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Transition from Lecture Based to Activity Based Teaching through whole School Improvement in Gilgit-Baltistan Pakistan

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Abstract

The study sets out to answer the question, “How and to what extent has Whole School Improvement Program influenced the teachers to shift from lecture to activity based teaching and learning processes in the project schools in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan? The study was conducted in two Whole School Improvement Programme (WSIP) project schools in district Gilgit from public and private education sector of Pakistan. A case study approach was used in qualitative paradigm and Context, Input, Process and Product model was used in data collection and analysis to evaluate the input given by Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) and outcomes of the program. Two head teachers, ten teachers, twelve students participated from both sample schools in the study. The focus was on one of the areas from the WSIP model: “quality of teaching and learning”. The study revealed that many positive changes have occurred in the domain of teaching/learning as a result of Whole School Improvement Programme. These include teachers planning lessons with clear objectives and activities, and they were reflecting on their executed lessons to find strengths, weaknesses and alternatives to overcome them. They were applying activity based teaching in a conducive learning environment by involving students in teaching and learning. They were also enriching the curriculum by using low-cost, no-cost and existing resources in their schools to develop students’ relational understanding and for student-centred teaching. Head teachers of schools were supportive in using activity based teaching. As a result of these practices teachers and students changed their behaviour towards teaching and learning process and enforced participative approaches in classroom teaching. The study also revealed that there were factors which supported or hindered the transition from lecture to activity based teaching and in both sample schools. Besides these factors changes were noted in the practices of head teachers, teachers and students in teaching and learning practices in favour of activity based teaching.

Keywords: *Lecture, Activity based teaching, whole school improvement*

1. Introduction

School improvement is considered one of the most powerful tools to improve the quality of education, particularly teaching/learning processes, in the classroom. The importance of school improvement is recognised all over the world and particularly in the developing world because developing countries are facing enormous challenges in education. These countries have issues with human resources, infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation systems and the proper use of available resources. Education systems in developing countries have experienced tremendous changes and expansion over the last three decades. Many reforms have been implemented to increase access and improve the quality of education, such as Universal Primary Education, Early Childhood Education, Education for All, and Nai Roshni (literally meaning new horizon) in Pakistan. Unfortunately most of these reforms have failed. These

innovations were implemented in a fragmented way or without building the capacity to maintain and sustain them.

In addition, one of the main reasons for the relative failure of the educational reforms, despite their good intentions and excellent content in many cases, was the implementation of single change programmes or lack of integration of many programs initiated in schools (Chinsamy, 2002).

Many plans and desires for bringing positive change in education are often guided by powerful ideas and ambitions, but only rarely is attention paid to the need to build capacity, to implement these ideas and develop the skills and attitude of the implementers in the course of action. As a result the quality of education has suffered at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Most of the educationists acknowledge that without the focus on capacity development or internal conditions of the school, innovative work will soon become marginalized (Hopkins & Harris, 2000). Research has shown that the internal capacity of schools becomes helpful in sustaining reform. Keeping these ideas in mind Aga Khan University-Professional Development Centre North started a Whole School Improvement Program in different districts of the Northern Areas (now Gilgit-Baltistan) aiming to enhance quality of teaching/learning.

This study discusses the transition from lecture to activity based teaching/learning processes in the sample schools in the Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan by answering the question “How and to what extent has Whole School Improvement Program influenced the teachers to shift from lecture to activity based teaching and learning processes in the project schools in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan?”

2. Background of the Study

It is necessary to understand the context in which Professional Development Centre North works to best understand what they do in schools of Gilgit-Baltistan. Professional Development Centre North is a non-profit organization and is relatively new. It came into being in 1999 and started functioning with limited programs but gradually expanded. It was a joint venture of Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development and Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan. Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan own the project but it was managed and supported by Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development but now it is fully own by Aga Khan University- Professional Development centre North’s mission statement is:

The mission of Professional Development Centre North is to develop and adopt activities and strategies that will lead to improvement in the quality of education in NAs. We aim to work in partnership with government and local organization build capacity, conduct research to test ideas and influence policy and develop assessment and evaluation procedures in order to improve practice and help identify what works and why.

Professional Development Teachers are integral to Professional Development Centre North. These are people who have completed their Masters Degree from Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development and they are working as change agents in project schools of Whole School Improvement Program.

To bring about educational development in the Gilgit of Pakistan, Professional Development Centre North develops the capacity of educators, teachers and administrators, by offering different programs. The institution also conducts research in collaboration with partners such as Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan, government, private and non-government educational organizations. Whole School Improvement Program was launched in 2000, and is the flagship program of Professional Development Centre North. Consequently, Professional Development Centre North has implemented Whole School

Improvement Program in 79 schools of NAs of Pakistan ((Kanji, 2000; Professional Development Centre North, Whole School Improvement Program Record 2007-8).

Statement of the Problem

A school is a platform where students develop their knowledge, skills and attitude to contribute to their society and nation in different disciplines of education under the supervision of teachers. On this platform teachers are performing as leaders and role models for students. The ultimate aim is students' holistic development to prepare them for their future as a successful personality. To achieve this goal schools need to perform effectively and integrate modern teaching/learning techniques in their daily practices, which is only possible by introducing new educational reforms in schools. Educational reforms help teachers' professional development and enhance students' learning outcomes. In the context of Pakistan there are many initiatives taken by different organizations to improve the quality of education and performance of schools but these initiatives have not been studied to evaluate their impact or to identify the gaps of planning and implementation. As a result many interesting and innovative ideas die soon without breeding new concepts or ideas. Therefore, in this study, researcher want to look at the impact of an educational initiative named Whole School Improvement Program in the aspect of teaching/learning. Having been a leading professional in Whole School Improvement Program at Professional Development Centre North, researcher's assumption is that before initiating Whole School Improvement Program in the project schools they were functioning in a traditional way, students were less involved in teaching/learning, teachers' teaching time was always greater than students learning time. Change has occurred in teaching/learning in schools as a result of participating in Whole School Improvement Program. Researcher's own experience as well as research has shown that Whole School Improvement Program is an innovative program which considers and deals with all aspects of School Improvement particularly teaching/learning. So researcher assume that project schools, which went through the process of Whole School Improvement Program, have improved their teaching/learning strategies and move from lecture based teaching to activity based teaching learning in the classroom.

3. Methodology

A qualitative evaluation research design was used for the study, by collecting appropriate data in a natural setting through analysis of document and exploring views of what people say and do (Creswell 1998). Qualitative research allows researchers to find the root causes of successes and challenges by exploring others' perspectives and interpreting the researchers own perspectives (Patton, 1990; Maykut and Morehouse,1994

In the qualitative research design researcher used the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model which focuses upon objectives as the major organizer for evaluation (Stufflebeam's model cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1983). As in this evaluation study the focus was Whole School Improvement Program objectives and specifically Whole School Improvement Program model. The product of this model evaluated particularly teaching/learning. In this research the context evaluation was considered needs assessment, the problems and opportunities within the decision makers' domain. Secondly, input evaluation was considered: what type of input has been provided through Whole School Improvement Program to the project schools particularly in the domain of teaching/learning. Thirdly, process evaluation was considered. It critically evaluated and analyzed the process of Whole School Improvement Program to achieve its intended or set objectives. Finally, product evaluation was considered, which is concerned with comparing actual or intended ends but which also takes account of other unintended effects (Stufflebeam's model cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1983).

As the focus of Whole School Improvement Program was the school as a unit of change, therefore the 'case study' approach was used. A qualitative case study helps not only to find out facts but also goes beyond the facts and looks for what does these facts means for a researcher. For instance, it is not enough to find out the impact of Whole School Improvement Program in teaching/learning. Nevertheless, finding

how they have changed their teaching/learning strategies and, what are the consequences of the new adapted strategies of teaching/learning for their classroom practices and for students learning was important (Creswell, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Gillham, 2000; Yin, 1994). Patton (1987) states, "Case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth" (p.19). A case study is one which investigates the specific research questions. It also seeks to explore and collect different kinds of evidence related to the question to get the possible answer of the research question (Gillham, 2000). The main purpose of the study was to develop a better understanding of the opted area 'the impact of Whole School Improvement Program in teaching/learning' in a particular context ,to find out its outcomes, challenges, issues and gaps, and suggest some recommendations. As Patton (1987) says, "...a qualitative case study seeks to describe that unit in depth, in detail, in context, and holistically" (p.19). Researcher employed interview to collect data because that provides opportunity to explore individual views and identify what is in other mind (Gillham, 2000). It also helped researcher to probe further by giving me freedom to ask additional questions based on responses to the questions (Willig, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Focused group interviews also used for data collection in the study and the researchers interviewed a group of six teachers and six pupils of class five and six because the "goal of qualitative research is to examine how things look from different vantage points. The student's perspective is as important as the teacher's" (Taylor, & Bogdan, 1998, p.9).

As Blumer (1969) believes that focus group interview "discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing it as they meet one another's disagreements [would] do more to uplift the veils covering the sphere of life than any other device that I know of" (p.41). That focus group helped the researcher to draw more information about the research question from the respective groups such as students and teachers. Observations were also used as an important data collection method in this study because the basic source of gaining information from "what I see, hear and feel" (Anderson, 1996; Maxwell, 1996). Observation is a useful method to collect data in qualitative research because researcher could observe the participants' classroom practices: whatever they were actually doing and saying (Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Patton, 1990; Willig, 2001, Creswell, 1998; Maxwell, 1996).

To further triangulate the data, researcher analyze some of the documents of teachers such as lesson plans, teachers diaries and reflective journals, students notebooks and teaching learning resources. The written text provided an indication of original things than do other type of evidences (Stake, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Guba & Lincoln, (1985) state:

Documents and records are singularly useful sources of information...particularly in basic research and in evaluation. They are a stable source of information, both in the sense that they may accurately reflect situations that occurred at some time in the past and that they can be analyzed and reanalyzed without undergoing changes in the interim. They are rich source of information, contextually relevant and Grounded in the context they represent. Their richness includes the fact that they appear in the natural language of that setting (p.277).

Similarly, Yin, (1994) state, "Documents are important as they corroborate 'an argument evidence from other sources' and provide specific details to confirm the evidences (p.81).

Researcher collected data by using different tools such as questionnaires about Whole School Improvement Program activities, tape recorder to record teacher's interviews, observation guidelines, reflective journals and field notebook. Data was collected in the form of field notes, transcriptions of interviews, memos, running descriptions and reflections.

4. Discussion on Findings

School improvement necessarily involves change and emphasizes increasing students learning outcomes. Different authors suggest different definitions of school improvement. Hopkins (1996) gives two meanings, the first is a common sense definition, which relates to general efforts to make schools a better place for students to learn. Second, in a more specific phrase, “I regard School Improvement as a strategy for educational change that enhance students’ outcomes as well as strengthen the school’s capacity for managing change” (p.32). Other authors have looked at the process of School Improvement. Lofton, et al (1998) claims that successful improvement is ongoing problem solving and improvement, which works as a process. In another way Venzen (1985) looked at the outcomes as an important aspect, and he defines school improvement as a systematic, sustained effort to improve outcomes. Similarly Fullan (1995) links outcomes and characteristic of effectiveness to School Improvement by saying, “School improvement’s ultimately aim, however, is to enhance pupils’ progress, achievement and development. This is the bottom line” (p.43).

To improve schools by improving the instructional performance of teachers and the students’ learning outcomes is a change. It is a process in which schools and change facilitators need to deal with different people who have different interests, beliefs and needs. So, careful planning, an eagle eye, sound knowledge and skills related to the innovation are necessary to help schools improve and give rise to effective students learning. Through research findings in the educational field, the overall change approach of School Improvement plan is accepted. However for successful schools, it is necessary to control the external change and not take any reform for granted but consider its internal conditions and realities while taking reforms. Because in the current era there is an overload of changes, schools need to prioritize their internal improvement needs, requirements and strategy, which would help them to improve their school and raise the students learning outcomes. Stoll and Fink (1996) distinguish schools that are more effective and more rapidly improving as they say:

To succeed in a world characteristic by rapid change and increased complexity, it is vital that school can grow, develop, adapt creatively to change and take charge of change so that they can create their own preferable future. Ability to take charge of externally driven change, rather than being controlled by it, has been shown to distinguish schools that are more effective and more rapidly improving from ones that are not (p.131).

Lundgren and Matson (1996) define improvement as a change not only in a process from one mode to another, but it also connotes a change towards a higher quality. In the same breath they caution that ‘quality is a question of value judgment’ and that “from the history of education we can learn that what has been labeled School Improvement is often the articulation of specific social and political interest” (p.139). They highlight the fact that interest, interpretation and attitudes impinge on the initiatives. The point to note is that the initiatives must have the imbedded mechanism of either utilizing or countering these social and political aspects to ensure that problems are solved and schools move in a positive direction. Any school improvement endeavor has key aspects to take into account if it wants to be successful as Stoll and Fink (1996) share the following key aspects regarding school improvement:

- Enhances pupil outcomes
- Focus on teaching/learning
- Build the capacity to take charge of change regardless of its source
- Define its own direction
- Assesses its current culture and works to develop positive culture norms
- Have strategies to achieve its goals
- Monitor and evaluate its process, progress, achievement and development

To successfully implement any school improvement initiative all stakeholders need to be clear about the purpose and process. To achieve the goal of whole school improvement program different initiatives has been taken such as teacher professional development which considered as an important tool to enhance

quality of teaching and learning and students learning outcomes. As a result teachers change their lecture base teaching and learning strategies to activity based teaching strategies and this change of teachers teaching practices enhanced students learning outcomes.

Willis, (1996) says, activity based teaching is a goal-oriented task where learners “solve a problem, do a puzzle, play a game, or share and compare experiences” (p. 53). Activity based teaching is learning experiences where learners actively construct knowledge as they interact with their environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, Piaget (1977) says, “Knowledge is bound to action”. He further explains that children act on objects and this action provides knowledge about those very objects. In this way the children know and construct the meaning or knowledge of the world.

Education is a process of exploring students’ potential and helping them learn themes conceptually. It is possible when teachers introduce activity based teaching in the classroom because activity based teaching allows students to think and share their knowledge and understanding. During Whole School Improvement Program Professional Development Teachers advocated activity based teaching because initiating activities in the classroom is important for students learning. But in the project schools at the beginning, teachers were not used to activity based teaching. A Professional Development Teacher said, “Teachers were only using traditional methods of teaching/learning and considering themselves as only source of knowledge but now they are doing different activities in the classrooms”. A Professional Development Teacher further explained that they had to put a lot of effort to change teachers’ perceptions about activity based teaching and it took a lot of time, but ultimately they were convinced and are using activity based teaching. A teacher Nizamuddin said,

Before Whole School Improvement Program we were teaching traditionally in the classroom. We were only lecturing and considered students as empty vessels Whole School Improvement Program helped us to realize all these mistakes in teaching/learning and we changed our behavior with our students. Now we are using activity based teaching approach.

Furthermore, a head teacher said, “After attending Whole School Improvement Program teachers are using activity based teaching approaches in their classrooms, particularly cooperative learning strategies”. Whole School Improvement Program believes teaching should be a two way process where teachers and students both put their understanding and energy. A teacher Chani expressed her views

Whole School Improvement Program has started activity based teaching in our school. In this method teachers are involving students in different activities with the help of material and students are learning effectively and easily because students are working with the material eagerly. Activity based teaching helps teachers in achieving set objectives in lesson plan and I have noticed that this strategy helped me to improve my teaching and students learning.

Classroom observation confirms that teachers placed students in pairs and groups and involved them in different group activities such as jigsaw reading. Students also acknowledged the improvement in teaching/learning processes as a result of participating in Whole School Improvement Program and said, “After Whole School Improvement Program our teachers are providing us opportunities to work in groups, interact with each other, and clarify ideas from each other and from teachers”. It was widely accepted by the teachers in both the schools that activity based teaching enhanced students learning and teachers felt satisfaction. Nizamuddin said, “I am using the strategy of activity based teaching. I am feeling physical and spiritual satisfaction in this teaching because students are learning more while working in different activities”. Participating in Whole School Improvement Program, the sample project schools teachers have shifted their practices from teachers-centered to child-centered approaches. They are using activity based teaching approaches where students are actively engaged in doing different activities and learning by doing. Classroom observations and teachers comments confirmed that students

are learning better than before. They take the responsibility for their own learning and support their colleagues in group work and other activities which lead students to social development. Activity based teaching leads towards students' involvement because while manipulating activities in the classroom students are involved constructively with the teaching/learning process. To execute activity based teaching teachers need to plan their lessons on daily basis and develop resources.

Lesson Planning for Effective Teaching

Planning is very important and critical to enhance students' learning in the classroom; therefore, teachers must develop plans for effective and efficient teaching and learning. As Vaidya (1971) said, "through successful planning of lesson, we can help to train our pupils in ... questioning, defining problemsand use their previous experience to think about it" (p.163). In WSIP lesson planning has given enough attention to move from lecture based teaching to activity based teaching to improve the quality of teaching/learning. Khan mentioned:

In WSIP I learnt how to develop activity based lesson plan. I could not specify objectives and I was not giving importance to involve students in activities and divide time considering the importance and length of activities. WSIP helped me to realize the importance of learning time in the classroom.

The purpose of valuing lesson plan was to devise innovative activities, involve students in teaching and learning processes efficiently, managing time in the classroom and utilize the available time effectively. As Singh (2004) described, "lesson planning prevent wastage of time and energy of both the teachers and the taught" (p.117). Further Vaidya (1971) explained, "we plan lessons because we can present material in a logical, systematic and effective way, keeping in mind, at the same time, the mental development of those for whom we plan to teach" (p.164). Supporting lesson planning, one of the HTr said, "Before WSIP we were planning our lessons which were long and in detail and our lesson plans were mostly lecture based and teacher centered. We were writing whole content of the topic from text books, but how to write brief, precise, activity based and child centered lesson plans, we learnt in WSIP". The same was also observed by PDT at the initial stage and said: "Some of teachers were planning very long lecture based teacher centered lesson plans. They were writing the whole text related to the topic from text books instead of devising activities to engage students in the classroom". Writing long lesson plans was the tradition of the school where teachers were supposed to write every step in the plan which made the teachers exhausted and teachers were no more interested in planning. Commenting on the long plans Zuhra said, "Before WSIP we used to write long and abstract objectives because we did not know how to write objectives and what these objectives are for and how to set activities to achieve these objectives". Researcher's observations also support these comments that teachers were not comfortable in writing lesson plans because of its long nature and it was time consuming for them. They were articulating whole text of lecture in the plan. They were developing lessons for their personal benefits not for students learning. Nizamuddin said, "We had in our mind that we have to plan 350 lessons, and people from Field Office will come, count them and on the basis of the numbers they would appraise us". Similarly, PDT B said, "Some of the experienced teachers were just articulating their objectives without devising activities and allocate a number to the lesson plan. Teachers were only trying to complete the given target of lesson plans in numbers. Researcher's classroom observation confirms that teachers design innovative activities looking at their objectives, and they also develop resources as a result of WSIP". Likewise, Qamar said, "Before attending WSIP we were running school but we were not aware of how to engage students effectively in activities to enhance their learning. WSIP helped us to learn about the teaching methodology particularly activity based teaching". The overall purpose of WSIP was sensitizing teachers towards effective teaching and make students learn in the classroom, for effective teaching/learning lesson planning is critical and teachers need to develop lesson plans. Furthermore, in a focused group interview a student commented,

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Before WSIP our teachers were teaching us without planning. Now they are teaching us by following lesson plans. They are involving us in different activities and we are also enjoying in the classroom because we get opportunity to discuss with the teachers and colleagues to clarify our concepts. Our teachers are also encouraging us to participate in the classroom.

There was a visible change in school and in teachers teaching that it had improved and changed teaching approaches of teachers and now they are using modern approaches in the classroom as researcher observed. Admitting the input of WSIP Arifa says,

Before WSIP we were lecturing. We considered students as empty vessels and tried to pour our knowledge in their mind. WSIP helped us to understand the method of teaching particularly the importance of activity based teaching; PDTs taught us how to teach different subjects by following activity based student centered teaching methods according to the requirement of subjects.

Similarly, teacher Hafiza explained, “Before WSIP we were blind. WSIP opened our eyes what is teaching/learning. First of all it taught us how to interact with student and with colleague teachers”. Lesson planning was well understood by the teachers and they have developed lesson plans according to the format and pattern shared by WSIP which had a greater impact on teaching/learning particularly transition from lecture based teaching to activity based teaching methods but still there are issues and challenges for teachers in developing a good lesson plans. Singh (2004) said, “keeping in view the mental capacities, attitude, habits, interest and aptitude of pupils to be taught a good lesson is planned before actual teaching” (p.117). Likewise, Chani said, “WSIP guided us and helped teachers to developed lesson plans and write reflections”.

It reveals from the comment of the teachers and classroom observation that WSIP has provided enough support to understand the philosophy of lesson planning and developing plan. It is critical for teachers to develop conceptual understanding of the teaching/learning related themes and support to teachers is fundamental. It also revealed from the data that activity based teaching encourage students involvement in teaching and learning processes.

Students' Involvement

Generally it is believed that the purpose of School Improvement is to bring about positive change in the practice of the school to make it a better place for students to learn. Stoll & Fink, (1996) identified the following purposes of school improvement:

- To promote active participation of students in curricular and co-curricular activities
- Active participation of parents and community
- To focus on teaching/learning
- Create best learning environment for learners
- Assess current culture and develop positive culture
- Address the internal conditions that support change
- Monitor and evaluate improvement process, progress and achievement

School improvement is a process through which schools adapt innovations that are based on the current educational requirements to bring about the positive change in teaching/learning processes. School improvement essentially involves change. Researchers and educationist describe four broad phases of change process are initiation, implementation, institutionalization and outcome (Fullan, 2001, Stoll & Mortimore, 1997). Brighthouse and Woods, (1999) suggested the processes of school Improvement as the practice of teaching/learning, the exercise of leadership, the practice of management and organization, the practice of collective review, the creation of an environment most suitable for learning, the promotion of

staff development and the encouragement of parental and community involvement. In the realm of education and development, educational experts have proposed many School improvement models

Teaching/learning is a two way process and it requires the involvement of both parties. It is inevitable for teachers to involve students in teaching/learning process because it allows students to develop the ability to formulate and solve problems (NCRTL, 2002). Whole School Improvement Program documents also show the evidence of students' involvement in different activities at school and outcome of that involvement. A teacher Nizamuddin described,

Before Whole School Improvement Program we were not involving students in teaching/learning. We were trying to transmit knowledge to the minds of students and expecting them that they would give us the same product. We were considering students as empty vessels and tried to pour our knowledge in their minds. Whole School Improvement Program helped us to realize that students have prior knowledge and teacher's responsibility is to construct knowledge on their existing knowledge.

Similarly, Qamar said, "Before Whole School Improvement program we were working hard to teach students but we were not involving students in teaching/learning processes. Whole School Improvement Program helped us to realize the importance of students' involvement in teaching/learning and this helps them to enhance their learning". Students are performing their roles with responsibilities and as a result of this involvement students have developed their confidence, changed their behavior and become self-directed learners.

Change in Students and Teachers Attitude

Khamis & Sammon (2007), state, "the focus on the individual schools proved to be appropriate for improvement especially when deliberate efforts were made to include the whole staff" (p.3). A school is a building and without the dwellers this building is worthless. So when we talk about Whole School Improvement, it means to improve the knowledge and skills of the inhabitants of this building the stakeholders and key actors in education. These stakeholders are teachers, students, management, and community. The central characters are the teachers and the students but the importance of the others cannot be ignored. Stoll and Fink (1996) explain the concept of Whole School Improvement as:

The main principle of Whole School Improvement is to treat the school as the unit of training rather than the individual, with the long-term aim being the development of effective group dynamics and collegiality amongst teachers, students, and communities for the purposes of ongoing educational dialogue and improvement (p. 4-22).

In the Whole School Improvement Program approach, change agents and teachers' are working collaboratively in the environment of trust and mutual understanding. Hopkins (2002) differentiates School Improvement and Whole School Improvement, by saying: "the Whole School Improvement concepts have been an important and necessary reaction to the evident failure of the top-down centralized, one-size-fits-all educational reforms" (p.268). Whole School Improvement refers to the continuous improvement of its structure, process, activities and practices of the entire education enterprise, towards the goal of improving students' achievement. "It is based on the concept that the way to successfully improve school performance is to simultaneously change all elements of a school's operating environment so as to bring each element into alignment with a central, guiding vision"(Kelterner 1998, p.1). Despite varied opinions about what constitute the Whole School Improvement, the core point is that the improvement takes the whole school as a unit of change.

The Whole School Improvement Program differs from other approaches to School improvement in a way that it is systematic, research based, has a record of effectiveness, and seeks to improve the entire school - not just a particular content area or special program. The Whole School Improvement Program can be

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considered synonymous with other terms frequently used by educators and policy makers, such as systemic or comprehensive School improvement. Characteristics of Whole School Improvement Program according to the Comprehensive School Research Demonstration (CSRD, 2002) include:

- A research-driven set of beliefs about reform
- A comprehensive philosophy that views the entire school as the agent for change
- External technical support and assistance
- Evaluation strategies
- An emphasis on professional development, which is considered a key component of the reform
- Coordination of resources (p.1)

The characteristics of the whole school reforms differ with different educationists, but the characteristics are the most fundamental.

According to Hopkins (2002) there are two dominant approaches in the policy and practice of change, the adoptive and the adaptive approach to change. The adoptive approach mostly disregards variables within the individual school environment. This approach is preoccupied with a top-down approach of change. It assumes that change is linear, initiated by an authority figure and motivated by external pressure. This approach is characterized in some of the Whole School Improvement Program in the Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. For example, an individual goes through professional development training and the change agent expects him/her to bring change in the classroom and in the school practices. We cannot deny that this approach can change traditional practices in the schools to some extent. However it does not improve the standards significantly.

The second approach that Hopkins (2002) describes is the adaptive approach. This approach to educational change is more sensitive to the context of the individual school and its local situation. Hargreaves (1994) says “the new professionalism implies a change in the value and practices of teachers’ as structural change encourage a move from individual to collaboration, and from hierarchies to team” (p.287). The literature further elaborates Whole School Improvement approach in which the external change agent is involved in all aspects of the school life, which impinge on students’ learning. Kanji (2001) says, “various research studies have shown that the interrelationship among different aspects of School improvement have a critical role in enhancing or constraining students learning outcomes” (p.4). In Whole School Improvement some important aspects need to be considered to successfully implement the program and enhance its outcomes.

Whole School Improvement Program initiatives are meant to change the attitude of students and teachers. As a result of this whole school improvement program, visible changes in the attitude of teachers and students have been observed. In an interview a Professional Development Teacher B said,

When I started work in this school, I observed students were misbehaving with each other and with the teachers. Once a male student was about to slap his teachers when she stop him to misbehave with his colleague students in the classroom. Teacher was a young female and she was crying and called me to make him understand but toward the end of project the scenario was completely changed.

Additionally, in observation researcher found students were taking care for each other in the classroom, assembly and break time. Researcher also observed that the students were tidy and were coming to school in full uniform. They were aware of their positions and responsibilities. One student shared in her interview:

If we behave in a good way, for example respect our teachers, do not make a noise in the class, and learn what the teacher teaches, and do our homework regularly, we are sure teachers will like us, and we will be considered good students.

In classroom observations researcher noticed when students were working in groups, they were dividing roles among themselves such as time keeper, note taker, facilitator and presenter. They were doing their work with responsibility and in a cooperative environment. Researcher did not see a single case where they fought with each other for roles and responsibilities. The teachers also praised students' attitude and their current practices. Teachers told me that they are observing a tremendous change in students' behavior. Students who had been misbehaving, but after participating in Whole School Improvement Program they become more obedient, punctual and caring for their colleagues and teachers. They behaved like mature people and were nice to each other. They expected the same behavior from their teachers, which they explained in their interview.

Our teachers are the role models for us, if they behave in a positive way with students. We will automatically adopt that behavior. If we do not understand anything teachers should help us and should not mind if we ask anything again and again. As a result of Whole School Improvement Program the attitudinal change among teachers and students was visible and they had great respect for each other.

Whole School Improvement Program has greatly influenced teachers' attitudes towards the teaching/learning process. Their attitude of keeping students as passive listeners was changed and now they have maximized the students' involvement in teaching/learning. They designed activities where students have to get involved. Teachers use problem solving and inquiry approaches in the classroom and outside the classroom which has greatly improved students' cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Students try to link their learning in classroom to the outer world by asking questions about its implications.

Factors Affecting Teaching/Learning Processes

Researcher identify that there are many factors which directly or indirectly affecting teaching learning processes and teachers and teacher educators are facing many problems, to improve students' learning outcomes in Pakistan. Researcher have identified some factors and educational experts also supported such as absence of appropriate textbooks, reduction in the availability of instructional material by system and lack of resources or ineffective usage of resources effect teaching/learning processes particularly activity based teaching (Fullan, 2001; Davies, 1997; White, 1997; Sammons, Khamis & Coleman, 2005). Additionally, rigid examination system and lack of awareness among parents about the importance of activity based child centered teaching/learning techniques and give importance to traditional approaches (lecture based) of teaching creates problems for teachers and students (Khamis & Jawed, 2006). Moreover, lack of shared leadership in schools (Kushman, 1999; Memon, Simkins, Sisum & Bana, 2006), lack of collaboration and commitment among staff, particularly teachers who are directly responsible of teaching/learning process and high incidences of teachers and students' absenteeism, unscheduled and scheduled holidays affect the process of teaching/learning (Khamis & Sammon, 2007). Furthermore, overcrowding in schools and limited 'time-on-task' spent by teachers and students on genuine educational activities also affect activity based teaching processes (Khamis & Jawed, 2006). Additionally there are many other factors which create hindrance in transition from lecture based to activity based teaching such as structural factors, system administrative factors, cultural factors and attitudinal factors of teachers.

5. Conclusion

Teaching and learning have a strong relationship and interdependence. Research has shown that teaching automatically leads to learning and improvements in the effectiveness of teachers (MacGilchrist, Myers & Reed, 2004). Studies of school improvement and school effectiveness have shown that effective

management of teaching/learning relies on systematic planning both at the school and the classroom level. Research further identified that effective teaching focused on factors such as relationship with pupils, classroom management, planning and preparation, aims, objectives and their achievement, choice of materials, marking, the match of work to pupils and question and answer techniques (Mortimore, 1998,165)

Teaching leads towards learning, and good facilitation in teaching enhances students learning because “particular styles of formal teaching made a significant difference to the performance of learners” (Mortimore, 1998. p. 165).

Teaching is the responsibility of schools for ensuring that pupils are learning about their world, each other, themselves and their learning. MacGilchrist, Myers & Reed, (2004) said that the intention of all teaching activities is to bring about learning and the concept of teaching is in fact totally unintelligible without a grasp of the concept of learning. MacGilchrist, Myers & Reed, (2004) suggested four main aspects to teaching/learning from their own experiences and literature which are; 1) “subject knowledge and making it accessible, 2) knowledge of who the people are and how they learn, 3) facilitating the process of learning/teaching and 4) managing the process of teaching/learning” (p.75).

Teaching for understanding is the crucial responsibility of teachers. The important task for the teacher is being able to relate the content of any subject with students’ daily life, that enables genuine understanding and enriches learning. Effective teaching is characterized by the teachers’ ability to plan properly and facilitate students in the classroom and engage pupils’ prior knowledge and current experience in subjects and across the curriculum (MacGilchrist, Myers & Reed, 2004). Watson (1986) suggested that teachers should be aware about such teaching/learning tools which help to enhance students learning outcomes, such as formative assessment and self evaluation. These help pupils towards constructive self-criticism and personal insights. All this possible through effective teachers learning in the school and at the classroom level by creating a learning conducive environment for all teachers by encouraging informal discussion in the staff room and develop a stronger personal relationships and shared outside school activities (Khamis, 2000).

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