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Continuous School Improvement Plan for Quality Education in the Light of Pedagogy: An Action Research

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Pedagogy, its concept and Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) are taken as the major elements for Quality Education in the areas of both management and academic follow-up of a school (herein Rural Development Academy Laboratory School & College). Pedagogy has been explored through the thinking and practice of those educators who look to accompany learners; care for and about them; and bring learning into life. Teaching is considered as just one aspect of their practice. This action research will demonstrate how assessment techniques can be used at the micro level to assess the pedagogical efficacy of individual classes and/or major subjects (such as Languages: Bangla, English, Mathematics, Social Studies,etc) as well as individual assignments for both the teachers and students along with the School Management Committee (SMC). It will discuss the results of a two-semester study of six consecutive years in which multiple cycles of assessment and corrective action will be taken to improve the quality of a class and out of class management exercises towards the whole school. Background of the action research has been worked out under a Kaizen (TQM) programme of JICA by organizing three courses, two workshops and series of meetings with selected 14 secondary schools of Bogra Sadar, Sherpur and Shajahanpur Upazilas of Bogra district. Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogra and Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) will jointly share their part for sharpening some technicalities to develop and further implementation of the action research as they are in a collaborative relation for a long time.

Keywords: *Quality education, continuous school improvement plan, action research on pedagogy and Kaizen.*

Introduction

In recent years interest has grown in 'pedagogy' within English-language discussions of education. The impetus has come from different directions. There have been those like Paulo Freire seeking a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' or 'critical pedagogy'; practitioners wanting to rework the boundaries of care and education via the idea of social pedagogy; and, perhaps most significantly, governments wanting to constraint the activities of teachers by requiring adherence to preferred 'pedagogies'.

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A common way of approaching pedagogy is as the art and science (and maybe even craft) of teaching. As we will see, viewing pedagogy in this way both fails to honour the historical experience, and to connect crucial areas of theory and practice. Here we suggest that a good way of exploring pedagogy is as the process of accompanying learners; caring for and about them; and bringing learning into life.

The school is a complex social institution that operates within a wider socio-cultural and political context. Accumulated evidence has demonstrated the need for "governments to develop policies that place schools at the forefront of improving educational quality. This involves the important questions regarding the levels of authority, responsibility and accountability that should lie with those who work directly in and with schools".

Schools however, cannot effect meaningful change without sufficient capacity and considerable ongoing support. This calls then for head and teachers to be equipped with the necessary skills that will make schools be part of and own attempts at educational reform.

Thus, schools need information on their performance to identify their strengths, weaknesses and priorities, in motivating rather than de-motivating ways. Further, the teacher is the key factor in the teaching learning process. And yet, in most cases, they are the forgotten lot in the change process. Further, teachers in developing countries operate under very pathetic conditions such as overcrowded classrooms, wide variations in age, and with little or no materials for teaching. Most worrying of course is the fact that these teachers are ill equipped to cope with such situations. Schools and hence teachers need to be empowered with skills which will enable them identify their own problems (administrative or pedagogical) and seek solutions to these problems. Being called upon here is the use of action research as a means of addressing the implementation of educational reform e.g. teacher led action research in the classroom. Such studies would complement what is usually lacking from the formal teacher training systems.

A competent teacher needs both content mastery and pedagogical competency. Content mastery provides knowledge about what to present in the class whereas pedagogical competency provides knowledge as well as skills in how to present the content. Pedagogy is the art of teaching that brings effectiveness in teaching-learning. Effective pedagogical practice promotes the achievement of students and builds up confidence of the teachers in teaching. It contributes in bringing quality of learning and teaching in the classrooms.

The National Education Policy (NEP 2010) has given proper attention to teacher training for developing necessary competencies in teachers, but such importance could not be materialized yet. This commission's report stated, "..... quality teachers' education and repetitive demand-driven training is imperative to develop the professional excellence of the teachers."

From the above discussion, it is clear that number of gaps were reported in several studies in the pedagogical practices between the school classrooms and intentions as stated in the various reports. It had also revealed that classroom teaching-learning was mostly teacher dominated, there was more emphasis on rote learning, and repetition of the textual materials was common practice in the classroom teaching learning. The major cause for the gap in pedagogical practices is due to lack of pedagogical competencies in school teachers. Hence, it is common felt need to assess the necessary pedagogical competencies of school teachers for implementing child centered teaching and learning.

Concerning to quality education RDA, Bogra started to work and implement action plan based on Total Quality Management (TQM) concepts and tools with pedagogical aspects at RDA Loboratory School and College, and other surrounded schools. RDA Lab School and College is the experiment institution of RDA, Bogra, so an attempt was made to start from this institution which has been trying to provide quality education to the children of the RDAFaculty Members and staff and children from nearby Sherpur, Dhunat and Shajhanpur Upazilas of Bogra District since 1985. It has a big set up at the rural level with 110 teachers including staff; and 2687 students including primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The students of the school and college are achievingcommendable results in public examinations both in termsof percentages of passage and obtaining superior grades after intervening with different tools and techniques. On the other hand, some surrounded schools are lagging behind in respect of quality education which also needs to be improved. So, under continuous school improvement process RDA Lab School and College, and side by side other secondary high schools are taken under this management in the light of pedagogical aspects. Keeping these points of viewsthe following objectives has been considered:

Objectives

The main objective of the action plan is to set and standardise a system for improving Continuous School Improvement Plan.

The specific objectives of the action research are given below in two parts:

A. **Related to SMC:**
   i) To identify and prioritise the major issues that should be addressed to develop a plan of action for the SMC; and
   ii) To monitor the plan for standardisation of the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

B. **Related to Teachers:**
   i) To identify the pedagogical problems and assess the necessary pedagogical competencies of school teachers for effective teaching and learning of the students; and
   ii) To suggest pedagogical management competencies for solving the pedagogical problems of teachers for quality education and CSIP.

Methodology for Continuous School Improvement by RDA, Bogra

Mainly the following types of method were undertaken by RDA, Bogra for Continuous School Improvement:

a) Organised Training programmes for the Stakeholders,
b) Preparation of the Action Plan by the participants for implementation in their respective schools.
c) Continued follow-up activities from RDA, Bogra with the trained school teachers.
d) Refresher Course was organised for the participants.
e) Evaluation of their activities based on the Action Plan.

Selection of the Study Area

A total of 14 Secondary private schools of Shajahanpur, Sherpur and Bogra SadarUpazila of Bogra District were selected for bringing them in the Continuous School Improvement Plan activities (List of Schools in Appendix-III).

Selection of the Study Stakeholders

The stakeholders like the Chair/vice chair of School Management Committee including Head Teachers, and Computer teachers; Upazila secondary education officers were the participants of the programme. District Education Offcier and UpazilaNirbahi Officer were also invited inthe programmes to get orientation about continuous school improvement plan (CSIP) activities.

Activities in Continuous School Improvement Plan

Organised Training Programmes for CSIP

A total of two training courses and one Refreshers course were organised for the stakeholders in CSIP.

In this connection the course was designed considering the following issues:

- Understand the basic concepts, principles and methodologies of continuous School Improvement in the context of improving quality education.
- Define and elaboration of CSIP for upgrading quality education,
- Preparation of the Action Plan by the participants for implementation in their respective schools.
- Formation of Work Improvement Team (WIT) and acquire skill to guide Work Improvement Teams (WIT).

Detailed Course contents is shown in the Appendix-I.

Training Methodology

The introduction to each key element of Continuous School Improvement using Total Quality Management (TQM) tools was done in a lecture format. In addition, participants demonstrated their understanding of the concepts and practices for each of these elements through various activities, such as group discussion/activities, short assignment and demonstration.

Selection of Theme and Development of the CSIP

The following steps were adopted in selection of the theme and development of CSIP:

- Identification of the problems
- Prioritisationof problems
- Identify three problems and match to 5W1H
- GANTT Chart.

Participants were required to develop an Action Plan following the above activities and make a presentation based on their selection of theme. Examples of two themes are attached in Appendix-II.

Proposed Framework for Continuous School Improvement

This proposed action research will demonstrate how assessment techniques can be used at the micro level to assess the pedagogical efficacy of individual classes and or major subjects (such as Languages: Bangla, English; Mathematics; Social Studies etc.) as well as individual assignments for both the teachers and students along with the School Management Committee (SMC). It will discuss the results of a two-semester study of six consecutive years in which multiple cycles of assessment and corrective action will be taken to improve the quality of a class and out of class management exercises towards the whole school. The main feature of the action research is given below:

Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) can be taken by

a) Teachers on:

- Major subjects (language: Bangla and English; Math; Social Studies) teaching towards students and
- Individual Self career plan for professional skill development in accordance to the policy requirements of the schools achievement
- A set of formats can be developed later on.

b) Students for

- In-class and
- Out of class quality management activities.

Each and every student would be given opportunity to show their capabilities, interest, instinct and internal possibilities towards selection of their future professions.

Compilation of all Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIPs)

Compilation of all CSIPs will be done in an Annual Planning Conference in presence of representations of students, guardians and all teaching staff along with the School Management Committee (SMC). The following activities will be undertaken:

- Reviewand fine tuning of all SIPs on teaching-learning quality management for major subjects proposed by teachers and students.
- CSIPs on support activities as supplementary to consolidate and integrate
- Formulation of a financial plan to implement a Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

Implementation

a) The action research may be undertaken for six academic years and school grades may be included as follows:

Table-1

Action Research and School Grades

Project Year	Inclusion of Grades	Remarks
Year - 01	VI and IX	
Year - 02	VI, VII and X	
Year - 03	VI, VII, VIII and Pass-out SSC	
Year - 04	VI, VII, VIII and IX	Presence of Old Pass-out SSC
Year - 05	VI, VII, VIII, IX and X	Fresh Cohort and Presence of Old Pass-out SSC
Yea r- 06	VI, VII, VIII, IX and X with Qualitative SSC	Reborn new School Cohort

b) Quality Class Management Exercise

i. A criticism of many assessment efforts is that they are simply used for measurement and not evaluation. This measurement or exam-result oriented education could teach a little of life-skill learning. Most of the assessments are known as examination, which became always fear-provoking events for the students. In order to identify opportunities for improvement, an attempt will be taken to match practice based assessment methods with evaluation needs.

ii. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: Assessment Methodology
    * Baseline Assessment (direct and indirect measures);
    * A portion of the Final Exam (final direct measures); and
    * Final Learning Outcomes Survey (final indirect measures).
iii. Team (both teachers and students separately) Performance Evaluation:
iv. In the first year 2-4 schools may be taken for the intervention and other 9-11 schools would be consulted to prepare for inclusion. Then more schools (at least 3-5) will be covered in accordance to the availability of fund.
v. A number of interested schools may form a Continuous School Improvement Forum (CSIF) and be connected by a web network/internet for experience sharing and caring to mobilize a popular movement for quality education using Banglazan.
vi. The purpose of the quality class and out of class management exercise is to provide a high-impact activity from which the teaching staff and students along with the SMC with the blessing of local education authority can learn by using various quality methods in an actual problem-solving situation.
vii. Establish effective communication with practicing CSIPs schools in abroad.
viii. Establish effective communication with the line ministry, National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB), Institute of Education and Research (IER), NAEM, and related Implementing Projects and Institutions to make use of their experience.
ix. Arrangement of series of actions oriented training workshops (with close mentoring) conducted by Certified TQM Facilitators of JICA from different Partner Organisations.
x. These opportunities include action research conducted by a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) with technical assistance from in and outside of the country.

As a whole, the continuous improvement process focuses on improvement of performance by constantly studying, learning, and changing.

The summary of the process is highlighted below

Table-2
The Summary of the Process

Participants/ Mentors	• The Chair/vice chair of School Management Committee including Head Teachers, Computer and other teachers. In addition to Teachers Upazila Secondary Education Officer and other related officers will also be participants in the training course. • Develop some mentors among faculties and teachers of RDA Laboratory School and College. Some mentors will be chosen from the Schools/Education related officials.
Preparation	• Course Management will prepare a list of schools for inclusion in the training course and making action plan. Priority will be given to those Schools who are lack behind in quality education compared to other schools. • Course Management will send letters to Upazila Secondary Education Officer and District Education Officer as well. They will be asked for nomination of the Participants and schools.
Training programs	• Training courses will be arranged for three days and after training mentors will be selected.

	• At first Venue for organising training programs will be at RDA, Bogra and other suitable places will be find out for organising training courses. • Assignment of mentors will be defined with the mentees.
Implementation	• Implementation of Action Plan will be followed in the next three months after the training course. The action research may undertake for six academic years.
UCSIC(Upazila Continuous School Improvement Convention).	• After Training courses and implementation of Action Plan **UCSIC (Upazila Continuous School ImprovementConvention)**will be arranged for one day at every Upazila. SMC, Teachers of different Schools will be invited to see the presentations of participating Schools. As a result, other Schools will be inspired to be involved in the Continuous School Improvement Process. DC, UNO, Education Officials and public representatives will also be invited.

Follow-up activities	*Mentors to visit offices of the mentees* • *Mentor will discuss work related problems with mentees and share the idea.* • *Mentor will ask mentees to consider their problems on these 3/4 criterion:* ✓ *They can solve by themselves easily* ✓ *Not too much cost involvement* ✓ *Students will be benefited* ✓ *Mentor will prepare the team for UCSIC (Upazila Continuous School Improvement Convention).*

Conclusion and Comments

Pedagogy needs to be explored through the thinking and practice of those educators who look to accompany learners; care for and about them; and bring learning into life. Teaching is just one aspect of their practice. He also looks to some of the issues facing the development of pedagogical thinking. Keeping this point of view RDA, Bogra tried to undertake a project on Continuous School Improvement involving teachers and SMC of surrounding schools, and it organised training programmes and refreshers course for them. After getting training, every group prepared its action plan and made commitment to implement plan-wise activities in their respective school. RDA, Bogra was trying to maintain follow-up activities and create linkage with the trained teachers. In the refresher course at RDA it was found that there had been continuing commendable progress in quality education in every trained school following continuous school improvement plan developed at RDA. But after a period of time RDA could not maintain follow-up activities with those schools due to shortage of fund or any other supports from any other corner. RDA Laboratory School & College tried to continue various development efforts for continuous improvement because it's closely attached to faculties of RDA, Bogra. So, it is obvious that close supervision and monitoring are needed for further development of any school.

Improvement is not an endless process; it is to be continued through imparting in continuous activities by the teachers, students and also by the supervisors. Faculties of Social Sciences Division of RDA intend to work further if any supports come from outside agencies. As a result, RDA Lab School & College along with other schools surrounded at Bogra District would be benefitted through this continuous school improvement process. Obviously it is not possible for RDA to continue this activity with its own capacity in respect of both human and financial resources. So, support/joint collaboration is needed for continuous improvement in the schools.

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Appendix-I

Course contents covered in the training course

Every 3-days training course covered following contents in discussion and practices:

Day 01

- Opening Session : Introduction and Objectives of the Course
- Ice Breaking and Expectations
- TQM Basic and Continuous School Improvement using Kaizen Activities
- Guideline for Kaizen Plan
- Areas for School Improvement Plan: Brain Writing
- (Workshop : Identification & Presentation)
- Matrix Diagram

Day 02

- Discussion Recapitulation of day-One
- Fishbone Diagram and Service/Task Monitoring Chart
- Service/Task Monitoring Chart and Gantt Chart
- Use of computer software in school management
- Preparation of School Improvement Plan (By the Participants)

Day 03

- Finalisation of School Improvement Plan (by the Participants)
- Feedback and Closing

In every course, every school was involved in preparation of action plan after getting orientation of school improvement plan. Every group selected new Kaizen Theme to implement in their respective school.

Appendix-II

Presented Action Plan by the Participants

1. One presentation of based on the Theme on "Irregular attendance of the Students".

Identification of the Problems

Primary factor	Tertiary factor
Students problems	Tendencies to be absent by the students
	Irregular in class
	Dropout
	Afraid of Teachers
Methods	lack of lesson plan
	Less use of education materials
Teachers Problems	lack of punctuality of the teachers
	Tendency of Casual Leave (CL)

	Political engagement of the teachers
	Lack of well Educated English and math Teachers
	lack of unity among the teachers
	Lack of interest on teaching and learning new things
Guardians Problems	Lack of interest on education
	Illiterate Guardian
	Lack of Communication with teachers
	Poverty of the students' families
Problems of SMC	Insufficient literate members in the SMC
	Lack of good relation among the Teachers and HT
	Political Influence
	Personal Business of the teachers
	Appointment of the Teachers through donation.
Others problems	Gander inequity
	Lack of Accommodation facilities
	Insufficient Toilet facilities

Prioritization of Problems

Item	Importance	Easiness	Cost effectiveness	Total
Tendencies to be absent by the students	5	5	5	15
Dropout	4	3	5	12
Afraid of Teachers	3	4	5	12
Lack of lesson plan	5	4	5	14
Less use of education materials	4	4	4	12
Lack of Punctuality in the class by the Teachers	5	5	5	15
Tendency of Casual Leave (CL)	4	4	5	13
Political engagement of the teachers	1	4	5	10
Lack of well-educated English and math Teachers	5	1	2	8
Lack of interest on teaching and learning new things (Teachers)	3	2	2	7
Lack of Communication between the teachers and students	5	3	2	10
Poverty of students' families	2	1	1	4
Insufficient literate members in the SMC	4	1	3	8
Lack of good relationshipamong Teachers and HT	4	4	4	12
Personal Business of the teachers hampers class	2	3	2	7
Appointment of Teachers through donation	1	1	2	4
Gender inequity	3	2	3	8
Lack of accommodation facilities	4	2	2	8

5W1H	Cause-1 Irregular attendance of the Students	Cause-2 Lack of Lesson Plan	Cause-3 Puctuality of Teachers
Where isthis problems?	Students	Teachers	Teachers

Why,Why and Why its a Problem	Lack of proper guidance and intention.	Lack of desire by the teacher and punctuality in the school	Lack of Responsiblity
What will do?what should we do? Action Plan and measurement.	We can arrange meeting in every after three months. Motivation process in the class.	Monitoring in the class.	Attendence monitoring.
Who is Responsible for this Action?	HeadTeacher (HT) and Class Teacher (CT)	HT and SMC	HT and SMC
When you will take step for Resolved?	Beginning of the Year and every three months	Throughout the Year	In weekly meeting
How much cost?	Few	Few	Few

The group prepared a Gantt Chart for problem-1 which is irregular attendance by the students. To overcome this problem following activities with formats have been considered.

Activities	Gantt Chart for Absenteeism											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Meeting with parents												
Work distribution												
Personal Contact												
Advice in the Daily assembly												
Monitoring to Attractive Teaching												

Task Monitoring Chart

Sl	Steps	Present Situation	Desired Situation	Monitoring Item	Person Responsible	Supervisor	Time Table
Ensure regular attendance							
1	Students Brigade	70%	85%	Students Group in area basis	HT and Class Teacher	Head Teacher	Daily Assembly
2	Parents meeting	One time in February	Yearly 3 times	By Register	Sub-committee	Head Teacher	3.00 PM
3	Home visit	2 times in yearly	6 times \year	By visiting diary	Teachers Sub Committee	Head Teacher	Last week
4	Personal Contact	3 times	6 times	By Register	Teachers Staff	Head Teacher	Leisure
5	Stipend for brilliant poor students.	50%	80%	By Register	SMC and Head teacher	SMC Chair	After Exam

2. Improvement in RDA Lab School and College

First of all, teachers of RDA Lab School and College came to the agreement to indicate 'Teaching Learning Method is not up to the mark'- as the most important problem behind ensuring quality education in their school. Then they divide the problem into primary, secondary and tertiary factors as follows:

Factors behind the problem

	Primary factor	Secondary factor	Tertiary factor
Teaching Learning Method is not up to the mark	MONITORING	Monitoring and evaluation	Lack of proper supervision and monitoring
			conducting classes with no or less preparation
			Teachers are not concerned to ensure attendance of all the students
	MANAGEMENT	Management and supervision	Teachers' don't prepare Lesson Plan
			They don't use necessary teaching aids
			Teachers are not selected as their background subject
	TRAINING	Human Resource	Lack of Trained Teachers
			Lack of Personal support
			Lack of sharing experiences among the teachers
			Lack of enthusiasm of teachers to learn
	CO-CURRICULAM	Co-curricular activities	Teachers are not cultural minded
			Teachers have lacking on drawing skills
			Limitation of out of subject knowledge of teachers

Teachers who participated in the training program shared their experience and their commitment to their fellow colleagues and they started to act as a team. After the experiment period it was found that they were successful to achieve their target enough.

They achieved success in following areas:

- Teacher absenteeism reduced, and they were more motivated to improve their teaching-learning process.
- School authority arranged some training programs to make teachers' more confident and to orient them with changes in curriculum and evaluation methods.
- Regular monitoring of teaching-learning activities, teachers found their problems and tried to fix those.
- Different club activities (e.g: Debating club, Swimming club, Language club, Science club, etc.) as part of co-curricular activities encouraged students to be more attentive in classes.

Finally, students of RDA laboratory school and college have been doing well in public examinations.

Appendix-III

Orientation and Refreshers Course

Continuous School Improvement in Rural Areas using Total Quality Management Tools in the Light of Pedagogy

List of Participating Schools

SL	Name of the School	Upazila
1.	SherpurTown Colony High School	Sherpur
2.	Dhankundi Shahnaz Siraj High School	Sherpur
3.	RDA Laboratory School & College	Sherpur
4.	Poalgachha High School	Shahjahanpur
5.	Chanchaitara High School	Shahjahanpur
6.	Foyzullah High School	Bogra Sadar
7.	Noongola High School	Bogra Sadar
8.	Chhoy Pukuria High School	Bogra Sadar
9.	Yousuf Uddin High School	Mirjapur, Sherpur, Bogra
10.	Manik Chak High School	Bogra Sadar
11.	Fapore High School	Bogra Sadar
12.	Matidali High School	Bogra Sadar
13.	Gokul Toslim Uddin High School	Bogra Sadar