
WSIP an exciting Educational voyage, which boosted students' motivation towards learning

Darvesh Karim¹

Abstract

This paper reports an action research, which was an exciting voyage of successful initiatives taken to boost-up the motivation of students for learning. Apart from students' aptitude, motivation is an essential key to students' success. To improve students' motivation is far from solving the whole problem; however, it is believed that various teaching methods and techniques work together to hold students' motivation, which, in my view, a singular method can never achieve. For instance, a poor student may be motivated by several encouraging words, whereas a good student may need more challenging questions. Secondly, teachers are not always responsible for students' motivation as that partly arises out of the students. Through group/pair work, questioning from/to students, micro teaching, and encouragement in personal communication between teacher and students and rearrangement of the classroom were the proven initiatives which resulted a commendable motivation of students for learning.

Key words: Action Research, micro-teaching, students' motivation, encouragement



Available online
www.bmdynamics.com
ISSN: 2047-7031

INTRODUCTION

Being from a rural area and having been exposed to the teacher-centered teaching methods during my schooling period and afterwards in my own initial teaching career with the traditional concept: "a teacher's role is to deliver a moral, pass on knowledge and skills, and help students solve puzzles," (*Confucius*). In other words, my teaching methods in the classroom were naturally traditional as I had adopted a teacher-centered academic style from my past. This academic teaching style is characterized by teaching techniques of grammatical explanation and translation, and so is sometimes known as the 'grammar-translation method.' (Cook, 2000). In short following is what I have done in past:

1. Led the students through the text of grammatical sentences step by step
2. Provided some background information concerning certain texts
3. Paraphrase some difficult words on grammatical points exist. Then paraphrase them, or translate them into first language (*Burushaski*).

Through this style, I believe I succeeded in delivering the necessary language knowledge as well as giving cultural information to my students for almost ten years of my teaching career. Furthermore, as a teacher, before the class, I sometimes use to prepare my lessons very carefully and thoroughly. In the class, I did my best to pass on as much knowledge as possible to my students. Once I fulfilled the syllabus's requirements, I was satisfied and my superiors were also satisfied. Hence I believed that I was a good and responsible teacher.

Such a situation remained until my selection for Masters in Education at Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development Karachi where I studied different approaches of modern teaching learning processes, specifically Action Research theory and practice for which I could say a paradigm shift in my understanding occurred. I learned that Action research is an approach of teaching methodology, also influenced by Socrates' dialectical method, characterized by logic of question and answer, and concentrating as well on students' learning much more than teachers' methodology.

During the course of two years master's degree, this understanding developed in me about the educational action research that it is a term, which refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be. ... a form of self-reflection practice. (McNiff, 2002). I understood that the basic steps of an action research process constitute an Action Plan:

1. we review our current practice
2. identify an aspect that we want to investigate

¹ AKU-IED-PDCN Gilgit
E-Mail: Darvesh.karim@gmail.com

3. imagine a way forward
4. try it out and
5. take stock of what happens
6. we modify we are doing in the light of what we have found, and continue working
7. monitor what we do
8. review and evaluate the modified action (Whitehead, 1989)

All in all, Educational action research is a self-reflective, problem-finding, problem-solving, self-evaluative and self-improving process for teachers (McNiff, 2000, 2002). With such a theoretical understanding gained within a period of two years, I re-joined the practical field of teaching and learning and I began my journey as a professional teacher-researcher with an esteemed university's offsite campus in a remote area of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Now, as a teacher educator, in every session I conduct for teachers, parents or for students, I always try to reinforce the understanding that whatever the efforts we make in the shape of constructing huge school buildings with fully equipped modern facilities, hiring qualified teachers and conducting training sessions for professional development are just because to achieve the ultimate goal of transforming the students and enhance their learning by providing knowledge and skills and by building character and instilling virtue (Sergiovanni, 1991). Students with various intellectual abilities, from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are the object of this educational process. How can schools or teachers ensure that all students, regardless of their social, economic, and intellectual statuses, learn and become useful and productive members of the society? Are all students motivated to pursue and achieve academic goals on their own? How can schools enhance students' motivation to learn? These are the big question marks for all the schools and teachers today.

Among many other questions, these were the ones in my mind when I was assigned a very significant task to run Whole School Improvement Programme (WSIP) in a private school of Gilgit from my institution Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development - Professional Development Centre, North (AKU-IED-PDCN) which is an institute totally dedicated for the capacity building of all the stakeholders of schools with a special focus on teachers, head teachers and school management committees, so that quality education and conducive learning environment and opportunities could be provided to the students of Gilgit-Baltistan.

THE PROJECT

Among other courses of AKU-IED-PDCN, WSIP is the major program which is also called the flagship program of PDCN. The main principle of WSIP is to treat the school as a unit of learning rather than an individual, with the long term aim of development and effective group dynamics and collegiality amongst teachers, students and communities for the purposes of ongoing educational dialog and improvement. (Shafa, Karim & Sultan, 2011). All the stakeholders such as students, teachers, head teacher, school management committee, parents, community and senior management of the system contribute their complementary or interdependent roles in improving quality of education in schools. In other words all mechanism of the school machinery simultaneously takes part for a proper functioning of the school system. The center and focus of change in the program is the '*child*'. All human, material and financial resources are utilized to achieve the objective that is holistic development of the child.

The project school which was assigned to me to run WSIP during the academic session 2009 - 2010 for one year school based rigorous input and two years follow-up support was a private girls' high school in district Gilgit. I was supposed to initiate and ensure the following quality mechanism in the project school.

1. Special attention to the areas: on-going professional support to the project school teachers, selection and development of appropriate materials/resources/handouts that accord with the objectives of the program and with the instructional approaches;
2. Timely feedback to teachers as well as students on their written and practical work;
3. Teachers' progress to be closely monitored, documented, and shared with them to bring further improvement;

4. Inbuilt on-going formative and summative assessment to be done through teachers' reflective journals, pre-observation-session collaborative instructional planning, meetings, post-observation-session reflective dialogues, and informal and formal reflective dialogues with principal and teachers;
5. Conduct small/large scale action researches with teachers as well as with students.

While initiating all above quality mechanisms for school development through an extensive school development plan, my focus was on six major areas and with the full cooperation of all the teaching staff and the principal of the project school I intervened in an extensive action research project.

Following is the brief description of the focus areas and the relevant activities initiated during the academic year.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

Improvement in quality of teaching and learning is the main focus of whole school improvement model. Quality teaching is fundamental in the process of school improvement especially to enhance students' learning outcomes. It uses to be a major pillar of WSIP and during the intervention phase, it digests a major chunk of time to mould the teaching learning processes towards the desired curve. To enhance the quality of teaching and learning following on-going initiatives were taken.

- Regular Lesson Planning
- Reflective Journals – Reflections
- Revised Timetable
- Vocabulary Development
- Presentation/Communication Skills
- Quiz Competitions
- Reading Skills
- Mental Math
- Co-operative learning
- Creative writing.

Curriculum Enrichment and Staff Development

Curriculum enrichment and staff development are the fundamental aspects of WSIP to ensure quality teaching and learning. Efficient teachers use various means and ways to provide concrete and ample knowledge about the different topics to the students, and they use to integrate different resources and material to enrich curriculum and for better understanding of their students. Following activities for the intervention in the school development plan were initiated.

- Use of resources in classrooms
- Guest speaker
- Provision of Library Books
- Study tours
- Computers and Encarta
- Weekly workshops for teachers
- Use of Reference books
- Project work
- Lesson Observation & Feedback

Community Participation

It is well understood and researched that when we involve parents in education, children's learning positively relates to higher achievements. So, the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievements and their effects with a long-lasting impact (Karim, 2010). Following activities were planned to increase the parental involvement in school activities.

- Parent+ teachers meetings
- Meetings with SMC.
- Parents' Day
- Sessions for mothers
- Involvement of Influential people
- Guest speakers in Monday Assembly

Leadership and Management

When it comes to leadership and management, many people think of either a business or team environment, many times overlooking the fact that school leadership is probably one of the most important kinds of leadership. Leadership and management skills are important in all walks of life. To enhance Leadership and Management practices in school following initiatives were taken.

- Students House System
- Classroom based Assembly procession
- Additional responsibilities for Teachers
- One day kingdom
- House Coordinators
- House-wise Competitions
- Day Teacher

Building, Accommodation and Resources

School facilities, resources and school building even the colour of the walls can affect whether the students and staff members who spend their days in the building perceive it as a place that enhances learning or as just another structure filled with desks and chairs. Hence while planning for this important pillar of WSIP, kept in mind about the shared space to accommodate computers and ensure accessibility as some classrooms were with larger strengths. Likewise school surrounding landscape also plays a key role in providing a high-quality educational environment. Following activities being within the limitation of the available resources were initiated;

- Whole school cleanliness day
- Beautification
- Setup Computer Lab/Library
- House-wise weekly cleanliness
- Setup Science Lab

Social, Moral Development and Health Education

Social and moral development of children is the prime goal of improving schools to develop children as civilized and cooperative individuals of the society and WSIP's focus was also on this dimension of child development. We planned and initiated the following activities.

- Celebration of special events.
- Student Counseling

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

During the baseline survey of the project school, my first step was to observe classrooms as well as the students' learning and teaching methodology, so that I could be able to figure out the existing practices of teaching learning in the project school. During classroom observations I found a lady teacher Miss. Aqlima² of grade 10th who was teaching English which attracted my attention as her teaching method was the same as I had been doing before my professional degree at AKU-IED – the traditional method of teaching. Whatever I found during my observation is really amazing which guided my action research.

During the thirty five-minute-long class, the teacher kept talking, talking and talking just like a lecturer, explaining difficult words, paraphrasing grammatical points, telling students to do this or do that. She seemed to me as a babysitter doing everything for the "babies". I was reflecting on my own practices with a smile as I had also been doing the same practice in my former school. Thus students' talking time was far less than teacher's talking time. Secondly, since she was a "dictator", students became mere passive listeners. The learning atmosphere was consequently inactive all the time: Thirdly, the learning atmosphere itself was un-dynamic, controlled and intense, for students never found enough freedom and space to speak, to communicate and to take part in any activity. All these rendered students passive instead of active and eager to learn. In other words, the teacher's academic teaching style restrained students' motivation for learning.

As soon as I felt such a problem, I asked the teacher right after the class for working together to change in our teaching practice and on her agreement I developed it into my first concern of Action Research, namely, how can I improve students' motivation so they can improve their learning?

A Brief Explanation of the Concern

So, working jointly with Miss Aqlima, how could I improve students' motivation so they could improve their learning? By students, I mean the whole class of grade 10th, instead of individual students, for "any class teaching is a compromise to suit the greatest number of students" (Cook, 2000). So I decided to concentrate on how to improve the motivation of the majority of the whole class instead of improving one or two students' motivation. My understanding about motivation according to the literature; "Motivation in second-language learning has chiefly been used to refer to the long-term fairly stable attitudes in the students' mind (Vivian, Cook, 2000, p97). Since motivation can benefit students' learning, I aimed to improve students' motivation, which, I believe, contribute a lot to students' success in second or third language learning.

² Pseudonyms have been used.

My understanding about students' motivation

Motivation is a critical component of learning. Motivation is important in getting students to engage in academic activities. It is also important in determining how much students will learn from the activities they perform or the information to which they will be exposed to. Students who are motivated to learn something use higher cognitive processes in learning about it. Motivation to do something can come about in many ways. It can be a personality characteristic or a stable long-lasting interest in something. There are several theories of motivation that exist. Some state that motivation is tied to the idea that behaviors that have been rewarded in the past will be more likely to be repeated in the future. Therefore past experiences will motivate a student to perform in future ones.

Other theories prefer to think of motivation as a way to satisfy certain needs. Some basic needs people must satisfy are food, shelter, love and positive self-esteem. Therefore, motivation to do something may be based on the achievement of these needs.

How to enhance motivation?

The most important types of motivation for educational psychology is achievement motivation, people's tendencies to strive for success and choose activities that are goal oriented. The main difference in achievement is the difference in how someone is motivated. Some people are motivated to learn, while others are motivated to perform well and get a good grade. It is important that teachers should try to convince their students that learning rather than grades are the purpose of academic work. This can be done by emphasizing the interest value and practical importance of the material that the students are studying and by de-emphasizing grades and other rewards. There are also many other ways that a teacher can imply that they have positive expectations for their students. These include:

- Waiting for the student to respond to a question.
- Avoid making distinctions of achievement among students.
- Assessment and results should be a private matter.
- Treat all students equally. Call on all students regardless of achievement levels, and spend equal amounts of time with them.

How to become a motivation factor?

The teacher should get to know his/her students, to start with. According to Ur (2000), a motivated learner has the following characteristics: s/he makes an effort to handle tasks and challenges and is confident in his/her success; s/he finds success in learning important to promote and keep a positive self-image; s/he feels the need to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he does; s/he is ambitious and likes challenging, proficiency tasks and high grades; s/he is aware of the goals of learning and of specific activities and directs her/his efforts to succeed in them; s/he makes strong efforts to learn and is not discouraged by obstacles or apparent lack of progress; s/he is not disturbed by temporary lack of understanding or confusion and knows his/her understanding will come later.

Specifically talking, an English teacher should be motivated to motivate his/her students. Maybe the first question you should ask yourself is whether you are really motivated to motivate. If you are, you will get motivation in return. If you are not, then, teacher, you have two options: you can go with the flow, walking the path of apathy which leads to nowhere, or you can seek motivation factors in your students and yourself, so that you can be a happy and fulfilled professional, motivated to motivate.

Why am I concerned about it?

Firstly, in terms of the underlying values of some action research (Whitehead, 1989; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2002), I learnt that what is most important for education in the class should be students' learning not teacher's teaching (McNiff, 1993). No matter how excellent a teacher's teaching method may be, it is nothing if it fails to encourage and improve students' learning. The aim of education is to improve students' learning. Secondly, when I distract my attention from my own teaching to students' learning, students' silence, non-participation and passiveness really frustrated me. It led me to considering whether or not I was a responsible and good teacher after all. I found the answer was "not really", I was trapped in my own living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989). This was constituted thus: to be a teacher, teaching students well is most important. However, what I observed and realized only proved that I had failed to fulfill my expectation and goes against my educational value of empowering students in their learning.

Accordingly, two problems at least arose out of my former teaching methods and the current teaching practice of Miss. Aqlima. One is the teaching style was actually restraining students' motivation and degrading their learning. The other was students' silence and non-cooperation, which in turn influenced by arrangement and teaching in the class. I realized that things would go round in a vicious circle, if no solution were provided for this phenomenon. Thirdly, I now knew from my own experience and new learning from the recent masters' course which I had completed that an active, interesting learning atmosphere could improve students' motivation and thus their learning.

I still remember my own classes as a school student. One of the teachers was so strict that punishment and scolding words would swarm like wasps towards those of us who made a mistake or failed to answer his questions. He was so strict that even we knew the answer, but due to fear of being wrong and the consequences thereafter, we used to remain silent. His attitude seriously affected our motivation. Most of the classmates kept silent and refused to be active because of the fear of being wrong and the consequent punishment from the teacher. The classes were a nightmare for us. Even today, some scolding words from my memory can make me shudder and when I meet this teacher the fear increases even today. If the teacher is absent a day for the school, that used to be the most pleasant and wonderful day for all of us.

Such experiences have led me to believe that the teacher has a great influence on his/her students' motivation as well as their learning. It also makes me believe that, I, as a teacher-educator, can do something to make the teachers realize and change students' passivity and non-participation to active and participatory atmosphere.

Fourthly, the questionnaire I devised at some point with my students in secondary section showed that 99% students preferred to learn in an interesting, free, and relaxed atmosphere. They don't want to learn in a passive and silent atmosphere. The questionnaire explored that students prefer teachers who are slightly strict, fair, treat students as individuals and who have a sense of humor.

Fifthly, from my own teaching experience, I think an 'academic' style benefits teacher's teaching more than students' learning. In such a class, the teacher talks while students listen. As a result, the teacher becomes a fluent lecturer, while students remain audience. Motivation consists of two main factors, it seems to me: the prevailing attitude to the learning situation, i.e. to the teacher, and integrativeness (Cook, 2000). I believe motivation should also include students' attitude to the class, namely, the learning atmosphere. Thus, my first step to alter such a situation is to change the learning atmosphere of the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

When realizing students' motivation was mainly restrained by the present academic style we decided to alter our teaching method (Miss. Aqlima and myself), so as to maximize student-participation and minimize teacher-domination - to offer students much freedom to talk, to discuss and to communicate so as to change the passive, silent atmosphere into an active and interesting one. In other words, how can I improve students' motivation towards learning? To answer this question a practical approach was needed and Action Research was the methodology through which I could be able improve the situation in classroom, as Action research is a natural part of teaching which requires continually observing students, collecting data and changing practices to improve student learning. (Miller, 2007).

Intervention One -- pair/group work

To increase the students' motivation for learning our first imagined solution was to apply group/pair work to the class. Instead of leading students to the text sentence by sentence as before by the teacher, we asked them to work in pairs or groups, discussing with each other and then tell us their result. From the very beginning, I found that this attempt was working. I walked around the class and observed students' behavior as they were doing their pair/group work. To work in a group or pair seemed to come naturally, since they could face their learning partners instead of the teacher. They usually held an animated talk, and I could hear them arguing with each other, could see them smiling. This was really encouraging for me and I sensed that students were also enjoying group/pair work. Initially students got the freedom to talk for the first time in their class and they were very excited to chat with each other.

Most importantly, they had started questions such as, "Sir, what does this mean?" or "I can't understand this". This was really impossible when I stood in-front of them and delivering/pouring knowledge to them. Students' questioning in groups/pairs together with my own observations proved that the present learning atmosphere had started to change a lot and they were becoming active in raising questions.

Another thing I would like to add to suggest group/pair work does indeed change the learning atmosphere, which in turn to some extent improves students' motivation. On one occasion the teaching aim was for students to talk about their own future. Students' were now required to talk about their future in pairs or as part of their group work. Take Mariam³ House as an example. Their group created a story of Ulfat's future. Here is an extract from their story:

"...after two years she will have a lovely daughter who is good at dancing and singing, Ulfat supports her daughter to learn more dancing and singing, while her husband was not in a favour...."

This is a complete and funny made-up story. I still remember when Sabila read it out, other students laughed a lot. Such a story could not have resulted from my previous teaching method, and I believe it proves to some extent that group/pair work liberates students from the teacher's control and direction, offering them much opportunity and freedom to speak in the way they want to. In addition, it also fosters their creativity and imagination. Miss. Aqlima was also witnessing this change and she was very happy to be the part of this learning process and I felt that she was attending school joyfully.

Apart from this success, I was also enlightened by such an idea----why not try another method of "questioning" since students' actively questioning behavior seems naturally to arise out of their pair/group work.

Intervention Two -- questioning

Based on group/pair work, I decided to put a more questioning method into practice and apply it mainly to the teaching of text. Students were divided into groups/pairs, discussing the text with each other and solving problems by themselves. Whenever some difficult problems were beyond their understanding, they would present it to me through questioning and I would ask other students to respond or I would answer their questions. Alternatively, I sometimes supervised their learning by questioning them. Thus the questioning-method was put into effect in two ways: one was through students raising questions and teachers'/other group students answering; another was teachers' raising questions and students' answering them.

To authenticate that whether this method of questioning really comply with my action research question, in other words, does it improve students' motivation, I collected students' feedback/reflection in writing. According to that, most of them agreed that questioning really improves their learning interest. When I collected students' feedback, I told them to decide to sign or not to sign their names for I believe it can guarantee the validity of my evidence. Thus if some students wanted to say something against the teacher, they might feel more at ease if they didn't have to sign their names. These are some of their comments:

- Samina wrote: *"Your teaching way fits me, especially the questioning. It not only makes me more active, but also makes me learn it by myself. I found my study was much more improved than before"*.
- Another student wrote: *"I am very appreciative about your methods of teaching, because you have a large change than before, we can ask you and you answer us. We can understand it well. It is better than before."*

Apart from this written reflection, I myself also noticed that students were more active than before. All this reassured me that questioning students on the basis of their group/pair work actually helped improve their participation and motivation. However, things always have two sides, just like a coin. Let's listen to several students' voice that belongs to the minority in the class. An anonymous student wrote: *"I think it is good, but it doesn't make some students understand the text completely or clearly because some good students can follow this way, they can understand the text easily. But others don't pay much attention to our lessons"*

Likewise, Nazia wrote: *"When Miss. Aqlima gives lecture I felt very clear about the structure, content and phrases of the articles. Thus it won't take a long time for me to finish our homework. With the questioning method though we can understand the words, phrases very well, [but] we failed to understand its structure and content completely. Thus we couldn't finish our homework easily. Of course, questioning really motivates us, activate the*

³ We had organized all the students in four houses in every class; Fatima, Mariam, Hawa and Khadija House.

atmosphere, but I notice that some students are busy with finding out questions instead of understanding the text, what's more, some students' questions are too far beyond the text. Actually questions have nothing to do with what we will learn. This is a waste of our time. So to me, I still prefer teacher-centered method than questioning method, for I can learn more by it."

Nazia's critical comments were unexpected for me and they made me reflect and think a lot. It seems that there should be a balance between questioning and academic style. A teacher shouldn't randomly force him/herself to adopt one teaching method while utterly abandoning another or simply make a judgment that this teaching method is better than that based on one experience. The adoption of a certain kind of teaching method should be decided by two factors: students' learning needs as well as the teaching materials available. All in all, teaching methods should alter with students' learning needs as well as the difficult degree of the teaching materials. Cook also recommends that,

"it is rare to encounter a classroom that is a pure version of one or other of these reaching styles as none of them fully satisfy all the needs of any real class of students: nevertheless they provide convenient reference points for the discussion on language teaching. (Cook, 2000, p.174)

Thus I believe that teaching encourages a variety of methods. Take questioning as an example: it seems to work well for me and the students if the teaching materials are less difficult and individual student prefers them. Hence I tried to introduce various teaching methods according to different teaching materials as well as students' learning needs. However, my next strategy was to change my teaching methodology again.

Intervention Three -- micro-teaching

"A Father's Advice" (a story from the English textbook we were using) is a chapter of low difficulty. It is full of simple conversations and few difficult grammatical points and the vocabulary is easy. This determines that students are capable of learning and even teaching this text by themselves. Guided by this idea, I asked students to work in a group of 5 or 6, solving difficult problems and learning by themselves. In order to test my hypothesis, I required each group to choose a group leader who would be in-charge of explaining on behalf of the whole group's understanding of certain paragraphs to the whole class, while other groups were asked to raise critical questions. To my surprise, they really did an excellent job. Most of them were good at controlling their language and making sense of it. A typical example is *Ulfat's* explanation of a paragraph. I remember challenging her by questioning her explanation and she presented very satisfactory answers, while her whole group was also supporting her in responses. I felt an ownership by the students for the topic they were talking about. Furthermore, students' feedback also proved that micro-teaching is really improving their learning. Here are some words from students' group feedback. *Hawa House* wrote:

"Our group thinks that this micro-learning is useful for our self-study and enables us to think of questions by ourselves. And it also improves our ability of teaching. In our group, we explain important and useful points one by one. We can improve our skills of explanation. And by this method, all of us must explain and teach the text, so the lazy people will be "punished" by explaining."

On the contrary, the words from other group are really funny. *Fatima House* wrote:

"We don't think it is a useful way of learning a new story. There are many difficult vocabulary and phrases even sentences. You should guide us to learn every point".

This voice states again that applying a variety of teaching methods according to students' learning needs and the teaching materials is extremely necessary and important. After these experiences I can say that action research should go side by side the teaching so that we could be able to enhance students learning and cater different learning styles.

Intervention Four -- encouragement, personal communication between teacher and students, rearrangement of the classroom

Now let's abandon such abstract theories, because I found ways to encourage students that weren't routines. One of those findings was giving encouragement to some students. *Rifat* was usually a silent student. She seldom appeared active in my class. At first, I guessed it was due to her poor English. However an interview with her changed my mind. Here is a part of our talk concerning her study.

- **Me:** *in your opinion, how can I help you to improve your learning?*
- **Rifat:** last year, Miss Fouzia taught me the English course. She constantly asked me to answer her questions. This made me feel that I was not ignored by the teacher. Furthermore, whenever I raised a

correct answer for a question, even a very easy one, she would praise me a lot. Her attitude to me really encourages me to learn a lot and I began to recover my interest in English.

- *Me: How about your study now?*
- **Rifat:** Well, many things have changed. Our head teacher was changed and another student took my place of the monitor. You with Miss. Aqlima began to teach us. I felt I lost my interest and confidence in English again.

Her words reminded me of what I have done to her in my class. Whenever I asked her to answer my questions, she did a bad job. Her broken sentences and murmuring voice made me feel tired. Furthermore, I was afraid I wouldn't fulfill the teaching schedule and syllabus since I had to spend lots of time correcting her mistakes. Therefore, I often avoided asking her questions and usually commented on her answers with simple words such as "OK, well, sit down, please". As a result, my conscious behavior possibly made her feel ignored by me and consequently she seemed to lose her confidence and learning interest. This led me to believe that teacher's encouragement to students and personal communication with them, especially the slow ones, are extremely significant factors in their development. It can improve to some extent some students' motivation.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is what I want to turn to next. On one occasion, I required students to make a report on the topic of modernization. I was surprised that they were more active in reading out their own reports than before. Their active participation was only apparently due to a little change in classroom management. Usually, they would give their reports standing on the platform, which accordingly activated those seated in the front rows more than those seated at the back. However, this time, thanks to a change of classroom management (students were asked to turn back and show their reports in an open area at the back of the class) they appeared more active in the face of such a novelty, especially those sitting at the back. Students like Mah Noor, Sofiya, Shazia and Naila seemed eager to listen. They even volunteered to read out their reports without my constant asking to read, perhaps because all at once they felt themselves to be a significant focus.

THE OUTCOMES OF THE INTERVENTION

Through the above-mentioned formative evaluation of every intervention and strategy, I may claim that my adoption of various teaching methods has really motivated my students to improve their learning. However, to further substantiate my claim, I'd like to turn to some summative evaluation.

i. My ways to collect evidence

Since Action Research inquires a triangulation of evidence to validate a researcher's claim (Winter, 1989), I tried various ways to collect data i.e. questionnaires, interview individual students, students' feedback/reflection as soon as the class is over, journals/notes and observation.

ii. My standards to evaluate my research were; whether the learning atmosphere is altered, examination results, students' attitudes to my teaching, students' improvement in their self-study ability, improvements in creativity and confidence.

iii. At the completion of one academic year's intervention in this school in general and class 10th in particular, I was able to achieve my target of how can I motivate students towards learning as now I was confident to claim that apart from above activity-wise achievements, I was also succeeded in following;

1. Students' confidence level had tremendously increased and they take very active part during lesson delivery by the teachers as well as when the visitors visit the school. To respond the questions from the visitors most of the students raise their hand. This rapid change has also been brilliantly felt and expressed by the senior officials of the school system and other teachers.
2. As an indirect outcome, other teachers of the school have also developed a caring attitude towards students and corporal punishment has been totally abandoned, which has been very prominently expressed through reflections of teachers as well as the students. Teachers are now on the way to develop a positive and strong relationship with students.
3. Students' grades and pass percentage has been now improved. Specifically in SSC-II examination overall result remained 94% and grades have also improved than the earlier board results. Only one

student could not make it to qualify with one subject drop. While the rest of the school result remained higher than the previous years.

4. In secondary section (specifically in class 10th), students have developed the capacity of creative writing as in this focused class we initiated the practices on regular basis. Students are confident now to write anything as they have been habitually and creatively write.
5. As teachers, we were successful to build a strong and respectful relationship with students as well as teachers, which reflect whenever we visit the school, through occasional gifts, greeting cards and the welcoming behavior, while students reflections and teachers reflection were very much evident to prove that we were able to build a strong relationship and attachment with the students, teachers, school and with the community as a whole.
6. In most of the students learning attitude and a spirit of team work has been extended, which can be observed while a group work, a competition, or during any task which involves the houses.
7. Students' self-esteem has improved as a result of presentations, freedom of asking questions for clarity and sharing ideas in classrooms as well as outside classrooms. School culture has been changed towards mutual understanding, respect and sharing ideas freely without the hesitation of being wrong.
8. Students' handwriting and spelling has improved to a greater extent which was weak before the intervention.

Finally, the present exemplary situation in class 10th in particular and in school as a whole and the conducive learning environment is evidently proving and witnessing the success story of WSIP intervention 2009- 2010.

CONCLUSION

I believed that as long as a teacher played the role of "delivering morals, passing on the knowledge and skills, and helping solve the problems", s/he was no doubt a good teacher. I also believed that my previous academic style helped to fulfill my dream of being a good teacher. Ironically, what I later learned from students was that I actually denied my values in my actions (Whitehead, 1989). By this serious teaching style I spoon-fed the knowledge to my students, which, far from motivating them to learn, badly constrained their creativity and freedom to communicate, as well as their insight and rights as individuals. It is Miss. Aqlima and Action Research that have helped me realize what was truly happening in my class. During my Action Research enquiry, I have simultaneously developed my own living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989, 1993) which, in mainly resulting from my own practice, is bound to enlarge my horizons, strengthen my insight, and improve my knowledge towards second language teaching as a professional teacher.

I have started to regard education as a constantly developmental, sustainable process instead of a static, passive 'thing'. Such practice and self-reflection, as well as self-directing research have helped me enhance my own professional development. I now feel capable of monitoring my teaching more flexibly, confidently and wisely. Most importantly, I am able to concentrate my attention on my students' learning not merely on my teaching. To sum up, what I have achieved will not only improve my students' learning but also will empower my teaching and their learning.

Apart from students' aptitude, motivation is an essential key to students' success. To improve students' motivation is far from solving the whole problem, however. Owing to different teaching materials as well as different students' learning needs, a variety of teaching methods are required to enhance motivation. Metaphorically, this can be linked to a spider's web or triangulation instead of a linear pathway. In other words, various teaching methods and techniques work together to hold students' motivation, which, in my view, a singular method can never achieve. For instance, a poor student may be motivated by several encouraging words, whereas a good student may need more challenging questions. Secondly, teachers are not always responsible for students' motivation as that partly arises out of the students themselves.

I remember once when other students appeared active in my class, several seemed tired and one of them even yawned. To start with I thought I had failed to motivate them. But why were other students so active? Through a small talk with them (Samina, Sheela and Fariha) during the break, I learned they had gone to bed too late the previous night! (Live cricket match was on-air last night).

Another typical example is Nosheen. She is usually inactive and silent in my class. Both Miss. Aqlima and I supposed that she was not motivated. Miss. Aqlima once told me: "How can you involve her in the learning? She is writing nothing in her book." However, an interview with her later proved that she preferred an "inactive and silent learning style". Other students' active participation even made her feel uncomfortable. She said her silence didn't mean she was distracted from my teaching:

She also told me that my teaching methods were very good because in this way it can cater to different demands of different students. Thus she always kept quiet and inactive in my class, but she insisted that she was listening carefully. For her seldom taking notes, she said she tried to memories what I said in my lesson and her way did work. Thus her attitudes in my eyes were explained properly. (Journal entry, May)

I believe what she told me for she usually gained a decent score in examinations. In the light of that, I am reassured that, students are also responsible for their own motivation and that it reveals itself in different ways. Their tiredness and preference for different learning styles may influence their motivation and learning.

Thirdly, I advocate that, apart from the two types of motivations, namely, integrative and instrumental, there is another type—emotional motivation. By it, I mean teachers' encouragement and conscious attention to some students, particularly the poor, may motivate them to learn. Put plainly, emotional motivation encourages a building-up of a friendly relationship between teachers and students through such ways as chat, individual communication, personal talk or even conscious attention, encouragement etc.

Another example comes from Nazia. She is an active student. However I always used to ignore her because of her very activeness because I believed more opportunities should be offered to other inactive and poor students. What was beyond my expectation was she was so sensitive that she felt my intentional avoidance of her. Without sensing my true purpose, she once told me: "I don't think I am motivated by you and please give me a suitable explanation for why you always jump over me, only me in the whole class, even I stand my hand to answer?" Her inquiry really surprised me and assured me that emotional motivation actually exists among students. No discrete teaching method would solve this problem. What I realized was that I needed to have a talk with her, informing her of my true intention.

Furthermore, my research has strengthened my insight into Action Research. I hold the following opinion: Action Research is a self-reflective, problem-spotting, problem-solving, evaluative, and self-improving process. It starts with a value (McNiff, 2002), then encourages educators to spot their own living contradictions (Whitehead, 1989), and try to solve them so as to generate their living educational theories through their practice and research. As a consequence, they can enhance their professional development. As a researcher, you have to undergo the process, which looks like a black box in some ways. Action Research focuses on student-centered teaching and students' learning needs. And the individuals' learning needs always come first. It seems a basic tenet of Action Research (McNiff, 1993, 2000; Whitehead, 1989, 1993) that the whole class consists of different individuals whose differences should be noted and respected as human beings.

REFERENCES

- Cook, V. (2000), *"Second Language Learning and Language Teaching"*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing.
- Karim, D. (2010, July 11). Parental involvement in education. *Dawn Islamabad*, pp. 21.
- Karim, D. (2012). Exploring Head and Deputy Headteachers' Attitude Towards Using Computers in Education. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)*, 8(2), 20-32. doi:10.4018/jicte.2012040102
- Karim, D. (2009). *Exploring head and deputy head teachers' attitude towards using computers in education*. Unpublished master's thesis, Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, Karachi, Pakistan.
- Miller, C. (2007).A. *"Action Research: Making Sense of Data."* On-line article recovered 26.09.2013, www.coe.fau.edu/sfcel/sensdata.htm.
- McNiff, J (2002). *"Action Research for Professional Development"*, booklet at: <http://www.jeanmcniff.com>

- McNiff, J. (2002). with Whitehead, J., "*Action Research: Principles and Practice*", Routledge, London and New York.
- McNiff, J. (2000). *Teaching as Learning*, Routledge, London.
- McNiff, J., Lomax, P., Whitehead, J. (2002). *You and Your Research Project*, Hyde Publication, Dorset, U.K.
- Sergiovanni, Thomas J. (1991). *The principal-ship a reflective Practice perspective* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Shafa, M., Karim, D., and Alam, S. (2011). What Works in Education in Pakistan, and Why? *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol. 2, 16, 132- 145.
- Whitehead, J. (1993). '*The Growth of Educational Knowledge*', Hyde Publications, Dorset, England.
- Whitehead, J. (1989). "*Creating a Living Educational theory from Questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?"*" Cambridge Journal of Education.