

[DRAFT]

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Ghanshyam Kapoor
Retd. Principal
GSSS Katrain, Kullu
Himachal Pradesh

Email id: kapoorghanshyam@gmail.com

Abstracts

The key goal of a school head is to ensure that effective learning happens for every child, every day in every classroom. The management of teaching and learning process is not enough; there is a need to lead the teaching and learning. The school head spend more time on continuous professional development of teachers, conducted lesson observations and learning rounds as effective tools for bringing improvement in teaching and learning. For leading teaching-learning process, encouraged teachers to ask higher order and reflective questions in classrooms and encourage students to ask questions in the classroom. The school team also identified stakeholders and partners with a view of building effective school-community relations.

I really don't know what to do with this topic

After putting in 17 years of service as a teacher, I got promoted as a school Principal in 2003. Although I underwent many pieces of training after assuming the responsibility as a school head the training under the school leadership programme made a significant impact on my working. My experience under the SLDP started in November 2012 when a five days workshop under the aegis of 'Save the Children' was organized by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan at Shimla. To me, it was first of its kind; it made us realize the role of a school head in shaping the teaching and learning environment in a school. While back in my district, I shared my experiences with the Deputy Director of Higher Education who further provided me an opportunity to share the workshop experiences with all the heads of schools in a district level meeting. Shortly, in January 2013, I was nominated for 45 days overseas training on school leadership in the University of Edinburgh. This training further deepened my understanding of the various issues of school leadership. On my return, I shared my experiences with my staff and then with the students in a span of one week. I also got an opportunity to share my experiences and key issues for quality improvement in schools with the Centre Head Teachers of my educational block.



[DRAFT]

Sharing of overseas training experiences with the teachers and the students

This experience was also shared with the heads of schools of my district. The School Leadership programme received further impetus in Kullu when Sh. Rakesh Kanwar, the former State Project Director SSA took over the charge of Deputy Commissioner. With the active support and guidance of the Deputy Commissioner and keen interest of the Deputy Director of Higher Education, this district progressed further in the capacity building programme under the SLDP since August 2013. A District Resource Group was formed to steer the programme and first phase training of all the principals and headmaster was held in October 2013 and 38 clusters consisting of Senior, Higher and Elementary schools were formed with the aim to review and share the experiences and resolve the challenges and problems at local level.

The opportunity to work as a facilitator at state level workshops held at Shimla and Dharamshala in November and December 2013 further sharpened my understanding of leadership and enhanced my commitment to school transformation. The 10 days' state-level workshop on leadership organized at Kullu in July 2014 with the partnership of NUEPA helped me understand more deeply the tools of lesson observation and learning round and also made me focus on developing self. I relished each and every training on leadership with more flavor and energy.

All my learning's of the school leadership programme can be summed up in the following points:

The key goal of a school head is to ensure that effective learning happens for every child, every day in every classroom.

1. The management of teaching and learning process is not enough; there is a need to lead the teaching and learning.
2. The school heads need to spend more time with the teachers and the students instead of working in the office.
3. The transformation requires focusing on the continuous professional development of school staff.
4. Lesson observation and Learning Round are the most important tools for bringing improvement in teaching and learning.
5. For effective teaching and learning, asking higher order and reflective questions in classrooms and encouraging the students to ask questions in the classroom could contribute a lot to the improvement of the quality of education.
6. Identification of stakeholders and partnership with them is another key area to create a conducive environment for the holistic development of children.

This capacity building training under SLDP made us focus on teaching and learning. The real challenge lies in the translation and adaptation of best practices and ideas into real situations in schools. The great challenge, I realized, lies in the transformation in our own attitude, behavior, and style of functioning. Even after understanding the various aspects and dimensions of school leadership, we more often fall prey to our traditional way of working which impedes our efforts in the direction of reforms. Nevertheless, the continuous engagement in the intended quality reform programme at school has been gradually bringing

[DRAFT]

transformation and sometimes a small change gives us immense pleasure and excitement to work more vigorously.

Impact of leadership programme in transforming the teaching-learning ambiance in GSSS Katrain:

The school has been making earnest efforts for the development of pupils in terms of their scholastic achievements. Some of the important steps taken in this direction are as under:

1. Shift in the priorities in school development plan: Before this leadership programme, we used to set physical development of the school in the highest priority but now we set academic improvement on our top priority.

2. Setting of Long term goal (vision): The school has set “Holistic development of every child in a fearless, caring and child-centered learning environment” as its long-term goal and is all set to achieve it.

3. Shift in SMC meeting agenda: In the monthly meetings of SMC, discussion on learning and teaching consumes a major portion of the time since the advent of SLDP. The school in particular is ensuring the sharing of students’ progress with the parents. The achievements of pupils in every monthly and terminal test are discussed and analyzed in all the SMC meetings.

4. Diagnostics of weak students through basic literacy and numeracy assessment using ASER tools. Since the learning of every student has become our major concern, the school conducted basic literacy and numeracy assessment tests in May 2014 and 2015 and conducted effective remedial classes for weak students. We conducted a similar assessment after the remedy and found 12 to 20 percent improvement.

5. Cluster level and School level workshops of teachers: Since the success in implementation of quality improvement programme depends upon the persons involved in teaching the children, their continuous growth and exposure to the new ideas, policies, and programming simple us to hold regular workshops on various issues. However, we started holding workshops at school levels on important issues such as lesson plan, Bloom's taxonomy, SWOT analysis, Higher Order and lower order questions and assessment since 2013 but subject teachers’ workshops at cluster level started in 2015.



Cluster level and school level workshops of teachers

[DRAFT]

Regular meetings of school heads at cluster level: The innovative steps taken for qualitative improvement in teaching and learning are shared with all the 17 heads of schools in monthly meetings. Cluster meetings are held in different schools in rotation and agenda items of meetings are circulated before the meeting. The proceedings of meetings are recorded and communicated to all the cluster schools. The cluster-level teacher's workshops, result analysis and common schedule of terminal examinations are the brainchild of these regular meetings.



Cluster level meetings of school heads



7. Steps to promote per learning: In order to enhance the learning outcome, the seating arrangement in most of the class rooms has been made conducive for group activities and peer learning. The groups are formed carefully ensuring that each group consists of pupils of different learning levels. We observed that only seating pattern was not enough, we started conducting leadership workshops of group leaders.

8. Regular career counseling of students: The special career counseling sessions are conducted for the students from 10th to plus two standard and their parents are also involved to see the career options for their children. We also engage the professionals for effective counseling.



Career counseling session in progress

9. Learning Round: We consider learning round an important tool for bringing improvement in teaching and learning. However, we could conduct only a few learning round but there is always need of such rounds after regular intervals.

[DRAFT]

10. Target Setting: This is one of the innovative steps taken in the school to motivate the students to enhance their achievement level by setting targets. In a similar manner, teachers are also required to set their targets to enhance the performance of students. Special counseling sessions are organized at the beginning of the academic session.

11. Specially designed multipurpose hall exclusively for training and teaching: As a result of leadership training, we realized a need to have a multipurpose hall in the school for holding school level workshops of teachers and also to serve the purpose of the smart classroom with audiovisual aids. Our dream came true with the help of Zila Parishad and district administration. So far the facilities in the hall have been utilized to the optimum.

12. Regular interactions with students' groups: We regularly hold meetings with different groups of students such as toppers, class leaders, group leaders, captains and vice-captains of Houses to keep them active and excel in their roles and responsibilities. The students have become more accountable and confident as a result of these interactions.

Although my journey as a school head ended with my retirement on superannuation on 31st January 2018 my association with the programme is still alive. I have been taking part as a facilitator in the SLDP workshops in different parts of the state and sharing my experiences with the school heads. I am also associated with the DIET and a few clusters and schools of my district.