



Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education

The Joy of Active Learning

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Mr. Zaman is demonstrating a science lesson and involving his students.

“Students show a more positive attitude toward learning when I use group work, debate, demonstration, role play, drama, brainstorming, questioning and case studies.”

Muhammad Zaman,
Primary School Teacher

Muhammad Zaman has been teaching primary school for 20 years in the village of Ghanool in a remote part of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The village is close to the epicenter of the October 2005 earthquake, which destroyed his school and most of the houses of his students. He currently conducts his fourth and fifth grade classes in a tent supplied by a relief agency. His job is not an easy one, as he has no desks or chairs, few materials, no electricity or running water, and little support from others.

In February 2007, Zaman participated in a 12-day teacher training program organized by the USAID-funded project titled *Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education (RISE)*. The program focused on the teaching of English, mathematics, and science, and introduced a variety of active-learning, child-centered teaching techniques. One of those is “demonstration,” and Zaman is showing his use of this technique in the accompanying picture.

In a conversation with a RISE staff member, Zaman said, “It is very important for us [teachers] to use active-learning methods in schools; students feel happy with these methods.” One day when he was teaching using his old lecture method, a student stood up and said to him, “Sir, we request you, please teach us using drama or demonstration.” Recently, he has been using these techniques more and more often as he sees his students improving attitudes toward learning.

Continuing on, Zaman said, “I like to learn and want to serve my country as a good teacher.” He added that RISE training changed his mind about how to teach, and “now I feel very comfortable with these techniques.” In discussing his future plans, he said that he would like to help organize a professional development forum in his region to help teachers learn a variety of effective teaching techniques. That way, he said, “I will learn more and get a sweet reward in the future. I am going to serve the children of my country.”