring is thus an essential component if a student is to make the transition or paradigm shift from a known reality of being assessed by others, to a self-evaluation of his/her competency and readiness for the teaching profession. Once this shift or transition is accomplished, its long-term impact will be felt in the school classrooms of such graduate teachers.

The relative subjectivity of the portfolio process is balanced by a faculty member's contribution to the final evaluative statement.

## **Integrative Learning**

The portfolio development process is not merely another piece of assigned work given to students to complete by a prescribed date. Rather it is a process of learning in itself, which is both taught and discovered. Faculty members must put in place the learning – teaching strategies to ensure that the students understand the nature of the learning portfolio and the modus operandi of portfolio learning.

While I realised it was not just a collection of assignments and worksheets and examples of classroom activities etc., it took me time to understand exactly what I was supposed to be doing. There's a whole practical side to it, like understanding what goes into it and what doesn't; how big does it have to be; is it all paper work or can it contain IT materials (Participant H).

Guidance and mentoring is an important part of assisting students to make connections between the theoretical aspects of their course, their experiences during the school-based teaching practicum, as well as micro teaching and the knowledge they have of themselves.

Once these three component parts of portfolio learning begin to act together, integrative learning can be seen to be happening in the students, and the student him/herself starts to “feel” this integration.

It took me a fair while to understand what I was really supposed to be doing for the portfolio, but once it clicked, then it was exciting. It also took away a lot of anxiety about assessment (Group Session 3).

It is within this integrative aspect of portfolio learning that students begin to develop and voice their beliefs about themselves as teachers, their attitudes and values towards not only the profession, but their own potential to “love” and to respect; and to animate the teaching-learning processes in whatever setting they find themselves in the future.

## Conclusions

The experiences of portfolio learning as narrated by the NDIE BEd/IGCE students and graduates appear to be not so different from those reported from other studies in varying social and cultural settings (Borko et al, 1997; Carroll et al, 1996; Krause, 1996; Van Sickle et al, 2005). As in Wenzlaff's (1998) study, the messages contained within the students' narratives hold descriptions of how and when they discovered their own learning. This learning was shown to be not undirected, but focussed on determining what they believed about teaching, and through tangible evidence, how they as individuals rated themselves as fit for the teaching profession in a local context that is screaming out for a pervasive change to what currently dominates the schooling process.

## The Poster

### **A Narrative as told by Leena Khusheed, MEd student, BEd/IGCE Graduate**

The poster is a story of the way reflection entered into the lives of the BEd/IGCE students who travelled the journey of the portfolio. In the Pakistan context, the concept of self-reflection and self-discovery does not seem to exist. However, when asked to compile a portfolio during the year at NDIE, a change in outlook of the way students' perceived themselves emerged.

The journey of the portfolio was one of self-growth through reflection. At the start of the course, when looking into the mirror of self-understanding, a blank image was formed. But, throughout the year various self-constructed, self-discovered artefacts were produced, gathered, assembled, arranged and re-arranged and strategically positioned for the part of the story they were to represent. By the end of the year, what they showed was the process of development that had emerged at various points throughout the year.

The portfolios' stories are created around the teacher education journey, its three main dimensions and their mirrored outcomes, namely:

1. Growth and development of the whole person in intellect, values, attitudes, interaction, personhood;
2. Demonstration of current abilities;
3. Evaluation and cumulative achievement;

Thus, through the journey of creating a portfolio, the initial blank image representing self-understanding becomes changed. A reflection becomes evident, depicting aspects of the personalities of the students, their strengths and weaknesses, their skills and talents and their improvement and progress.



The poster's message is that portfolio learning is a positive means of enabling students to get involved in the process of evaluating their learning and through this, to be able to critically reflect on their own person. In this way, they are able to express their own preparedness and suitability for the teaching profession, and the values and attitudes they hold as potential educators.

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# Significance Of School Experience Based Teaching Practicum and Quality in Teacher Education

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## Abstract

*Every flourishing society has debated about 'Quality Education'; this debate cannot produce final answers because the aims of education are tied down to the nature and ideals of a particular society. The latest notion of education suggested by (Noddings, 2003) is "happiness ". Educators have associated happiness with qualities such as rich intellectual life, rewarding human relationships, love for home and places, sound character, good parenting and preparing for job that one loves.*

*Even educators recognize that students are whole persons; the temptation arises to describe the 'whole' in terms of collective parts and make sure that every aspect, part, or attributes are covered in the curriculum. At this point question arises 'how can teacher incorporate the above-mentioned curriculum in order to fulfill the needs and interests of the whole child? It requires skills, understanding about needs of child. (Nodding, 2005).*

*In the context of professional development programs for teachers good amount of time is spent in teaching practicum, it is not only meant to practice the teaching skills, it is a continuation of teacher education in an another setting a genuine classroom and school setting for student teachers to practice and to understand the context of school setting as 'whole' and teach the child through holistic approach. The professional development institution teaches and train teachers to interact with students as 'whole person' and treat schools as 'whole community'. Teaching the whole child requires that we accept students for who they are rather than what they are.*

*Being a teacher educator of B.Ed students at Notre-Dame I experienced the SETP model; it is need-based and is developed by the faculty members of the Notre-Dame and still in a process of improvement. They are focusing upon making students to think 'teaching as a lateral process rather than vertical or horizontal process. As a facilitator I mentored the group following the steps of SETP model and kept on reflecting upon its process and recorded my experiences and compared it with the experiences I have gained in the capacity of M.Ed student of a renowned university of Karachi. I found the process of SETP most effective for teacher preparation*

*programme because it is more relevant to the demands of a teacher's job, ought to correspond to the roles expected of a teacher, besides the role of a classroom instructor and facilitator of learning.*

*Further, teacher these days is also expected to understand the child's needs and interest; perform the role of a counselor, researcher, organizer of curricular and co-curricular activities, community mobilizer as well as developer and manager or resources. Therefore, the trainee teachers should be placed in a school for long time to understand the culture of school, take observations of schoolteachers, and participate in co-curricular activities PTA and other school related activities. The school head and a senior teacher of the school (mentor) should be adequately prepared to guide and supervise the trainees' performance. The teacher education institution should develop a mechanism to evaluate the teachers' performance and it should be triangulated by assigning responsibilities to mentor, schoolteacher and teacher educator to assess the performance of the trainee for the purpose of further improvement and in some cases for accreditation. The SETP aims to give the best professional support to the trainee during the teaching component so that they can understand the child and school culture as 'whole' and in their carrier they can keep pace with the students' needs.*

## **Introduction**

Teaching practicum is a central element in the teacher education programmes, and school experience or on site experience is the most important component of the teacher preparation programme, as it is relevant to the demands of a teacher's job. The Schools Experience Programme (SETP) ought to correspond to the roles expected of a teacher, reflecting the current world trend towards school-based teacher training. Teacher education has contributed to the popular use of the term "mentoring" to signify the appointment of experienced teachers to undertake the supervision of student teachers during their teaching practice in schools (McIntyre, Hagger, and Wilkin, 1993).

## **Teacher Roles**

To ensure relevance of the 'practicum' component of teacher education programme, the practicum activities must correspond to the roles expected of a teacher in the present day world. Needless to say, teacher's roles are nothing but his/her performance areas. In the context of the present day school realities and current discourse relating to the aims and objectives of education, a school teacher is expected to perform the role of a manager of classroom instruction;

facilitator of learning; mobilizer and manager of resources; designer and organizer of pupil evaluation; researcher and innovator; planner and organizer of co-curricular activities; mentor and counselor of children; service provider for the community and parents; and curriculum developer.

To perform each of the above-mentioned roles, the teacher is called upon to carry out a series of tasks for which he/she needs to build a set of competencies. This requires an analysis of tasks, vis-à-vis competencies undertaken to develop the outline of the practicum component of the teacher education programme.

To perform the role of a manager of classroom instruction, a teacher shall require competencies to undertake pedagogical analysis of the content to be taught, to match the content delivery with the level of students' cognitive development, to communicate effectively, to mobilize and appropriately use the requisite teaching learning material and to create and sustain students' interest in learning. To perform the role of a learning facilitator, the teacher shall require the competencies to create the situations conducive for self-learning through dialogue, discussion, problem solving and investigation individually or in groups.

In additions, he/she shall have to develop the competence to use appropriate learning material at proper time in the best possible manner. To evaluate students' learning and to use it as a feedback on the quality of his/her own instruction, the teacher should have the competency to frame suitable questions and activities, assignments, etc. for both formative and summative evaluation.

A teacher may face certain difficulties in matters relating to his/her roles, and the tasks he/she is supposed to carry out. In some cases, the problems may be specific to his/her situation, and hence the textbook solutions based on the insights gained through the study of theoretical courses may not take him/her nearer to the resolution of the problems. Therefore, he/she shall have to develop the competence to systematically investigate the problem by using the methods and procedures generally used by the researchers. The context-specific problems relating to students' motivation, learning and behavior, teacher's instruction, inter-personal relations and classroom management, may also be investigated by the teacher. He/she may also develop innovative strategies and practices to solve his/her day-to-day problems.

To ensure child's total development, the teacher is duty bound to provide him/her with varied educational and aesthetic experiences, for which there is need to develop the competence to plan and organize a variety of co-curricular activities, including games, sports, excursions, etc. The teacher should be in a

position to meet their information needs and to also provide them assistance to develop life skills and tackle their personal problems on their own. Besides students, they are also expected to provide guidance to the parents and community, especially in relation to children's education and upbringing. In our country, curriculum development is generally considered a high level technical exercise, which can only be taken up by experts. This view allows the teachers to have a role in the transaction of given curriculum, and does not consider them competent enough to participate in the development of curriculum and instructional material. On the other hand, there is a view, which allows to the teachers, the role of participating actively in all the processes of curriculum development. It is rightly claimed that their participation in curriculum development shall go a long way in making it relevant and realistic, to represent an appropriate match between its demands on the one hand, and the level of students' cognitive development on the other.

## **Components of School Experience Programmes (SEPT)**

Keeping in view the different roles a teacher is expected to perform and the tasks relating to each role, the school experience programme must include the following:

1. Classroom teaching in different contexts, such as teaching in large size classes, multi-grade situations, rural, urban and remote areas; mixed ability classes, multicultural classes, etc.
2. Observation of teaching and other activities of regular teachers of the school.
3. Observation of the teaching and other activities of other trainees, and offering comments, observations and suggestions for improvement. This in fact is a mechanism for mutual learning, as it proves useful for the 'observer' as well as for the 'observed'.
4. Participation in the school assembly as an observer and sometimes preparing students for presenting talks, news reading, thoughts of the day, songs, etc.
5. Student counseling for which the students in need of counseling shall have to be identified through observation and discussion with teachers. The trainees may prepare case studies of one or two identified children, for which they may collect the requisite information from the children concerned, their parents, teachers or peers. On the basis of insights gained through the case

study, the trainees shall devise the strategies for providing guidance to the children concerned.

6. A teacher is also expected to be sensitive to the problems of students, fellow teachers, parents, and school staff including head of the school. The problems may relate to students' learning, classroom management, school discipline, inter-personal relations, school attendance and absenteeism and relevance of curriculum content and effectiveness of curriculum transaction, and may accordingly attempt an alternative mode or technique to achieve the desired results. If found useful and effective, the teacher may use the technique regularly, and may also recommend it to the other teachers.
7. The organization of various types of co-curricular activities also forms an important component of the teacher's responsibilities, as it is considered essential to realize the over-all objective of education, which is the total development of a child's personality. It is generally observed that all the teachers do not possess the same level of competence for the selection and organization of such activities. It would be sheer wastage of time and effort if the activities are badly organized, as it would not lead to the realization of the stated objectives. The teacher trainees shall acquire the requisite organizational skills by observing the teacher educators and school teachers organizing various activities, and then by organizing the activities themselves.
8. The school is expected to seek parents' involvement and cooperation in all matters relating to the education of their wards, such as their attendance in school and progress in studies. Besides parents, the school is also expected to ensure whole-hearted cooperation of the community, especially of the members of the Panchayati Raj structures and area education committees, if any. The school staff should encourage the trainees to attend the meetings of parents and other committees as observers. They should also be encouraged to interact formally or informally, with the parents of the children whom they are teaching.
9. Evaluation, an integral part of the instructional process, involves evaluation of the students' progress through oral, written or practical examination. During the school experience programme, the prospective teachers should be provided an opportunity to construct different types of evaluation tools, and before their use, to obtain feedback from the teachers, supervisors and peers.

## **Preparation for school experience programme (SEPT)**

In the teacher education institution, the trainees' preparation for the School Experience Programme begins from the very first day of the session. However, the following activities specifically meant for preparing the trainees for school experience, need to be organized in every teacher education institution:-

### **Observation of High-Quality Teaching**

It is imperative for the teacher education institution to provide adequate opportunities to the trainees to observe the teaching of experienced and reputed teachers. This may be arranged in one of the cooperating schools. In addition, demonstration lessons by the teacher educators, and screening of video recordings of samples of 'good' teaching, must be arranged in the training institution. The observation should be followed by detailed discussion on the strong as well as weak points of the 'teaching' observed by the trainees. The trainees may be encouraged to recall the positive and memorable aspects of the work of their own teachers.

### **Practicing Teaching in Simulated Situations**

After discussing 'Teaching skills and competencies' and 'Microteaching' in theory classes, the teacher educators should demonstrate the use of different teaching skills in simulated situations. There should be proper coordination among teacher educators regarding the selection of teaching skills to be demonstrated by them, so as to ensure that all the skills are demonstrated by the teacher educators and practiced by the trainees.

### **Practicing Blackboard Writing**

Writing on the black board or white board continues to be an important teaching skill, which requires sufficient practice. This aspect of teacher's work assumes greater importance in view of the fact that the quality of handwriting is not emphasized these days in schools. Besides simple writing, the prospective teachers should also be made to practice making diagrams, sketches, etc. on the board.

## **Learning to Prepare and Use Teaching Aids/Materials**

The teacher education institutions may organize a workshop to provide training to the student teachers, to prepare teaching aids like charts, models, and to use display boards, etc. Besides, they should also learn to use technological aids like OHP, Audio cassette recorder and player, VCP etc.

## **Learning to Operate Computers**

To promote use of computers as an instructional aid, all the trainees must be provided computer training so as to enable them to use it for teaching and learning, both on line and off line.

## **Criticism or Discussion Lessons**

After Practicing different teaching skills in simulated situations and other essential skills like writing on board, preparation of teaching aids and learning of computer operations, the trainees should be prepared to deliver full lessons in the subjects of their specialization. Such lessons shall be supervised by the concerned teacher educator and observed by other teacher trainees. The discussion that follows the lesson delivery provides an opportunity to the trainees to have the benefit of the comments and suggestions of the teacher educators and also of their peers.

## **Preparation for Conducting Action Research and Case Study**

To prepare the trainees for this role, the teacher educators should first discuss the concept, objectives, importance, scope and methodology of the Action Research and Case Study. Thereafter, the trainees may prepare outline of some project, which they may present in a workshop for discussion in the presence of some outline experts.

## **Preparation for Student Counselling**

The preparation for student counselling shall have to be preceded by a detailed discussion on the educational and psychological problems of children, methods of their identification, concept, services, and methodology of different type of counselling. If possible, the teacher educators may conduct a mock counselling session with a child or with a volunteer trainee.



## **Preparation for Seeking Cooperation of the Parents and Community**

The trainees should be made to realize that children's education is the joint responsibility of the school, parents and the community. While the trainees shall get the first hand experience of interacting with children's parents and members of the community during SETP in the cooperating school, the teacher educators may provide some useful hints to the trainees in this regard.

## **Preparation of the School Staff for Mentoring and Supervision**

The tasks mentioned above, if organized effectively by the training institution, shall prepare the trainees mentally and professionally for SETP. The teacher preparation is the joint responsibility of the practicing schools, and of the teacher education institution, therefore, the school staff, who is supposed to be the mentors and supervisors of trainees, also need to be trained in performing the tasks and roles expected of them. The teacher education institution must organize a workshop for the teachers of practicing schools, before sending the trainees for SETP.

## **Interlocking Teaching Practicum and Professional Development**

It is one of the major components of SETP, and normally, teacher educators believe that the strategies taught to trainee is a wealth for them and that they just need enrichment to mature into a strong and competent teacher. However, strategies and techniques are imported from outside the school and classroom without significant attention given to the data regarding the school and real teachers, and about the children needs and interest. The SETP provides an opportunity to the trainee to gain insight about the school culture and about the students' interest and problems, in order to plan strategies connecting to the specific learning dilemma of students inside their classrooms, and to be able to later track the effects of the efforts made by them.

## **On-site Support**

Lack of support during teaching practices diminishes the trainee teacher's ability to learn deeply and to take risks, because they lack experiences and expertise as they began to build the techniques into their own practices. The SETP provides on-going support to the trainee by peer-ing them with their colleagues and

arranging a senior teacher of the school as mentors for the trainee, who provide them constructive feedback and help them in troubleshooting.

## **Evaluating trainees' performance in SETP**

The teacher education institution is expected to evolve and use a reliable system of the evaluation of trainees' performance in various aspects of SETP, such as the quality of the lesson plan, effectiveness of classroom teaching or lesson delivery, quality of peer observation, relevance and appropriateness of the teaching aids, quality of evaluation instruments prepared and used, quality of contribution in the organization of morning assembly and other activities; along with quality of action research and case study completed, effectiveness of student counseling and contribution in the organization of the meetings of PTA and other committees. The teacher education institution shall have to decide the weight of each individual task in the overall scheme of assessment, which should be in proportion to its importance in the total scheme of teacher preparation. The responsibility of evaluating trainees' performance should be jointly shouldered by the teacher educator, mentor teacher and the school head master.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the School Experience Programme (SETP) constitutes the most important component of a teacher preparation programme. It is different from the routine teaching practice programme, as it makes an attempt to provide experiences to the trainees in respect of all the roles they are expected to perform. It develops a teachers' repertoire, and by building and using the said, both new and experienced teachers are better able to help students to success in school.

Teachers frequently ask whether the changes they made in the classroom have a significant effect on their students, whether the strategies they use are useful for students, and whether the said fulfills the needs and interest of the students. The research, along with my field experiences, indicates that when students show interest in classroom, the absenteeism is minimized and drop outs decrease. This is the case where teachers are addressing needs and interest of students. A relationship exists between students' interest, and the investment in their work and school, and their teachers' repertoire of techniques for engaging them in meaningful activities. Trainee teachers need to learn the skill of building

repertoire, because they have a limited image of good teaching. Trainee teachers are exposed to new strategies and techniques, but these are ambiguous for them, and therefore they find it difficult to make appropriate adjustments by relating them to content and assessment. SETP provides experiences to trainees to see the complex image of teaching, which includes a repertoire of techniques for working with children and adjusting them with curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school context, because no single strategy can work successfully for all children.

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# **Learning and Modes to Ascertain Learning: Perception, Purpose and Practice**

*Unaeza Alvi, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

Formal testing and examination has remained the most prevalent mode to ascertain learning, however, it is under constant criticism, for reasons of its narrow scope, norming, de-motivating, testing of atomized and low-level knowledge and its back wash influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Hence, a need for a paradigm shift towards wider school-based assessment reform and the use of alternative and formative methods to ascertain learning to promote the teaching and learning process and assess deeper and wider range of knowledge and skills, as proposed by experts (Gipps, 2002; Hargreaves, et. al., 2002; Black, 1998; Gitomer and Duschl, 1998). However, due to limited research evidence and in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, practices, purposes and the complexities involved in the implementation processes of such practices, any large scale implementation is yet to be evidenced. Hence, this qualitative, case-study investigated this particular phenomenon to develop and present an in-depth and holistic view of assessment.

The research aimed to understand in-depth the perceptions and practices, the basis of practices, and the complexities involved in the implementation of such practices. Hence the qualitative research paradigm, which has the advantage of providing a rich understanding, seemed to be more suitable. To be more specific, a case-study approach was used as it allows a rich study of the complexities of the situations, phenomenon and instances in their natural settings. In-depth interviews, observation, document analysis and the researcher's reflective diary were used to collect data. The research was conducted with five teachers – three secondary (Mathematics/Science) and two primary teachers – from schools/colleges in Melbourne, Australia, and four academics conversant with rich assessment practices – one science/generalist educator, one mathematics educator, and two science educators from a university in Melbourne, Australia.

The research aimed to understand in depth the perceptions and practices, the basis of practices, and the complexities involved in the implementation of rich and formative assessment with the purpose of enriching the thinking, discourse and limited empirical knowledge available in this field. However, in this paper, I will discuss the nature of participants' personal experiences of learning about such practices, their perceptions of learning and their practices to ascertain learning.

The study reveals that participants did not experience such methods of establishing learning as school students themselves, but did experience these at higher levels. Their learning about such methods happened through interaction with active peers and in-service professional development, and through interactions with professionals and academics that were more conversant in such practices. The study also suggests that teacher learning was facilitated internally in schools through setting up of learning team structures with innovative colleagues, of similar disciplinary areas and class levels. It was also facilitated by in-service professional developments and networking with professional and academics and open and shared school culture in which work, ideas and workloads related to the designing of the task, criteria and reporting were shared.

It is evident that all participants viewed learning and assessments as very broad and rich. The participants also practiced a broad range of methods and approaches to ascertain students' learning but the essential purpose of such practices was to support and facilitate the demonstration of students learning.

The study recommends that in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, it would be essential to provide practitioners with opportunities to conceptualize and re-think views of learning and purposes of assessments through interactions with innovative peers and academics. Moreover, flexibility during practice and collaborative reflections on practices would be fundamental to the process.

# **Gendered Schooling: A Case from Northern Pakistan**

*Dr. Dilshad Ashraf, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

This paper is based on the findings of my doctoral research that examined women teachers' experiences in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Life history research was used to establish links between women teachers' (five women participants) experiences and their social, historical and social contexts. The study attempted to understand how women teachers manage their familial traditional role and their professional commitment – a comparative recent addition to their traditional role. Life history interviews and observations were main source of data generation.

This paper will specifically discuss findings of my observations of five teachers' role they play inside and outside the classroom. Teachers unanimously agreed that teaching was the most appropriate profession due to schools' ability to accommodate women's other role as primary care givers of their families. Interestingly, the dominant gender division of labour also found an expression in schools' every day routines in terms of delegation of task to different teachers. Most of the time, female teachers enacted their 'traditional' role inside the schools and the classrooms. Classroom observations also identified female teachers' gendered teaching practices, eg, making gender segregated groups, reminding girls of their 'familial and care giving' responsibilities and specific seating arrangements.

The paper discusses these nuances from teachers' classroom practices and school experiences to demonstrate its impact on quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and therefore the need to integrate gender as crosscutting theme in teachers' professional development programmes.

# The Language of Schooling and the Creation of Social Identity

*Hina Ashraf, Aga Khan University Examination Board, Pakistan*  
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In recent years an attempt has been made to understand the pace of economic growth as affected by the non-economic elements of the society. These non-economic elements are referred to as social capital and include the structure of relationships, interpersonal dynamics (interaction and trust) and the common context and language shared by individuals. In Pakistani society, English and Urdu languages have gained primary significance as the language constituents of social capital.

Linguistic practices and the anticipation of the value that linguistic products will receive in other fields or markets affect our decisions and outlook towards life. They also affect our decision in choosing the right kind of school for our children. These linguistic practices are determined through the habitus of individuals and societies. The term habitus (Bourdieu 1983: 17) contains the meaning of habitat, habitant, the process of habitation and habit (particularly habits of thought). Habitus is thus the social environment which shapes our dispositions and inclinations. The linguistic habitus is the subset of dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts (family, peer group, schools, etc.).

A questionnaire was administered on 261 parents drawn from a stratified random sample of Karachi schools. The schools were differentiated on a basis of level of fees, gender, and language of instruction. Bourdieu's theoretical analysis of social capital implicit in the questionnaire proved to map closely on to the aspirations of parents in Karachi for the creation of social capital in children. In this paper their perceptions of the relative potency of the schools of their choice in this respect are discussed.

## **Globalization and Teaching Learning – Productive Human Capital, Pakistani Perspective**

*Bartholomew David, Notre Dame Institute of Education, Pakistan*

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Countries that have been investing, consciously and regularly, in their own education systems in order to improve and develop it have been able to gain sustainability in their economic and social development and their people have been able to confidently face the demands of globalization. It has also helped the nations to develop productive human capital, which in today's world are valued more than the physical resources of a nation. Such nations have capitalized on their productive human capital for higher rates of return both in economic and social sectors. This study focuses on "how will this productive human capital develop in Pakistan?" Indicators are that it will develop only through a skill-based quality education that has the ability to change the unproductive to productive human who is then capable of adapting itself with the changing nature and trends of globalization.

Education addresses the ways to eliminate conflicts – political, religious, social and sectarian – from the lives of peoples and nations. It is not the absence of any conflict that acts as a catalyst to achieve economic and social sustainability among the developed nations but its their conscious and deliberate effort to develop their human capital through education who can then understand the importance of social stability and its role in economic development. This paper has looked at the changes in the education system and curriculum made in the last 30 years in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan. It is evident how these countries have moved from low-income countries to middle-income and higher-income countries through refining their education systems and curriculums over the years. The British and American education systems and curriculums are other examples that have evolved after the Second World War, especially in the last 30 years, to ensure that they do have a continuous supply of productive human capital, which is active in the social, economic and cultural spheres in their countries.

A consideration of the Pakistani education system and the curriculum covering the same time period presents a contrasting picture. Pakistan has been introducing changes in its education system and curriculum since its independence but there has been no substantial improvement in the economic and social sectors. The function of its curriculum is to close the minds of the



people towards creative thinking. It does not help the individuals to solve their problems. So far, the curriculum has proved to be a barrier to productive human capital and towards conflicting issues within and outside the country. It has not contributed to any change in the thinking patterns and attitudes of the people towards each other, that is, religious and ethnic minorities, and towards people of neighbouring countries. Curriculum evaluation is an important tool to develop and improve the overall education system. Pakistan has a federal and provincial setup of education and there are a large number of officials working in these setups. The entire setup has to be maintained. A huge amount goes from the budget to salaries and maintenance of the entire setup. In return, how does it develop the individual learner? Is curriculum evaluation a regular exercise in Pakistan? Is curriculum development carried out on unscientific basis? If the answer to both these questions is 'Yes', then why is it not shared with the people through the media? Does every stakeholder in Pakistan know the vision, aims, goals and objectives of education in Pakistan? If we do have a vision, aim of education, then why is our education largely failing to develop the individuals as productive humans in society?

It is suggested that curriculum should be evaluated not only in the light of the aims of social, religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of Pakistan, but also whether it is successful in producing productive human capital, according to the needs of Pakistani society and the present trends of globalization and emerging professions and changing patterns in investment. Curriculum evaluation should be carried out mainly for the purpose of evaluating the process through which the learners pass through and not only evaluating the learners' performances.

# **A Story of Change and Innovation to Enhance Quality of Schooling: A Case Study of AKU-IED Impact**

*Dr Nelofer Halai, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

This study investigates the impact of the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) led school improvement programmes that include Certificate, Diploma and Master's programmes in teacher education for "partner schools" being offered over the last 10 years. The 15-month long study was intended to (a) help understand and identify the changes that have occurred in the schools, (b) document the processes that led to the change, and (c) factors that facilitated/inhibited this process. Four broad areas of school improvement – (i) Classroom teaching and learning processes, (ii) Student outcomes, (iii) Academic coordination, and (iv) Teacher-teacher interaction were identified from the literature as the focus of research (Thiessen & Anderson, 1999; Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001). A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for understanding reform efforts. A multi-stage sampling process was used to select seven schools out of 107, as "cases" that had at least five years of continuous interaction with AKU-IED and had a variety of staff graduate from AKU-IED. Each case was researched by one of the eight-member research teams.

This paper presents the case of Shining Star Academy (SSA), a private English-medium, boy's school, from classes 6-10, located in Karachi. The school is a part of a system owned by a religious community, governed by a Board of Governors that includes representation from the school management. Data was collected through multiple interviews of eight teachers teaching in classes 6-8, including two who had not obtained any training from AKU-IED. Two lessons taught by each teacher were observed. Key administrative staff and a group of students were also interviewed. A large number of documents, including examination results and examination papers, were obtained and analysed.

Findings show a positive impact of AKU-IED in all four areas. There is change in classroom teaching – new methods of teaching are being used by most of the teachers observed. The change in students is multi-dimensional; they appeared confident and articulate. Academic coordination brought about innovative ways of professional development. The teacher-teacher interaction was greatly enhanced through structures/activities built into the school timetable. These changes were brought about in the management, teachers and students of the school through four overlapping processes:

1. Planning and initiation

2. Implementation
3. Institutionalisation and
4. Evolution and modification.

The concept of school improvement employed by SSA can be seen as a large and complex participatory action research where change was fostered through an iterative process much like the cycles of action research.

However, there are a number of issues that need attention both from the school and from AKU-IED. There is tension and disharmony between school improvement activities and the philosophy of the school and the teachers. Though the school improvement initiatives are showing results, they are also causing “problems”, for example, in the perceived “lack of discipline” among the students. More details and implications of these findings for both AKU-IED and the school are discussed.

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# Quality in Teacher Education for Better Quality of Life

*Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, University of Faisalabad, Pakistan*

This paper is based on a case study reflecting the author's experience while training female teachers in schools run by the City District Government Karachi (CDGK). These schools are located in Liaqatabad Town and are usually run among *shanty houses*. Pupils coming from these slums are the wards of the economically downtrodden classes. Parents are generally daily wage earners who have no vision for the future of their children. Living as squatters makes them develop a psyche of contentment without any hope for the betterment of their children. The ghettos in which they dwell seldom have city water supply, electricity or natural gas connections. However, community living of this kind leads to familiarity with each other, thus developing strong feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood. Offspring are usually brought up by parents who quarrel daily due to meagre income of the breadwinner.

The government has established schools through planned intervention and these primary education institutions are never far from the communities. Tradition, not well-thought decisions, takes these children to merely schools. But there are other reasons also. Many parents have seen the neighbours bringing changing to their respective neighbourhoods as and when their promising child got a career job through hard work in achieving quality education. Such parents also seek free time on their own that results from the children being in school. This too is a reason of sending their wards to schools.

A majority of female teachers were from the same neighbourhood and were satisfied with their role. Earning, and not the nature of their role, provided them satisfaction. Some amongst them held masters degree whereas most had taken on the profession after intermediate and graduate level education. Most of them were professionally qualified and possessed teaching certifications or Bachelor of Education degrees. Living in the metropolis had exposed them to an environment unlikely that their counterparts could experience deep in the interior of the province of Sindh.

In all, 272 female teachers were trained three-and-a-half years ago in the areas of teaching methodology and instructional technology. Learning theories, early years education, child development, class room management, questioning skills, curriculum, and evaluation and assessment were the main topics covered during these 3-day phased training programmes. Since the teachers were experienced enough to grasp the philosophy of this short training, some of them

demonstrated exceptionally high-levels of teaching capabilities. Excellence in education and quality in the dispensation of teaching at school were the hallmark of these training interventions. Stories abound about the taught who excelled in education and were able to get admission into engineering universities and medical colleges thus transforming their quality of life dramatically. Generally, they shifted with their families to planned neighbourhood.

The case study empirically investigates the qualitative change taking place silently over a long period of time through quality instruction. Teachers with the ability and capacity to ignite thought process in students have inspired them to achieve laurels in their lives. Standards of living changed and individuals became more responsible citizenship. Quality in teaching imparts valuable learning skills leading to self-directed learning. Quality education enables pupils to learn to think. These teachers had faith in the transformation process and may have contributed to change in the destiny of mankind through quality education. The squatters in urban areas who were taught by the teachers are at an advantage, as compared to their counterparts in rural areas, as they have been given an opportunity to get education and are witness to successes achieved by able students who are wards of these economically deprived families. A majority of the students are now earning their livelihood from the professions unlike their parents. Miracles performed by quality in teacher education are evident from these success stories of achievement of students hailing from the *kutchi abadies* of the metropolis.

## **Leadership for Promoting Quality in Science Teaching and Learning: Reflections from the Science Association of Pakistan.**

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*Qamar Syed, SAP, Pakistan*

*Naseem Fakhar, SAP, Pakistan*

Pakistan, like other developing countries in the world is in continuous struggle to improve and uplift the quality of education and particularly science education. Many reforms and innovations to improve the quality of science teaching and learning have been introduced that have proven to be unsuccessful. One essential reason for it being unsuccessful is the quality of teaching and teachers reluctance to accept and implement such reforms. The reluctance of teachers to accept such reforms may be due to the non supportive and non sharing culture of our schools, the absence of a culture that could support and nurture professional development activities.

In addition to this the science teachers and teacher educators working in such environments have no platforms and avenues to share their experiences, learning and seek support from like minded colleagues. In order, to sustain the acquired practices of these teachers it is essential to have opportunities of sharing and learning from others who might be also experiencing or had experienced and addressed such situations in their practices. The need of a professional development platform for continuous professional development and learning was felt. A platform where all involved in this profession could regularly meet, share, discuss, resolve issues and learn from each other. Therefore graduates, along with faculty member of AKU-IED and the support of AKU-IED established the Science Association of Pakistan (SAP) in July -1998. The aim of the association is to provide a professional development forum to science teachers and educators for the improvement of the quality of science education in Pakistan. The forum was established to provide an avenue for sharing and learning from each other. Prior to its establishment there existed no such professional development association for science teachers of Pakistan.

Being the first in the field SAP continued to provide leadership for promoting science teaching and learning in Pakistan through its various activities. This paper explores the leadership of the platform in promoting science education in Pakistan through its various activities. The data for this paper is drawn from our observation notes and discussion, participants' comments, feedbacks, our reflections, meeting notes and reports.

One of the important activities of SAP are its workshops, the workshops aim to provide opportunities of exchanging ideas and learning from each other. It also provides opportunities of learning through hands on activities, interactions and exchange of ideas on active, innovative and contextually relevant teaching methods and approaches. Moreover, discussions during and after sessions, facilitates and motivates the teachers to implement and reflect on such practices. The findings indicated that these experiences developed both content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of teachers. However, one main issue that we encountered is the unavailability of the culture to nurture and support the further development of the science teachers, developed through our activities. Hence, the promotion of science teaching and learning, in some cases, in a non supporting culture, is yet a challenging task that needs to be addressed to improve the quality of science teaching and learning at the grass root level.

Its annual events and activities such as symposium and seminars on science education issues, professional dialogues for setting standards for science teachers and Science Olympiad are yet another step towards leadership in improvement of the quality of science teaching and learning through dissemination and sharing of experiences.

The association has also provided leadership in science curriculum development for a private examination board in Pakistan and also provided support to different systems such as government, private and community based in their teacher, curriculum and programme development initiatives.

As a Leading professional development association, SAP also serves as role model for other science associations in Pakistan.

President of Science Association for Government school teachers stated that "We have never thought of converting our classrooms into learning rooms by using low cost material, our association just focuses on financial constraints and other administrative problems of science teachers now I feel that we should also include professional development activities beside that". SAP Symposium 2001

Being one of the association that provides quality science education in the country it has the opportunity to facilitate the promotion of science teaching and learning through teacher development, curriculum development, text book writing, material development, and dissemination activities. However, in a developing context like Pakistan with a low literacy rate and inadequate educational standards it has not been easy to take a lead in the promotion of science education in the country, where it is extremely difficult to acquire human resources with the ability to facilitate the development of science teaching and learning.

The paper will further discuss these experiences and the opportunities and challenges for provision of leadership by a professional association in a developing context.



## **Unpacking the Quality Knack Pack – AKESP’s Teacher Development Experiences through Research and Practice**

*Belinda Johnson, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Khadija Khan, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Yasmeen Bano, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Noordin Merchant, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Amina Kanjee, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Sughra Choudhry Khan, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Shahzad Mithani, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Wasif Rizvi, AKES, Pakistan*

The first presentation in this symposia session will be on ‘Quality of teacher education in the context of Chitral’. This presentation will argue that despite growing concern about the quality of education, defining it is still quite challenging. However, it is seen in light of real life application through which practical experience is linked to theory that when the real world is brought into a classroom setting, a quality learning experience is guaranteed. There are many factors which contribute to quality education. One of them is teacher education. Quality of teacher education is a fundamental and central component of the general well-being of an education system. Educational reform considers professional development/ teacher education as a primary source for bringing sustainable and situational changes in schools.

*Presenters:*

*Belinda Johnson and Academic Development Officers*

The second presentation will be on ‘Perception of teachers about classroom observations’ by AKES operations in Northern Areas. This gives an overall impression of the classroom observations (one of the major activities under NPEP-II) being conducted by teacher educators based in 11 FEOs of the Northern Areas. With primary focus on the perception of teachers about this rigorous exercise, the perception of other stakeholders, including Academic Development Officers, FEO Heads, head teachers and students, is also reflected in this study. The presentation will highlight how classroom observations can be used as an effective support mechanism for improving teaching and learning in schools. The after-effects of linking classroom observation with teacher appraisal will also be highlighted in the presentation.

*Presenter:*  
*Khadija Khan*

The third presentation will be on 'Creativity, innovation and optimal use of learning possibilities and resources'. This presentation will elaborate on the teacher-student learning projects and integration of technology including library. During the last couple of years, AKES South Operations designed an in-service professional develop programme based on collaborative work of teacher(s) and student(s). Experience of teacher and student learning will be shared in this presentation, especially in relation to how new knowledge is generated as a result of shared learning opportunities.

*Presenter:*  
*Yasmeen Bano, Noordin Merchant and Amina Kanjee*

The fourth presentation will be on 'Way forward: Where AKESP is heading and what could be the possibilities of partnerships among various sectors to promote quality'.

*Presenter:*  
*Sughra Choudhry Khan, Shahzad Mithani and Wasif Rizvi*

## **The Role of Schooling in Constructing Gender Identities in Pakistani Students**

*Rahat Joldoshalieva, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Jane Rarieya, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Bernadette Dean, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Abid Shah Hussainy, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

Many research reports indicate that disparity between access, nature and creating opportunities for children's future differed according to their gender. The need to bridge this gap became a global agenda at the Dakar Conference, where one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was set 'to promote gender equality and empowerment of women'. In order to meet this goal, work was expected to be done in all the spheres of life, including the education sector. Education plays a potential role in transforming or reproducing the society.

Many studies have been conducted and widely reported on the role of schools in constructing gendered identities of boys and girls in western contexts. These studies report that there are multiple processes and structures of schooling that contribute to shaping students' gendered identities. In Pakistan, several anecdotal records suggest that gender disparity is wide; however, the studies are either unreported or unavailable with regard to the role of schooling or education.

To get an insight of this issue, an exploratory study was carried out in 11 schools in urban and semi-urban areas of Karachi by a team of AKU-IED faculty. The findings of the study were meant to help improve our own understanding regarding gender issues in schools and bring changes on the basis of contextually relevant gender analysis rather than quick fixes.

Through purposive sampling, schools were selected to find appropriate balance between breadth and depth of the data. The focus was targeted to one class in each section (primary or secondary) of four subject areas, and to some teachers and students to be interviewed. The study adopted mostly qualitative data collection methods and tools to gain insight into inter-related factors and processes that contribute to experiences of girls and boys constructions of gendered identities in the schools. There were individual semi-structured interviews with school heads, and selected teachers and focus group interviews with students in different settings (girls only, boys only, and mixed), observations in and outside classrooms, and analysis of the curricular materials

used in the classrooms. In addition, we obtained quantitative data through survey of facilities, enrollment rates, staff profile and some school policies.

Though this research was conducted in eleven schools, for this symposium we share the preliminary analysis of the data obtained from three different school settings (girls only, boys only and co-educational). Initially, the presenters will briefly share the findings from each school setting. This will be followed by cross-case analysis. It will then be opened for discussion on the issues raised with the audience and presenters. On the basis of the discussion, recommendations for gender-fair schools and implications for teacher education institutions will be drawn.

Tentative findings drawn from these three settings indicate that students construct their gendered identities through different schooling processes such as gendered division of labour, gendered bodily and disciplinary regulations, control of space and practices, and teachers' beliefs about gender differential characteristics, which influence the ways students learn. Moreover, construction of gendered identities was influenced by the students' families and social class backgrounds.

## **Unpacking the Quality Knack Pack – AKESP’s Experiences of School Improvement and Systemic Reforms**

*Shahzad Mithani, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Wasif Rizvi, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Sughra Choudhry Khan, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Yasmeen Bano, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Samina Razi, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Amima Sayeed, AKES, Pakistan*  
*Attauallah Baig, AKES, Pakistan*

The first presentation will deliberate upon the notion and discourse on quality that has taken systemic roots in AKES schools and how during the process it has enabled leadership to identify complex developmental and cognitive frameworks leading towards academic direction, intellectualizing notions of quality through a measured discourse while identifying key process and outcome indicators of success and quality.

*Presenters:*

*Shahzad Mithani, Wasif Rizvi and Sughra Choudhry Khan*

The second presentation will capture the experiences of AKES operations in the Southern Region based on their experiences under ‘public-private partnership’ initiative. This presentation will highlight the notion of quality advancement through institutional development. This project with three years of experiences would highlight how quality is compromised inadvertently without systemic processes to reform.

While evolution of teacher education programmes has often been in response to vulnerable areas of schooling rather than development through a clear programme design that goes bottom-up. Developing an overall framework of quality with clearly defined quality indicators ensures adequate preparation provision for reflection and ability to respond better to challenges.

*Presenters:*

*Wasif Rizvi, Yasmeen Bano, Samina Razi, Amima Sayeed*

The third presentation will capture the experiences of AKES operations in Northern Areas of Pakistan, specifically under the NPEP project. This presentation will highlight the Community Development Programme teams’ work

with mothers and how this initiative has mobilized community-based schools with greater participation of young women and out of school children in educational initiatives and in the strengthening of SMCs/VECs. The presentation will also highlight the increasing participation of mothers in education process (both at home and in the school) as a result of their involvement through mothers meetings.

*Presenter:*

*Attauallah Baig*

# Potentials, Prospects and Problems of Educational Leadership for Quality Education

*Moladad Shiffa, Professional Development Centre, Northern Areas, Pakistan*

*Muhammad Jumma Abdalla, Fidel Castro Secondary School, Zanzibar*

*Rashida Qureshi, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*John Retallick, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

The importance of effective leadership as a key factor for school improvement has been widely recognized in the literature. The proposed symposia will present the different aspects of leadership for quality teaching in Pakistan where the educational landscape is not homogeneous. There is a large public sector that serves the majority. In this sector, most of the schools use national/regional languages as medium of instruction and reach out to lower income and/or lower middle income groups in both urban and rural areas. Private school systems, on the other hand, serve the upper middle classes and/or elites. Majority of these schools are urban-based. These schools mostly use English as medium of instruction. Moreover, faith-based and/or community schools are also catering to the needs of different socio-economic sections of the Pakistani society. These schools in the rural and urban areas, affiliated with different systems, face different prospects, potentials and problems. These contextual differences pose varying challenges for school leaders at different levels.

Dr Moladad Shafa will present the findings of his ethnographic case study that was conducted to explore the work life of a government secondary school head teacher in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. His case study provides a deeper understanding of the nature of challenges a head teacher of a government school in the Northern Areas of Pakistan has to face. In his study, Dr Shafa has highlighted the overall role of a headteacher as a school developer while addressing the challenges for school improvement as he moves ahead.

Mohammad Jumma Abdalla and Rashida Qureshi will present the findings of a field research that explored the leadership role of a subject coordinator in one of the urban private schools in Karachi. Subject coordinators are considered to be middle managers in educational leadership hierarchy. Leask and Terrel (1997) put the middle managers at the centre of leadership for school improvement because of “the complexity of the organization and curriculum, the need for all teams to be fully involved in realizing the school vision, and in creating conditions for school improvement” (p. 2). Abdalla & Qureshi’s presentation explores the multiplicity of roles a subject coordinator is subjected to play

because of the school's expectations highlighting the challenges faced, especially in performing his/her role in teachers' professional development.

Dr John Retallick's research looks at the management practices and strategies in three successful schools in Pakistan. His research findings highlight the importance of "personal qualities of the people who are to be principals of the schools" (Retallick, 2004: 92) among the factors that contributed to the success of these schools. The three research studies, included in the symposia, are expected to bring out the peculiarities of leadership roles in different school systems and localities in Pakistan. The discussion will be based on the implications of these peculiarities for the quality of teaching in Pakistan while drawing insights into other similar contexts.



# Relationship of Depression, Locus of Control and Loneliness

*Fatima Bukhari, Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan*

This study seeks to explore the relationship among Depression, Locus of Control and Loneliness in the adult population of Multan, a large city in southern Punjab. It is a small-scale quantitative study using regression analysis to understand the relationship between the three factors. The sample consisted of 80 individuals, 40 from the “normal” population and 40 from patients suffering from clinical depression as diagnosed by a qualified psychiatrist. These groups were further divided on the basis of gender - 20 males and 20 females in each group. The age-range was between 20-50 years with a mean age of 35 years. Only those patients were included in the study who were functionally literate in Urdu and could read and understand the language so that they could adequately respond to the self-report questionnaires. Despite this criteria majority of the sample population or their attendants were interviewed informally to ensure that appropriate data was collected. The sample was selected from two hospitals of Multan, one a major government teaching hospital and the other a private clinic. The control was matched with the sample population and was also selected from Multan city.

Depression is an emotional state marked by great sadness, feelings of worthlessness and guilt, withdrawal from others and loss of sleep, appetite, sexual desire, interest and pleasure in everyday activities. It was noticed that depressed individuals had certain common personality traits, one of them is the Locus of Control. Additionally, many studies reveal relationship between psychopathology and locus of control. Hence, in this study this factor was studied in relation to depression. The term locus of control is defined as individual’s generalized expectancies regarding the forces that determine rewards and punishment. A locus of control can be Internal or External. In the former it is believed that the outcomes are contingent on what we do and in the latter the outcomes are determined by the events outside our control such as, fate, chance, and luck. Loneliness can be defined as chronic, distressful mental state whereby an individual feels estranged from or rejected by peers and is starved for the emotional intimacy found in relationships.

Different tools were used to measure the three variables. Urdu version of Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI) (revised 1971) was used to measure the level of depression. This inventory is a 21-item self-report questionnaire that assesses the

presence and severity of cognitive, affective, motivational and physical symptoms of depression. Similarly the Urdu version of the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale, which is based on the Social Learning Theory, was used to measure the Locus of Control. The reliability was determined for the overall scale as well as sub-scales. The Urdu version of the University of California Log Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness scale was used to measure the level of loneliness, which also has 21-items.

Results of the study reveal that there is a strong relationship between depression, locus of control and loneliness. It shows that people who are less assertive and lack social skills are more prone to depression which further leads to feelings of loneliness. Findings also suggest that there is a cause and effect relationship between these three variables i.e. depression, locus of control and loneliness. This study has implications for the adult population of urban cities including teachers. Adults with an internal locus of control are inclined to take responsibility for their actions while people with an external locus of control tend to blame outside circumstances for their mistakes. They credit their success to luck rather than their own efforts. They are readily influenced by the opinions of others and more likely to pay attention to the status of the opinion holder. So this study helps teachers to see children & adults according to their particular traits. Internals tend to be more success oriented & intelligent & less prone to depression & loneliness. On the contrary externals are not very intelligent and not success oriented and more prone to depression & loneliness. Teachers should consider these factors in character building of student & improving quality in education.

## **Collaboration for Success: Inclusive Education in the ESRA Mentoring Programmes**

*Debbie Kramer-Roy, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Rakshinda Meher, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Ghazala Mursaleen, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Asghari Rizvi, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

*Rehana Naz, AKU-IED, Pakistan*

This poster will show how the Inclusive Education team and the Professional Development team of the ESRA programme collaboratively developed an effective mini-module on inclusive education for the Certificate in Education: Primary Education (Mentoring Focus). Input about inclusive education has been offered from the very first cohort and has gradually become more effective. The mentoring programme is organised in three phases: Phase 1 and 3 are AKU-IED-based and Phase 2 is field-based. The initial cohorts just had one day of input in Phase 1, which aimed to raise awareness of special needs issues and to share some information about the right to and reasons for inclusion.

By Cohort 7 the input had developed into a mini-module consisting of a one-day session in Phase 1, during which CPs discussed their ideas about and experiences of special needs in the classroom; read stories and acted out in a role play on how the main character's situation could be improved; review one of their own previously prepared lesson plans that needed to be changed if the child from the story was to be included in the class. A field task for Phase 2 for which the CPs fill in a specially designed format that helps them analyze the nature of special needs of a child and the reasons for their exclusion from or reduced participation in school; and a session-based on the case studies generated from the field task in Phase 3. This structure has really helped us to tailor both the content and the teaching and learning method to the contextual realities and the preferred learning styles of the CPs. Significant learning in terms of knowledge, skills and – most dramatically – attitudes is evident from CPs responses in the classroom as well as from their written reflections, which they write on a daily basis.

The poster will show the materials used and developed, which we intend to publish in Urdu as a learning resource for teachers in rural and other lowly resourced communities. The poster will also show photographs of AKU-IED-based and field-based activities and quotations from CPs oral and written reflections. The very successful outcome of the collaborative work between the ESRA team

and the Inclusive Education team was made possible through mutual respect for each other's areas of strengths and expertise, constant constructive feedback and its follow-up, common commitment to the improvement of life and education of children in the rural areas and the desire to learn from each other in order to continue our professional development. Working together like this has confirmed to the team that quality in (teacher) education can be achieved through consistent hard work and collaboration with colleagues. The poster will include this important team process into its design.