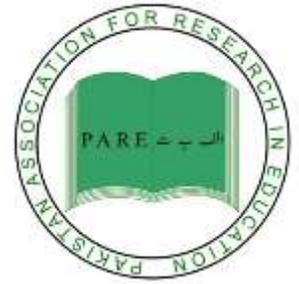


# PARE NEWS

A Quarterly Publication of Pakistan Association for Research in Education



July 2012

Volume 2: 3

## Seminars, Conferences and Events

### **Call for Proposals ICSEI January 3-6 2013 Santiago de Chile**

It is the 26th Annual conference of the International Congress for School. Proposals will be accepted from Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, until midnight (Chilean time) Monday, August 6th 2012. Proposals must be addressed to the conference website. On line button Paper submission will be available from June 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Athens Institute for Education and Research- ATINER (www.atiner.gr) Call for Papers and Participation 15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference Education, 20-23 May 2013, Athens, Greece**

Abstract submission deadline: October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012

For further information

[www.atiner.gr/education.htm](http://www.atiner.gr/education.htm)

### **CCEM Conference 2012 – ‘New trends, new challenges in educational leadership and governance’ 3-7 November, 2012, Grand Resort hotel, Limassol-Cyprus**

For further information:

<http://www.cceam2012.com/index.html>

### **International Joint Conferences, November 8- 10, 2012, in ISTANBUL-TURKEY**

Late submission deadline is August 01, 2012.

For more information: <http://www.beykon.org>

### **5th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation November, 19<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> 2012.Madrid (Spain)**

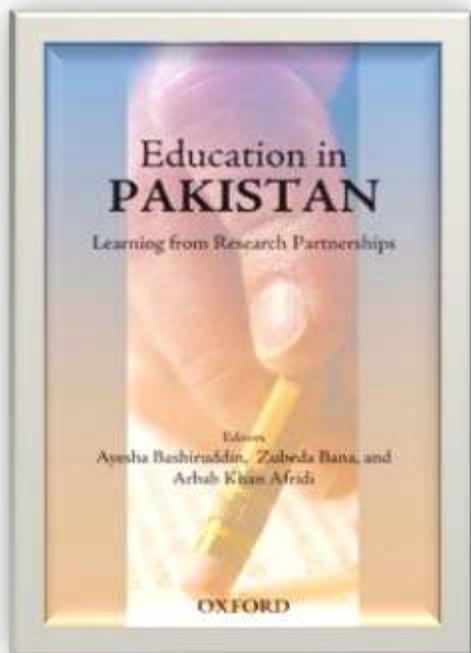
Abstracts submission deadline: July 19th, 2012 you can submit your abstract at [www.iceri2012.org/submit](http://www.iceri2012.org/submit)

For more information: <http://www.iceri2012.org/>

### **AKU-IED's Ninth International Conference | In Search of Relevance and Sustainability in Educational Change | November 1-3, 2012, Karachi, Pakistan Abstract Deadline 25 August**

The upcoming AKU-IED conference theme calls for “search” that indicates a sense of felt gap between “what is” (the current state of affairs) and what can possibly be (the desired or the envisioned state) in education. The themes include: Innovative Pedagogies, Learner and Learning Spaces, Responsive Governance and Management etc. For details:

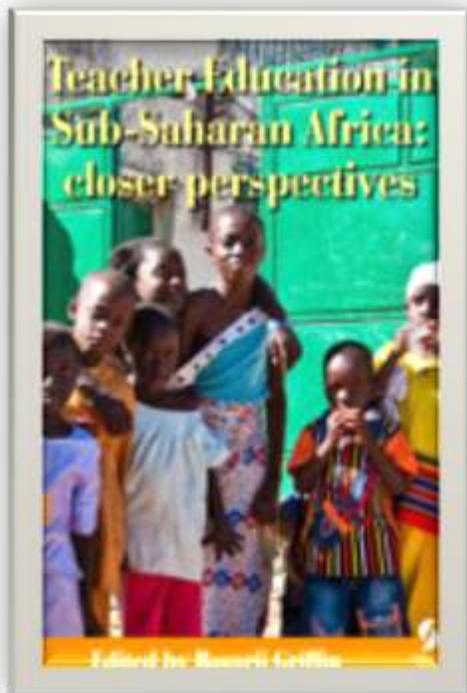
<http://www.aku.edu/aboutaku/newsandevents/iedcon2012/>



### Education in Pakistan: Learning from Research Partnerships, Edited by Ayesha Bashiruddin, Zubeda Bana and Arbab Afridi

This book discusses the partnership between the IER–PU and Oslo University College in the higher education sub-sector. It gives a complete account of the above-mentioned joint research study focusing on teaching, learning, teacher education, educational leadership and management, assessment practices, and whole school improvement initiative.

**Ayesha Bashiruddin** is an Assistant Professor at the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU–IED), with a wide experience of English language education. **Zubeda Bana** is an Assistant Professor at AKU–IED. She has extensive experience of running educational leadership and management programmes within and outside Pakistan. **Arbab Khan Afridi** is an Associate Professor and former Director of the Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar



### Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: closer perspectives, Edited by Rosari Griffin

In the drive to achieve universal primary education as one of the Millennium Development Goals, there is an increasing recognition of the urgency of focusing on teacher education to both meet the demand for more than one million qualified teachers required to achieve this goal within sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to combat the sometimes poor quality educational experience reported in the school. This volume focuses on the various aspects of teacher education which need to be addressed in order for the wider MDGs to be achieved, but more importantly, so that each African child living within sub-Saharan Africa will have the right to a quality education: ensuring they too experience their right and entitlement as children to reach their full potential, giving African children the necessary tools to build a better future for themselves.

## Improving Education Through Large-scale Testing?

### A Study on Primary and Elementary level Exams in Punjab

If quality education is a process of imparting a measure of agreed upon knowledge and a set of skills to children, how are we to determine that such a process is indeed in place? In recent years large-scale assessments which involve administering valid, reliable and comparable assessments to the entire population of students at a particular grade level have become something of a norm. Notwithstanding this worldwide popularity, however, implanting high quality large-scale assessment remains a complex undertaking with its own set of challenges.



Punjab is the first province in Pakistan to opt for large-scale centralized exams at the levels of Grade 5 and Grade 8. The Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) was established to conduct these exams, and in 2011 administered exams to 2.6 million students. Given the importance of such assessments, there was a clear need to review the exam processes and purposes and purpose. The society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) was commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) to address this requirement through a monitoring study and independent review of the PEC examination

processes. The study reported here entailed intensive data collection involving a review of the design process, observation of exams conduct, re-marking analysis of exams papers and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders to understand data management and interpretation practices. The emerging findings and recommendations, we hope, will provide insights into the nature of the PEC examinations as well as its broader systemic implications.

## Researching Teacher Education, Data Management and Analysis: 2<sup>nd</sup> National Seminar by Pre STEP, July 3-6, 2012 Islamabad



The Session on Researching Teacher Education, Data Management and Analysis: 2<sup>nd</sup> National Seminar was organized by Pre STEP in the month of July 3-6, 2012 Islamabad. Research team from 19 universities across Pakistan participated in the seminar. The seminar had presentation from national and international experts on the issues of data management and analysis both qualitative and quantitative.

## **Governance of Education in Sindh Discussed**

On July 10 the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) in collaboration with the Aga Khan University – Institute for Education Development (AKU-IED) conducted a Policy Dialogue on the subject of ‘Governance of Education in Sindh’ in the context of 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to encourage open communication and constructive debate among stakeholders so that practical and viable solutions maybe forged. Over 120 people including major stakeholders belonging to the field of academics, practitioners working in the field of education and representatives from the Government and media personnel attended the event.



Education experts and policy makers gathered together and discussed measures which could be taken forward for a meaningful transition of power from the federal to the provincial government through the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. Solutions were proposed that can be carried forward to the policy level for broader impact utilizing various instruments like monographs, proposals, media campaigns, permanent dialogue platform etc. to aid the province of Sindh in particular and other provinces in general in dealing with this paradigm shift. The panelists included eminent scholars: Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Dean and Director IBA, Mr. Javed Hasan Ali, Former Secretary Establishment Division, Dr. Kaiser Bengali, Applied Economic Research Center, University of Karachi, Mr. Parvez Sehar, Chief Program Manager Reform Support Unit, Mr. Abdul Wahid Oqaily, MD Sindh Technical Education and Vocation Training Authority, Mr. Ehsan Rabbani, Chief Executive Office, i-Care Foundation, Capt. (R) Dr. U.A.G.

Isani, Vice Chancellor Iqra University, Dr. Mohammad Memon, Director AKU-IED, Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali, MD SEF, Dr. Javed Leghari, Chairperson HEC.

## **Kazim Bacchus Research Seminar**

### **Researching Educational Issues: Experiences of Graduate Students**



The Aga Khan University Institute for educational development had organized Kazim Bacchus research seminar on Friday, June 22, 2012 at 2:30 to 5:00 in AKU-IED Multipurpose Hall, which was open to the public. The seminar had showcased several poster presentations by graduate students of AKU-IED. In the beginning the chief guest Dr. Sadruddin Pardhan, CEO AKESP describes the scholarly contributions of Dr. Kazim Bacchus. Fruitful discussion on the importance of educational research followed.

### **Students' views of impact of textbooks on their achievements**

*By: Riaz Hussain,*

The history of curricula and textbook development in Pakistan has remained contentious particularly during Zia Ul Haq era (1977- 1988) and after. There have been quite a few reviews of the curricula and textbooks undertaken both by Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan and independent researchers. These reviews have mainly employed document/textbook analysis methods and few of them explored teachers or students' views of curricula and textbooks. I argue that since teachers and students are the ultimate users and beneficiaries of textbooks so their views are worth exploring before suggesting or initiating any change process including curricula and textbooks reforms. To fill this gap, therefore, this study explored secondary school students' views of impacts different textbooks had on their achievements. Using a prospective causal comparative research design, data were collected through a questionnaire from a conveniently selected sample of 112 secondary school students of Karachi. The sample consisted of 39 students, all male, using Oxford University Press textbooks and 73 students, 33 male and 40 female, using Sindh Textbook Board textbooks. The data were analysed and chi-square test was applied to test the hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The analysis of data indicated that OUP textbooks have more impact for the achievement of students than STB textbooks. Based on these findings, this paper suggests reforms in the curricula and textbooks in order to enhance their impact for students' achievements.

### **Identity construction of teachers of English in Pakistan**

*By: Ayesha Bashiruddin*

The study narrates the way four teachers (Rabia, Aameena, Mehnaz and Nabila<sup>1</sup>) develop their identities in diverse school contexts of Karachi, Pakistan. The purpose of this study was to understand the English teachers' identities with special reference to professional (knowledge, skill and attitude in learning process), social (communal, situated or co-identity) and pedagogical (personal way of teaching in classroom) aspects and see its relationship with their teaching practices. For constructing their identities narrative inquiry was employed which promotes subjective understanding and meaning making unique to each individual. The research has highlighted the powerful influence of context on construction of identities of teachers of English. The teachers' identities have developed over time and are located in a given social and cultural space (Caldron & Smith, 1999; Sachs, 2001). They are dependent on how teachers view themselves within their respective contexts in which they teach and live out their narratives. This study underlines the need to re-look at the ways the teachers can develop their identities in various ways. There should be a professional development model which is ongoing and should address the needs of teachers according to the contexts in which they construct their identity and enact it in their classrooms.

## **Tracing spaces of knower's autonomy for knowledge construction in International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum**

*By: Raheel Tajuddin Lakhani*

Autonomy is readiness, which entails both capacity and willingness, to take charge of one's learning and lies at heart of student-centred learning. The research focuses on envisaged, perceived and enacted roles and meaning of autonomy of the knower in context of Theory of Knowledge course of IB Diploma Programme. It also explores the ways in which the autonomy of the knower reflects in the process of knowledge construction through interplay between curricular spaces such as course content, pedagogy and assessments. Qualitative case study approach was employed to gain the perception and experiences of knowers. Document analysis, observations, semi-structured interviews and personal portrayals were used as data collection methods.

The findings of the research suggest that the learner holds central position as a 'knower' in the learning processes. The data gathered in the study gives indications that the meaning and scope of autonomy is defined by its context. The findings show that students are developing autonomy as they are becoming more competent in the art of critical thinking and reflection. Students are also demonstrating the key attributes such as inquisitiveness, resourcefulness, motivation and sustained interest for learning. Curriculum content, pedagogy and assessments foster autonomy of knowers by providing them necessary knowledge and skills. Consequently, each proposes some challenges to knower such societal and academic pressure related to questioning, less-directive instructions and limited spaces for creative expression.

The results also indicate that knowers do not prefer development of autonomy as an independent sport because interdependency is highly valued in their cultural/social context. Such nature of autonomy also creates implications on the interplay between freedom and control in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the

research recommends that autonomy should be supported by scaffolding through a guided inquiry, communication of role changes and discussions following the independent task to improve their autonomous learning.

## **Exploring the contribution of teaching and learning processes to the construction of students' gender identity in early years' classroom of two government primary schools in Karachi Pakistan**

*By: Amina Baig*

The construction of gender identity is a complex process which begins at very early formative age. In the formative years, children begin making sense of how men and women are positioned in society. Schools as important institutions play an important role in this process particularly with reference to students' understanding of gender relationship around them. The present study explored how gender identity construction takes place in single sex classroom for early years. Qualitative research guided the study design which was conducted in two public sectors single sex schools (one for girls and one for boys) in Karachi, Pakistan.

The data was collected through observations of the teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, focused group discussion with children from both the schools and semi-structured interviews with the teachers (male and female teacher). The study found that the teaching and learning is gendered in single sex settings of a school as gender messages are passed on to the students which play an important role in the gender identity construction of these children. The study indicated that the teachers' personal experiences greatly influence their perceptions regarding gender identities. There was also evidence that teacher has different expectations of girls and boys. Another important finding highlighted that children brought certain perceptions from home which contributed to the gender discourse in the context of a school. These children believed that they were different from each other because of being boys or girls and that they had different roles and

responsibilities. Schools were, hence, found promoting those stereotypes regarding gender roles and responsibilities in a social context. All the participants were found to have views and practices around gender positioning which was approved by the larger society.

The findings of the study emphasize on the importance of gender awareness among the teachers in order to provide an equitable learning environment for the students. The research has significance for teachers, teacher educators and school management who wish to promote gender sensitive teaching and learning spaces in early year's education.

### **The role of school leadership in facilitating students in the integration of their learning from various learning spaces in a private higher secondary school in Karachi, Pakistan**

*By: Taj-ul-Muluk*

This study aims to explore the role of school leadership in facilitating students in integrating their learning from various learning spaces in a private higher secondary school in Karachi, Pakistan. Traditionally, it is believed that learning takes place only in schools and particularly in classrooms. Educationists and researchers highlight that learning is a social phenomenon and a continuous process which can take place any time at any place and can be integrated in any setting. The study argues that learning can be integrated in school and the result of integration is more powerful. Within the qualitative research paradigm, the case study research methodology was employed as a feasible research method. Data collection was done over a period of eight weeks through conduction of in-depth semi structured interviews with school leadership and discussion with selected focused group of students. Data were also generated through observations, informal discussions and document analysis. The findings of the study suggest that school leadership's role has been momentous in providing opportunities to integrate learning from various learning spaces in a formal setting

through various ways. Leadership has been successful in creating learning spaces beyond routine classrooms for students. These learning spaces help students in the learning process. The study is unique in its nature because this area has been less explored in Pakistan and other developing countries. Moreover, it is the first study of its nature at AKU-IED. The conclusion of the study infers that school leadership can employ diverse activities in classrooms, schools and out of schools to further integrate students' experiential learning. In the case explored in this study, opportunities of learning from various sources were provided. School leadership encouraged students to learn from different learning spaces and resources. School leadership developed a policy to engage students through various activities and for that purpose, a yearly calendar was developed with mentioning events and tentative dates. Various curricular and co-curricular activities have been introduced in three different levels such as classrooms, school and out of school in order to integrate learning in a formal setting. These activities helped students to explore their hidden potentials and enhance leadership skills.

### **Exploring Classroom based assessment strategy to assist reading skills of young learner**

*By: Shaheena Dae*

Teaching reading in the early years is highly emphasized especially in an EFL context like Pakistan; however, its assessment is often neglected. The current study is based on the concept that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and it should facilitate the child's learning. The purpose of this study is to explore classroom-based assessment strategies to assess the reading skills of young children. To serve the purpose of the study, a Collaborative Action Research approach was employed, in which the researcher worked in collaboration with the teacher to apply reading assessment strategies in the classroom. The study comprised three phases starting from the pre-intervention in which the existing assessment practices were explored, then the intervention

phase where different strategies were applied and last was the post- intervention phase in which the teacher assessed the children independently. As a research participant, one English teacher who had at least three years of experience of teaching young children was selected along with four students of 6-7 years as a focused group. The findings of the study confirmed that the assessment strategies 'observation and retelling stories' have potential to assess the reading skills of young children – especially their understanding of reading as a meaning-making process. It was also revealed that these assessment strategies allowed the teacher to monitor students' progress as well as guide her own teaching practice. Moreover, classroom-based assessment was found to be promising in providing a teacher a rich picture of children is reading development by gathering and interpreting the assessment information. However, a teacher's own education of assessment and time pressure hindered the implementation of classroom-based assessment. It is recommended that educational assessment must be included as a part of teacher development programmes so that students' learning could be supported during the course of the teaching learning process through effective use of assessment.

### **Use of calculator in primary mathematics classroom in rural Sindh**

*By: Khatti, Rafique Ahmed*

The study was aimed to investigate how the use of calculator can enrich the teaching of primary mathematics of Grade Four. Moreover, it helped two participant teachers to use calculators to help their students improve their mathematical thinking. The research question 'How can a teachers use calculators in primary mathematics classroom to improve their students' problem solving and mathematical thinking 'was employed to conduct the study in a private school of rural Sindh. A small-scale action research, consisting of pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention, was conducted to explore and understand the possibilities and challenges of using calculator in primary mathematics classrooms. The study lasted for eight weeks. The data was collected through various qualitative

data collection tools such as observation, interview, tape-recording of the discussions and reflections of researcher and participant teachers. The study has identified the factors which facilitate or hinder students' problem solving and thinking process in primary mathematics classroom when calculator is incorporated in primary mathematics. The study reveals the results of the using calculator in teaching primary mathematics, its possible benefits and the expected challenges of incorporating calculator as learning tool in primary mathematics curriculum of Grade Four. This study has significant implications for implementation of the recent National Educational Policy (2009), which puts emphasis on mathematical thinking and problem solving as well as recommends the use of technology in mathematics classrooms

## **Call for Contribution**

PARE newsletter is designed to share latest educational research news, members' achievements, and information about latest research. The newsletter calls for submission under these categories.

The next newsletter will be the October 2012 issue. Please send your contribution by September 15, 2012. The length of submission should not exceed 100 words.

Please submit items to PARE Secretariat by email at [pare.secretariat@aku.edu](mailto:pare.secretariat@aku.edu)

We also welcome your suggestions to improve this publication.