

Schools Now! Teaching, Learning and Life Beyond School

Proposal in Response to Call for Papers

Title: A quest for reading to improve teaching and learning

Conference sub theme: Teaching - In-service teacher training

Programme abstract (67 words out of 75 maximum)

Teachers must use their knowledge and perspectives to be reflective practitioners, continuously questioning and improving their practices. Generation's School introduced book clubs to engage teachers and increase their literacy and awareness. This paper explores the planning and execution of this initiative and its effects. Organizing and participating in book clubs was found to develop positive reading attitudes in teachers, and greater engagement, hence improving teaching and learning.

Longer Summary: (281 words out of 300 maximum) Generations' School has a rich reading environment. It boasts a comprehensive framework for literacy development for students and professional development for teachers (appendix1). However, survey (Appendix2) results showed teachers rarely read anything beyond what was needed for school purposes. Most teachers are driven to work hard and reading for pleasure is a luxury they could not afford. According to Pressley et al, (2007, p.420), *'teachers who have a passion to read, motivate their students to read and discuss books often'*.

This inspired us to form a teachers' book club in the space provided for in-service professional development. It was a bold move to initiate book clubs in a school housed in a society with a low literacy rate, but the school's leadership persevered. The sustained positive interaction with reading has proved to be a pleasurable learning experience for teachers and a powerful and fresh approach to professional development. Soon, tangible results began to surface as the culture changed subtly. The works of well-known authors were being shared and the subscription of magazines rose. Staff rooms were abuzz with professional discourse about books. Several of motivated teachers spent money on novels for the first time—a tipping point!

To overcome a shortage of books, the team created private book shelf. The teachers provided books for borrowing and reading. Moreover, teachers are now giving their students choices in reading and are favoring discussions and cooperative learning as opposed to skill-based instruction.

Indeed, the success of the book clubs has given the management grounds to establish the same programme for parents. The implications are clear; our students can be avid readers with guided reading experiences planned by motivated teachers who enjoy reading and discussions.

Biographic data: Ms.Ghazala Sajjad, an experienced educator is the Lead **Coordinator Curriculum and Professional Development**, at Generations School Karachi. G.sajjad@generations.edu.pk.