

Examining How to Ensure Transferable Skills Education for **Students of Government & Private Schools in District Mansehra**

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Key Insights/ Abstract

This research work focused on examining how to ensure transferable skills education for students of government & private schools in district Mansehra. The lack of critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, public speaking and other transferable skills in the students of government and private schools has been remained the main challenge. Rote learning and memory-based learning spoils creativity of adolescents and youth. This research focused on what topics need to be included in the curriculum to develop transferable skills as well as it also emphasizes the role of teachers' training to ensure fruitful results in this regard. This study also focused on identifying the problems which can become a hurdle in interventions for transferable skills education at school level. Unfortunately, Pakistan is facing deteriorating conditions in

the education sector, mainly because of a dearth of resources and only 2% of GDP allocation for education. This has become a major hindrance in improvement of quality of education, especially in places like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where Pakistan's battle against terrorism has also caused deterioration in quality of education. In this regard, Mansehra district in Hazara Division has been negatively affected owing to an already existing dearth of resources. The main goal of this research work was to come up with research-oriented recommendations which can be instrumental in inculcating transferable skills in the students of government and private schools of District Mansehra so that they can become independent lifelong learners.

Research Context

The main challenge is the lack of critical thinking skills and other transferable skills education for the students of government and private schools of District Mansehra. Rote learning and memory-based learning spoils creativity of adolescents and youth. Unfortunately, Pakistan is facing deteriorating conditions in the education sector, mainly because of a dearth of resources and only 2% of GDP allocation for education. This has become a major hindrance in improvement of quality of education, especially in places like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where Pakistan's battle against terrorism has also caused deterioration in quality of education. In this regard, Mansehra district in Hazara Division has been negatively affected owing to an already existing dearth of resources. Since primary and secondary education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of students, it holds profound importance to provide trained and qualified teachers and curriculum. As noted by Ghulam Rasool Memon, "the quality of education imparted

by the majority of private schools is questionable owing to an acute dearth of properly trained and qualified teachers, and any kind of support mechanism for these teachers. Except for large school systems like Beacon House, City School, Lahore Grammar, and others, which constitute a small percentage of the existing schools, the majority of others have appointed teachers who are qualified up to intermediate (12 years of schooling) or BA level (14 years of education) and are paid much lower salaries compared to their counterparts in the government sector in addition to no job security". The problem also remains an important one in government schools, creating an imbalance of quality education among students of private and government schools. This has resulted in producing graduates with no skillset and no understanding of the job market in contemporary world. It is the need of the hour to impart 21st century learning skills to the students who are the future of Pakistan to actually make a change.

This research has focused on what topics can be included in the curriculum to develop transferable skills as well as how can training of teachers ensure fruitful results in this regard. How can we ensure

adolescents and children know about transferable skills better? The goal of this research work is how to ensure that transferable skills will be imparted to the students by the teachers and principals.

Research Design

The questionnaires were designed for students, teachers and education officers both on qualitative and quantitative basis both online and in person, visits were made to different schools and to key stakeholders and data was collected, interviews were conducted. A Focused Group Discussions with the key stakeholders was conducted with relevant teachers and principals and representatives of elementary and secondary education for the discussion of the issue in detail.

The minutes of the FGD were noted down and a report was made. After the completion of required interviews, filled questionnaire forms and focused group discussion, the data was analysed through different ways. First of all, all the responses were read and the quantitative and qualitative responses were noted in excel sheets. The final discussion paper reflects the inputs of our target group (teachers, students, principals and District Officer Education),

Key Findings and Discussion

96% of students want to participate in public speaking activities, they want to build up their confidence but most of the students complained about non-availability of the facilities, burden of homework, financial problems, burden of paying for the activities happening in the schools. For girls, there are very limited opportunities due to societal and family construct, they are very skilful, they have the ability of multitasking, they manage their home chores and study at the same time, but the daughters are not provided with level playing field as compared to the sons. This study has found that the students of government schools are very bright, talented and sharp but due to the non-availability of proper learning resources both in the school and home, they remain behind those who study from private English schools. 80% of the female students were interested in sports activities but due to family and social pressure, they do not participate in sports competitions even they are very good at sports. 60% of the

students were lacking confidence due to several reasons that are non-cooperation of the teacher, no group discussions arranged by the teachers, not being given chance to speak up in the class. In 80 percent of schools, there were no co-curricular activities organized by the schools as they are very important for the students to build their confidence, get opportunity to work in teams and show their talent to the world. Most of the students adopt rote learning while preparing for class tests and exams because if they adopt the conceptual learning method, their teachers won't give them marks. Commemoration of relevant international days and weeks is also of profound importance and most of the newly recruited young teachers demanded from the ESED and District Officer Education to include it in the yearly calendar of schools. To excel in professional career, one should know how to work in teams. 90% of the student have not worked in a team for a class assignment or a presentation. To make

our future generation capable of doing wonders, they must know how to work in team, how to build teams. It is very important to include group work and team presentations. 90% of the students adopt rote-based learning/memorization other than concept-based learning for preparing for a test or paper. This is much needed that the schools promote concept-based learning. The students need to be appreciated by the teachers if they write answers in their own words. 60% of the teachers have no training of teaching pedagogies. Most of the male students are very interested in sports and want sports activities and sports day to be allowed at school. Most of them are very much interested in metaverse, gaming, and emerging

technologies. They want study tours to historical places such as museums. 81% of the students complained about the nonavailability of science and computer laboratories which bars them from building concepts and learning modern tools and techniques. The behaviour of the teacher with the students greatly affects the learning process of a student. Trainings on teaching pedagogies should be made compulsory for the newly recruited teachers to make them a productive and informed teachers. If we want to build leadership, problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills of students, 37% of the teachers suggest that well thought-out interventions in the curriculum and training of teachers will be needed.

Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations are;

1. The Elementary & Secondary Education department should engage the teachers in different Training of Trainer (ToT) workshops to make them educators of transferable skills in their schools and sessions on transferable skills education should be included in the milestones of their annual performance reports.
2. The Elementary & Secondary Education department should allow the teachers to conduct joint classes of different grades as they are mostly needed for team building and leadership exercises.
3. The Elementary & Secondary Education department should issue directions to all the District Education Officers to introduce feedback mechanism for the teachers. The feedback mechanism must have input of the students as well.
4. Mostly, the principals of the schools force the teachers to complete the syllabus even if the learning process is slow due to the students' educational background. This pressure on the teachers results in negative because he/she no longer engage the students in different needed topics/discussions other than the syllabus. The District Officer and Elementary & Secondary Education department should give liberty to some extent to the teachers in this regard.
5. The Principals of the schools must make it sure that the individual performance of each student is monitored and if there is any hurdle in the learning process, it should be communicated with the parents.
6. There is a Parent Teachers Council in every government school which comprises of the principal, parents and elders of the area. The Council is presided by the Chairman who is elected from the elders of the area. The whole purpose of this Council is to act as a watchdog on the school's performance and work closely with the school's management but sadly, majority of the Parent Teachers Councils are chaired by powerful elders of the area who are there just for the sake of being the Chairman. They lack the capacity as well as they do not show interest in the affairs of school. This research has identified this gap in the policy and

Department of Elementary & Secondary Education should revisit the policy of PTC specifically the composition of Parent Teachers Council and the procedure of electing the Chairman. Inclusion of women (the mothers) should also be prioritized.

7. It should be made mandatory by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education that the Principals of the schools should have Monthly Open House with the students of the institute to discuss their problems and keep contact with the students.
8. To manage the learning of students who are slow learners specifically students with Dyslexia, the teachers must be sensitized and trained through teachers training.
9. "Do you think the students can become good public speakers, problem solvers, critical thinkers through the same curriculum and teaching

methodologies". We asked this question from the Principals of government and private schools who had experience of more than a decade. 75% of them replied in negative so there is a serious need of improving our curriculum and teaching methodologies.

10. The Directorate of Elementary & Secondary Education should provide tablets to teachers specifically SST(IT) so they can engage students on online learning platforms at primary schools where there are no computer laboratories.
11. For better performance, the government should incentivise the teachers who show outstanding performance. The government should also introduce Performance Awards for Principals of schools with excellent record of attendance of students to encourage the principals for ensuring attendance of students.

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