



# NOTRE DAME INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Affiliated with University of Karachi

## NEWSLETTER



This issue of the July – December 2021 bi-annual E-newsletter provides coverage of several events held at the institute: Celebration of 30 years of NDIE's service to teacher education; a first-ever Open House; talking to our Associate Degree in Education (ADE) students who secured positions in their University of Karachi annual examination; and, celebrating Christmas onsite. Subsequently, prospective teachers narrate their experiences of finally returning to face-to-face classes after a long pandemic-related hiatus. The next segment provides glimpses of what the prospective teachers engage in during the time-honored institutional custom of Morning Assemblies. Finally, highlights of outreach activities that NDIE accomplished are described which includes collaborating with Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro through week-long committee meetings where NDIE faculty with the requisite expertise reviewed a draft of revised Grade 10 English textbooks developed as per Provincial curriculum 2016.

Dr. Sherwin Rodrigues,  
Director

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# 1 INSTITUTIONAL EVENTS

## From Little Seeds Grow Mighty Trees

Gillian Rodrigues  
Faculty, NDIE

It is not what is poured into the student but what is planted that counts. These famous words of E. P. Bertin remind us of the important mission of teachers. Contrary to the simplistic assumption that teaching is pouring of knowledge into students, Bertin indicates that it is those little seeds that teachers plant that are most significant to students. And it was one such little seed that a certain teacher Ms. D'Cunha planted in the mind of a young girl in her English language class that encouraged this girl to believe in her talent of writing and prompted her never to look back. This young girl as we know today is the extremely inspiring and talented Ms. Zubeida Mustafa.

This teacher's day the Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) invited a guest speaker well known for her magnanimous contributions to education, health care, women's empowerment, children's rights, through the power of her pen to share some thoughts with the prospective teachers of the B.Ed (Hons) programmes. Despite all odds Ms. Mustafa climbed three storeys to spend this teacher's day with the prospective teachers at NDIE. She was eager to hear from these young men and women about what inspired them to choose teaching as a profession and the teacher who inspired them the most. She shared a little anecdote of how she was inspired by her teacher - Ms. D'Cunha - to believe in her potential of writing well. It was the encouraging act of Ms. D'Cunha pinning Zubeida's writing on the board for all to read that made a lasting impact in her decision to become a writer.

Ms. Mustafa reminded the prospective teachers of their privileged career roles. The fact that students remember their teachers' names long after they have been through school and college is indicative of the important social positions that teachers hold. She spoke of the significant responsibility that teachers have in shaping the young impressionable minds of children. She feels that it is necessary to teach children to discern between right and wrong through kindness that can go a long way in developing them as humane individuals. These words of the renowned journalist and author boosted the morale of our teachers and they appeared to radiate with happiness and satisfaction over their choice of profession. She further answered questions of students affirming ideas of teachers needing to assume caring roles in the profession irrespective of their gender. A good teacher as described by Ms. Mustafa helps to awaken a sense of realization in a person. She ended with a thought-provoking idea that feeling defeated after failure is the real failure and that failure is connected to success.

The day's programme continued with a vote of thanks by Dr. Sherwin Rodrigues who thanked Ms. Mustafa for spending this important day with us and for doing so in a manner that was most effective and inspiring. He commented on the importance of the planting of seeds as an important role of good teachers who help us realize our potential and teachers who encourage students to pursue their dreams. He applauded students' efforts for writing and contributing to the newsletter and encouraged them to continue exercising the power of the pen. He thanked Ms. Rabbiya Faridi who was the Head librarian at NDIE and staff who made this programme possible. He concluded with a message that Ms. Zubeida taught us a lot by her words but had inspired us even more by her actions of persevering to be physically present with these young prospective teachers.



The students of B.Ed (Hons) 2021 cohort recited a poem dedicated to all teachers followed by motivational speeches by two class fellows Shigufta and Irsa. As a final token of appreciation for their teachers, the students of B.Ed (Hons) Elementary 2021 presented creatively prepared handmade cards to their teachers and Ms. Mustafa.



# Celebrating 30 Years of Service in Teacher Education

Gillian Rodrigues  
Faculty, NDIE

Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) began its celebration of thirty years of service in teacher education in Pakistan on Saturday October 09, 2021 at the institute. What better way to initiate the festivity than a Eucharistic Celebration of thanksgiving. It is indeed a time of thanksgiving to God Almighty for His infinite blessings on the institute, its people, students and staff to be the change in the education fraternity. The mass was celebrated by His Grace Archbishop Benny Mario Travas, President of the Notre Dame Institute of Education's Board of Governors. The Eucharistic Celebration was attended by members of the Board of Governors, heads of institutes, principals of cooperating schools, friends, well-wishers and staff. The mass commenced with a hymn of thanksgiving sung by the staff choir accompanied by the skillful playing of chords by the ever so talented Mr. William. There was a strong aura of praise and thanksgiving that continued throughout the Eucharistic celebration. Days of untiring efforts put in by all members of the staff culminated in a beautiful symphony of praise and thanksgiving.



Ms. Fozia Gulab - Academic Coordinator of the teacher education programmes offered at NDIE, in her introductory speech - spoke of the beginnings of Notre Dame Institute of Education. It began with the dream of His Excellency Bishop Anthony Lobo, who envisioned a teacher education institute, perhaps the first of its kind, in Pakistan for the development of teachers. He took this dream to the Religious Sisters of Mercy in Australia who came forward to make this dream a reality. It was nothing short of herculean efforts through which Notre Dame Institute of Education was founded on October 1st, 1991. Ms. Gulab artistically used mountaineering as a metaphor for the work we do at NDIE. Different aspects of mountaineering such as light baggage, serenity, appreciating and valuing nature and accomplishment were shown to be analogous to our practices at NDIE. Here we are extremely mindful of the burdens we place on students; we ensure that we give students the right push and not shove so that their light burdens help them reach the summit. We begin with minimal skills and as we ascend the summit we learn, unlearn and relearn to skillfully manoeuvre our way in order to reach the peak thereby developing new skills and learning. On the way up to the summit we begin to appreciate the serene atmosphere and aerial view. This is akin to having an aerial view of our surrounding. This bird's eye view constitutes the multiple perspectives we have of different situations that helps us understand and appreciate each other. These are but some of the skills that NDIE strives to develop in its students besides the academics.





As the Eucharistic celebration progressed the assembly room resonated with the melody of thanksgiving and loud acclamations of praise. His Grace Archbishop Benny began his homily with a note of gratitude for the vision of His Excellency Bishop Anthony Lobo. He voiced the need for quality teacher education not only in Karachi but for the whole of Pakistan and appreciated the services of NDIE in this regard. His Grace compared the services of teacher education to four significant parts of the last supper of Our Lord, i.e., taking bread, blessing it, breaking it and giving it to others. The first action of taking bread is like accepting the vocation of teaching. We accept the responsibilities, the challenges and the unflinching resolution to remain committed to our work. The blessing is similar to the prayers and well wishes that we keep in our heart and mind while seeking the guidance and blessing of Almighty God to keep us strong in nurturing and developing pre-service teachers who come to learn how to teach. Further, the breaking indicates the many times we surmount challenges that often break or wound us. Often it is experiencing these challenges that make us whole again. Through such experiences we discover new aspects about who we are and it is these challenges that strengthen us to become better versions of ourselves. Finally, the action of giving to others is like working for the betterment of others. It is said that it is teaching that creates all other professions. And hence teachers distribute of themselves their skills and knowledge to develop others. Listening to this comparison of His Grace filled each of us at NDIE with a sense of pride in the work we do and bolstered our resolution to continue striving to provide quality teacher education in Pakistan.



The Eucharistic Celebration continued with the intercessions offered by staff members for the Holy Father, His Grace Archbishop Benny, the priests and religious, the institute, its faculty, staff, students, benefactors and well-wishers. This was proceeded by the offertory procession of gifts and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic celebration continued with great fervor and zeal mingled with the melodious singing of the choir.



Prior to the concluding prayer and blessing, the Director of Notre Dame Institute of Education, Dr. Sherwin Rodrigues, gave his vote of thanks. He began by thanking His Grace Archbishop Benny Travas for consenting to celebrate the mass and for bestowing his blessings for the continued success and evolution of NDIE. He then proceeded to thank the guests constituting the principals, heads of institutions and members of the Board of Governors for their unwavering support to NDIE. Last but by no means least he extended his gratitude to NDIE staff who meticulously planned the whole event right down to the minutest detail. After the final blessing the congregation joined in the singing of a mellifluous hymn to Our Lady who is the patron of the institute.





The Eucharistic Celebration was followed by a social gathering in the quadrangle of St. Patrick's High School. The guests followed by staff entered a beautifully adorned canopy all decorated in the theme colours of blue and white corresponding to the colours of the NDIE logo.



Soon after everyone was seated Dr. Sherwin addressed the guests and staff by welcoming and thanking them for participating in this most important milestone for NDIE. He began his address by reiterating the vision of His Excellency Bishop Anthony Lobo and expressing gratitude to the Religious Sisters of Mercy for their phenomenal efforts in transforming this dream to a reality. He proceeded to share that the day's gathering was one of the several occasions that the institute will hold as part of its yearlong celebration as a one off event would not do justice to showcase the cumulative achievements of the institute. The evening's gathering in fact was intended as thanksgiving for the achievement of this important milestone. In the same vein he thanked the scores of key players along this journey.







The audience then viewed a montage showcasing the achievements and work that is done at NDIE. This was followed by a formal session of photography to capture memories of this euphoric evening.









The guests and staff then proceeded to a delectable high tea which officially closed the evening's festivities.



## In Conversation with NDIE's Second and Third Position Holders



**NOTRE DAME INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION**  
LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE IN TEACHER EDUCATION



**ZARFIN SALEEM**

**POSITION  
HOLDERS**



**AYESHA AYAZ**

NOTRE DAME INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (NDIE) IS PROUD OF ITS ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN EDUCATION (ADE 2019) STUDENTS - **MS. ZARFIN SALEEM AND MS. AYESHA AYAZ** - WHO SECURED THE **SECOND AND THIRD POSITIONS**, RESPECTIVELY, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI ANNUAL EXAMINATION. THIS DOUBLE ACHIEVEMENT IS A MATTER OF GREAT PRIDE AND AN HONOUR FOR NDIE AS IT CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE IN TEACHER EDUCATION. WE CONGRATULATE ZARFIN SALEEM AND AYESHA AYAZ ON THEIR WELL-DESERVED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRAY THAT THEY MAY CONTINUE TO SHINE IN THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVOURS.

[https://www.ndie.edu.pk/2021/12/24/ps\\_2021/](https://www.ndie.edu.pk/2021/12/24/ps_2021/)



## Zarfin Saleem Secured the 2nd Position from University of Karachi

### 1) Two to three things that Zarfin had hoped to achieve when she had enrolled in the ADE programme at NDIE.

When I enrolled myself in ADE, I had teaching experience at the community level but was lacking the research part which I hoped to gain from Notre Dame Institute of Education. NDIE helped me to relate practical implementation and theories. I wished for an open and diverse platform of learning, which NDIE really gave me.

### 2) Your feelings / thoughts the moment you realised that you were a position holder.

It was so unexpected! I had never thought that I would get the reward of my hard work in such a fruitful way. I was so joyful that I had made NDIE, my parents and myself proud.



### 3) List some factors that you think contributed to your success.

- Resilience
- Hard work
- Sacrifice for learning
- Good observation
- Concentration
- Consistency

### 4) What role did NDIE play in your achievement?

• NDIE has made me understand the importance of teaching and how a teacher can be a change agent in the society. I am very eager to be a part of professional teaching so that I can implement what I have learnt.

- Teachers at this institute always critically examine students' work and have helped me learn to think out of the box. They made me learn the magic of writing academically because when I enrolled as a student at NDIE I was a very bad writer.
- NDIE made me confident and I realized that I am a good public speaker.
- In short, this institution has made me a better and confident individual to live and contribute in the society.

#### **5)Some challenges as a student of this institute.**

- From the very beginning, the first and foremost challenge was to come to NDIE on time because I live far from the institute.
- I always wanted a diverse environment to study; however, it took me long to adjust in an environment where everybody is different.
- Academic writing has always given a tough time to me, especially the referencing.
- Initially, I was not habitual of doing extensive readings and assignments. So initially it was very hard to sacrifice my sleep and complete the work but that is what has made me successful today.

#### **6)Your advice to students enrolled in B.Ed (Hons) programmes at NDIE.**

- Work as hard as you can and never give up. At times you will feel burdened, at times you will feel stressed but always remember that your efforts will enrich you as an individual as well as a good teacher.
- Enjoy the life of NDIE the most because I guarantee that you can never get this amazing experience of learning and enjoyment again.

### **Ayesha Ayaz Secured the 3rd Position from University of Karachi**

#### **1)Two to three things that Ayesha had hoped to achieve when she had enrolled in the ADE programme at NDIE.**

From this programme I expected to learn the wonders and the art of teaching. I expected to get exposure to the onsets of giving and receiving education in the most genuine form. I hope to achieve my talent of being a good educator and so far I am happily satisfied with my journey. During the ADE programme I expected and hoped to be a better version of myself and I can see it happening by my progress.

#### **2)Your feelings / thoughts the moment you realised that you were a position holder.**

I felt the same as anybody who got a position would feel. The past years have been difficult for studies considering the rise of COVID. I was immensely happy and struck with feelings of being blessed. I felt both proud and delighted at the same time.



**3)List some factors that you think contributed to your success.**

- My teachers who always supported me throughout my journey.
- My parents who gave me a chance to study in this prestigious institution and always believed in me.
- Last but not the least my hard work which led me to achieve success.

**4)What role did NDIE play in your achievement?**

NDIE has always been very supportive. Each and every person at NDIE is always ready to help in any circumstances. NDIE gave me the best teachers and a positive learning environment.

**5)Some challenges as a student of this institute.**

So far I have not faced many challenges. COVID brought in some distortion with the whole learning process but it turned out to be fine as alternatives were made.

**6)Your advice to students enrolled in B.Ed (Hons) programmes at NDIE.**

I can say “Work hard, don’t give up, be the better version of you” and all the other cliches. However, my real advice would be to study and work hard to become the teachers that you needed when you were younger. This should be the utter motivation that ultimately leads you towards more dedication and commitment.



## Open House: Picture Gallery







## Christmas Celebrations 2021

Mother Theresa once said, “it is not how much we give but how much love we put in giving” that characterized the Christmas celebration at Notre Dame Institute of Education on December 17, 2021. The evening’s programme reflected how each one at NDIE ‘gave’ off their time, effort and skills to put up an evening of enjoyment, fun and relaxation. The evening festivities kicked off with a formal appreciation and recognition of the efforts of two students who secured positions at the Karachi University examinations. This was indeed a proud moment for us all.





The students and staff gave selflessly of their time and effort in preparing the events of the evening. The opening item was a Christmas play on the true meaning and spirit of Christmas.





Subsequently, the student and staff choirs melodiously sang all time Christmas favourites adding to the mirth of the evening.



No programme is complete without a little physical activity and so games were played by staff who jumped, laughed, strategized and encouraged each other to get to the finish line.







Representatives from each student cohort and staff joined the Director and Academic Coordinator in the cutting of a Christmas cake.







This was followed by the tradition of an exchange of gifts from secret friends within the NDIE community.





After the Director's vote of thanks, students and staff enjoyed a meal together.



## 2 STUDENTS' WORK

# Why Is Returning to Face-to-Face Classes Absolutely Necessary?

Suman Aslam  
B.Ed (Hons) Elementary 2019

The Covid-19 crisis has drastically affected the educational system across regions. The sudden outbreak of the Covid virus forced educational institutes to halt their on-campus teaching and shift to online teaching. After more than a year of hybrid teaching and online gaining of knowledge, the authorities decided to resume on-campus classes after students and faculty had been fully vaccinated against the Corona Virus.

Returning to physical classes is a very positive step towards the betterment of students' academic and physical performances. There are numerous benefits of physical classes as compared to online classes. Firstly, it increases the students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. Secondly, it helps them to improve their concentration and ability to stay on task, which in turn improves their academic performance. Thirdly, teachers can use differentiated instructional strategies such as kinesthetic activities to meet individual needs by connecting with students emotionally as well as physically. Moreover, physical classes also help students to improve their socializing skills. When students work in pairs or groups, it helps them to interact effectively which will also help them in life.

In conclusion, returning to physical classes after a long break will not be easy for some individuals due to the Covid crisis, but gradually the education system will come back on track if teachers and students will collaborate with and motivate each other.



# The Return to Face-to-Face Classes

Andrea Dorthy Thomas  
B.Ed (Hons) Secondary 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic affected normal routines. After the lockdown that was held in May, NDIE reopened after one month, that is, in the month of June 2021. The lockdown was ordered by the Sindh Government as the cases of Covid-19 were increasing and many people including the young, old and even children were being affected. Everything moved to the online mode – even we had online classes.

When the lockdown ended, I got an email from the Academic Coordinator that NDIE was reopening and we were to return to face-to-face classes. We were asked to follow the SOPs strictly as there were chances of contracting Covid-19. We were instructed to wear a mask, vaccination was mandatory and also we were asked to maintain social distance at the institute.

Face-to-face classes to me are a blessing as I learn better in physical classes as compared to online classes because my concentration is more focused and there is no distraction like there is at home. Face-to-face classes also give a better experience of interacting with teachers and classmates. They help us explore several things while performing activities related to our course. I remember in one of my classes that I learned about low-cost and no-cost teaching material. And we did micro-teaching with the material we found such as newspapers, disposable teacups and markers within the institute. Online learning does not give us a chance to explore in this manner. Nevertheless, online learning did give us an opportunity to explore various search engines that we can explore and learn likewise in our face-to-face classes as well.

I also find face-to-face classes better because I get a chance to meet my friends and interact with them, and most importantly, to learn from and with them. Face-to-face classes are also about learning and creating memories in the classroom. To me returning to physical classes was good and exciting news as I knew that I can always learn and do better in face-to-face classes. I hope that the Covid-19 virus fades away soon so that we do not have to switch back again to online classes.

# Returning to Face-to-Face Classes

Arwa Rahim

B.Ed (Hons) Elementary 2019

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over; however, the risk has been reduced after the vaccination campaign which has led to face-to-face classes resuming at educational institutes. Last semester Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) also had face-to-face classes completely. After 1.5 years of the hybrid model, returning to our classes with regular timings reminisced old times. Although we had adjusted ourselves to online classes, face-to-face classes feel different. It feels like we really are university students having fun along with learning.

With all the classes, assignments, presentations and my friends I really came back to my busy life. Waking up early in the morning, rushing to the institute, trying not to get late. This kept me busy as a bee, but I enjoyed it too.

In face-to-face classes the interaction was at its peak! We were given multiple assignments all of different kinds: poster presentations, role plays, taking interviews, etc. which enhanced my learning. Learning together in groups and pairs is what I always look forward to and is one of my favourite things at NDIE. This semester we engaged a lot and did group assignments. For example, in the Comparative Education course the whole class prepared a two-hour lesson for the B.Ed (Hons) Secondary 2020 cohort. Also we did science projects in pairs. Activities and tasks like these not only boost confidence but also bring out one's inner abilities and talents. Most importantly, we made sure that Covid-19 SOPs were not violated.

Apart from studies, eating, talking, gossiping and having fun with classmates is the thing which I missed the most during online classes. In this semester we all re-lived it, did crazy things like playing during our free classes, listening to songs while doing our work, etc.

In December 2021 we had two major events: one was the Open House that was conducted for the first time in the history of NDIE, and the other was the Christmas celebration, which is my most favourite of all. Preparations for the Open House had begun in early November 2021. We were asked to gather all the resources that we had made over the years. We gladly presented our work to the audience; it was a great experience to interact with different groups of people and showcase our creativity and skills that we have learnt throughout the programme. Secondly, for the Christmas evening, which is the main event celebrated at NDIE, we were all given responsibilities – our cohort was responsible for the decorations. Other cohorts were responsible for Kris Kindle, performing a play, etc. After a year's gap we, the NDIE family, finally celebrated together.

I am really grateful to everyone: the staff, teachers and my friends who have been a part of this fascinating journey which has not only groomed me as an individual but also made me a responsible citizen of the society.



# Mental Health Needs to be Highlighted in Education

Natasha Dias  
B.Ed (Hons) 2020

Mental health is basically our emotional, social and psychological need that should be addressed. Our mental health entails the angle we look at, the way we think, perceive and react. At the onset of my examination, I panicked because I had procrastinated which had taken a toll on me. I had passed through many phases of anxiety, panic attacks and lowered self-esteem. I coped with the exam stress only through breathing. I realized my existence in this world and believed that I could do it. I saw that I was struggling and needed to move ahead for my betterment. I do not want to be just a teacher, but I wish to be a useful catalyst of change in society.

Looking around I realized that mental health should be highlighted in education. Mental health arises in issues such as the following:

- Anxiety or lowered self-esteem is faced by a person in choosing their field or choosing their profession.
- Circumstances where parents overburden their children to study or pursue specific careers.
- Some people also get anxious and agitated when they do not have notes before the examination. They tend to get hyper when things do not go the way they planned or if they ever meet with failure. We tend to give up when we see failure as an end rather than looking at failure as a part of learning.
- We start to worry when we feel that we are not well prepared for an exam. Even though we may be ready for the exam our anxiety gets the better of us at times.

There are many issues that can add up to our emotional instability that are not mentioned. I feel that there is a need to be mindful in our choice of words towards people. Sometimes people are sensitive and the slightest of unintended responses can hurt them. We need to work in unity for a common goal. There is a need to instill empathy in the hearts of students for a better society; this is when we all feel accepted regardless of diversity. Inclusivity occurs when we realize and highlight the importance of mental health in schools. Mental health is a pivotal issue that is not emphasized in schools.

I believe that we need to have good quality education in order to produce exemplary students. I have faith in the generation to come that they may have a brighter future. I am certain that by accommodating issues such as those indicated above, we as teachers are going to produce masses of brilliant minds.

# Rehearsals for the Preparation of Christmas Celebrations at NDIE

Elishba Alwin George  
B.Ed (Hons) 2020

Memories of participating in programs and activities are always the best part of everyone's life. It provides time to reflect on what has happened and what can be improved from our experiences. Overcoming mistakes becomes learning and that learning is a lifelong lesson.

Last year NDIE celebrated its Christmas programme virtually but by God's grace this year NDIE prepared to celebrate Christmas physically. Every year we at NDIE celebrate Christmas together through planning and participating in different activities (plays, carols, etc.) which are guided by our facilitators.

It was on the 9th of November 2021 when our facilitators officially announced that we would be participating in a role play as part of the Christmas programme. In the role play all the students of ADE 2020, B.Ed Hons 2019, and B.Ed Hons 2020 would participate. I was ecstatic and could not express my feelings as my eyes gleamed with joy with regards to me playing a character in the role play. I gave my best in the rehearsals and enjoyed each part of the preparation which put me in the Christmas spirit.

This was my first experience of participating in a Christmas program. During the rehearsals, all the cohorts gathered together and all of us practiced and had fun with each other. It was truly a memorable experience to work together and observe how our colleagues from different cohorts practiced and expressed their dialogues. I used to hold my script in my hands and try to memorize all my dialogues with expression. Sometimes I was nervous while at times I felt very confident in performing my role.

During the delivery of my dialogue, I made several mistakes but learned from these how to become a better version of myself. Our facilitators directed us how to perform dialogues and how to use expressions while saying them. Everyone gave their best and so did I. While practicing our role play, there were some dialogues that were accompanied by actions such as "flapping wings" or witty remarks which made us giggle a little. These dramatic dialogues and actions gave all of us energy to play our roles enthusiastically.

I am so glad to be a part of NDIE where I have polished my hidden skills. Before participating in this play, I did not have any idea that I could also be a good actress in performing the role in this act. However, this self-image has changed and now I feel more confident as I look forward to participating in even more programs and activities.



# Expectations vs Reality: My Experience as a Novice Action Researcher

Aisha Nurullah  
B.Ed (Hons) 2019

With excitement, fears and apprehensions we took our first action research session at Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE). Personally, it was something of extreme value and interest to me, but when marks are assigned to something, it gets a bit difficult to enjoy the process. Nonetheless, I was all set to enjoy it.

After a few initial sessions by our facilitators, we were joined by some of the students of previous cohorts to share their experiences with us. Those sessions gave us an insight into what action research looks like as a component of the B.Ed programme.

Action research, in all its practicality, is the research done in-action! It implies that teachers carry out research while doing what they do – teaching. While teaching, teachers come up with a lot of critical incidents which could serve as potential research areas, and the teacher could very well work on it for the entire term, semester or even one whole academic session or perhaps even more (depending upon the research area). We as students of the B.Ed (Hons) programme are, however, not already teaching somewhere; hence, we shadow a teacher (in our assigned school) and look for an area of improvement. We also have limited time to complete our research, so the research area we select should very well consider the time limitation.

In this write up, I will try to share my experiences which will help you to cater to your needs while conducting your action research. The suggestions offered here have come from my reading the action research literature, my personal experiences and also my engagement in an action research study. I hope this write up establishes meaningful contact with you - the general readers, but specifically my fellow mates at NDIE who are about to begin their journey of Action Research. I have tried to capture the realities, complexities, and challenges of conducting student-teacher action research.

Action research is demanding, complex, and challenging because the researcher not only assumes responsibilities for doing the research but also for enacting change. Enacting change is not easy - it requires time, patience, and sound planning, communication, and implementation skills (Pine, 2008). Our experience too will be quite the same. We need to be critically active throughout the process.

First, as action researchers, we may find that insights emerge unexpectedly, in response to unplanned encounters or the analysis of particular comments. For instance, during my initial classroom observations I was looking for some particular instances, but by the time my observations finished, quite unknowingly, I had moved to a complete new area.

Second, the data we anticipate as being very rich and illuminating may be less so than other sources of information. Hence, the importance of remaining open to changing our data collection methods is crucial. Collect whatever and as much data you can. It is never enough! You need more and more data when it comes to data analysis. It is also difficult for us to grasp everything at once and so data may need to be revisited in the light of new experiences – to follow up hunches and explore their credibility. Moreover, while tentative conclusions about the meaning of a situation have to be drawn together at some stage, it is important to avoid premature closure and pre-emptive judgements. Don't rush! I noticed that our insights get deeper with time and experience. Keep collecting and analyzing!

Third, action research is not just about how brilliantly your suggested intervention worked or how unique your area is. Rather, it is about why a particular intervention did not work given the circumstances you were in, what the reasons were and what could be the various other ways which might address the area. It is not just the success but how you deal with an apparent failure. Be forewarned and, therefore, to some extent, forearmed. One minute you're on top of the world brimming with success and the next minute you are at an all-time low, feeling utterly defeated. Anticipating and understanding this roller-coaster ride of emotions may facilitate progress through difficult times.

Following are some Dos and Don'ts for conducting action research as a student teacher:

1.It's not what you think it is!

Action research is not an assignment – it is actual work! Completely independent, only a bit of guidance by your supervisor and course facilitators.

2.Teacher Apprehensions

Do ease out the teacher you are assigned to work with. Build up good rapport with her (without getting too personal). Not every school has a culture of constructive classroom observations; hence, you observing that teacher would very well act as a threat for that teacher, which will have an adverse effect on your research process.

3.Researcher-Student Relationship

Don't develop deep relationships with students during your research. You will remain in contact with those students only till the length of your research. Therefore, don't get involved so much that it becomes difficult to part from the students. They get upset and disturbed.



#### 4. Routines of the school

Don't disrupt the routines of the students, teachers, etc. Remember you would be there for a very short time.

#### 5. Data Collection

Do gather loads of data. When I say 'loads', I really mean 'loads and loads and loads' of data. Of course, relevant! But in various forms, e.g. classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, reflections, peer observations, feedback from the critical friend, evidence of learning, artefacts, etc. At the time of gathering data, you cannot decide what you will use and what you will discard, so just keep gathering! When the time comes to analyze it, you won't have any opportunity left to go back and gather more.

#### 6. Be Ethical

The data you collect should have no identity markers at all.

#### 7. Timelines

Do make timelines. Now is the time you will best understand this term. Make timelines and follow them religiously! You have limited time and lots to do in that time frame.

#### 8. Reflect

Most of us are novice teachers. It is crucial to reflect. Easier said than done? Get into a habit and it is no more difficult. Trust me on this one.

#### 9. Make notes to self

I would write notes to myself. For example, "Talk to supervisor", "Search for literature about ....", "Read the article downloaded yesterday", "Make key points for this article" etc.". This helps in continuing your work from where you had last left it.

#### 10. Use your phone recording app

There is an in-built recording app in all phones. Use it – for reflecting, taking voice notes, capturing critical incidents, ideas to ponder upon, etc.

#### 11. Read - Reread - Keep reading

It is never enough. Reading should be your 'best friend forever' throughout your action research.

#### 12. Help yourself!

No one – Let me repeat ... No one actually cares whether you are done with your field work or not. It is completely self-driven! You need to run after the teachers, school and your supervisor!

Put your heart and soul in your action research and it will become an enjoyable learning experience for you, giving you deep insights for your future teaching ventures. I hope this write up will be a meaningful resource and foundation for you as you conduct your own research, which would then give you all the essentials of practice you need to become a lifelong researcher. Each one of us will have our own unique experiences with action research. What is certain, however, is that action research is an extremely powerful methodology, with the potential for promoting change for all the participants in the process.

#### Reference

Pine, G. J. (2008). Teacher Action Research. Boston: Sage Publication.

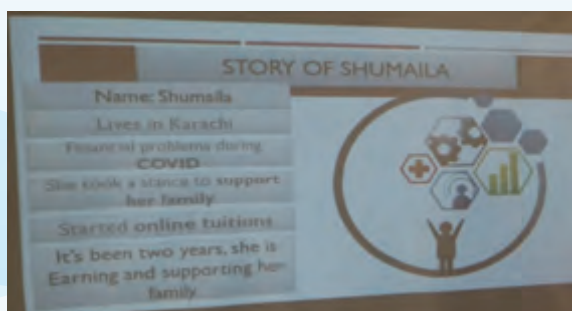


## Digital Generation: Our Generation

In line with the pluralistic experiences that Notre Dame Institute of Education offers to its students and staff, it celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child on October 29, 2021 through a special morning assembly. The assembly was planned in harmony with this year's theme of "Digital Generation: Our Generation."



The student-led assembly began with a discussion on the realities of the digital divide and moved to the gender digital divide. The reality of this phenomenon was supported by research-based evidence and statistics. While there is much to be done to bridge this divide, the stories of women tech trailblazers were highlighted to bolster hope. Stories of Pakistani women and girls who rose to the challenge of the pandemic and used technology creatively and wisely to counter their grim circumstances were shared by a couple of students. These stories augmented the motivation of students and staff alike.





The assembly closed with the pinning of these commitments on the soft boards for all to see and read.





## World Philosophy Day

World Philosophy Day is celebrated to reflect upon the contribution of philosophy in developing human thoughts creating a long-lasting impact throughout history. At NDIE, on Friday November 19, 2021, the students of B.Ed (Hons) Secondary 2021 planned a few activities to celebrate this day. The assembly started with an introductory speech. This was followed by two activities: (1) Pictionary, and, (2) Philosopher's hat. In the first activity, the participants illustrated the given philosophical thought by drawing images on the whiteboard. After that members from the audience were invited to share their thoughts on the message that was conveyed by the pictures. Later, there was a debrief by the participants regarding their picture and the philosophical thought.



For the second activity, a basket was kept with paper slips having quotes from famous educational philosophers written on it. As the music played the participants had to pass the “philosopher’s hat” to one another. When the music stopped, the participant holding the hat was required to pick up one paper slip and share his/her views on the quote written on it. On the whole, the experience was not only educative for all present but also thoroughly appreciated and thought provoking.



## Advent: A Time of Preparation

Advent is a period of preparation extending over four Sundays before Christmas. In preparation of the solemnity of this holy period a morning assembly was held at Notre Dame Institute of Education on November 26, 2021. The students once again rose to the occasion and led the assembly by sharing the meaning and significance of advent through symbols of the season such as the wreath and candles.





The NDIE community who was gathered in the assembly room then joined these students in prayer. As part of the traditional Christmas festivities at the institute, the practice of Kris Kindle was shared with all those present. The idea of having a secret friend and remembering the person in your prayers sparked excitement in students and staff alike.



Each participant of the assembly picked a piece of paper with the name of someone who they would pray for, for the next four weeks and surprise them with a little gift at the Institute's Christmas Celebration in December 2021.







## Reviewing the 10th Grade Textbook for the Sindh Textbook Board: My Experience

Pamela Yousuf  
Faculty, NDIE

“Textbooks are an important part of the educational process in schools, universities, colleges, and various courses all over the world. Generally speaking, the aim of a textbook is teaching and learning. The content and structure of a textbook can positively or negatively influence the learning process. That is why it is important to review textbooks to check the quality and readability of content.” (AnswerShark.com, 2021)

The Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro is in the process of preparing new textbooks for various grade levels. This is one of the remarkable initiatives by the Government to upgrade our education system.

It was an exciting prospect when I was nominated as part of a committee to review the prospective Grade 10 English textbook being published by the Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro.

Having prior experience of writing textbooks for the Oxford University Press, I already had some idea of what the task would entail. The actual experience, in fact, was far more interesting and educative than my expectations – a true in-depth learning experience!

The project was a five-day event. The team arrived on Tuesday, comprising the respected representatives from the Sindh Textbook Board, and other educators. The members representing the review team from Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) were Dr. Sherwin Rodrigues, Ms. Gillian Rodrigues and myself.



For five days, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, we congregated in the Conference Room, listening to selections from the prospective textbook being read out, correcting errors, providing our input and feedback, exchanging ideas, and on the whole doing our utmost to ensure that the textbook would turn out to be of the highest quality. Not even errors of a single letter or punctuation were spared. But if you might think that this process was in any way tedious or boring, that would be a misconception. On the contrary, it was a very jovial, enthusiastic and good-humoured environment with anecdotes and personal experiences being shared by all at intervals, which kept us refreshed, motivated and task-driven.



All the material presented in the textbook was aligned with the SLOs provided in the curriculum document for English Language. The material included in the textbook is updated, modern, relevant and interesting. Hopefully, the textbook would be well-received by all the stakeholders.





It was a pleasure to meet and work with the representatives from the Sindh Textbook Board, and other educators. It was equally a pleasure to work in conjunction with our very own colleagues from NDIE. The teamwork and camaraderie we experienced will truly be memorable. We got time to get to know everyone and the contexts they work in better, as we had lunch and tea together.

I personally was very pleased to observe the progressive changes made to the textbook, which were aligned with 21st century learning skills. This is a positive step forward for our education system.



Many thanks are due to the Director Dr. Sherwin for providing this wonderful learning opportunity, which is just one of the reasons which makes me feel proud to be a part of this institute and contribute to the cause of education in our country.

## CPD Courses Conducted (July – Dec 2021)

<b>July 2021</b>	
<b>1.</b>	Managing Classrooms through Behaviour Modification
<b>August 2021</b>	
<b>2.</b>	Online Tools for Teaching and Learning
<b>3.</b>	Power of Toys and Stories
<b>4.</b>	Teaching Grammar for Communicative Competence
<b>5.</b>	Using Formative Assessment to Promote Learning
<b>September 2021</b>	
<b>6.</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education
<b>7.</b>	Certificate in School Counselling
<b>8.</b>	Promoting Resilience in Children
<b>9.</b>	History Teaching in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Classroom
<b>10.</b>	Digital Learning in School Libraries
<b>October 2021</b>	
<b>11.</b>	Teachers as Leaders
<b>November 2021</b>	
<b>12.</b>	Rhymes and Fairy Tale Activities for Teaching in Early Years



## Professional Development for Diocesan Teacher Educators: Participants' Experiences of Phase 7, Cycle 3

Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) continued its provision of online professional training to the National Catholic Education Commission's (NCEC) diocesan teacher educators for the third cycle of phase 7 from August to December 2021. These synchronous online sessions contributed to the learning of the teacher educators in a digitized world. The reflections of the 11 teacher educators provide insights into their experiences and the impact of the cumulative learning from the online professional development episode of cycle 3.

### Arshia Nayab, Quetta



NDIE is working well in this pandemic with online training sessions. All the covered topics were very well-selected and for me the most meaningful experience of learning arose when I attended NDIE sessions from Jul-Dec 2021. Through these sessions I developed a better understanding in order to improve the quality of my work.

Additionally, observation of the training session by NDIE facilitators helped me to work more on myself as a teacher educator. Therefore, it was also a good way of keeping my learning in check.

### Haroon Raphael, Multan



I truly enjoyed the exchange of ideas, discussions, and interactions of the participants as well as of the facilitators during the sessions. As a practitioner, the knowledge gained about different global issues and the strategies for teaching different subjects have assisted me to enhance my own learning and to monitor the teachers under my care. It was a good platform to learn about some online teaching tools and resources. I came to know about the contemporary teaching styles of some of the NDIE facilitators which helped me to evaluate my own teaching style. In general, it was a delightful learning experience.

**Robella Younas, Rawalpindi**

My experience during these 6 months was a fun-filled roller coaster ride. A lot of aspects such as the transfer of learning into the workplace and impact on students in social services are some evident outcomes from these sessions. All the facilitators were highly energetic and enthusiastic and filled with attributes of great facilitators. Concepts were presented with new aspects in an interesting way especially the resource pack for mathematics was very helpful in understanding the concepts. The English Module had many important aspects.

Moreover, a detailed talk on lesson planning and assessment was an asset for making English teaching and learning effective. During Urdu pedagogy speaking and sharing of thoughts in the Urdu language was emphasized. There are plenty of interesting ways of making Urdu teaching and learning more interactive and an easy-to-learn process.

**Shama Mukhtar, Faisalabad**

Overall, I had an amazing experience of attending NCEC-NDIE sessions phase 7 (Cycle 3). I enjoyed these sessions very much. The facilitators were very helpful and supportive. They encouraged me to actively participate in the sessions. In this cycle, I attended the pedagogy modules of Math, English, Urdu and Science. I found the reflection meetings very helpful. It provided us with the opportunity to share our experiences and concerns regarding these sessions. Because of not being fluent in English, initially I was reluctant to participate and share my view points.

Over a period of time, I gained confidence and started participating in the discussions. I have learned a lot from it. This learning experience has helped me to plan my session for the spark teachers. I am grateful to the NDIE team for arranging these sessions and I look forward to attending the sessions in the upcoming cycle.



### **Saima Iqbal, Quetta**



I joined CBE-Quetta in March 2021 as a teacher educator. In the beginning when I shouldered this responsibility it was a bit difficult but with the help of NDIE and NCEC staff, I adjusted within a short period of time because of the support received through their knowledge and the attitude of the facilitators. I have attended different sessions organized by the NDIE team which has given me much knowledge, confidence, skills of IT and experience.

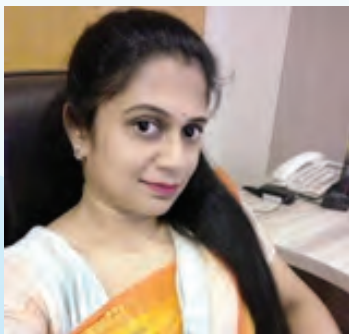
### **Sania Fiaz, Faisalabad**



During my work experience with NDIE, I was fortunate enough to have experienced firsthand and learned many different sides of teaching, the general process of how a session is initially planned, developed and completed. I came across valuable sessions by NDIE faculty. I found myself more skillful. I enjoyed all the sessions and I have also learned the diversity of work. During the Action Research journey, starting from the problem identification to the research presentation, I explored new ideas and techniques that helped me to groom myself as well as the students.

With the help of my supervisor I felt more confident and supported. By observing and learning from them, I managed to pick up tips and learned different types of techniques that helped me in my research work. Thank you to all the facilitators for such interesting and effective sessions.

### **Sara Younis Anthony, Rawalpindi**



I could not have been more excited looking back at the training sessions and reflecting on the numerous things that I have learned. I feel very advantaged to be part of the team and the amount of new information that I have acquired. I feel very confident and empowered in the knowledge that I have been equipped with all the skills required to deliver adequately in my role as a teacher educator.

### Sheraz Mark, Hyderabad



As a newly appointed teacher educator I was only able to attend the Urdu Pedagogy session of 6 hours during the third cycle of phase 7. The facilitator shared very informative material regarding Urdu Pedagogy which clarified my concepts of Urdu teaching and enhanced my learning. So far it is a very good learning experience for me. I am looking forward to be a part of the upcoming sessions to polish my teaching skills.

### Sunita Shoukat, Lahore



NDIE sessions always work as energy boosters in my professional development. The topics covered by NDIE in cycle 3 increased my professional mastery on subject-based sessions and different teaching strategies. This knowledge has helped me to support my spark teachers to develop their expertise in the process of teaching and learning.

The additional thing which I liked about these sessions was sharing critical feedback which helped a lot in addressing the areas for improvement for the next planning.

### Teresa D'Souza, Hyderabad



The online sessions in the third cycle of phase 7 was a treasure of assortments to me as they helped to enhance skills in writing a report on Action Research, teaching and assessing Languages and strategies to teach Mathematics.

The information received through these invaluable sessions would have an enduring impact on the spark teachers after cascading the same to them. Moreover, the regular reflection meetings helped in resolving any matters that needed to be sorted out.

The endeavours of NDIE have always been a source of enriching my abilities that are extended to developing the skills of teachers in their classroom teaching.



**Uzma Aziz, Multan**

I enjoyed the online teaching of NDIE facilitators. Everyone played an important role as the best leader. All the modules were very interesting, especially the Mathematics one that covered percentages, decimals and fractions. Furthermore, in the English module it was interesting to see how the facilitator engaged and encouraged every participant during the session. The Urdu module was very innovative and exciting because everyone enjoyed and participated in this session. Overall, I would say that every facilitator is very confident and guides us through structured support. You are all very helpful and true leaders.