

Once a Teacher Always a Teacher

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I became a teacher right after passing my matriculation examination, from Central High School Quetta. I had to earn and save to pay for my further education. From that moment on till now, I have been a teacher, at one level or another. I taught at a primary school for some months and then joined an English Language Institute as an English instructor. This was in the year 2000, when the trend of English language centers was at its peak. People of all ages, professions and educational backgrounds were my students in this class. I also had Afghan refugees in my class, who only had basic literacy. At the end of one year they were able to communicate quite effectively.

There were many female students in my class. I found that if taught separately from men, these women were communicative and absorbed new knowledge easily. They also scored well at the end of a course. The same women, however, did not perform as well if they were in a co-education classroom. Thus the English language faculty decided as a team to hold separate classes for women. We set aside a time for socializing and for confidence building when the male and female students would interact. We saw that this plan had a positive impact on our students' language acquisition and personality formation.

I was fortunate to be a part of a teaching team that was dynamic and cohesive. I remember that I once talked to my colleagues about how there was a need to enhance English language skills among school teachers, specially public sector teachers. My colleagues took up the idea. Together we prepared a proposal for English classes for

primary and secondary teachers and presented it to the Education Secretary. We put in some effort to follow up on our proposal, and sure enough, we got the approval.

We were able to teach seventy school teachers at our institute, free of cost. We set time aside for newspaper reading practice and for having conversations. This was an add-on of minutes to the sixty minute class. At the end of the course, the Ministry of Education awarded an appreciation certificate to our institution.

I left the Institute to finish my own education and then started to teach O' Level and A' Level students. The difference in their level of understanding and that of students from the public sector is alarming. These students had exposure to the language, their families facilitated their studies and they had been given the space to question and to express their own opinions.

I have taught children, adolescents and adults over the course of my career. I have taught people from all kinds of backgrounds. Whichever level I taught, I knew I was doing something important, teaching people to communicate.

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