

An Evaluation of Teaching Styles and Student's Needs: A Case Study of Schools, Punjab, Pakistan.

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Abstract

This research paper aims to identify and evaluate the educational problems, specifically related to teaching methods in the Pakistan, Punjab, schools. This article is a part of two -phased research project which aims at;

- Identification and evaluation of the existing problem.
- Application of Bloom's Taxonomy and Multiple Intelligences theories to diversify teaching methods to solve the existing problem.

In this research paper, only part one is being discussed. The Pakistani education system directs that most teachers use traditional teaching methods and favour a teacher-centred teaching model. This way of teaching does not make a connection with the learning styles of students. The result of this teaching shows students struggling to learn and lack in their abilities. This research paper is only confined to identifying the problem through different data collection methods to reconfirm the existing problem. Furthermore, discusses the intervention plan for the second part of this research project.

Key words: *Educational Problems, Teaching Methods, Learner Needs, Teacher Training, Bloom's Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligences Theories.*

Introduction

Education in Pakistan is the Ministry of Education (MoE) responsibility, which the Minister of Education heads. The primary function of the MoE is to formulate educational policies and coordinate uniformity of educational objectives, practices, and standards throughout the provinces. There are approximately 175,600 educational institutions in Pakistan at the elementary, secondary, upper secondary, and higher education levels (WES- Canada, 2004).

Our primary concern here is with the teachers' training. Saeed (2007) said "In Pakistan, teacher education is of two types: pre-service or initial teachers training and in-service training (p. 50)". Induction training programs are almost absent throughout the country. However, some good private school systems make some arrangements for the training of teachers at the time of induction, e.g., APSACS (Army public schools and colleges systems). They conduct a Principal Induction Course (PIC) for the newly appointed teachers.

In the same fashion, BEACON House school systems offer some induction training programs. However, it is not a regular practice for most private sector schools. The ministry of education has identified the purpose of teachers' training in this policy: to increase the system's effectiveness by institutionalizing in-service training of teachers, teacher-trainers, and educational administrators through school clustering and other techniques.

Literature Review

Quality learning is equal to quality teaching by professional teachers responsible for development in updating knowledge, using new instructional tools and pedagogical skills, and assessing and monitoring students' learning outcomes. Teachers should know about the learning theories and developmental stages of students. Teachers should also have constructive and critical thinking to improve their teaching (MoE, 2009). It has been confirmed through the first phase of data collection that most of the teachers in Pakistan lack a variety of teaching methods. We know that one of the most important goals of education is to facilitate students in learning. The main concern of not applying various teaching methods is that most of the teachers in Pakistani educational institutions are used to implementing only the traditional teaching approaches in their classes.

This traditional approach ignores the unique abilities of many students. As a result, many students are unable to reach their full potential. Indeed, "the teacher's style can influence the form of learning that takes place as much, if not more, than the teaching methods employed" (Jarvis, 2006:29). It shows that if teachers are teaching in just one way and ignoring the learning diversity among students, it does not facilitate students' learning. Most Pakistani teachers are likely to use the traditional methods because they do not have to work hard. However, it will not be wrong to say that linguistic and analytical skills are highly valued in Pakistani culture. A highly linguistic individual has an acute sensitivity to the sounds or phonology of language (Armstrong, 1999).

Students learn differently based on their unique learning styles. Therefore,

teachers need to teach differently, which should match their learning styles to learn. If teachers' use Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives and Multiple Intelligences based instructional activities, then students with diverse learning needs will have their needs met and will learn better and faster. All students need to be learning and achieving, not just the bright or smart ones. Every student is capable of learning if taught appropriately.

Methodology

This part is related to the methodology of data collection that the researchers used for the Action Research. The researcher collected the data to identify the problem; the teachers in Pakistan are not equipped with teaching methods that match students' learning styles. There are different methodologies to collect data, i.e., by videoing, from documents, by taking a diary, and surveys.

There are parts of surveys like questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and case studies. If methods refer to techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering, methodology aims to describe approaches to kinds and paradigms of research. Kaplan also suggests that the methodology aims to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself". The researchers used observations and surveys (questionnaires and interviews) (Kaplan, 1973 as cited in Cohen et al., 2007:47).

Methods of Data Collection

To make sure that the problem exists, the researchers had to gather data by different methods. In other words, it leads to problem identification in a more authentic way. In the first and second phases of data collection, the researchers used those methods to highlight the problem and then show whether or not teachers had brought a change in their teaching methods. They used the triangulation of observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

Triangulation uses either the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study" (Cohen et al., 2007:142). The purpose of using triangulation was to see what teachers said about a question on the questionnaire or in an interview. Another purpose of triangulation was to minimize the complexity of opinions in order to collect data. A sample of fifty was selected for each methodology to get the maximum truth out of the data. The selection of the sample was random. The most widely sampling approach is probably random sampling, in which all the objects and individuals come (Blaxter et al., 2006).

For the second phase of data collection, they used the same methods. This phase of data collection evaluated their intervention plan to see whether or not teachers changed their teaching practices. Forty-eight specific classes were observed. In total, there were twelve teachers observed. These twelve teachers were observed four times to see whether they used different teaching methods or stick with the same teaching practices they were used to. In addition, twelve teachers were asked to fill questionnaires. The interviews were also conducted with the same twelve teachers. The purpose of having twelve

teachers instead of five or seven was an effort to eliminate the failure factor of the intervention plan.

Data Analysis

This part is related to the first phase of data collection that how it was completed. The researchers started with the analysis of teachers’ observations. The second method was questionnaires, followed by the analysis of interviews. In the end, the conclusion was presented from all three methods.

Teachers’ Observations

To get a first-hand feel of the classroom environment, the researchers stepped in and observed fifty (50) teachers in action. These fifty teachers were observed in three different local schools during the summer. The structured observation checklist helped them to gather the relevant information. They observed a range of grades from first to eighth. The varied range provided them with an opportunity to observe a variety of teachers. The selection of the classrooms to be observed was random. The principal purpose of the random selection of the classes was to get the broader spectrum of teachers’ views. The duration of each observation was 40 minutes. The table shows the number of times a grade level had been observed. The observation checklist is in Appendix 1

Grade Levels	Number of Times Grade Levels Observed
1 st	7
2 nd	3
3 rd	11
4 th	5
5 th	7
6 th	5
7 th	8
8 th	4

They observed four different subjects, English, Mathematics, Science, and Urdu. These four subjects are considered core subjects at the primary and secondary levels. The most observed subject was English, and the least observed subject was Urdu. The purpose of selecting these core subjects was to focus on the compulsory and mandatory subjects to study within the Pakistani education system. The table shows how many times a particular subject had been observed.

Subjects	Number of Times Subjects Observed
English	18
Mathematics	10
Science	14
Urdu	8

The observation checklist was structured into three questions. The first question was related to the different teaching methods that the teachers could use in the classroom. The teaching styles fell into six pedagogical behaviours. Each behaviour was assigned a degree of response: completely, adequately, minimally, not at all, and not applicable. The frequency of the behaviours shows that very few teachers used diverse teaching styles. The data shows that hardly any teacher encouraged questions, student participation, or adequate time to respond to the teacher’s questions. Mostly they did not like to give feedback and interact with students. Many were not even aware of different learning styles and never placed students into groups. The table shows these behaviours.

Teaching Styles

During the observed class session, to what extent did the teacher demonstrate the following behaviours?

Behaviors	Number of Times Observed				
	Completely	Adequately	Minimally	Not at all	Not applicable
Encouraged questions and student participation	9	11	20	10	0
Provided students with an adequate amount of time to respond to questions	3	18	18	11	0
Provided feedback that gave students direction for Comments	3	12	16	19	0
Interacted with individual students during the class Session	5	24	11	10	0
Interacted with students working in small groups during the class session	0	2	5	43	0
Used techniques that reflect an awareness of different learning styles	0	1	15	34	0

The second question was related to the instructional strategies; the teachers could apply in the classroom:

The instructional strategies to be observed were based on eight techniques selected by the researcher. The data shows that most teachers used the lecture method. They are not aware of teacher-led discussions and teacher-student shared responsibility concepts. They do not expect students to give presentations or work in groups. The data shows the classes to be heavily engaged in fruitless activities. Hands-on practice and experiential learning are often limited. The table shows instructional techniques used by teachers.

Instructional Techniques

During the observed class session, to what extent did the teacher demonstrate the following techniques?

Instructional Techniques	Number of Times Observed				
	Completely	Adequate	Minima	Not at	Not applicable
Lecture	31	7	12	0	0
Teaching – led discussions	1	8	18	22	1
Teacher-student responsibility (seminar, discussion)	1	3	5	22	19
Small group activities	0	4	3	24	19
Student presentations	1	0	2	24	23
Hands-on practice	3	2	16	29	0
In-class writing	13	13	16	8	0
Experimental learning (labs, fieldwork, internships, etc)	0	0	1	20	29

The third question was related to the learning process; the teachers could engage students to guide them through different cognitive processes. The data shows that the teacher developed activities that helped the learners to memorize facts and concepts. Such activities cannot help with analysis, synthesis, or judging the ideas, opinions, and experiences. The data also shows that the teachers cannot create an engaging learning experience for their students. The table shows critical thinking encouraged by teachers.

Encouragement to Engage in Critical Thinking

During the observed class session, to what extent did the learning processes designed by the teacher encourage students to engage in the following cognitive processes?

Critical Thinking	Number of Times Observed				
	Complete	Adequate	Minimally	Not at all	Not applicable
Memorizing facts, methods so that they can be repeated in pretty much same form	36	12	1	1	0
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	2	8	16	22	2
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, and experiences in new ways	2	2	12	30	4
Judging values or soundness of information, argument or methods	0	3	3	41	3
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems in new situations	2	2	6	36	4
Overall, did the instructor provide an engaging learning experience during the observed session?	1	7	19	23	0

Teaching-Methods Analysis Questionnaires

Total Questionnaires: 50

Gender: Males (25) Females (25)

Sixty-two questionnaires were distributed among teachers, of which fifty were returned. The questionnaires were distributed equally among male and female teachers. The teaching experience of teachers was classified into ranges of five years. Most teachers were heavy in the 1-5 range. Very few of the teachers had the experience of more than ten years. The table shows teaching experience range in years. The questionnaire is in Appendix 2.

Teaching Experience Range in Years	Number of Teachers
1-5	30
5-10	10
11-15	5
16-20	2
21-25	0
26-30	3

Teaching-Methods Analysis Questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed among teachers who are teaching a variety of subjects across different grade levels. The variety of subjects gives a diverse base to the different teaching- methods used by teachers across disciplines and grade levels. The table shows those subjects that the teachers were teaching.

Subjects	Number of Questionnaires Filled
Biology	3
Chemistry	5
Computer	2
English	11
Geography	2
History	2
Mathematics	4
Physics	1
Religious Studie	4
Science	8
Social Studies	6
Urdu	2

The questionnaire had been divided into three broad categories. Each category had been assigned a degree of response: every lesson, most lessons, weekly, monthly, very rarely, and never. The first category was related to the whole class:

Whole Class Activities	Number of Responses					
	Every Lesson	Most Lessons	Weekly	Monthly	Very Rarely	Never
Lecture/Teacher led	27	20	0	2	1	0
Question & Answer	20	16	5	2	7	0
Demonstration	10	14	9	5	9	3
Watching a video	1	1	4	6	16	22
Bulletin board style display	3	4	6	9	9	19
Overhead projector	2	4	3	9	10	22
Interactive						
Whiteboard/Conventional Whiteboard	22	11	5	1	3	8
Group Discussions	7	9	9	5	11	9
Visits	0	0	2	6	25	17
Multimedia	1	4	2	0	15	28
Other teaching methods, please specify:						
44 N/R (No Response)						
. Direct method.						
. Pair discussion and outside class activities.						
. Worksheets.						
Lecture method.						
Depends upon the course.						

The data shows that most teachers used lectures, question answers, whiteboards, and demonstrations while teaching. A high frequency of teachers did not use videos, bulletin boards, overhead projectors, group discussions, and multimedia to diversify their teaching- methods. Eighty- eight per cent (88%) of the teachers did not apply other teaching methods. The rest of the teachers used more or less the same activities as were listed. The table shows the whole class activities used by teachers.

How often do you use the following teaching methods?

The second category was related to individual students:

The data shows that many teachers used essay writing, homework, and reading from textbooks. A few teachers applied varied individual activities like worksheets, self- evaluation, music, computer- aided teaching, information seeking, and case studies. Ninety-six per cent (96%) of the teachers did not respond to “other individual student

activities”. Four per cent (4%) of the teachers continued to use more or less routine teacher-centred activities. The table shows individual student activities used by teachers.

Individual Student Activities	Number of Responses					
	Every Lesson	Most Lessons	Weekly	Monthly	Very rare	Never
Essay writing/formal reasoning	7	14	7	9	9	4
Exam paper questions	9	11	17	7	6	0
Individual Worksheets	5	12	7	7	10	9
Homework/private study	10	15	10	5	6	4
Individually negotiated activities	3	9	10	9	13	6
Regular tests	8	13	19	9	1	0
Self-evaluation & individual setting	5	8	4	13	11	9
One-to-one teaching	5	9	13	3	14	6
Music/Singing	1	0	2	4	15	28
Reading textbooks/journals etc	13	12	4	1	8	12
Computer aided learning	5	6	6	1	22	10
Library research/ information Seeking	0	5	6	4	15	20
Case Studies	1	2	5	9	10	23
Other teaching methods, please specify:						
48 N/R (No Response)						
. Direct method.						

The third category of the questionnaire dealt with small group activities:

The small group discussions were introduced more than the other teaching methods in the list. The small group role-plays, student presentations, student-led discussions, guided discovery, puzzles and case studies were used fewer times by the teachers. Ninety per cent (90%) of the teachers had not used diverse small group activities before the intervention plan. The other ten per cent (10%) of teachers used traditional teaching methods. The table shows small group activities used by teachers.

Small Group Activities	Number of Responses					
	Every Le	Most Le	Week	Monthl	Very R	Neve
Small group discussions	8	12	8	5	12	5
Small group role play	4	3	4	9	17	13
Student presentation groups	0	2	9	10	17	13
Debates/Student discussions	2	7	8	4	14	13
Guided discovery	1	5	2	6	16	20
Games/Puzzles	0	1	4	4	22	19
Case studies	1	1	8	8	14	13
Practical	1	8	8	10	11	13
Other teaching methods, please specify:						
45 N/R (No Response)						
. Division of students into groups may increase their motivation in learning skills.						
. Direct method.						
. Demonstration.						
. Depends upon the course.						

Open-ended Questions Categories

The questionnaire had three open-ended questions to get a broad range of the respondents’ points of view. The first question was related to the belief of teachers that students learn in a variety of ways. The teachers’ responses were grouped broadly into three categories: yes, strongly believe; yes, but not sure; and, no. Most teachers believe that students do learn in a variety of ways. A thought, that students could learn in various ways, while others felt that students do not learn in a variety of ways or do not need to. The table shows response types and the number of responses.

In your teaching experience, do you believe that students learn in a variety of ways? Please explain:

1 = Yes, strongly believe 2 = Yes, but not sure 3 = No

	Response Types		
	Yes, strongly believe	Yes, but not sure	No
Number of Responses	37	5	8

The second question was related to teaching methods and how this caters to

different learning styles of students. As with the first question, this one was also grouped broadly into three different categories based on the teachers' responses: yes, frequently; yes, sometimes; and no or rarely. A large number of teachers said that they do cater to students' learning styles deliberately. On the other hand, few of the teachers used different teaching methods, occasionally, to cater to students' learning styles. A large number of teachers also said that they do not cater to students' learning styles deliberately. The table shows response types and the number of responses.

Do you deliberately use different teaching methods to cater for students' different learning styles? If so, can you give examples?

1 = Yes, frequently 2 = Yes, sometimes 3 = No or rarely

	Response Types		
	Yes, frequently	Yes, sometimes	No or rarely
Number of Responses	23	9	18

The third question was related to the professional development of teachers. Again, the responses were grouped into three categories: regularly attend, attend at times, and no or rarely. Many of the teachers do attend teachers' training to improve their teaching practice. However, a large number of teachers do not participate in professional training. The table shows response types and the number of responses.

1. Do you attend teachers' training workshops to improve your teaching methods? If yes, how do you evaluate your teaching?

1 = Attend regularly 2 = Attend at times 3 = No or rarely

	Response Types		
	Attend regularly	Attend at times	No or rarely
Number of Responses	23	7	20

Teaching-Methods Interviews

Total Interviews: 50 Teachers

Fifty interviews were conducted with the teachers. Teachers were interviewed to probe about the teaching methods they used. The table shows grade levels and the frequency of interviews. The Interview Sheet is in Appendix 3.

Grade Levels Taught	Number of Interviews
3 rd	4
4 th	9

5 th	4
6 th	10
7 th	9
8 th	4
9 th	8
10 th	2

The teachers participating in these interviews were from across different grade levels and teaching a variety of subjects. The variety of subjects gives a holistic feel of the different teaching methods used by teachers. The structured interview sheet had three broad, open-ended questions. The table shows subjects and the number of teachers teaching a subject interviewed.

Subjects Taught	Number of Teachers Teaching a Subject Interviewed
Biology	3
Chemistry	1
English	10
Geography	3
Mathematics	9
Physics	3
Science	11
S. Studies	5
Urdu	5

Interview Questions Categories

The first question was related to the teaching styles teachers used. The responses were grouped into three categories: supports rote, supports student-centred activities, and a mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred activities. Most teachers used teaching styles that supported rote learning and note-taking. A few used teaching styles that promoted student-centred activities. Finally, some of the teachers used a mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred activities. The table shows response types and the number of responses.

What teaching styles do you use?

1 = Supports rote; lecture, note-taking, practise exercises etc 2 = Supports student-centred activities

3 = Mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred activities

Response Types		
1s	2s	3s

Number of Responses	35	8	7
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The second question was related to the accommodation of the different learning styles of the students. The responses were also grouped into three categories: no “styles” – one size fits all; some accommodation; and highly varied instruction/activities. Many teachers did not use diverse teaching methods to accommodate the different learning styles of students. Few used some accommodation while teaching. Only one teacher’s accommodation made room for using a variety of activities. The table shows response types and the number of responses.

How do you accommodate for different learning styles of your students?

1 = No “styles” – one size fits all 2 = Some accommodation

3 = Highly varied instructions/activities

	Response Types		
	1s	2s	3s
Number of Responses	31	18	1

The third question was related to encouraging creativity and higher-order thinking (HOT) in classrooms. The responses were grouped into three categories: no opportunity for HOT, some opportunity for HOT, and using HOT frequently. Most teachers did not create opportunities for higher-order thinking. A few, however, engaged students in higher-order thinking in their classrooms. The table shows response types and number of responses.

In what ways do you encourage creativity and higher-order thinking (HOT) in your classroom?

1 = No opportunity for HOT

2 = Some opportunity for HOT

3 = Using HOT frequently

	Response types		
	1s	2s	3s
Number of Responses	36	14	0

Designing the Intervention

The first phase of data collection shows that teachers are using less diverse teaching methods, indicating that this problem exists in the education system of Pakistan. To alleviate this problem, the researchers had to design an intervention plan to bring about change on a small scale. The researcher aimed to introduce Bloom's Taxonomy and

Multiple Intelligences Theory along with different instructional methods. Training sessions would help teachers learn new ways of doing the same thing through varied activities according to students' learning styles. It is imperative for students' learning styles to both using their preferences and extending their range. This increases their ability to learn. (Overall & Sangster, 2008:106).

Moreover, learning styles can be divided into three categories. Most students have different learning styles and preferences. The dominant styles can be Visual learners, auditory learners and kinaesthetic learners (Cooze, 2007). Another aim of this training was to empower the teachers in such a way that they could promote higher-order thinking skills among their students. These training sessions were the intervention plan of this action research.

Conclusion

To conclude, the current paper, '*An evaluation of teaching styles and student's needs: A case study of primary schools, Punjab, Pakistan*', discusses the imperative need to identify the varied learning styles of the primary students of the Punjab schools and the current teaching styles in practice. The paper emphasised the conduction of the need-analysis of the students to identify their learning styles, the unceasing teachers' training programs, and implementation of the varied methodologies, techniques and styles. These prompted the researchers to analyse the existing problems in the schools of Punjab, Pakistan. Unfortunately, the province of Punjab schools does not re-frame their educational set up catering to the needs of the 21st-century learning-teaching styles. The teachers who were trained under the traditional lecture methods employ the same upon the current primary students. The data revealed a considerable gap between students' learning needs and teaching practices. To bridge this gap, incorporating Bloom's Taxonomy with teaching practices and the multiple intelligences theories is imperative to resolve the current problem. This research paper helps identify the gaps in the secondary, higher, secondary and higher education levels for future research to identify the gaps between the set objectives and learning outcomes. The current paper focuses on pedagogy skills, but the same action research can be conducted for higher educational institutes to identify their changing learning needs and the required teaching practices. In the future, this research will lead to finding better teaching methodologies to meet the students' learning needs. This research also highlights the inert and inactive educational setup in Pakistan that needs a consistent curriculum revision and required training for the teachers. If we could not reform the primary educational setup in the current scenario, our secondary and higher educational setup will surely suffer; hence, more action research is needed to combat this recurring issue while considering the students' individual needs

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