Impact of Examination System on Teaching Styles of Teachers at Secondary and Higher Secondary Classes

BY

Prof. Dr. Munawar Mirza
Miss Munaza Nosheen
Mr. Nasir Mahmood

Institute of Education and Research
University of the Punjab, Lahore

Funded by
Asian Development Bank

Through
Teacher Training Project, Government of Punjab

1999
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Secondary School Examination is the first countrywide public examination conducted at the completion of Matriculation, grade 10th, and enables the successful candidates to enter the job market or get admission to higher education. The second large scale public examination is conducted after 12 years of schooling and is called Higher Secondary School Examination. Both the examinations are conducted by the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education. The number of BISE’s is eight in Punjab.

Another stream of curriculum, almost at parallel grade levels, offered in selected private schools, is evaluated through public examination conducted by the University of London Examinations known as O’ level (Ordinary level) examination.

Our examination system has been criticized for many of its weaknesses including the quality of assessment and the conduct of examinations. The present government is taking drastic measures to eliminate or at least to minimize the malpractices in the conduct of examinations. But, the nature and quality of assessment, criticized for its partial content coverage, and assessing basically rote memorization of candidates still awaits to be addressed. It is also widely assumed that the impact of examination system infiltrates to the classroom teaching learning situations.

The present study has been designed to analyze the nature of assessment in Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations and its relevance to the teaching methods and styles. Comparisons, at each aspect, have been made with the Ordinary Level (O’ level) examination.

Comparisons of the two systems were made to identify the differences in the quality of assessment made through the two types of examinations and to determine their differential impact on the classroom teaching styles and methods. The findings of the study will go a long way not only in revamping the quality of educational assessment but also in improving the classroom practices to ultimately help in achieving the objective of producing human resources capable of thinking, analyzing, reflecting, and solving the situations and problems faced by them in the society as a whole and as individuals.

Sample of the Study

The study encompassed five compulsory and one elective subject. The examination papers for the six subjects for the last five years, 1993-97, for group A and B, were collected from the selected four BISE’s. The total number of papers was 640 with the number of items exceeding 10,000. The sample included 12 content and measurement experts, 81 paper setters, 237 examiners; and 638 teachers and their classrooms selected from 134 schools of eight districts, two within the jurisdiction of each Board. The detail of sample is given in the main text of the study.

Instruments

The study being a complex and multidimensional required at least eighteen different instruments including questionnaires, observation schedules and checklists as given below.

- Checklists for experts in content and measurement.
- Ten Questionnaires.
  - One for paper setters
  - One for examiners
Examination Papers

11. Theory papers of all subjects in SSE and HSSE level have two parts: Part I consisting of only objective type items having a weightage of about 20-25% of the total paper and the second part consists of Essay Type questions, generally the extended essay type. In the recent years some shift towards short/restricted essay type items has taken place. Short essay type items constitute parts of a main question. Other than objective part, the number of essay type items to be attempted by a candidate ranged from 3 - 7 in various subjects. With the recent changes of introducing restricted essay type items the number ranged from 4 to 12.

12. All the papers of O' level have short essay type questions spreading over the whole syllabus. The number of items (sub-items) varies from 12 to 30 in different subjects.

13. Generally the sub-items of an item, at Secondary/Higher Secondary, have neither any relationship with each other nor are they related to the same topic. The sub-items are independent short essay type items. At O' level the sub-items are related to the main question and every sub-item develops on the previous one arranged from easy to difficult in a hierarchy of cognitive levels. The O' level questions assess the cognitive skills as outlined in the curriculum.

14. The pattern of examination with high degree of choice in the items to be attempted at SSE and HSSE level encourage selective study in all subjects. The highly predictable number of chapters to be included in the examination and sufficient for a student to qualify the examination with good grades is as given below:

- Physics: 1/3rd in matriculation and fifty percent at intermediate level
- Mathematics: Approximately 60% of the chapters in SSE as well as in HSSE.
- Other subjects: A choice of 100% to 300% in certain types of items again encourage selective study.

15. At the O' level no choice in items to be attempted is given in the papers of Physics, Mathematics, and English. In the English paper option is given only in one item requiring extended composition. In the other three papers i.e. Pakistan Studies, Urdu, and Islamiat, the pattern of choice is similar to the SSE/HSSE papers. The nature of items as mentioned earlier is, however, related to the three/four cognitive levels. The items are distributed with 40% knowledge, 40% understanding and 20% application requiring abilities.

Teaching Styles and Methods

16. The study clearly shows that the examination system has an impact on the teaching styles and methods.

17. The teachers at O' level have better classroom environment and teaching styles with characteristics of better communication and presentation, better time utilization, and high student participation.

18. The teachers of secondary and higher secondary classes were mostly using Lecture method and Recitation of the textbook by the teacher. Student participatory methods did not take a significant place in these classrooms. For teaching English our teachers used the grammar-translation method in combination with the audio-lingual method.

19. The teachers of secondary and higher secondary classes were using almost the similar methods.
20. The teachers of O’ level realized that their students are required to demonstrate understanding and application of the knowledge. Therefore, they generally used student-centered techniques and methods. Discussion, Question-answer, and Observation were the most frequently used methods. They used Deductive method for teaching Mathematics. Laboratory method was also used as needed. For the teaching of English, the teachers used the Direct Method alongwith the Language Experience and the Discussion Method.

**Recommendations**

Following recommendations are made to revamp the examination system at secondary and higher secondary levels, particularly with reference to its intrinsic qualities.

1. Detailed curriculum and syllabus of each subject should be developed with topic-specific objectives. The objectives should be stated in a manner to clearly describe the cognitive skills/processes required to be demonstrated by the students at the completion of a topic and in the examination.

2. Presently, the objectives of secondary and higher secondary class courses are vague but, a critical review shows that they are mostly related to knowledge level ranging from 2/3rd to 4/5th in various subjects. The emphasis should be shifted to comprehension/assimilation, application, and analysis. After specifying the weightage for various cognitive levels, the objectives should be stated clearly.

3. The curriculum and syllabi should be made available to the teachers and the students. The same should be given to the paper setters and examiners.

4. More than one books should be made available for use as textbooks for each subject. The Textbook Board should encourage people to write different books for each subject.

5. The examination papers should be set according to the revised curriculum outlines as suggested above.

6. Paper setters should be given intensive training in test development using the actual materials i.e., curriculum outlines, objectives, textbooks and other materials. Such training workshops can be conducted with the collaboration of personnel from IER’s.

7. Presently one/two paper setters set one subject paper. It will be better to constitute teams of experts in content and educational testing. They may develop item bank for each subject which should remain available with the Boards. However, the item analysis and addition of new items should be a continuous process. Care should be taken that items are not repeated for quite some years.

8. Test items should be evaluated carefully for their validity and reliability.

9. The examiners should also be given training in scoring a paper deviating from the present system of comparing answers to the textbook (measuring memorization and recall). They should be trained to assess for the tasks required in the question. Creative/reflective responses should be awarded.

10. The teams of examiners should mark papers at the Board office. The practice has been started for higher secondary school papers and was observed at Lahore and Gujranwala Boards. In order to standardize the marking and establish inter-scorer and intra-scorer reliability, the examiner teams may prepare ‘Rubric’ answer for each question.
1. Pre-service teacher training programmes should revise courses on teaching methods in order to relate the methods to the desired learning outcomes of students. Intensive field-based teaching practice closely supervised by the teacher-trainers and the best schools should be introduced to give the prospective teachers the real task oriented teaching experience.

12. The pre-service teacher training programmes should also give due emphasis on courses like Educational Measurement/Student Assessment.

13. In order to act as models the Teacher Training institutions should not only teach, in theory, the various methods of teaching and student assessment, they should practice and demonstrate all such methods.

14. Teachers should be encouraged to use a variety of questions and methods for the classroom learning assessment.

15. In-service training should be designed for the reorientation of the teachers with the student-centered and task/process-centered approaches of teaching. They need further training in test development. This would help the teachers in using different types of items for the classroom/formative assessment of students.
how teachers teach and students learn, and can have an impact on both teaching and learning. (Rehmani, 2003). Citing Gipps (1994) argument, Rehmani (2003, p. 7) suggests that “the major at secondary and higher secondary in Pakistan levels fail to prepare students for the higher education. Academic competencies and skills required to enroll and sustain in higher education. Rehmani, A. (2003). Impact of public examination system on teaching and learning in Pakistan. ANTRIEP. Newsletter, 8(1), 3-6. Teacher's role: Teachers must use various types of Modern teaching aids to connect with students. Now days, we can find class rooms ith out teachers and just students sitting in class room and a teacher is teaching through online video streaming from some other place. These things are done by the satellite and communication to students is made possible to clear doubts and make them understand. Modern teaching aids incorporate audio-visual techniques like speakers, screens that influence and create the interest and memory of students. Utilizing Modern teaching aids successfully will create