



## *KKU: Educational Standards and International Frameworks*

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**As**ir Region's main university, King Khalid University is required to impart education that serves the local, national and international requirements in terms of educational standards, jobs and research as the foundation of the knowledge based economy.

The international frameworks are the new frontiers of educational development. Unless they are adopted in the classroom, the efforts put in teaching and learning will prove futile at every level.

These frameworks allow structured progress towards achieving required international educational standards and supremacy in the modern economies. The students of those countries who participate in Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) are more likely to succeed in the job market, knowledge based economies and nation building.

To maintain their standing in modern economy, the governments of the advanced countries are using PISA to advance educational standards in their countries. Big countries like the US (NAEP)<sup>2</sup> and the UK (Sats)<sup>3</sup> have their own national educational frameworks and reporting systems but they also participate in PISA to improve their educational standards.

PISA is triennial international survey which evaluates education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. In 2015 PISA over half a million students, representing 28 million 15-year-olds in 72 countries and economies, took the internationally agreed two-hour test. Students were assessed in science, mathemat-



ics and reading. In addition to three skills, the members can also opt to participate in collaborative problem solving skill and financial literacy tests.

The participating countries use PISA results<sup>4</sup> to build and improve<sup>5</sup> their education policies. The PISA results allow them to overcome their weaknesses, build on their strengths, review their assessment standards and align with future educational developments and policies at global level. These frameworks help countries to translate teaching and learning in the classroom into jobs, innovation and manufacturing.

KKU can use PISA to develop higher secondary school educa-

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tion because these students join university and they then form foundation of university education. The research centers and quality setups of KKU have a critical role in helping the local policymakers to use PISA frameworks and results to develop short practical roadmaps for higher secondary school education and level one education in the university to meet future needs of education, jobs and knowledge based economy in the region.

The 2015 PISA Reading framework<sup>6</sup> draft shows that there are many changes in reading. New reading terminologies have been introduced like fixed text, dynamic text and so on. It has shifted from paper to computers (electronic reading), types of questions have changed, assessment scales have been reviewed, and the policies on reading skills that will be adopted in future have been discussed as well. Without keeping pace with international standards, it is not possible to achieve required output in reading.

In terms of improving reading skills with the help of PISA reading frameworks and tests<sup>7</sup>, a study was conducted in Finland. "Differences between students' PISA reading literacy scores and grading for mother tongue and literature at school: a geostatistical analysis of the Finnish PISA 2009 data"<sup>8</sup>.

Finland was ranked 4th in 2015 reading and well ahead of countries like UK (21) and USA (24). The important areas for KKU are:

- a. Latest and emerging reading strategies should be used in mother tongue to achieve better results in learning reading skill in other subjects and languages including English.
- b. The study results of grades given to students in mother tongue and literature at different schools and the same students' reading literacy performance in PISA 2009.
- c. International assessments frameworks have an increasingly important role in developing the local education system in terms of educational equality and quality.

In conclusion, the international frameworks provide an approved step-wise path to improve educational standards to bring them in line with the international standards. Reading and writing can be the starting points. The research centers and quality setups of KKU have to play their cardinal role to help KKU achieve required educational standards in Asir Region to meet future challenges in education, jobs and economy.



**Sources:**

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