Quality Education for All in Egypt: "Post 2015 Education Development Goal"
Case Studies
Nagwa Megahed (Ed.)

Foreword by
NDri Assie-Lumumba
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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the American University in Cairo, Graduate School of Education.
FOREWORD

As generously referred to by Professor Nagwa Megahed in the background of this timely report, Quality Education for All in Egypt: “Post 2015 Education Global Development Goal” Case Studies, I had the privilege of learning about the research while it was in progress and its findings were preliminary. One important dimension, in reflecting on the rigorous process of this cutting-edge research, was the remarkable disposition of Professor Megahed, as an established authority in comparative education in leading atop quality research while consistently serving as an inspiring mentor to the students who made significant contributions from the inception of the project to the outcome being shared through this publication. I met some of these well-prepared, highly motivated, and focused students who appeared aware of the special opportunity they had in acquiring solid skills as young researchers. They reflected Professor Megahed’s rigor and confidently made impressive presentations of the preliminary results at the 2014 CIES annual conference and were sharp in articulating educational issues and methodological matters on the campus of the American University in Cairo where, as Distinguished Visiting Professor, I interacted with them. By bringing to fruition this research, Professor Megahed is making a valuable contribution to our understanding of educational processes and information for policymakers in Egypt and other countries across the African continent and beyond.

I want to take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Professor Samiha Peterson, Founding Dean of the Graduate School of Education, for her vision and intellectual engagement that led her to imagine and create an enabling institutional space and environment with a remarkably dedicated team for quality and relevant knowledge production that is central to educational processes in national context with comparative and international significance.

Given the goal and nature of the monitoring reports that were produced until the 2015 expiration of the MDGs and EFA, they provided useful but not sufficiently adequate comparative information in regards to having a deeper and more detailed understanding of national, local, and institutional dynamics of the educational processes. For instance, what are the lived and professional experiences of teachers in the concrete environment where they exercise their professional experience in striving for quality education? The immeasurable contributions of the Egyptian case studies in this report include the review of the historical context of the Education Reform Program (ERP) and the rigorous analysis to reveal the relationship and the gaps, if any, between the articulated policy goal, objectives, and targets of the ERP and the subsequent practices in reality of the teaching and learning contexts. The report includes four case studies that provide Egyptian perspectives and experiences in tackling educational questions that shape the dialectic of global goals and national processes in support of a forward looking approach for education beyond 2015.

Each of these four studies carefully articulates comprehensive guiding questions relevant to the study the implementation of national education standards, the definition and the
implementation of “global citizenship” education, “a school-based professional development program,” and a study of “classroom practice” that brings to light challenges faced by teachers in the process of trying to promote quality education.

To carry out the research in addressing the respective questions, the researchers used qualitative research methods, with very comprehensive focus group interviews that included the full range of policy, administrative and teaching staff across the board, geographically and with regards to the different levels of the education system. The final painstaking analysis of the rich data collected provided a unique, thorough, and critical examination of the Egyptian education system.

This report offers a model for other countries in Africa and other regions as they assess the education factor in the new sustainable development goals (SDGs) with the benefit of constructive lessons from the implementation of the previous global engagement of the MDGs and EFA. These lessons call for a better understanding, by all the stakeholders, of the common and specific national and local circumstances that can foster a greater contribution of education to the SDGs, and more generally, social progress.

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Johannesburg, July 2016
DEAN'S MESSAGE

The collection of papers that follows provides a unique look into Egypt's ambitious, thought at times stalled, progress toward the Education for All goals. In some sense, this collection reflects the very need for, and the corresponding contribution of, the Graduate School of Education at the American University in Cairo (AUC). For decades, monitoring and evaluation reports covering the momentum of development projects have provided quantitative portrayals that, inevitably, mask the critical circumstances, challenges, successes, and conditions on the ground.

Education inherently is a human endeavor, and as much as global policy actors attempt to whittle complex knowledge into simplistic indicators, most people I know who work with teachers, Ministry of Education staff, school leaders, parents, and students--anywhere in the world--will tell you that context often makes statistics inconsequential. Indeed, quantifiable evidence is important, but such data only tell part of the story. Case studies, such as these, help us to see the depths of experiences in public and international schools, governmental and non-governmental organizations, teacher social groups, families, and so forth.

In my field, organizational theory, it is commonly understood that planned policy and actual implementation are separated by varying interpretations, unintended incentives, socially- and institutionally- constructed imitations, and other behaviors and situations that emphasize the primacy of human involvement in any socio-political activity. All of these factors would, under normal circumstances, already heavily influence a country's progress toward Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals at large. Egypt's political and economic landscape over the past decade has undoubtedly exacerbated the situation. As these papers portray, educators and educational reformers in Egypt have persisted in the face of great challenges and uncertain politics. Most importantly, they illustrate just how dedicated Egyptian citizens--whether educational professionals, students, parents, or researchers--are about the improvement of educational opportunity in the country.

Professor Megahed and the authors of this report should be commended for this nuanced and important depiction of Egypt's progress. I welcome all readers to engage in dialogue with the authors and AUC's Graduate School of Education on the findings, as well as the next steps that they propose and encourage. Despite the challenges in the Middle East and Africa that are constantly portrayed in the global news media, we are in the midst of an exciting time of possibility and transformation. To say that transformation takes time ignores the crucial contributions of people who dedicate their lives to renewal and reform. Thankfully, this collection gives us a glimpse of such perseverance and hope.

Ted Purinton, Dean
The AUC's Graduate School of Education
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INTRODUCTION

Education as a human right has received global attention. For more than two decades the international “Education for All” (EFA) movement has emphasized equality and quality of education. In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, sought to provide a new direction in education by creating flexible and inclusive educational systems, in addition to achieving education for all by the year 2000. However, slow progress was made, thus the Dakar Framework for Action reaffirmed the commitments of EFA and with a focus on female education, pledged to provide quality education for all by 2015. Furthermore, EFA sought to achieve gender parity by 2015 and called for a new direction in education, with special focus on cultural diversity, problem solving and the interdependence of the global world.

This publication is based on a research project funded by the Graduate School of Education and undertaken during the academic year 2014-2015. The editor of this publication, Nagwa Megahed, designed and led the project. With her mentorship, three research fellows participated in this project: Shaimaa Awad, Amira Abduo, and Farah Abdel Karim. In addition, a research assistant, Nazly Abaza, served as the assistant to editor. The project aims at integrating the Egyptian perspective in the global dialogue concerning the development of post-2015 education development goal by conducting case studies of educational quality in Egypt. The case studies were presented at two research events. First, a public research forum organized by the Graduate School of Education (GAE) and held at The American University in Cairo on March 3rd, 2014. And a panel organized at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference, held in Canada, Toronto on March 2014.

The case studies tackle educational quality in Egypt at national, societal, school and classroom levels. They adopt a global-local perspective and employ qualitative research approach. They shed light on a variety of efforts that were undertaken by Egyptian and international educators and civil society organizations to promote educational quality for all. These include the implementation of national education standards; a character education program for global citizenship; and a school-based professional development program. In addition, a case study of classroom practice is conducted to reveal the challenges confronting teachers in promoting educational quality for Egyptian students.

Thanks are due to Professor Samiha Peterson, Founding Dean of GSE, and Professor Ted Purinton, current Dean of GSE, for their support to the initiation of this project and the production of its report. Thanks are also due to Professor N’Dri Assie-Lumumba for her insightful feedback during the CIES panel where the studies of this report were presented and for her enduring support to education development in Egypt and other African countries.
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT: A CASE STUDY OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

Nagwa Megahed

Introduction

One of the priorities adopted by the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) in its reform effort was improving educational quality through the implementation of National Education Standards. Preceding the legislation creating the Quality Assurance and Accreditation body in 2006, the National Education Standards document was published in 2003. In support of the Ministry of Education’s effort, the USAID-Funded Education Reform Program (ERP, 2004-2009) was initiated as an integrated set of activities intended to establish a foundation of policy and institutional capacity for sustainable and replicable reform in seven target governorates in Egypt: Cairo, Alexandria, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Menia, Qena and Aswan. One of the major activities of ERP is to assist the Ministry of Education in its implementation of the national education standards. This case study focuses on the process of implementing national education standards in the seven governorates in Egypt. It depends on the analysis and review of relevant MOE and ERP documents and related literature to identify the national discourse and its call for educational quality. In addition, focus group interviews were conducted with MOE personnel from the seven focal governorates representing different levels of the system. The objectives include identifying how and to what extent the standards were implemented; what impact this reform activities had on relevant, valued outcomes; what factors constrained or enabled the reform processes and their impact, and what suggestions for improving the reform activities.

National Discourse and International Support: The Call for Educational Quality

Following the 1952 revaluation, expanding access in education has been the main objective for the Egyptian government. When Mohamed Hosni Mubarak (1981-present) became president, the efforts to expand educational access continued, including extending compulsory schooling from six to nine years. However, in the wake of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, president Mubarak (1991; included in MOE, 1992, p. 5) called attention to what he termed “the crisis in education ... In spite of the fact that education exhausts the resources of the national budget and individual families, the end-product still remains poor and inadequate. Education continues to suffer from a predominant focus on quantity rather than quality.” In the volume, Mubarak and Education, in which this speech was published, the Egyptian government’s conception of improving educational quality is articulated:

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1 This study is part of a comprehensive research that was supported by the USAID-funded Egypt Education Reform Program. An earlier version of this study has been published in the Romanian Journal of Pedagogy.
Education should, therefore, change from an outdated mode of teaching dependent on memorization and repetition to a new form of instruction, which would include the student as an active participant in the educational experience and an active partner in the learning process. (MOE, 1992, p. 43).

“In September 2003 the MOE issued the National Standards for Education, leading to an emphasis on improving the quality of the educational process. The Standards became one of the milestones on which the quality of several aspects of the education process will be based” (MOE, 2007, p. 126). According to the introduction to this volume, the standards development project proceeded: on a logical course inspired by the education policy, which the President announced in 1992, the objective of which was to achieve ‘education for all.’ … Having succeeded in achieving this objective, … according to internationally approved quantitative indicators, the state is now inspired by the President’s vision which is represented in his call for a qualitative change in education … In pursuance of the effort aimed at achieving quality education, the Ministry presents this work in the form of a Document on National Standards of Education in Egypt from a comparative international perspective. This document contains standards and performance indicators in the following five domains: the effective school, the educator, educational management excellence, community participation, the curriculum and learning outcomes.” (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2003, p. 4)

Improving educational quality was also emphasized in the context of the economic transition in Egypt. Began in 1991, the government of Egypt embarked on a comprehensive Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) supported by donors.² The major objective of this reform was to allow the private sector to achieve rapid, efficient, and sustainable growth. The ERSAP advocated a shift from a centrally planned economy with a dominant public sector to a market-based and export-oriented economy in which the private sector plays a leading role (Al-Mashat & Grigorian, 1998; USAID/EGYPT, 2007). Promoting private sector growth remains a priority for job creation.³ Egypt’s labor force is growing at a rate of 500,000 new entrants per year. But one of the challenges faced by privatization was the quality of education, which was viewed by the World Bank specialists as inadequate: “in spite of high enrollment rates, literacy remains low, more than half of the officially unemployed hold an intermediate degree or higher, and yet there is a shortage of skilled workers. This suggests large inefficiencies and a serious market mismatch with the educational system” (World Bank, 2000, p. 4).

With the beginning of the new millennium the Ministry of Education embarked on many educational reforms (Megahed, 2002; Ministry of Education (MOE), 2007). Several multilateral

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² The World Bank approved a Structural Adjustment Loan to Egypt in the 1991. It was the first policy-based Bank loan to Egypt. It was part of a larger donor package of assistance, which included a Stand By Arrangement from IMF and Paris Club debt reduction (World Bank, 2000, p. 6)

³ In reaction to global pressures, internal policies in Egypt had to shift. Private enterprise was increasingly accepted as a requirement for growth, along with an economy open to free trade. It was also accepted that a healthy economy would require a significant increase in productivity, the attraction of private capital, and the ability to compete successfully with alternative trading partners in the European Union (Gill & Heyneman, 2000, pp. 401-402).
and bilateral organizations initiated programs in support of the Ministry of Education’s reform agenda. Among these projects is the “Education Reform Program.” The Education Reform Program (ERP, 2004-2009) was initiated as an integrated set of activities intended to establish a foundation of policy and institutional capacity for sustainable and replicable reform in seven target governorates in Egypt: Cairo, Alexandria, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Menia, Qena and Aswan. This program is a bilateral agreement between the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is being implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), American Institute for Research (AIR), and other firms.

ERP provided technical assistance at various levels of the system (school, local, provincial, and national) in the following broad areas: professional development, decentralization and community participation, and monitoring and evaluation. Major initiatives were undertaken toward a) improving learning, b) improving teaching, c) improving schools, and d) improving policy/system. ERP supported the Ministry of Education in its efforts to a) establish a quality assurance and accreditation system; b) improve teachers’ professional and socioeconomic status through establishing a special cadre/career path and a Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT); c) enhance community participation, and d) decentralize governance and management system. The Ministry adopted a standards-based approach in the planning and implementation of its educational reform.

Figure 1. Education Reform Program in Egypt (2004 - 2009)
A necessary ground-stage toward this ambitious, comprehensive reform was to promote standards awareness among educational practitioners and stakeholders (school teachers, principals, supervisors, and other ministry personnel at governorate and district levels as well as members of Board of Trustees, parents and students). There was also a need for training in conducting standards-based school self-assessment in preparation for accreditation. The Education Reform Program (ERP) played a major role in supporting these efforts.

**Research Questions, Strategy, and Methodology**

This research focuses on ERP support to the Ministry of Education in the area of standards implementation. It aims at answering the following questions:

- What strategies and activities were pursued by ERP staff/consultants and MOE personnel to implement the national education standards?
- What evidence (perceived and/or documented) is there that these strategies and activities had an impact on changing policies and or practices?
- What conditions and other factors were perceived to have constrained or enabled the implementation and impact of reform efforts?
- What are the suggestions for improving the reform activities for implementing the standards?

To answer the above questions, the research adopts qualitative research method and follows what is called documentation research (see Bickel, 1984). Documentation research is an approach for creating and maintaining stronger and more productive relationships between researcher/evaluators and policy makers/practitioners (see Ginsburg and Gorostiaga, 2003). Conceptually and operationally, documentation research can be seen as related to “decision-oriented research” (Cooley and Bickel, 1986) and, like “utilization-focused evaluation, begins with identification … of specific, relevant decision makers … who will use the information that the evaluation produces” and then proceeds to collect and analyze data and present findings in ways that inform the issues they deem important (Patton, 2002, p. 173). A working group of MOE-ERP Monitoring and Evaluation was identified to function as an oversight committee for a comprehensive documentation research project in which this research was conducted as part of it. The research, furthermore, depends on reviewing and analyzing relevant MOE and ERP documents and other literatures. In addition, fieldwork was conducted in collaboration with a team of ERP governorate staff and consultants to conduct focus group interviews with MOE personnel in the seven governorates.

**Focus Group Interviews**

To supplement and provide richer insights into the findings derived from the document review and input from ERP staff and the M&E Working Group, focus group interviews were conducted with a range of categories of MOE staff. Focus group interviews are “[a]mong the

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4The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education has been established in 2006 according to the Presidential Law No. 82 (Government of Egypt, 5 June 2006).
most widely used research tools in the social sciences; … this technique came into vogue after World War II and has been a part of the social scientist’s took kit ever since” (Stewart et al., 2007, p. 1). Using a focus group interview approach seems very appropriate for the purposes of this research, in that it involves moderating a discussion of a group of persons who “are known to have been involved in a particular situation …, [about which] the hypothetically significant elements, patterns, processes and total structure of this situation have been provisionally analyzed [by the researcher], … in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation” (Merton et al., 1956/1990, p. 3). Nevertheless, there are disadvantages as well as advantages of using focus group interviews, while “[o]n balance, it appears that the advantages of the focused interview of groups more than offsets the disadvantages when one seeks clues to diverse definitions of the situation by a numerous body of individuals” (Merton et al., 1956/1990, p. 135).

Samples and Interview Questions

The sampling strategy was designed to identify participants for the focus group interviews who represented a range of relevant perspectives on the implementation of standards process and outcomes. Focus group interviews were conducted with a total of 133 MOE personnel from the seven focal governorates representing three different levels of the system: a) school administrators (37), b) standards support team members – including district directors and staff, supervisors, and senior teachers (42), and c) local system administrators – including governorate directors and staff (54).

Interviewees were asked first about the most important accomplishments for the standards support teams and the quality teams as well as the impact of the teams’ activities on professional development for teachers and other educators in the focal governorates. Interview questions included:

a. What would you describe as your team’s most important accomplishments?

b. How do you think the work of your Standards Support Team had a positive impact on professional development activities for teachers and other educators in this governorate?

c. What circumstances or factors helped your team to achieve these accomplishments?

d. What, if anything, do you think your team has been less successful in doing?

e. What circumstances or factors limited your team’s effectiveness in these areas?

5 Merton & Kendall (1946) originally referred to such interviews, whether involving one interviewee or a group of interviewees, as “focused interviews.”

6 The advantages include a) lower cost in time and money of obtaining a broader range of viewpoints from a variety of research participants (Frey and Fontana, 1993, p. 32; Stewart et al., 2007, pp. 42-43) and b) social interaction within the group stimulates participants’ ideas through synergism and snowballing (Albrecht et al., 1993, p. 51; Crabtree et al., 1993, p. 143; Frey and Fontana, 1993, p. 32; Jarrett, 1993, p. 193; Morgan, 1993, p. 232; Stewart et al., 2007, pp. 46-47). The disadvantages include a) “social pressures [may] prevent a topic from being discussed in groups” (Crabtree et al., 1993, p. 145); b) individual’s responses “may be biased by a very dominant or opinionated member” (Stewart et al. (2007), pp. 43-44; see also Merton et al., 1956/90, pp. 149; Puchta and Potter, 2004, p. 22).
f. What ERP-supported activities have been most helpful in enabling the work of your Standards Support Team? Why?
g. What, if anything, could ERP have done differently to enable the work of your Standards Support Team?

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed then data were classified and analyzed to select the most relevant and comprehensible quotes that represent the perspectives of different groups in different governorates. The selected quotes were then translated and integrated into the research. Before presenting the interview findings, the approach and process undertaken by ERP to support the implementation of national education standards are presented.

Approach to Implementing Educational Standards

The approach guiding ERP’s activities concerned with the implementation of standards was collaborative, research-based and data-driven. In order to initiate the work at the onset of the project, ERP respective staff as well as educators from all seven governorates representing all stakeholders – parents, teachers, supervisors, principals and directors – worked together to develop the vision, identify the mechanism, the content, and the strategy of standards implementation. The implementation was research-based in the sense that products of past USAID efforts, such as the New School Program, were carefully reviewed and the group (ERP respective staff and stakeholders) agreed not to proceed to the next steps until adequate piloting or field testing of the tools took place. It was data-driven in that decisions were based on collected and examined information. (ERP, EQ 2006a)

Four priority areas were established in relation to the implementation of standards. The first area involved advocating for standards at all levels of the school community and the education system. The message was that decisions ought to be standards-based to insure reliability, validity and, above all, quality. The second area promotes reflective practice through standards-based self-assessment by communities, schools, principals, teachers and even students. The third area involves approaching the school as the unit for reform. In this case the whole school – administrators, teachers, parents, Board of Trustees members, and students – works together to promote education quality, using a school-based reform model. Finally, there was a focus on creating a cadre of standards advocates. So, developing the cadre, building their capacity, proving their value, and presenting the findings in order to obtain official recognition (ERP, EQ, 2006a).

The mechanism for standards implementation involved creating two important groups: “standards support teams” at the governorate level and the “quality teams” at the school level. The standards support teams delivered trainings, held meetings, developed tools, supported the administration of these tools and monitored and assisted in the implementation of standards for all stakeholders. Their direct link in the schools is the quality teams, which were tasked with
administering standards-based tools at the school level to come up with recommendations for improvement (ERP, EQ 2006a and 2006b).

Planning Phase of Standards Implementation

The overall program for standards implementation followed a participatory and collaborative strategy. Stakeholders and MOE personnel – parents, teachers, supervisors, and school principals – collaborated beginning with the planning phase in 2004-2005. In addition, there has been a level of collaboration between ERP and other USAID-funded programs as well as other international organization-funded programs involved in the area of standards implementation.

Based on the discussions on “standards-based planning” at a forum attended by MOE representatives and ERP staff and consultants held at the beginning of 2005, a general framework for the implementation of standards was developed to include the following stages for standards awareness and school self assessment:

1- Constituting standards support teams in the seven governorates and training them
2- Constituting quality teams in the family of schools and training them by the standards support teams
3- Developing assessment tools (for students, teachers, administrators, and parents) in the effective schools and community participation areas of the standards
4- Piloting school self-assessment tools, refining the tools, and re-piloting the refined tools in one school in each governorate
5- Finalizing the new tools, developing a guide for the area of “effective school,” and creating a guide for the area of “community participation”
6- Diffusing and facilitating use of the school self-assessment tools (ERP, EQ, 2006b).

The process involved is examined below.

Constituting Standards-Support Teams at Governorate and District Levels

The main tasks for the standards support teams in the governorates were defined to include: a) developing awareness of the national standards; b) receiving central trainings and transmitting the lessons learned from these training to the quality teams in schools; c) diffusing a culture of standards among their colleagues (teachers, subject content supervisors, administrators, Board of Trustees members, NGO representatives) at district and governorate levels by organizing workshops, meetings, and trainings in national standards; d) collaborating with quality teams in the implementation of school self assessment; e) participating in refining the school self-assessment tools; f) providing training for the quality teams in the preparation of a standards-based school portfolio; and g) monitoring/providing support to the implementation of national standards in schools.

To select members of the standards support team, meetings were held in each governorate/province to introduce the national standards and the ERP work procedure (AIR, AED, et al., 2005a). Then each undersecretary of education sector in each governorate, in
consultation with the director of the focal district, nominated people for the standards support team in that governorate. Subsequently, ERP staff conducted interviews with the nominees to select the best candidates.

ERP staff organized series of training workshops for the standards support teams focusing on the National Education Standards and school self–assessment. As a result of their training, the standards support teams were able to develop training materials for foundational standards workshops (to be provided for the school-based quality teams). They incorporated existing New Schools Program training manuals to build capacity for effective school self-assessment (ERP, EQ, 2006b, AIR, AED, et al., 2005 b and 2005c).

To supplement the workshops and other activities conducted in Egypt, ERP staff organized study tours to the United States for members of the standards support teams to expose them to the US experience in implementing standards, such as a U.S.-based training course titled “The Impact of Standards on Curriculum and Assessment” at California State University-Chico in 2006 and 2007 (AIR, AED, et al., 2006a and 2007).

Constituting School Quality Teams at School Level

The main tasks for the quality teams in schools include: a) developing awareness of the national standards in schools, b) conducting the school self-assessment, c) writing reports on the results of school self-assessment and submitting them to the quality support teams and the Board of Trustees (BOTs), d) providing recommendations and suggestions to ERP and the BOTs, and e) participating in the development of school improvement plans. In order to form quality teams, ERP staff requested the nomination of seven individuals from each school. Team members normally included the school principal, school undersecretary, school social worker, SBTEU manager, two excellent teachers, and the BOT head or other member (ERP, EQ, 2006b).

ERP staff organized a variety of capacity building activities for the school quality teams (ERP, EQ 2006b). These focused on applying standards and raising cultural awareness in schools about self-assessment, using school self-assessment tools, and developing standards-based portfolio of school achievement. The school-based self-assessments were to be used to generate school improvement plans, which would, among other things, guide professional development efforts at the governorate and district levels. The point of reference for this activity has been the MOE’s National Standards for the effective school (AIR, AED, et al., 2006b). ERP staff also organized capacity building activities focused on developing and implementing school improvement plans.

7 Complementary efforts undertaken during the same period by ERP staff affiliated to the BOT component of the Non formal Education (EQUIP1) division include: a) facilitating strategic planning workshops for BOT members, providing a foundation for subsequent development of annual school improvement plans; b) training BOT members on how to develop their school improvement plan based on information collected using four previously introduced tools: standards-based school self-assessment questionnaire, BOT performance indicators questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, and student questionnaire tool (ERP, 2005c, p. 19).
Developing, Piloting, and Refining the Assessment Tools

As noted above, assessment tools were a key component of efforts to conduct standards-based school self-assessment, which would identify strengths and weaknesses and thus inform school improvement plans. The development of the school self-assessment tools was informed by reviewing documents and tools for school self-assessment developed by the USAID-funded New Schools Program and the World Bank/European Union-funded Education Enhancement Project (ERP, EQ, 2006b). As a result of this process, ERP (Educational Quality and Monitoring & Evaluation divisions) staff in collaboration with members of the standards support teams created a refined and simplified set of school self-assessment tools.

As stated in the cover page of these tools, the Preliminary School Self-Assessment Tools aim at supporting school quality teams to assess school performance at a preliminary stage, in relation to National Standards for Effective School. This process is accomplished through collecting data about the school to identify:

1. How far present school practices match the standards of the effective school.
2. Strengths and weaknesses in present school performance, in terms of the effective school standards.
3. A starting point in developing and implementing a school improvement plan to meet the effective school standards.

The tools comprise two parts: a template (a declarative tool) and a questionnaire (a field-based tool). First, the template (Declarative Tool): the template is a tool used by school quality teams to collect necessary school information, either through examining formal school files and records or through interviews or focus groups activities with school staff (teachers and administrators). The tool includes both close-ended and open-ended questions (extra answer sheets can be attached to the main document).

Second, the questionnaire (Field-based Tool), the questionnaire is a tool used by school quality teams to collect information from teachers, administrators, students and their parents as well as any concerned members in the local community members. The tool includes close-ended questions with a 0 to-4 scale for responses.

The simplified tools (one each for students, teachers, administrators and parents) were piloted in six schools in six governorates, representing all levels: one general secondary, one technical secondary, two preparatory schools, and two primary schools. This first piloting of school self-assessment tools was conducted in September 2005, and involved responses from 300 students, 40 teachers, 10 administrators, and 40 parents. Forms were distributed and collected, data were analyzed, and a report on findings was developed for each school. A second piloting in one school from each governorate was conducted to finalize and the refined tools; then a final report was developed by each governorate office. Subsequently, ERP published a handbook describing the tools and how they can be used in the process of school self-assessment. This handbook was designed to promote a scaling-up of this important process (AIR, AED, et al., 2005d).
Diffusing and Facilitating Use of the Assessment Tools

MOE in collaboration with ERP (Educational Quality and Monitoring & Evaluation divisions) staff conducted a workshop in Alexandria for standards support team members in all seven focal governorates (10 to 12 MOE personnel per governorate). This workshop represented the culmination of a long process of developing, field testing, reviewing, piloting and finalizing the school self-assessment tools. Important outcomes of the workshop were final drafts of the four school self-assessment tools (school management, teachers, students and community members) as well as a User’s Guide. These documents were shared with staff of other international organization-funded projects working on standards application; a dialogue was initiated in order to coordinate such efforts (AIR, AED, et al., 2006a and 2006b).

Following the Alexandria workshop, standards support teams (with ERP staff support) conducted one-day seminars for a total of 350 members of community development centers and boards of trustees in the seven governorates on the use of standards for assessment and planning (AIR, AED, et al., 2006b). Furthermore, standards support teams organized refresher trainings for members of quality teams from each ERP-supported school during the third and fourth quarters of 2006. The trainings also introduced to the link between the self-assessment process and school accreditation (AIR, AED, et al., 2006c and 2006d). Subsequently, 200 schools implemented self-assessments using the tools focused on the standards domains of Effective Schools and Community Participation. As another strategy for raising awareness of school communities regarding the importance of standards-based reform, including standards-based school assessment and improvement, the standards support teams in the seven governorates developed a plan for a competition to determine the best School Reform Portfolio (AIR, AED, et al., 2006c and 2006d).

To summarize, by the end of March 2007, despite various challenges, MOE personnel constituting the governorate standards support teams and school quality teams – with the assistance of ERP staff and consultants – helped raise awareness about national standards in at least the 248 ERP-supported schools and their communities. Additionally, standards support teams from the seven focal governorates developed a plan for a competition to determine the best School Reform Portfolio (AIR, AED, et al., 2006c and 2006d).

produced school reform reports/portfolios, and drafted (in collaboration with BOTs) school improvement plans. In some focal governorates, the school self-assessment results were used to rank order schools according to their capacities to achieve the standards-based indicators.

MOE Personnel’s Perceptions on the Applications of Standards

Perceived Accomplishments of the Standards and Quality Teams

When asked about the teams’ accomplishments, 6 out of 133 participants reported limited knowledge about the work of the standards support teams and the quality teams. This was the case for 5 out of 8 participants in the Local System Administrators group in Aswan, which involved individuals who had been appointed just prior to the interviews being conducted: “I do not know anything about these teams.” “This is the first time that I heard about these teams.” “We might know the people but we do not know their work or their activities.” In addition, one participant in Bani-Suef local system administrator mentioned: “This is the first time for me to hear such a thing. I do not have enough information; I am taking notes exactly like you …”

However, a large majority of participants not only was knowledgeable about the teams but identified positive accomplishments. They agreed that the most important accomplishment of the standards and the quality teams included: a) creating awareness about standards and promoting a culture of standards; b) developing rubrics for the standards; c) implementing school self-assessment (including the school’s vision, mission, and improvement plan); and d) enhancing school-community participation. Illustrative quotes include:

“The most important accomplishment for the standards support team … [was] for teachers, school principals and … supervisors to … develop rubrics and to constitute a team responsible for implementing school self-assessment[, which] was the first and leading experience in the whole governorate …” (Alexandria Local System Administrator)

“We promoted the culture of standards and the most important accomplishment is that we now know where we are as schools … We enabled schools to develop a portfolio for its achievement …” (Aswan Standards Support Team Member)

“After we returned from a study abroad program we were asked to develop a plan for school self-assessment and improvement; we focused on students’ dropout problem. We were able to determine the reasons for this problem, develop its improvement plan, and recruit volunteers from teachers to help students. However, the plan stopped; I do not know why.” (Bani-Suef School Administrator)

“[The most important accomplishment was] the school self-assessment and the expansion of the NSP document, February 2007.
of such culture made teachers think of their performance and their weaknesses … Instead of trying to hide their problems they are now trying to fix such problems, aiming at improvement.” (Minia Local System Administrator)

It is important to mention that in Fayoum, although the 8 participants in the Local System Administrators group knew about the activities of the standards and quality teams, they expressed some reservations regarding how much of a real impact the teams had on schools, both those receiving direct ERP support and others in the governorate: “It is not clear for most schools what the quality team is? Maybe it is clear at the reform schools because they received training …” “There is no impact for the quality team on schools; only some posters and reports, that is all, words on paper …” “The culture of standards is spread at the 40 [ERP-supported] schools, but this is all on paper and nothing was implemented …”

Factors Influencing Effectiveness of Teams

When asked about the factors that helped the teams to achieve their accomplishments, interviewees mentioned the following: a) creating change agents, groups, or teams to promote cultural change with a careful selection for the team members; b) getting the support needed from leaders and people in charge; c) receiving training, capacity building activities, and technical support; d) engaging in exchanges and learning lessons from the experiences of colleagues in other governorates; and e) participating in study abroad programs. These experiences helped members of the standards and quality teams to recognize the need for change, develop the confidence in their ability to make changes, and function with a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. The following give a sense of the comments by interviewees:

“ERP’s support for these teams’ activities, organizing a lot of meetings and training programs and providing experts in areas such as educational quality and standards, actually helped the quality teams very much” (Alexandria Local System Administrators).

“The extensive training that we received inside and outside Egypt helped us a lot.” (Alexandria School Administrator)

“The support from the leaders is very important; the idarra (district) director supports what we do and this is very encouraging.” (Aswan Standards Support Team Member)

“The team was interested and believed in its work … The schools were also interested; without the school’s interest we would not be able to do what we have done.” (Fayoum School Administrator)

“The team members were carefully selected and worked voluntarily…” (Qena School Administrator)
In discussing what limited the effectiveness of the efforts of standards support and school quality teams, interviewees noted the following structural factors: a) the poor facilities in schools, b) the lack of financial and other incentives to become involved, c) the heavy workload of teachers and other school staff, d) the absence of formal system roles for the standards support and school quality teams, e) the scheduling conflicts for training and exams; and f) the restrictions on community members’ school visits because of security requirements. They also mentioned the following interpersonal factors that limited the effectiveness of these teams, for example: g) the lack of cooperation by some school leaders, h) the lack of transparency and exchange of information across system levels, i) the lack of coordination among different reform projects, and j) teachers being transferred from their schools or idarras not long after they have received training. For example:

“The load of work for teachers made it hard to involve them in training.” (Alexandria Standards Support Team Member)

“There is no reward system for schools’ participation in reform efforts … [and] the team does not have a formal stand. … For example, I remember calling one of the school principals a million times and every time he/she was coming up with an excuse.” (Aswan Standards Support Team Member)

“Some members of the standards support team were moved from their schools to other schools. This was after they received a lot of training.” (Aswan Local System Administrator)

“The team includes community members and they have the tendency to work… There should be some flexibility from the muddiriya [officials] that allows these members to enter school and implement their positive ideas. How can we call for effective community participation but do not allow them to enter school?” (Fayoum Standards Support Team Member)

“Schools in AboKorkas have poor facilities and limited equipment. They operate in two shifts… These schools are not ready for reform …” (Minia Local System Administrator)

**Suggestions for Improving ERP’s Activities**

Moreover, in discussing how ERP activities could have contributed more positively to the work of standards support and quality teams, interviewees focused on expanding and improving training and follow-up activities, especially in relation to developing and implementing school improvement plans. For example:

“The quality team with all its accomplishments; does not have indicators for success. Their work stopped at the stage of providing suggestions for school improvement and they did not receive any training on how to develop this plan and how to implement it.” (Alexandria...
School Administrator)

“If the team receives more follow-up it will get more work done.” (Aswan Standards Support Team Member)

“Some training programs needed more time, as for example the training in school portfolio.” (Qena Standards Support Team Member)

“The training should have expanded to include school principals, supervisors, and even administrators and not to be limited to teachers only. This would make it more beneficial as for example the training in school self assessment, this was a very important training.” (Qena Local System Administrator).

“The reform should not be limited to the Fayoum idarra. Other schools should be included under the reform umbrella.” (Fayoum Standards Support Team Member)

Discussion and Implications

The overall interview findings highlight many important factors that would constrain or promote change. It is evidenced that creating advocates of reform at different levels of the system through awareness raising activities facilitates the implementation of reform. However, these activities need to be combined with actions that demonstrate systemic change toward better educational quality. For examples, the campaign undertaken by the standards support team and the quality team was criticized for being a rhetoric movement. Some interviewees believed that, "there is no impact for the quality team on schools; only some posters and reports, that is all, words on paper;” “the culture of standards is spread…, but this is all on paper and nothing was implemented.” The main reasons identified for such perceptions include for examples a) the lack of actions toward improving school infrastructure (i.e., laboratories, equipment, library, condition of buildings, classrooms, playgrounds, etc.) whether through community's or government's fund, b) the persistence of a bureaucratic, centralized management system that restricts school autonomy, and c) the absence of a rewarding system for individual and group who take initiatives to enhance learning and teaching.

In addition, changing leadership appears to affect negatively the reform process if new leaders are not well oriented about processes undertaken, progress achieved, and next steps. Some interviewees who serve as district (idarra) directors were actually informed about the process for implementing national education standards in their schools during the interviews; the reason was said to be their recent appointments in their current leadership positions. Thus, when a government embarks on an institutional, systemic reform it needs to integrate orientation programs about the reform agenda addressed to new leaders in order to ensure sustainability.

Moreover, although technical support provided by funded projects to implement reform is celebrated monitoring the impact of these projects is crucial. Interviewees perceived positively
the Education Reform Program's activities and the impact of its training and study abroad programs on enhancing their capacities. From their perspectives, these enabled them to promote the culture of standards and to conduct school self-assessment. Nonetheless, they expressed the needs to have indicators for success of reform efforts and to organize follow-up programs that guide them in the implementation of next step (school improvement plan). Furthermore, they believed that expanding training programs and involving different education groups (teachers, principals, supervisors, and administrators) would improve and facilitate the use of standards in conducting school-based reform toward improving the quality of education.

Conclusion

According to a variety of international and regional reports, the Arab States are in urgent need for reforming their educational policies and practices. A serious call for adopting new approaches that would ensure equity and quality of education has been heard in many Arab countries. Yet, there are many challenges to overcome and many promises to fulfill. Egypt has embarked on several education reform programs. This research drew on document review to describe the processes involved in one of the major Egyptian initiatives to improve educational quality through the implementation of national standards and school self-assessment. It illuminated some of the challenges faced as well as the activities undertaken in this regard, including collaborative planning and various efforts to promote standards awareness and facilitate school-self assessment. The latter activities included: a) constituting governorate-based standards support teams; b) constituting school-based quality teams; c) developing, piloting, and refining the assessment tools (related to effective schools and community participation standards); d) diffusing and facilitating use of the assessment tools; and e) initiating the development of tools in other areas of standards (i.e., administrator and teacher). The findings from the focus groups with various MOE personnel, indicated a positive assessment of the accomplishments of the governorate-based standards support teams and the school-based quality teams. Interviewees also identified factors that facilitated the work of these teams as well as factors that limited their accomplishments. For example, creating change agents, groups, or teams to promote cultural change with a careful selection for the team members promotes success while the lack of transparency and exchange of information across system levels constrains achievement. This research explained how advocating for reform at different levels of the system facilitates its implementation but needs to be combined with actions that demonstrate systemic change toward better educational quality. It also exhibited how with the dynamic of reform changes occur but challenges persist and high educational quality remains a promise.
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CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUPPORT TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN EGYPT: A CASE STUDY OF THE HUMAN FOUNDATION ORGANIZATION

Shaimaa Awad

With the rise of globalization and the need to have a set of universal values respected by all humanity regardless of differences in cultures or religious beliefs, the importance of global citizenship education has emerged. As mentioned by many scholars that we live in a highly connected and interdependent world, where the actions of some citizens on one side of the globe greatly affect other people’s lives, thus all our lives, jobs and even the food we eat are also connected and affected by global growth. Thus, it is becoming profoundly needed to get a generation of people who are fully aware of and able to meet the current problems that confront humanity. Research showed that the more the notion of interconnectedness and interdependence of the world is recognized, the more the need for having some universal values like tolerance, fairness, acceptance, compassion and respect for diversity that help in stimulating a sense of universal belonging and oneness with the humanity. These constitute basic global citizenship values. This study focuses on the experience of a civil society organization in implementing a character building program for Egyptian children. Theoretically, the study is grounded in relevant literature and theories related to the field of global citizenship education, especially in terms of dealing with the moral aspects of it. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative approach. This includes a) undertaking document reviews of the program’s purposes, components and procedures of implementation; b) collecting qualitative data using a survey with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews with the program designer, twelve trainers, three public school social counselors who facilitated the implementation of this program at some public schools; and c) conducting observation of the program implementation in two classrooms in a private school. Findings of the study revealed that the civil society organization examined in this case study and its education program support school and community in building well-rounded Egyptian characters who possess moral values and manifest those values in their relationships with others. This perceived impact of the program is aligned with other programs for promoting global citizenship and the required traits of global citizens. The study recommends the integration of similar character education programs in Egyptian schools, which would act as a beginning for introducing Global Citizenship Education to Egyptian students.

Introduction

We live in a highly connected and interdependent world, where the actions of citizens on one side of the globe greatly affect other citizen’s lives. All aspects our lives, from our jobs to even the food we eat are connected and impacted by the global growth (Zahabioun, Yousefy, Yarmohammadian & Keshtiaray, 2013). Therefore, it is becoming profoundly necessary to develop a generation of people who are fully aware of and able to meet the current (global) problems that confront humanity. This can be achieved through education. It is greatly acknowledged that education plays an important role in transforming the lives of children and
youth, and thus helps in developing their values, attitudes and personal behaviors (need citation). It is through the young people’s capacity and positive contribution to their societies that individual, economic and social lives can be improved (Education Above All, 2012). According to Oxfam (2006), Education has the power to change the whole world as it works on today’s children who will be tomorrow’s adults.

The more people become aware of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the world, the more there is a need for having some universal values like tolerance, fairness, acceptance, compassion and respect for diversity that help in stimulating a sense of universal belonging and oneness with the humanity. Therefore, these universal values of global interdependence have been constituted as basic values for global citizenship (Gibson & Landwehr-Brown, 2009).

All the previous factors highlight the importance of having a kind of education that prepares children to become well rounded and active citizens in a globalized world. Based on a research conducted by an Egyptian scholar, building and developing students’ characters is often overlooked, minimized, or might not be considered a priority in many schools especially when it comes to Egypt (AbdelKerim, F. 2014).

This study examines and evaluates a character-building initiative created by The Human Foundation, entitled “Be Yourself: Focused, Free & Fulfilled.” The Human Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that has implemented this program in some Egyptian private schools. The study seeks to reveal the extent to which the Be Yourself program provides an introduction for ideas connected to global citizenship education and builds a foundation for constructing global citizens in Egypt. Furthermore, the study also investigates how such programs might contribute to the global discourse on constructing and educating global citizens.

Global Citizenship

As per the literature in trying to define “Global Citizenship,” it seems that there is no definite agreement upon defining the term. It might give the meaning of surpassing the obstacles and differences whether they were ethnic, religious or racial (Zahabioun et al., 2013). According to UNESCO (2013), global citizenship has been called by some as “citizenship beyond borders” or “citizenship beyond the nation state.” Others suggested that the term “cosmopolitanism” might act as a broader term. There is also a suggestion for calling it “planetary citizenship” as it strongly relates to preserving the planet Earth (UNESCO, 2013).

Global citizenship refers to the membership in the global community; it emerged as a new way to define rights and responsibilities and above all a sense of social belonging to the whole world. (Zahabioun et al., 2013). Global citizenship does not refer to a legal state; however it is more related to “a sense of belonging to the global community and common humanity, with its presumed members experiencing solidarity and collective identity among themselves and collective responsibility at the global level. Global citizenship can be seen as an ethos/metaphor rather than a formal membership” (UNESCO, 2013. p. 3).

According to Gibson & Landwehr-Brown (2009), a basic idea of global citizenship is the “understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of humanity and an acceptance of universal responsibility leading to global consciousness” (p.306). During the current 21st century, the extensive amount of information and technological means of communication caused the inevitable worldwide interconnectedness and interdependence. These facilities contributed to
the development of the ordinary citizens and transformed them into global citizens through creating virtual spaces.

Due to the rapid and dramatic global changes that have been taking place on the social, cultural, economic, and technological levels, there is a significant need for developing a universal code of ethics. One of the aspects of global citizenship is that it is believed to be a moral concept. This is related to the fact that in today’s world many people are dependent on each other. Thus the world becomes a moral concept and global citizenship is strongly connected and linked to ethics (Zahabioun et al., 2013). Accordingly, people should feel their moral or ethical responsibilities towards others (Feature Report on citizenship, 2008). Thus, the term “global citizenship” might constitute an implication for an ethically motivated action on global problems (Feature Report on citizenship, 2008).

On another level, the traditionally family unit has been greatly affected and developed in order to cope with such major worldly changes. Thus, society became more dependent on schools in order to instill morals and values into the coming generations. Technology and the Internet also play major roles in the next generations’ lives and the way they communicate with each other; the role of human interaction has been much reduced in this virtual world, which consequently affected cultural transmission. Thus, the students’ sense of belonging to the community both nationally and globally has been greatly affected (Gibson & Landwehr-Brown, 2009).

Global Citizenship Education & Its Importance

According to Oxfam (2006), "Education for Global Citizenship" enables children to think critically of global matters and qualifies them with the abilities to express their own values while listening to others’ views and respect them. It also helps them to develop a sense of empathy to others and to the whole planet. Global citizenship education equips the students with the needed values and attitudes that support them in order to attain a healthy life and relationships within their societies and globally. Global Citizenship education helps students to develop a wider perspective of life (Zahabioun et al., 2013). In a recent report, UNESCO defined global citizenship education as “a framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9).

The goal behind citizenship education has been observed as to prepare students to play active roles in their schools, families, and societies as well as on the global level. This is in addition to their active participation and responsibility towards other human beings and the planet Earth at large (Education above All, 2012). The goal behind global citizenship education is to empower learners to engage actively, playing active roles on both the local and the global levels in order to participate in solving the global challenges and to succeed in having a more just, tolerant and inclusive world (UNESCO, 2013 & 2014).

International Discourse on Global Citizenship Education

In a globalized world, the mandatory role of education in emphasizing the importance of human values and attitudes in addition to the communication skills as an added value and of the same importance to the cognitive knowledge and skills. “The Global Education First Initiative” that was launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2012 comprises global citizenship education
as its third priority in addition to putting every child in school and improving the quality of learning as its first two priorities (UNESCO, 2013).

According to UNICEF (2013), good quality education is supposed to equip people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to enable them to learn to live together as active citizens both on the national and the global levels. Most of the consultations highlighted the need for an education agenda, which would help in preparing children, youth and even adults to become active citizens who would participate and engage in transforming their societies and the whole world at large. This point affirms the goals of the UN Secretary General’s Education First Initiative (UNICEF, 2013). Education for global citizenship “means embracing a more holistic view of what kind of skills and attitudes are needed in our world today. While skills for jobs are important, so are skills for living together” (Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, participant in online consultations on Education as quoted in UNICEF, 2013, p.26).

Furthermore, there are numerous and different approaches and programs through which global citizenship can be promoted such as those offered by civil society (UNICEF, 2013). Global citizenship education can be delivered either in formal, non-formal or informal education modes and venues. However, if it is delivered in a formal system, it still needs to be complemented by both non-formal and informal systems (UNESCO, 2013).

The Global Citizen

Today’s citizen is considered a member of a global community and accordingly is required to receive an education, which qualifies him/her to deal with the challenges that might confront him/her. As mentioned earlier, s/he needs to have a state of open-mindedness and to develop a sense of belonging to the bigger community, which is the world. A global citizen should have a sense of responsibility and connectivity towards others not only on the local level but on the global level as well. S/he should develop a strong bond to all human beings through mutual relations that reveal a sense of understanding and concern (Zahabioun et al., 2013). As Zahabioun et al state, “A global citizen is a member of a wider community consisting of all humanity that transposes (his/her) sense of identity, loyalty and commitment beyond the nation state” (p. 198).

As a member in a global community, a global citizen needs to acquire all the necessary values, skills and knowledge that enable him/her to deal with a world of diverse religions, nationalities, ideologies, races, etc.; this can only be accomplished through education (Zahabioun et al., 2013). “Young people need to be able to make sense of their place in a complex world and move towards shaping that world for the better” (Development Education Association United Kingdom, 2002 as cited in Zahabioun et al., 2013. p. 198). As advised in Zahabioun et al. (2013) students need to be educated in ethics, knowledge and attitudes that would empower them to live in a global society.

Global Citizenship Education Curriculum Goals and Pedagogies

A curriculum for global citizenship needs to stress the following goals and learning objectives:

- To develop global citizens in relation to culture, language and learning to live together.
- To instill and develop in students a set of universal values. (Zahabioun et al., 2013)
As advised in Education above All (2012) that there are various ways through which education for global citizenship can be inserted into the school program, both explicitly and implicitly. For example, the active engagement and participation of students throughout the learning experience is highly encouraged. Also lessons and activities need to relate to students’ perceptions and life experiences and thus have a transformative effect on their personalities. This is called a “compound learning” approach.

In order for this “compound learning” process to take place there are some activities that can be used like “stimulus activity” which engages the student personally and is then followed by discussion to link the activity to the key values and behavioral learning objectives (Education above All, 2012).

The first kind of these stimulus activities is done through the use of stories. Stories help in arousing students’ empathy and help in introducing different values, skills and concepts related to global citizenship education. They also attract students’ interest and attention on both the emotional and personal levels. The second type is done through the use of photographs and pictures as a picture can also act as a story used to elicit from students some personal feelings and evoke in them certain hidden values and morals (Education above All, 2012).

Game-like activities and role-playing are another form of stimulus activities. They help to strongly connect the activity and values to students’ personal lives. In addition, they help in introducing and developing fundamental concepts and values, which play a vital role in behavior change and the development of values. Cultural and religious references can also act as a stimulus activity, as they can be done through some traditional sayings and stories. It is advised that they can be introduced without mentioning or preferring some persons or beliefs to others. This helps in making students’ aware of other religions and increases the sense of respect and awareness of diversity amongst them. Last but not least, is the use of expressive activities like art, drama, creative writing, music and dancing which stimulate students’ emotions and involve their personal identities. It also encounters the psychological needs of students and helps them to freely express their feelings and emotions (Education above All, 2012).

Challenges and Constraints for Global Citizenship Education

Global citizenship education is faced by many tensions. The most important challenge is the tension between the national and the global identities. This is a main issue especially in the countries where identity is a very sensitive issue and attaining the national identity itself is a problem and considered a challenge (UNESCO, 2013). The problem in many nations when developing curricula for citizenship education is that they work only on developing citizens who can function within the nation borders and not globally, however the fact is “Globalization and nationalism are contradictory but coexisting trends and forces in the world today” (Banks, 2004, p.6). Citizenship education should develop in order to cope with the requirements and needs of students in the 21st century. It should help students to recognize that “no local loyalty can ever justify forgetting that each human being has responsibilities to every other” (Banks, 2008 as cited in Zahabion et al., 2013. p199).

It is acknowledged that “The increasing importance of cross-border flows and networks undermines the principles of the nation-state as the predominant site for organizing economic, political, cultural, and social life” (Banks, 2004, p.18). That’s why there is essential need to
develop a kind of civic education that enables students to live and act within their national context as well as abroad. According to Banks (2004), citizenship education has to strengthen students’ relation and sense of belonging to their cultural attachments as well as their ability to praise and respect other cultures and identities. It also has to qualify them to be able to live in other cultural communities through helping them developing the needed skills and attitudes. Banks (2004) believed that individuals can endorse “multiple identifications and attachments, including attachments to their cultural community, their nation, and to (the world and humanity in general)” (Banks, 2004, p.8).

As per "Education above All" (2012), there are numerous constraints and challenges that might encounter the implementation of global citizenship education, among which is the human resource constraint. This is exemplified in teachers’ educational background as it plays a great role; if they were raised up and exposed only to traditional methods of learning, they would find it very difficult and even challenging to use creative methods of teaching like facilitating dialogue and discussions in class. Limited material resources constitute another challenge to education for global citizenship. The lack or scarcity of resources like libraries, access to the internet and even working in crowded classrooms might hinder the application of stimulus activities. Another constraint can be found in timetables; time assigned for active learning, discussion and extra-curricular activities is very limited as in some schools there are two “shifts” per day. In addition to the fact that in some unprivileged schools, students still have to copy from the blackboard which consumes a lot of time. The last constraint is that of the sensitivity of the subject matter and this happens in some countries after a time of conflict where teachers might find it very difficult to open or enhance a class discussion on topics like respect for others’ opinions or accepting diversities (Education above All, 2012).

Character Education

There are many ways in which we can divide the approaches to global citizenship education among which is the distinction between “soft” and “critical” global citizenship education. In the ‘soft’ approach, morals act as the starting point for global citizenship education and it is centered on the moral and ethical notion of the oneness of humanity and the need for universal ethics (Tawil, 2013). On the other hand, the ‘critical’ approach has to deal more with the concepts of social justice and human rights. This study focuses on the ‘soft’ approach as it emphasizes the importance of morals and values and the role they play in developing the characters of citizens. Accordingly, character education can play a pivotal role in constructing and developing students’ characters.

The Relationship between Character Education and Citizenship Education

In a study that was conducted by Althof, & Berkowitz (2006) the interrelations between the roles of educating for character including moral and character education and educating for citizenship including civic education and citizenship skills and dispositions were explored. The study also highlights the role of schools in developing students’ characters to become moral citizens in democratic societies and this necessitates a great focus on moral development, character development, teaching of civics and citizenship skills. The researchers conclude that integrating all the previous kinds of education are very important to have a liberal democratic society. According to Althof & Berkowitz (2006), both character education and citizenship education share many dispositions of personality traits, values and motives, such as: “social justice, honesty, personal and social responsibility, equality… Of course there are some character
dispositions that are less central to citizenship and vice versa, but the overall set has great overlap” (p.512-513).

The previous overlap between character education and citizenship education lead us to describe a “civic character”. Boston (2005) describes a civic character as “responsible moral action that serves the common good” (p. 5). Another definition can be found in Arthur, Arthur, Davies, & Hahn (2008) which defines a civic character as “the set of dispositions and the skills that motivate and enable an individual to effectively and responsibly participate in the public sphere in order to serve the common good” (p. 402).

The Egyptian Context

The Ministry of Education set a new strategic plan for pre-university education (2014-2030) while taking into consideration the different contexts that affect and are affected by education such as the national and the global contexts as well as the economic, cultural and political contexts which are the most relevant for the focus of this research.

According to the Ministry of Education (2014), culture plays a major role in determining the future and the societal interactions between people in any country. It is believed that the contemporary world goes through radical transformations that constitute a cultural revolution which has long term effects on societies and cause a deep gap between what has been achieved through technology and the cultural beliefs in some conservative communities. This progress in technology and means of communication that eliminated distances between people living in different parts of the world and put the future in the hands of the more developed countries that through the communication means can export their knowledge, culture and values. The Ministry of Education believes that this constitutes a huge challenge that Egypt has to confront through education (Ministry of Education 2014). It is believed that if the culture of the society in the receiving country is strong enough, it can easily absorb these intruding cultural aspects without being affected itself and without losing its identity. However, if the culture is weak, it will be affected by whatever it receives (MOE, 2014).

It has been observed that the Egyptian society has suffered lately from many social transformations that drastically affected its culture and values in a negative way. This caused the failure of social institutions such as the family, the school and the whole education system to raise their members in accordance with the correct culture and values. This resulted in having many negative phenomena such as the disintegration of the family bonding, the weakening of the impact of education on culture and the collapse of moral and ethical values (MOE, 2014). Currently, the Egyptian society and its culture are believed to be suffering from becoming weak, loose and losing its identity. This is caused through the weakness that hit its political and social institutions in the previous years. In addition, it is worth mentioning that political systems didn’t pay much attention to strengthening and preserving the societal values and culture. Egypt’s cultural crisis is the result of its lagging behind from the contemporary world’s needs and demands (MOE, 2014).

Another important factor that affected education in Egypt is the political system as Egypt has been going through a status of unrest especially after the January 25th Revolution 2011; this stage is considered as a transitional period aiming at triggering change to confront the challenges and demands of the revolution. Thus education has to play an important role in this critical period through developing the political awareness and political participation of citizens, enhancing the values of democracy, freedom, citizenship, tolerance and acceptance of others. But unfortunately, as Egyptians were not used to such values and notions they misused their freedom
A Higher Purpose for Education, the Amended Constitution of 2014

In the amended Egyptian constitution (2014), education has been given a great importance and priority as it was linked to a list of objectives and a higher purpose that needs to be fulfilled by the Ministry of Education and any authorities that have to deal with the educational process (Makar, 2013). These objectives are made clear in the following article from the constitution:

Article (19)

Every citizen has the right to education. The goals of education are to build the Egyptian character, preserve the national identity, root the scientific method of thinking, develop talents and promote innovation, establish cultural and spiritual values, and found the concepts of citizenship, tolerance and non-discrimination. The State shall observe the goals of education in the educational curricula and methods, and provide education in accordance with international quality standards. (Amended Constitution, 2014)

The higher purpose of education in this constitution is to “build the Egyptian character (and to) preserve the national identity” and this is what makes the aim behind education in this constitution really unique and distinguished from the previous constitutions that only stated that education was a right for all Egyptians. Developing 21st century skills like creativity and innovation, in addition to values of citizenship, tolerance and non-discrimination were also highlighted and prioritized as they were given special significance in the same article.

It is worth mentioning that “preserving the national identity” of Egyptians has lately been the focus of attention in the Egyptian society especially after the one year rule of the Muslim Brotherhood and their trials to transform the Egyptian identity and Egyptians (Makar, 2013). Thus, it was very important to include it in the amended constitution under the main aim behind education; this can only be achieved through building the Egyptian character.

The Egyptian Identity

Identity is about belonging. It is about what one has in common with some and what distinguishes oneself from other people. Identity is about relationships and involvements with one’s forefathers, which in modern societies are very complex; it is about contradictions and values we share with others. At its best, Identity gives us a sense of personal location, a sense of a stable core to one’s individuality. On a societal level, the notion of identity is a key for social integration. It holds a society together or tears it apart. (Taha, 2011, p.2)

The Egyptian identity is believed to have been affected after the revolution of 1952 and under the rule of President Gamal Abdel Nasser who believed in the unity of the Arab States and Arab nationalism. “Egypt’s official name became the Arab Republic of Egypt—as opposed to simply the Republic of Egypt…. (this) was a short push to an Islamic identity” (Ibrahim, 2011, p.1). For years, the Muslim Brotherhood tried to impact the Egyptian society by their beliefs and
conservative values. Thus, it was their chance after Egypt’s second revolution in 2011, and electing one of their leaders; President Morsi as the first elected president for Egypt after the revolution that they officially started to impose their social values on society. This was clear through the constitution that was passed by the fundamentalist and which contained many restrictions on freedom of faith and expression. They also used education to pass through the same conservative values using the appointed brothers who worked in the Ministry of Education. Those members tried to change and remove sections from the national curricula which described their violent history (Nawara, 2013).

It was obvious that “The Muslim Brotherhood ideology didn’t acknowledge the concept of the nation-state and calls instead for a monolithic Islamic nation [Al Ummah Al-Islamiya] that ignores national borders” (Nawara, 2013, p.2). Accordingly, Egyptians rose up against Morsi and his government in June 30th Revolution as they felt the threat that might affect Egypt’s future as a nation and their identity as Egyptians. People (Muslims and Non-muslims) were very angry and protective of their culture and their way of living that they refused to change. So “if the January 25th revolution was about freedom, justice and dignity, the protests of June 30th were about Egyptians salvaging their Egyptian identity” (Nawara, 2013, p.2).

However, it is becoming currently difficult to identify the values that characterize the Egyptian identity. The Egyptian society is becoming more contradictory than ever as it is claimed to be religious and conservative while at the same time sexual harassment and violence are prevailing. Unfortunately, it is obvious that there is deterioration of values and that “Egypt has experienced a major setback in some of the moral values that used to constitute an integral part of society, such as honour, dignity, trust, and respect.” (Nosseir, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, quoting Nosseir “Identity should reflect the behavior of mainstream Egyptians, habits and traditions that they have been practicing for centuries and that will serve to unite society, instead of discriminating among its members or polarizing them” (Nosseir, 2014, p. 4)

Last but not least is how “Egyptian Identity” is perceived by young Egyptians. In a study that was conducted on young Egyptians to find their perceptions about what being an Egyptian means to them showed a variety of responses. Some of them believed that being Egyptian included different dimensions as Egyptian, African, Arab and Muslim. On the other hand, some identified themselves as being Muslims as they see that one’s identification with his/her religion is superior than being Egyptian. This perception was not restricted to religious people only but with others who are not religiously committed too. Another group identified themselves as Egyptians and expressed that they are proud to be. They related this to the fact that they were “born, raised, educated, and having their families and their friends in the country” (Taha, 2011, p.6). One of the participants believed that “the Egyptian identity is older and more developed than the Arab, Muslim or other related identities” (Taha, 2011, p.6). One of the most interesting findings in this study is that a big portion of the sample identified themselves as being “human and belonging to humanity”. But this mostly related to the fact that they were unsatisfied with the political and socioeconomic conditions in Egypt.

In the same study, young Egyptians were asked about the relationship between identity and belonging. The findings showed that “there are degrees of loyalty to Egypt among Egyptian youth” (Taha, 2011, p.8). There are those who, out of their love for Egypt are willing to work so hard in order to help improve the country’s situation. Others have been critical but out of their love for Egypt. On the other hand there were those whose sense of belonging have weakened and they have blamed this on the deteriorating political and socioeconomic conditions caused Egypt
to retreat into a degraded position among other countries. This resulted in Egyptians being treated in a disrespectful manner by others (Taha, 2011).

The previous section on the Egyptian national identity invited the review of citizenship education in Egypt where “preserving national identity” is one of the main objectives. This will be covered in the following section.

**Citizenship Education in Egypt**

The information in this section on citizenship education in Egypt is mainly based on the findings of two studies that were basically Masters Theses. Findings from the first study constitute the results of the content analysis of Egyptian citizenship education textbooks (Ali, 2014). While the other represents the perceptions of citizenship education in Egypt from the perspectives of public middle school students, parents, teachers, administrators and education activists (Omar, 2013). These two studies symbolize the comparison between the current situation of citizenship education represented in the content analysis of the currently used textbooks, and how it needs to be reformed into a more practical approach as reflected in the participants’ responses for the future of citizenship education and what the most appropriate approach for teaching it.

In the first study and according to Ali (2014), the findings of the content analysis of citizenship education textbooks in Egypt show that there was a progress achieved in the content of the books after the January 25th revolution in 2011. The Ministry of Education started to give more attention to the content of textbooks, thus developing it from only focusing on historical emphasis on citizenship to more focus on the principles and goals of citizenship. Although there was information about values and attitudes that reflect a good profile of good citizenship, still citizenship needs more practice than theory as “citizenship education is a humanity discipline, which means that acquiring it cannot be measured by exams and rhetoric questions” (Ali, 2014, p.162). Ali (2014) also explained that the fact that citizenship education is a pass/fail subject makes it a marginalized subject that is not given the same importance like the other subjects which are being graded. Thus, in her recommendations for a better practice of citizenship education Ali (2014) proposed that “active learning and practice is a need for reaching an applicable level of education for citizenship…..A healthy cycle of education has three main factors; a good content supported by a good teacher (pedagogy) which would result in educated students (citizens)” (p.164) and that “Egyptians, to a large extent, are in urgent need for education that promotes applicable understanding of coexistence, acceptance of diversity and respect for freedoms” (Ali, 2014, p.161).

In another study that was conducted to investigate the perceptions of citizenship education in a public middle school in Egypt, participants were asked about the appropriate approach and the suggested topics from their perspectives. The participants were divided into four categories: students, parents, teachers and school administrators, and education activists (Omar, 2013). Most of the respondents articulated that teaching citizenship education has to be “skill-based”. Teachers and administrators believed that non-formal and informal approach is the most suitable and successful one but they expressed that it needs readiness and skills from the teachers, thus they preferred the formal approach which they are familiar to. However, teachers showed interest in learning about the non-formal approach (Omar, 2013).

When asked about the topics that need to be included in the curriculum of citizenship education, almost all the respondents stressed the importance of focusing on morals as a
basis for citizenship. Students emphasized that “they need to learn how to build their personality... (and that) no one can be a good citizen unless he is a balanced, confident person” (Omar, 2013, p.22). Parents also suggested teaching morals as conscience and honesty. Teachers’ support for teaching morals is very obvious in quoting one of them who said: “Morals is prior to citizenship. Morals are the main motivator for citizenship.” They also emphasized that “building a confident personality of students is prior to citizenship education” (Omar, 2013, p.24). Last but not least, education activists believed that “building self-esteem of the students is also prior to constructing citizenship”. (Omar, 2013, p.27)

Civil Society and Education

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Civil society organizations are “autonomous, voluntary, not-for-profit associations that have a structured governance and organizational framework. They operate within boundaries defined by legislation and defend the public interest outside of the political realm” (EHDR, 2008, P.5). They include “non-state and non-market bodies” and they vary according to their “purpose, philosophy, expertise and scope of activities.” They comprise organizations with “a philanthropic or services orientation, community associations, associations reflecting special interests such as business, advocacy groups to defend the ‘collective benefit’ and professional groups such as syndicates” (EHDR, 2008, P.5). There are a variety of factors and conditions that affect the nature of a society and thus the nature of CSOs such as political values, privatization, the percentage of women’s participation in the labor force, young population, and globalization (EDHR, 2008).

Civil Society’s Support to Education in Egypt

A Brief History of NGOs in Egypt

Since their establishment in Egypt, NGOs played a great role in providing many services in the fields of health care, social assistance and educational services. In addition to the previous, and through the past three decades, they paid attention to local development, women’s and children’s issues and problems, human rights, and protecting the environment. They also had many projects through which they tried to contribute in solving problems like combating poverty and unemployment (Ministry of Education Portal). They also had projects that supported both formal and informal education.

The Role of NGOs in Supporting Education in Egypt

Based on the vision of the Ministry of Education, the community participation is one of the main themes of the pre-university education and NGOs working in the domain of education is one of the main means for achieving this. The activities of those NGOs vary but they have to be in accordance with the policy and the strategic plan of the Ministry. The role of NGOs and civil society institutions is illustrated through projects that support the educational process through three main domains: first, to support educational function like raising the efficiency of the educational process, technological support, environmental services, literacy, community Schools, one classroom schools and child-friendly schools. Second, to support education profession through offering seminars, lectures and conferences, caring for special needs and stressing the idea of inclusion. Third, to support the link between school and family through
tackling the problem of leakage; spreading social, cultural, health and environmental awareness, and offering social assistance (Ministry of Education Portal).

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### The Human Foundation Organization

This research is a case study of The human foundation, which is a non-profit Egyptian organization that was founded and registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity in 2011. It was first established by Dr. Aliaa Rafea (1) who is a Professor of Anthropology at Ain-Shams University, Women's College. The vision of the organization is to have "A Society where citizens have an equal opportunity to bring forth their human potential by contributing positively to their human and natural environments". Their main mission is to "work to foster human values that cherish freedom, maintain equality and justice, respect diversities, cultivate gender balance, and secure human rights. We are guided by the belief that such values are intrinsically related to fulfillment of human potential." ([http://www.hfegypt.org](http://www.hfegypt.org)). The organization contributes to the development of the social life in Egypt through offering different services and carrying out different projects that help in establishing and founding the concept of knowledge based society. Among those projects is the (Be Yourself) project. ([http://www.hfegypt.org](http://www.hfegypt.org)). Among the organization's program is the "Be Yourself" program. It is a group of personal growth programs designed by Ms. Aisha Rafea. They are built on one philosophical background which is based on the belief that the life of every individual is valuable and that it is through our consciousness and the connection to the innate divine spark inside us that we can discover the higher value of our lives. According to the program’s philosophy "to ‘be oneself’ is to manifest all one’s potentials; spiritual, emotional, mental and physical." Accordingly, this collective consciousness of the

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9Ms. Aisha Rafea is co-founder of the women's group at the Egyptian Society for Spiritual and Cultural Research (ESSCR). She is a devoted writer, researcher and teacher of spirituality. Ms. Rafea pursued free research in the area of spiritual psychology. She has a vision that without spiritual awareness, people turn the most precious divine guidance into dogma and stagnant tradition. Along with her team, Ms. Rafea has designed the True Me: Focused, Free and Fulfilled an international program for the development of human character for children which includes both Islam and interfaith literature. She is also a designer and trainer of a self-help program for adults. The program combines spiritual training techniques and cognitive behavioral therapy tools to help trainees gain consciousness of and connection to their inner divinity where wholeness resides. She co-authored a number of books on Islam and spirituality in English which were also translated into Arabic. She wrote four books and numerous articles in Arabic and participated in several international interfaith conferences in the US and Europe (The Human Foundation, n .d.)
higher value of life would lead a whole society to reach spiritual, psychological and physical balance (Be Yourself Program Presentation, n.d.).

**Research Questions and Methods**

**The Research Questions**

1. How are global citizenship and global citizenship education defined? And what is the international discourse of global citizenship education?

2. What is the national context of education and civil society organizations in Egypt? And what is the nature of education within the "Be Yourself "program of the NGO, The Human Foundation, in terms of its learning objectives, curriculum content, teaching strategies and expected learning outcomes?

3. How do the values promoted through the program in Egypt compare to the discourses on global citizenship education?

4. What are the challenges and opportunities of implementing a similar program in other schools?

To answer the above questions, the research adopts a qualitative research method. It is a case study of the Human Foundation Organization and its program, *Be Yourself: Focused, Free & Fulfilled*. The research depends mainly on document review, individual and focus group interviews, and a survey with open-ended questions for data collection. In addition, observation of the program implementation was conducted in two classrooms in a private school. This would enable the "triangulation" and the validation of the research findings (Patton, 2002).

The research sample is a purposeful sample that included a total of 19 participants, as follows: the program designer, 12 program trainers, 3 social counselors who work in three public schools and attended the program as observers and evaluators of its implementation, 3 trainers whom the researcher observed during the implementation of the program in two classrooms, each classroom included 15 students in grade one.

The research instruments included interviews that were conducted to get in-depth data from the participants in order to understand their perceptions, experiences and feelings about the program. The interviews consisted of a one-time session with the participants who were interviewed individually. The interview questions were in the form of open-ended questions (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). There was also a focus group discussion that was conducted with the program trainers (12) in order to get a deeper understanding of their shared perspectives about the program. This is in addition to an online survey that was sent to a group of the program trainers. Document review was also undertaken to allow for knowing the required information about the organization, its foundation history and the different services it offers. The researcher also conducted a non-participant observation of the program implementation where the researcher was not involved in the situation that is being observed. The researcher used an observation guide (see appendix 4) which helped the researcher in taking field notes and thus organizing and categorizing the data (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Last but not least, the researcher resorted to taking some field notes that included both descriptive and reflective information which record the researcher’s personal reactions, thoughts and experiences during the observation.
Data Analysis

Interview and focus group data were transcribed and developed in Arabic then translated into English. Thematic analysis was conducted to the survey responses along with the qualitative transcript. Most powerful, expressive and representative quotes were identified then integrated in the research findings. Field notes were reviewed and organized systematically in alignment with the qualitative data thematic analysis. The findings of observation were used to support and validate other collected data. Triangulation was ensured based on using several tools for data collection (interviews, focus group, survey with open-ended questions, and observation). In addition, participants in the study included the program designer, trainers and social counselors, plus observation of the implementation of the program inside classrooms helped the validation of research findings.

Findings and Discussion

“Be Yourself” Program

The "Be Yourself" is a group of personal growth programs designed by Ms. Aisha Rafea. They are built on one philosophical background which is based on the belief that the life of every individual is valuable and that it is through our consciousness and the connection to the innate divine spark inside us that we can discover the higher value of our lives. According to the program’s philosophy "to ‘be oneself’ is to manifest all one’s potentials; spiritual, emotional, mental and physical." Accordingly, this collective consciousness of the higher value of life would lead a whole society to reach spiritual, psychological and physical balance (Be Yourself Program Presentation, n.d.)

True Me: Focused, Free and Fulfilled

Philosophy

The basic philosophy of this program is based on the notion that each child is a unique treasure that needs to be discovered and is not a raw material to be moulded according to his/her parents’ or society’s needs. The program also proposes that the core of education is to create a safe and free environment through which the child is encouraged to discover his/her full potentials and the world around.

Vision and Mission

This program is mainly a moral development and a character building program with the aim of fulfilling the following mission: "To raise young souls who are conscious of the honour of being human, and work for making our planet a safe environment for all to realize that high state of being-ness." The program’s vision is founded on how to cultivate "each child’s unique character that s/he was born with."

Objectives and Values Stressed

The program respects each child’s individuality through directing and guiding the child while fully considering her/ his unique character. The program also respects the children’s free thinking through encouraging them to build a dialogue with their inner self as there is a belief
that the child is endowed with a self-observation ability from an early age and through which s/he can observe her/his own actions; the program is designed to "awaken this observer, and support each child to seek being a better person." According to the program, when the child feels that s/he is free and is not obliged by adults to behave in a certain way just to please them, s/he behaves with honesty and sincerity and not out of the intention of pleasing their parents or educators. The program provides the children with this free environment that would help them get rid of any inner conflict and thus be in peace with oneself and the environment.

Children are our hope for a better life for all humanity. In a world full of ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts, we are in great need of creating a different world culture, based on respecting diversities and highlighting connectedness, peace and love among all nations and civilizations (Program proposal, n.d., p.4).

Thus, according to the program description each child gains:

- **High self-esteem** by discovering and appreciating his/her **uniqueness**.
- Analytical, critical and scientific thinking skills.
- A sense of **responsibility** for their wellbeing and that of others.
- **Openness** to the diverse cultures and faiths, old and new and thus experience the sense of the oneness of humanity.
- Encouraging their creativity, and promoting their artistic talents.
- The capability to work in teams with the spirit of completion and integration, not competition.
- The awareness of being good to themselves, to others, to the animal world and to the universe. This awareness is the core of morality, and it brings to their consciousness the extension of life (Be Yourself Program Presentation, n.d.).

The values stressed throughout the program and through the use of stories and discussions are: honesty, selflessness, gratitude, modesty, dedication, patience, forgiveness, tolerance, acceptance, courage, and trust in the sublime order of the universe.

**Tools and Course Duration**

There is a variety of tools used through the implementation of this program. They can be divided into four categories: Mind Mastery, healing storytelling, self-expression and group singing. The Mind Mastery is done using silence exercises like concentration, relaxation, stillness; or through movement exercises like stretching, dancing or walking. The healing storytelling uses stories in the form of fiction, real situations or about great figures. Stories are used because they are believed to cause fun, help in communication and self-discovery. It exposes the students to high values, help them understand the world around them and thus enrich their experience. The self-expression activities are in the form drawing and painting, role playing and games. Last but not least is the group singing where the children stand in a circle and start singing together in a circle of love (Be Yourself Program Proposal).

As for the course duration, it is normally done in sixteen sessions. Each session lasts for ninety minutes. The number of children per session is preferred not to exceed twelve children. The environment or the setting where the session is being taken has to be quiet whether outdoors or indoors ((Be Yourself Program Proposal).
The sequence of the session is as follows (Be Yourself Program Proposal): Exercises for concentration, visualization and mindfulness; storytelling and discussion; activities; and singing in a circle of love.

**The Effect of the Program on both the Trainers and the Target Audience**

The very first step towards becoming a trainer for the "True Me " program is to undergo training in another course which is "Awakening Our Inner Child"; which is another part of the "Be Yourself " program to enable the trainers to deal with the problems that confront them and heal them in order to prepare them to be able to deal with children. So when the trainers were asked about the effect of the program on their characters they were talking about the impact of both courses whether theirs or the children’s.

Almost all the trainers agreed that the program had a very deep impact on their characters and personalities and caused a drastic change in the way they see, react and behave towards different issues in their lives. They mentioned that the program had a healing effect on their characters as it cured their feeling of fear from committing a mistake for example and made them confront their flaws and the shortages in their characters. After undergoing the course, they became more able to express their feelings and desires as the program provided them with the tools to deal with their inner problems and solve them in order to be able to deal with the children and their problems. After going through this process, they became more self-confident, more accepting of themselves and others and more aware of their needs whether emotional or spiritual. They became more capable of dealing with their negative feelings and develop them to give them power to decide on their goals and decisions.

One of the main effects of the program that was recurrent amongst almost most of the participant trainers was that of becoming more accepting of themselves and others. They developed a sense of self-appreciation and acceptance of their flaws as one of the trainers mentioned that "the journey to self-healing and self-actualization starts with acceptance and love...Yes, we all make mistakes, yet we never deserve to be unloved or de-humanized for those mistakes. "This sense of acceptance was the way that led them to "start a journey towards happiness. "They agreed that happiness comes from within oneself when he is more accepting of his flaws and those of others. This developed another very important trait in the trainers’ characters which is that of not being judgemental towards other people’s characters or reactions. This is obvious in one of the trainers’ words: "I learned to criticize people’s ideas and not the people themselves."They learned to see what’s behind the actions and see things from other people’s perspectives.

Another important impact of the program on the trainers’ personalities is that it helped them to develop a sense of inner peace and to get rid of the wrong beliefs and traditions. From their perspective, this sense of inner peace is automatically reflected upon their relationships with others and thus the whole society. Quoting one of the trainers; "I believe that inner peace is a first step towards changing the whole society. "

When the trainers and the public school social counsellors were asked about the impact of the program on the children, their answers reflected in a way or the other that the program had the same effect and changes on the children as it had on them. They expressed that the children
developed a sense of self-appreciation and self-confidence by being provided with the tools that helped them discover their own potentials and capabilities.

The most recurrent privilege of the program and that was highly stressed by most of the trainers was that it provided a safe environment for the children where they can freely express their fears, feelings and problems. It also provides the tools by which they can discover their hidden potentials. This safe environment in addition to the needed tools allow for a space where the children become themselves; to become more creative and to discover their inner beauty which is automatically reflected on their outer character. In that way, the child feels his/her own value which is considered as the key towards any other change without being obligated to follow a certain role model or being moulded into a certain form. As mentioned by one of the trainers that the children at the beginning of the program "would copy each other’s answers in any discussion; they would even copy each other’s drawings and they drew with a ruler. "However, after a while this had changed and they were able to talk freely and to be creative in their drawings as they were encouraged by the trainer who met anything they did with great appreciation and admiration which gave them a high sense of self-confidence.

The children also developed a sense of control over their nerves and aggression. Through the use of stories, they identified with the characters and were able to learn how to act and react in different situations. They learned to control their outbursts and think carefully before reacting to any situation as one of the trainers responded:

"The children got to understand that they can impact the quality of their lives by simply choosing to react and act differently towards daily events….they discover that they can have a say in their happiness and their lives." (A trainer)

Thus, the children develop a sense of acceptance of their flaws and they love themselves for what they are and they find the light and goodness and right decisions from deep inside; it is imposed on them through certain direct values that are stressed but rather the moral message is delivered through the different stories and the various activities of the program that help the children develop this moral obligation towards themselves and in their different relationships with others. Instead of being very rude at the beginning and they refused to listen to the trainers as they were used to always listen and not being listened to, they developed an ability to listen to others and accept their opinions. They became less aggressive and they developed the skill of peacefully solving their conflicts and problems.

The same effect and changes were also stressed by the social counsellors who when asked about the impact of the program on the children answered that it had a great impact on their controlling their nerves and their reactions. Quoting one of them, she answered: "There was a spirit of forgiveness and acceptance among the children; even brothers, but unfortunately this had changed after the program had stopped. "Another social counsellor who works in another school said that the program helped in knowing students’ tendencies, beliefs and thoughts and that it also helped in behaviour regulation and taught the students how to freely express themselves and their views. The third social counsellor mentioned that the program affected the students’ relationships with their colleagues and with their teachers. It also affected the relationship of the child with his/her parents. All the previous affected the whole school atmosphere.
The Values Stressed by the Program and Why It Is Important to the Target Audience

From the main important points that the participants were asked about were the values that are stressed by the program and the importance of such programs to the target audience. In their responses, the participants emphasized that the interest in such programs lies in the values it asserts and the effect it has on the target audience. They highlighted that the program is mainly a moral program that focuses on implanting in children some very important moral values which are not imposed neither by the program nor by the trainers; however the children get to grasp the moral message and the intended value after listening to the story and after doing the activities.

From the respondents’ perspective, the program helps the children to know that “the value of a human being lies inside his/her soul and in the abilities that God bestowed him with,” which when discovered lead him/her to happiness.

They also added:

"The values in this program are not imposed on the children from outside but they are rather implanted in their hearts and they just acquire the skill of how to discriminate between right and wrong."

They stressed the point that the trainer does not impose his/her opinion on the child but only provides his/her experience in an indirect way. The child gets to know that s/he is not a follower and thus cannot be deceived by any fake or superficial religious, social or cultural factors. They also emphasized that the program enables the child to know the deep meanings of forgiveness, acceptance, honesty, self-confidence, self-appreciation, respect for diversity and freedom. One of the participants mentioned that “The program promotes for the uniqueness of every individual, but at the same time it pushes him/her to seek integration and cooperation with others.”

According to the respondents, the target audience are interested in this program for the sake of all the previously mentioned values that it instils in the children in addition to other factors like providing a safe environment where the child feels safe and free; the child is provided with unconditioned love from the trainers. One of the trainers said:

"The child feels that he is a human being who deserves to be loved and respected and that he has got all the abilities that he needs to reach his goals and dreams."

The respondents clarified another reason for this interest where there is a psychological need of some target audience for such programs to help them discover their capabilities and acquire new skills. They added that also some parents want their children to be able to face their daily problems with their friends and be able to solve them peacefully. They also wanted their children to be creative. The program provides the children with this opportunity as mentioned by one of the participants that:

“Through the program, the child finds a safe environment where there are no threats, no fear and no humiliation where s/he is able to express her/himself and create.”
The Importance of the Program/Such Programs to Egypt and to Constructing Well-Rounded Egyptian Citizens

This point is presented from the points of view of the program designer, the program trainers and the school social counsellors. The participants were asked about the importance and the need for such programs in Egypt and how they would help in constructing the characters of Egyptian citizens. The responses made it clear that Egypt deeply needs such programs especially in such transitional period where people are moving from the state of being for long governed by an authoritarian rule into a democratic one. This transition led to a state of chaos as people used to obey the rules out of fear and not out of the desire of being good and conscious. One of the participants said:

"There is a great need as people have become very fixed in their ideas and intolerant of anything and anyone who is different. Moral behaviour is not something that stems from inside them; they do it out of fear or out of keeping up appearances." (A trainer)

They agreed that such programs as the “Be Yourself” are needed as they would help in constructing a new generation who can unify around one ethical goal which is building a civilization with humans at its core. This civilization will be based on moral values like acceptance, forgiveness, respect for diversity and others. They believe that when those children are equipped with the right tools and a safe environment where they can act, interact and freely express themselves and their views; they can get rid of the mistaken and superficial traditions and beliefs and thus be able to act in the right way consciously and not out of fear.

From the respondents’ point of view, another striking phenomenon that started to prevail among Egyptians especially after the January 25th revolution is aggression and a misconception of the true meaning of freedom. So, such programs would help in adjusting people’s wrong behaviours and attitudes. Such programs would also work on adjusting the attitudes of the parents who abuse their children. They also agreed that the program helps the children discover their points of strengths. Children learn how to freely express their own points of view and how to become decision makers. They learn how to peacefully solve their problems and to accept constructive criticism.

According to almost all the respondents, the program also helps the children to become creative and unique; something which is not highly stressed by the Egyptian education system and curricula and hence the importance of introducing such programs emerges.

As mentioned by one of the trainers:

"In Egypt, the education system doesn’t address all levels of thinking within the students. It only focuses on memorization. However, creativity which is the highest thinking level is rarely addressed. That’s why such programs that address imagination and creativity within children are highly needed to compensate for the deficiency within the education system."
Another participant confirmed the previous view saying:

"The Egyptian curricula focus on theories and passive learning. The “Be Yourself” program is about active interaction and a lot of reflective questions which gives the child the opportunity to tune into his own creativity and be himself."

As for the benefits of such programs on constructing well-balanced Egyptians, the participants agreed as mentioned earlier that the program does not impose the values on the children, but it provides them with tools to discover the goodness and beauty in their souls which is something that has already been there for long. According to them, the program helps the human being to discover his unique individual capabilities and talents which allow him to cooperate and integrate with other members in his/her society. This would help in constructing well-rounded characters that can appreciate everything in life and thus appreciate the value of homeland.

One of the participants said:

"All the values and techniques, the eye-openers that the program offers help in constructing a healthy human being who can function positively and in a balanced way and thus becomes a productive part of society."

The main aim behind the program is to build a “stable well-rounded person who is accepting of himself and others and who can reach his full potential.” The designer of the program mentioned that there is nothing special in the program that addresses this part, but she believes that when the child connects to the light inside him/her; this part which is free from bias, superiority, jealousy, rigidness and other things that differentiate people. She said:

"The main idea of the program (True Me) is that the child by nature possesses all the good values and when this part is vivid inside him/her, s/he has no inclination or cultural moulding and barriers."

**The Definition and the Traits of a Global Citizen**

When the participants were asked about the definition of a global citizen and the traits that s/he needs to possess, their responses showed a great consensus over the traits of a global citizen and how they perceived a global citizen should be. Among the traits that they agreed upon were acceptance of self and others, tolerance, respect for diversity, to be non-judgemental, to respect science and scientific methods and be creative, to be self-confident, to accept criticism, to know how to deal with the feelings of both anger and joy in a balanced way, to think positively and be able to deal with whoever contravenes his/her ideas and beliefs, to appreciate the value of a human being and feel the sense of belonging to humanity at large, to be aware and caring of what goes on and happens all around the world and to be a servant for humanity. They also added that a global citizen must be non-discriminative neither for race, skin colour, religion nor culture. As one of the respondents said that “A global citizen has to appreciate his value as a human being and to have a sense of belonging to the whole universe and to act accordingly.”
As for the definition of a “Global Citizen”, the respondents’ answers varied according to how they perceived the meaning of a “global citizen” and how they understood his/her qualities and responsibilities should be. As defined by the program designer:

"A global citizen is the one who knows or whose objective in life is to be human in the deeper sense of the word; to be growing spiritually and manifesting this development in the concept of being in service. On another level, s/he is the one who is open to knowledge and to new experiences; who can integrate and not compete with others; who can embrace differences and be able to see the oneness beyond it; who seeks knowledge forever; who respects scientific methods and who has the moral values which are part of being human."

Another respondent added that:

"A global citizen is the one who knows her/ his value and capabilities as an individual, but at the same time can integrate and cooperate with others in having one unified goal which is building a new civilization. S/He accepts diversity and appreciates the value of life and respects the environment. S/He has the ability of accepting her/his own mistakes in order to be able to accept and forgive others and thus spreads the peace inside her/his soul which is reflected on her/his relationships with others."

According to the participants a global citizen needs to be responsible for making the world a better place and he is the one in whom the meaning of humanity is achieved. They also added that a global citizen is the one who is open to the world and who knows that his views and perspectives are not sacred; but can be changed if there is a better view. S/he is the one who appreciates his/her cultural heritage but is open to other cultures and accepts and learns from them. They believe that a global citizen is the one who carries love and peace in his/her heart and who tries to find common things with others to cooperate and build a future that encompasses all humans. S/he cherishes scientific thinking and problem solving.

One of the respondents expressed that

"Global feels like belonging to the world and the world is my home and home is the self; when we reach the point of belonging to our own selves that is the point where we are really united with the globe and the whole universe."


According to the participants, the program provides children with the tools and the methodology by which s/he can achieve her/his full potentials so that the social and cultural factors and influences might not hinder their characters. The children acquire different psychological and behavioural skills that enable them to serve their society and be creative; rather than becoming an imitator or a follower; they become able of setting their own goals and take the responsibility of achieving them; they also acquire the skills of conflict resolution and working in teams. They also believe that the program helps the child to develop and builds her/his character and not to be moulded by others’ thoughts and society’s requirements; the child
recognizes her/his uniqueness and at the same time not to become discriminative or judgemental towards others.

In their responses, the participants emphasized a main effect of the program that can deeply help Egyptians become “Global Citizens” which is that of acceptance and celebrating differences. One respondent said:

"Acceptance and celebration of differences and diversity are values that the program promotes and which help children and adults who participate in the program realize through the constant self-reflection, exposure to stories and activities that we are all different and see how that is a blessing....diversity is a divine law encrypted in the DNA of this universe."

They also added that the program helps children to be positive, interactive and accepting of other cultures but at the same time proud of their identity and heritage and to become a well-rounded person and this is what the world needs.

When asked about how the program develops a sense of belonging to Egypt and the whole universe, they replied that the program helps the children to develop a sense of belonging to human moral values which they consider a way to feel the sense of belonging to homeland and the whole universe. They believe that it is through the program that the child learns to value everything in her/his life and thus learns to value the meaning of her/his homeland and the whole world. They also added that the program works on developing the individual’s sense of her/himself and hence of his country and the world as it helps the individual to accept her/himself and those around him. A respondent replied:

"The program has some shared values among all humans, no matter what their religions are; it is only by being aware of their value as human beings and developing a sense of belonging to humanity."

As for the part of how the program can help spreading peace and harmony in the Egyptian society and the universe, the participants believed that the seed of peace lies inside every individual, so when the human being develops this sense of inner peace it is reflected on his outer relationships with others. They emphasized that the program helps in healing the spiritual side of the human being and helps her/him to reach a sense of safety and that this safety comes only from God; this is how the sense of inner peace is achieved through solving the inner struggle and developing a better understanding of the person’s inner feelings; the person gets to know her/his “True Me”. One of the respondents said:

"The program trains the child to use different tools that would enable her/him to transform all the challenges s/he meets into opportunities for moral and personal development and growth. This helps in building a well-rounded character who can live in peace and harmony with her/himself and spread it in her/his relationships with members of his little family in Egypt and those of his bigger family in the whole world."
The participants believed that when both adults and children are helped to discover the moral values in themselves, there will be no conflict, no discrimination which help in eliminating the power of struggle amongst people and even governments. Another respondent mentioned that: “Outer peace can never be achieved unless inner peace is achieved. This program’s main target is to help all individuals achieve inner peace and thus happiness in their lives.”

Challenges and Constraints of Program Implementation and the Possibility of Implementation on the Whole-School Level

When the participants were asked about the challenges and constraints that confronted them when they were implementing the program and the possibility of implementing it on the whole school level, they expressed different obstacles that they faced and their views varied upon the possibility of implementing it on the whole school level.

As for the challenges and constraints, they expressed that the main obstacles are the culture and the traditional mentality of some officials in schools, some teachers and parents. From the designer’s point of view that the main challenge is

"The culture of parents and teachers and the whole community because children are taught something and then they go home and are confronted with a completely opposite culture and attitude; they are maltreated by their parents at home and the same with their teachers in schools; I believe that when children are treated with love and respect, they respond positively."

Other respondents asserted the previous point by saying that many teachers in schools are neither helpful nor cooperative as they are not convinced with the importance of the program. But this changes if it happened that the teachers go through training or a workshop that would help them treat the children in a different way and find alternatives for the traditional punishment/reward method.

Other obstacles that were mentioned by the respondents were like the failure to provide a suitable place for the trainers to work in with the children especially in public schools. Other things were like having some children amongst the group who have a complex background due to being exposed to abuse or aggression which is reflected on their behaviour and relationships with others. Those children need special treatment and a longer time to respond as they need first to feel that they are accepted and to be provided by love and kind feelings. This might affect the rest of the group in an indirect way. Another challenge that was mentioned by the respondents was that the officials in schools or some parents think that the trainers have “a magic wand that we will transform the child with”; they don’t understand that it is a process and that it takes time, but rather they expect quick and instant results.

Another challenge that came up through the responses was that in public schools there is no desire for transformation or change. In addition to the previous point, they added that the fact that teachers are overloaded with workloads strengthens this rejection for the idea of the program. The respondents perceive the importance of the teachers taking the training as a cornerstone for maintaining the sustainability of the program’s effect on students.
When the participants were asked about the possibility of implementing the program on the whole-school level, most of them emphasized the importance of having a kind of partnership with the Ministry of Education in order for this to be possible especially in public schools. This partnership would help most of the constraints met during the implementation as providing a suitable place, trying to take off some of the workloads of the teachers who are attending the training. One of the respondents talked about a previous experience of training some teachers, but unfortunately it failed because “of the workloads and the harshness of their schedules as the number of teachers was fewer compared to the number of classes and periods.” She added that “even through the summer vacation, they go through professional development trainings.” It is also through the Ministry of Education that teachers can be given incentives for the teachers in order for them to feel that their contribution is appreciated.

Discussion

This study was initially conducted to explore the efforts of civil society in support to education as represented in the initiative undertaken by the “The Human Foundation” in order to implement a character building and moral development program in Egyptian schools. And to explore to what extent character education can help in constructing the characters of Egyptian students thus helping them to develop into well-rounded characters who acquire the global values of citizenship.

Results from the participants’ responses about common features and stressed values of the program showed much consensus to the international discourse on the values stressed through global citizenship education. From the perspective of the trainers, their responses showed that the program had deep impact on both the trainers and the students. It helped to change the way they value themselves and life around them. It helped them develop many skills and morals and be able to manifest them in their relationships with other people. They asserted that they became more tolerant and accepting to others’ diversities. They also emphasized that they gained a set of universal moral values that would help them develop a sense of cooperation and feeling for others. According to the program designer the core of the program is to enhance the sense of belonging to humanity. All the previous reflect the international discourse for global citizenship and the required skills and values that need to be stressed in order to promote for global citizenship. This aligns with what has been mentioned in (Zahabioun et al., 2013) about global citizenship as being belonging to a global community and the world social family. It also aligns with the UNESCO’s definition of global citizenship education as “belonging to the global community and common humanity” (UNESCO. 2013. p. 3).

Participants’ responses reflected a deep sense of awareness of the definition and the traits of a “global citizen”. The definition that was given by the program designer echoed her deep belief in the concept of a “global citizen”. Through her definition, she highlighted some of the traits that a “global citizen” should have like to feel the deep sense of being a human, to love being in service to others, to be open to knowledge and embrace differences and diversities. This aligns with the definition of a global citizen as having a state of open-mindedness and to develop a sense of belonging to the bigger community (Zahabioun et al., 2013).

The program goals and pedagogies also showed similarity with those suggested for global citizenship education in the sense that both stress the importance of developing the ability of learning to live together and instilling in students a set of universal values (Zahabioun et al.,
2013). Also the methods of teaching support like using “stimulus activity” which engages the student personally and is then followed by discussion to link the activity to the key values and behavioral learning objectives (Education above All, 2012). This is exactly what has been observed during the program implementation. These stimulus activities vary between using stories, game-like, role playing, expressive activities and cultural and religious references (Education above All, 2012). The program uses the almost same teaching methods and stimulus activities.

Although the literature on the conflict between national and global identities support having a kind of citizenship education that would work on developing both the national attachment and the global sense of belonging (Banks, 2004), when asked about whether the program enrich the Egyptians sense of belonging to Egypt, most of the responses were in favour of belonging to morals which would reflect on one’s character and thus reflect on society in general. The designer responded that there is no special part in the program that tackles this point in specif. According to the literature reviewed this doesn’t support the higher purpose of education as set in the amended constitution in article (19) which is that of “building the Egyptian character… [and to] preserve the national identity”

As for the challenges and the possibility of implementation in other public schools, findings showed that the program implementation met many challenges like high group capacity, providing a suitable setting for the sessions and teachers’ resistance. Due to the fact that this is a private school, the school director tried to find many solutions to support the continuation of the program implementation for the second term. However, if this was in a public school, this may or may not have been the case. As per the literature, the current status of the Egyptian education system in reference to public schools’ conditions in terms of lack of resources and facilities, class capacity, schools running in shifts this would have act as a barrier for implementation. Also, the status of some teachers working in public schools is very low in terms of income and social status. This would also act as another barrier.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined the experience of a civil society organization, The Human Foundation, in designing a character building program and implementing it in a private sector Egyptian school. The study is grounded theoretically on the notions of global citizenship and character education in the context of international discourse and national identity as well as national political and cultural dynamics. The study employed a qualitative research method and depended on interviews, focus group discussion and open-ended survey, plus non-participant observation. Findings of the study demonstrated the potential usefulness of this program to Egyptian children at this particular stage (Grade one) and its alignment with the features of global citizenship education in its pedagogical and moral aspects. However, to what extent this program can be successfully implemented in public schools remains questionable, taking into consideration the current status of education in Egypt.

Based on this study and its findings, the following recommendations are addressed to the Ministry of Education and the policy makers, Private schools’ owners and directors, and The Human Foundation Organization.

The Ministry of Education needs to consider developing a partnership with this NGO or similar ones and to further examine the possibilities and benefits of implementing such programs that work on building students’ characters in public schools. Such programs can act as a complementary part to the theoretical curriculum of national citizenship education; it can
compensate for the practical and interactive part that is missing from the national curriculum. As per the literature, there is an administration for NGOs within the ministry but most of the partnerships are with NGOs that do not offer such programs, is this would act a new field to be discovered.

Concerning the private schools’ owners and directors, I deeply recommend that they adopt the implementation of such programs in order to help in developing the students’ characters. The possibility if implementation is much easier in private schools. You would also include courses and workshops of such kind for teachers and parents in order to complement the students’ program results. Thus, character education becomes a whole school culture and this is an important point as mentioned in Lickona (1996).

Last but not least are my recommendations for The Human Foundation Organization. I recommend that the organization highlights in its programs the value of belonging to Egypt, so that students who lost this sense of belonging because of the excessive use of technology and means of communication that melted all the borders between nations; they would regain their love for their country and strengthen their national identity which would help them gain the global aspect while maintaining the national one. Another recommendation would be to develop a kind of partnership with the Ministry of Education in order to make it easier for you to access public schools. Another partnership would be developed with more private schools. These partnerships might contribute in the problem of having a shortage in the number of trainers.

From my perspective, Egypt is in a deep need for such programs to be implemented in schools whether they are public, private national and private international schools. This is becoming of great necessity specially in such transitional period where people’s perceptions and beliefs were misled and distorted, thus the need for building a new generation who would share in building a stronger Egypt is tremendously required.

References


SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
EXAMINING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN THE EGYPTIAN CONTEXT

Amira Abdou

Introduction
At this momentous time in Egypt’s history, it becomes imperative for the state to embark on a range of state-wide as well as institutionalized reform initiatives. At the heart of these reform initiatives comes educational reform with education being the cornerstone of all societal reforms. Since 2007, and with the launching of its National Strategy for Education Reform, Egypt has realized the pressing need to shift from the centralized educational system towards a decentralized educational model. School-based reform, thus, becomes one of the adopted approaches for reforming education in Egypt. Therefore, this study focuses on school-based teacher professional development at policy and practice levels towards improving teacher performance and the quality of education.

The purpose of this study is to firstly examine the policy discourse for school-based teacher professional development to identify to what extent the government has adopted school-based teacher professional development approach. Second, the paper explores the extent to which this approach has been implemented in Egyptian public schools through exploring teachers’ perceptions and experiences with school-based teacher professional development. This was done by conducting field work in three language urban experimental schools that include elementary, middle, and high school levels. Third, the paper intends to identify the gaps between the policy discourse and the practice of teachers at school level in order to come up with recommendation for bridging the gap.

The study follows a qualitative approach that includes document review and conducting individual and focus group interviews using semi-structured open-ended questions in addition to the researcher’s observation during the school’s field visits.

In the following section, I present some of the main concepts of teacher professional development and the significance of the school-based approach. This will be followed by the research design including research setting, sampling strategy, and data collecting tools.

Literature Review
In the age of rapid social and political changes, calls on school reform are echoed across the world. The focus on schooling institutions as the cornerstone of education reform is continuously growing. Effective teaching is primarily dependent on high-quality teachers who are competent enough to prepare students to be life-long and self-directed learners (OECD, 2005). Parents, along with education experts, consider teachers as one of the most determinant factors of students’ academic performance. In their rigorous study of 28 such factors, Wei,
Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) found that the two most prominent factors were directly related to teachers. Hence, teachers, being the front liniers, are key instruments in transforming their schools into effective learning communities.

Building teachers’ capacity, therefore, drives our attention to the importance of providing effective school-based professional development for teachers being the link between standards input-driven movement and student achievement output-driven movement (Wei et al., 2009). To understand clearly the crucial role of effective school-based professional development for teachers at the school level, we must first define effective professional development. In their report published by The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Wei et al. (2009) define effective professional development as “that which results in teachers’ knowledge and instructional practice, as well as, improve student-learning outcomes.” In this respect, professional development does not only positively affect students’ learning outcomes, but also reinforces the new role assigned to teachers as active learners and reflective practitioners at their own schools, which could be the first building block towards a community of learners where teachers become generators of knowledge for professional practice.

The last two decades have witnessed a paradigm shift in the research concerned with professional development. The new paradigm focuses on distinguishing between high-quality or effective professional development, which aims at offering active opportunities for teachers’ learning, and traditional professional development that is criticized in literature for being ineffective (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The most common forms of traditional professional development are workshops, conferences, courses, and institutes. School-based teacher professional development or “reform” activities of effective professional development take the forms of coaching, mentoring, peer observation, and study groups, (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon., 2001; Wei et al., 2009). Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2010) list other alternative formats of professional development such as action research, partnerships between schools and teachers’ universities, teachers’ networks, where teachers from different schools have access to shared information on concerns and accomplishments, and where teachers can engage in active learning through computer links, newsletters, etc. Teachers’ networks could also facilitate the arrangement of teachers’ seminars and conferences. Such seminars could be held at “teachers’ centers,” which represent another alternative format for professional development. Teachers’ centers enable teachers from various school contexts to participate in constructive dialogue and develop new skills in their profession.

Research on effective teacher professional development places emphasis on significant common characteristics of reformed, or rather, school-based professional development activities. These features include collective participation, coherence, content-based, and time-sustained activities, which could be implemented when adopting school-based approach (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal , 2003; Garet et al., 2001; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Wei et al., 2009).

The literature on effective professional development has reached a consensus that collegiate and collective participation of teachers—in the on-going process of professional development—have strong positive impacts on students’ achievements, teachers’ teaching
practices, in addition to teachers’ beliefs and attitudes (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). As highlighted by many researchers, collective participation of teachers within the context of their own school enables teachers to rely on one another and to engage in professional dialogue and rigorous processes of both self and students’ assessment. This kind of interdependency of teachers motivates teachers to carry their practices to a public level, hence, forming a community of active learners. Teachers then get the opportunity to be generators of knowledge, rather than being passive recipients of it. In this respect, the school also fulfils its role as a learning community (Wei et al., 2009).

The duration period and intensity of professional development activities have also been determinants of whether these activities are effective or not with respect to teachers’ learning and students’ achievements. Research findings on time sustained and more intensive professional and learning development activities, suggest that teachers are more likely to implement these well-absorbed and reflected-upon activities into their own daily teaching practices (Garet et al., 2001; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Wei et al., 2009). Thus, the time-sustained professional development activities prove to be more effective than the “flavor of the month” or the one-shot workshop whose impact is minimal on teachers’ learning and students’ achievements (Garet et al., 2001).

Effective professional development requires activities that are content-based and job-embedded as well, in order to be of high-quality. The literature divides the content-based activities into two main categories; the first category is the knowledge-based content, which includes knowledge of the subject matter taught and the tools and skills related to deliver that knowledge. The second category is pedagogical competences that include teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment (Fishman et al., 2003). Effective professional development needs to be rich in both categories in order to be meaningful to teachers. This will guarantee continuous and consistent implementation as well.

Coherence of teacher professional development is a key component to its success. Effective professional development aims at activities that are carried out in coherence within the school context and in alignment with the school’s endeavors toward reform, rather than patched or fragmented activities that are done in isolation of the school context (Wei et al., 2009). Coherence of effective school-based professional development practices calls for collaboration of school leadership and teaching faculty. In this respect, promoting the concept of distributed leadership becomes imperative and strongly related to effective teacher professional development. Coherence, as a concept, could also be expanded to embrace teachers’ individual goals for growth in addition to the school-wide goals, where each of these two sets of goals support and reinforce one another (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010). Lambert (2000) adds a further dimension to school leadership with respect to effective teacher professional development when she suggests that school leadership should not be reduced to the person of the principal; she states that leadership is derived from synergy and collaboration of all those who want to join the wave and construct collective meaning and knowledge. Consequently, all stakeholders need to develop a shared sense of community and work toward achieving collective goals and promoting their school as a center for knowledge and empowerment. Hence; school
leaders become orchestral leaders who are “skilled in helping large teams produce a coherent sound, while encouraging soloists to shine” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

In conclusion, the above literature on effective teacher professional development suggests that school-based teacher professional development approach could render better results in terms of teacher professional learning because it encompasses all the components of collective participation, coherence, common moral purpose, and time sustainability. More importantly, school-based teacher professional development could be regarded as a perfect provision for teachers to examine their perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and culture that underlie their accustomed teaching approaches, giving teachers the invaluable chance to unlearn and relearn (Butler & Leahy, 2003).

Implementation of effective school-based professional development mandates efforts on the policy level to reach the domains of pre-service training, in-service induction, and on-going school-based teacher professional development activities and practices. Teachers’ colleges and institutions should collaborate with schools where teacher candidates’ educators collaborate with practicing teachers in devising teaching practices, content-based and pedagogy-based knowledge, and curricula that are compatible with global standards and in alignment to the school-wide goals and vision for reform. Such partnership must also be sensitive to the specificity of school context and school culture as well. Veteran and effectively experienced teachers could be of great help to novice teachers in induction programs through mentoring. To sum up, effective school-based professional development is an on-going process, rather than an episode, that can contribute to transforming teachers to the model of teachers as active learners, decision makers, problem-solvers, and active agents of change.

School-Based Teacher Professional Development in the International Policy Discourse

With almost one year left before 2015, rising voices from all around the globe calls for placing education development at the heart of global development agenda after 2015 (GMR, 2013-14). The Global Monitoring Report (2013-14) states that more children are gaining access to schools than ever. International education policies, since the Dakar World Education Forum held in Senegal in 2000, have been geared toward providing universal primary education access, which also represents the Second Millennium Development Goal. In post-2015 global framework, the proposed shift in focus towards quality learning and teaching becomes a necessity. According to GMR (2013-14) this could be attributed to the fact that 130 million students out of 250 million still exhibit the need for better learning opportunities even though they spent “at least four years” in formal schooling. The shift in emphasis coupled with the immaterialized learning opportunities for enrolled students suggest that policy discourse and implementations have been preoccupied with quantity over quality. GMR (2013-14) states that national education policies must prioritize quality learning and teaching; a goal that cannot be achieved without well-trained quality teachers.

Quality teachers’ features are commonly identified through significant indicators such as: qualifications, experience, teacher knowledge-base content, and pedagogical knowledge.
Nevertheless, there are other equally significant indicators to teacher quality that are strongly related to quality learning and harder to capture such as: the ability to create effective environment for all types of learners, nourish productive teacher-student relationship, last but not least, the ability to work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues and parents (OECD, 2011). Research on constituents of a quality teacher demonstrates common characteristics of professionalism, passion for teaching, reflective and analytical thinking, and respect for others (IIEP, 2007).

This trend has been examined by OECD since 2005 till present; the OECD (2005) country background notes indicate that “school-based professional development activities involving the entire staff, or significant groups of teachers are becoming more common, and teacher-initiated personal development probably less so.” In parallel, the IIEP report (2007) suggests that establishment of a continuing and systemized structure for school-based teacher professional development, where teachers can “talk” about their teaching practice. Teacher “talk” in this context is identified more different than the casual informal or personal teacher talk; rather, it is a professional dialogue that tackles all pertaining issues of the teaching and learning processes inside the school including: teaching practices and instructional approaches, and evaluation methods, with the aim of on-going refinement of the end product, which is enhancing students’ learning outcomes to the fullest potentials.

Teacher policies play a pivotal role in establishing effective school-based teacher professional development. OECD (2005) encourages the inclusion of teachers in the design and implementation of policies by which teachers can become empowered to fulfill their role as active and life-long learners. In this respect, teachers gain ownership over their learning and teaching. Furthermore, the same report reinforces the significance of teachers being supported by policy to form “professional learning communities” within their schools, as well as, beyond. This would enable teachers to analyze their teaching practice according to professional benchmarks and standards, in addition to, analyzing their students’ learning performance in light of the student learning standards.

But, teachers cannot shoulder this immense task alone, they need the help, guidance and support of an enlightened school leadership. It should be noted that the term “school leadership” does not necessarily refer to the solely to school principal; it is an expandable expression that is school-culture embedded and community-nurtured. School leadership is a shared vision and goals that encompasses all forms of leaderships within the school: teacher leadership teams, heads of subject departments, and individual teacher leaders (Lambert, 2002). OECD (2008) report “Improving School Leadership: Policy and Practice” indicates that school leadership is a key playing actor in improving the whole school outcomes including students’ learning outcomes and teacher quality through influencing the school culture and learning environment, in addition to motivating teachers to build their capacities. The report suggests “redefining” the roles assignments to school leadership to foster school-based teacher professional development in relevance to school’s local context. Furthermore, school leadership is responsible for promoting team work among teachers (OECD, 2008).
School-Based Teacher Professional Development in the Regional Policy Discourse

As an integral member of the international community, the League of Arab States (LAS) endorses the view that education must be prioritized among all development endeavors. Hence, a report that included purpose and direction of how education can be incorporated into all development processes in all areas in the Arab world was presented to the Arab Summit in Riyadh in March 2007. This report was followed by the “Plan for Development of Education in the Arab World,” which was adopted in the Damascus Arab Summit in 2008. The two documents, the report and the plan, place great emphasis on the role of Arab teachers in the academic, social, and political education of Arab generations, in addition to helping them acquire foundations of “citizenship and a civilization-based identity.”

In this respect, the Arab states recognize that they are part of the global system. Therefore, efforts should be geared towards navigating through the challenges and opportunities imposed by globalization. The Arab states, thus, responded to the five most recent and significant initiatives that direct efforts for education development:

1. The Millennium Development Goals outcome document that sets eight MDG to be reached by 2015;
2. The Education For All Initiative launched during Dakar Conference in 2000 with six goals to be achieved in 2015;
3. The declaration of Literacy Decade (2003-2013) under the UN umbrella;
4. The UN “Education for Sustainable Development Decade Initiative” (2005-2014);

Committed to the cause of educational reform and providing quality teaching and learning that is learner-centered, LAS, joined with international partners—the United Nations Children’s’ Fund (UNICEF), Unified Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization, along with Arab Education Science and Culture Organization (AESCO) and Arab Bureau of Education for Gulf States (ABEGS)—to launch the Guiding Framework of the Performance Standards for Arab Teachers in 2010. The Guiding Framework is primarily concerned with developing the capacities of Arab teachers in the areas of teacher education, teacher preparation, and on-going teacher professional development. The Guiding Framework also targets the professionalization of teachers where teachers are empowered to issue and solve practice-related challenges based on decision making processes. This requires quality teachers who possess professional competencies and constantly work on improving their performance levels (LAS-UNICEF, 2010).

To achieve this goal, The Guiding Framework introduced an “Integrated Model” for Arab teachers. This “Integrated Model” acknowledges the necessity of teacher professional development, yet, within its humanitarian framework. The “Integrated Model” rests on major pillars that are aligned with the international policy discourse with respect to providing quality teaching and learning in addition to placing teachers at the heart of school-based reform. For example, pillar one recognized teachers as allies in the education reform process and merely
tools for reform. It emphasizes the importance of teacher relations within the school that could enable teachers to “forge” collaborative activities and form collegial school culture that fosters teamwork among teachers. Furthermore; pillars four and five advocate the development of schools as institutional contexts and a space for professional activity and dialogue where schools practice autonomy in “school-based professional development for teachers” (LAS-UNICEF, 2010, p.34-5)

The Guiding Framework proposes a bundle of projects and programs that represent “A Policy Framework for Teachers’ Professional Development.” One of the proposed projects is Project 6, titled “Professional Development Units in Schools,” which reinforces the principle of “school-based reform” through the implementation of school-based professional development for teachers. The project identifies the effective school system as the system where professional decisions on professional development are made by those who encounter challenges and recognize opportunities based on their daily experience in that place, within that system. Project 6 suggests that school-based professional development units will reinforce the professional and social interaction of teachers helping them to identify the gaps in the teaching and learning processes in addition to implementing professional development programs that address teachers’ as well as students’ learning needs. In conclusion, Project 6 as proposed by the Guiding Framework aims at providing a school context that is conducive to professional development for teachers, monitoring and evaluating teachers’ learning and teaching practices in action on the ground with the aim of developing teachers’ performance levels, and on-going development for teacher professional development programs in light of teachers’ performance (LAS-UNICEF, 2010, p.69-70)

The Egyptian Case

Egypt is the most populous state in the Arab world. According to the 2012 census, official figures released by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) indicate that Egypt’s population has reached 92 million living on just 5.3% of the country’s area. The noticeable feature in the demographics of Egypt is its huge youth bulge, where 34% of the population is under the age of 15. Around 98% of the population is crowded around the narrow stripes of the Nile valley. These demographic features place significant value on the role played by the human capital in Egypt in the process of educational reform. Investment and development of the human capital, represented in Egyptian teachers, form one of the most critical challenges that educational reform must deal with in Egypt.

In 2007, Egypt launched its five-year National Strategic Plan for Pre University Education Reform that marks a paradigm shift in achieving quality education in Egypt. The plan aimed at achieving three main goals: (1) Higher quality of education; (2) Enhanced system efficiency, institutionalized decentralization, and community participation; and (3) Equitable access to education. One of the major pillars in the five-year plan (2007/2008—2011/2012) is “School-Based Reform,” which rests on enabling schools to practice autonomy and develop
school improvement plans and quality management systems. In addition, the plan sets the strategy of “building sustainable professional development systems based on the cascade training model to provide professional development for teachers at the school level, in addition to building the capacity of leaders at all levels: district, governorate, and central level” (National Strategic Plan, 2007, p.130). The plan further reinforces the same concept of, the significance of sustainable school-based professional development for teachers, in the chapter titled “Human Resources and Professional Development.” In this chapter, the plan acknowledges the dire need for teachers to participate in school-based professional development programs (National Strategic Plan, 2007,p.140).

The ten-year National Strategic Plan for Education Reform in Egypt (2014—2024) builds on its predecessor with respect to school-based Professional development for teachers. The plan rests on three main pillars: (1) Access; (2) Quality; and (3) Education Management system. The plan identifies professional development as crucial in the process of achieving “school-based reform.” Furthermore, it suggests establishing new and innovative mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of teachers’ performance from the perspective of building teachers’ capacities and enhancing the teaching and learning competencies of teachers as well as of students.

The establishment of the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, (NAQAAE) in 2007 and the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) came in response to meeting the national needs for the development and reform of education in Egypt.

**The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAAE)**

The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAAE) is responsible for disseminating the culture of quality in educational institutions in Egypt, in addition to developing the national standards in alignment with their international equivalents. It aims at restructuring educational institutions through internal and external review systems that would enable these institutions to develop better quality outcomes. To fulfill its designated role, NAQAAE relies on the two main domains of: institutional capacities and educational effectiveness. The first domain comprises five standards: Vision and Mission; Governance and Leadership; Human and Financial resources; Community Participation; and Quality Assurance and Accountability. The second domain constitutes four standards, which are: Learner; Achievements; Teacher Qualifications; Academic Curriculum; and Educational Environment.

The fourth standard “Quality Assurance and Accountability” mandates the enactment of a school-based “Training & Quality Unit” to enhance teachers’ performance levels. The school-based Training & Quality Unit is entirely devoted to the design and implementation of “school-based professional development” for teachers based on the on-site teachers’ needs and challenges. One of the recommended mechanisms to achieve that goal, as set by NAQAAE, is conducting needs assessment to identify the gaps encountered in the daily practices of teachers. The unit is also encouraged to include teachers’ input and vision to bridge the identified gaps in a systemized school-based structure that rests on teachers’ collaboration and collegial endeavors.
The school-based “Training & Quality Unit” coordinates with the corresponding offices on the district and governorate levels.

The school-based “Training & Quality Unit” is headed by the school deputy for quality and professional development, sometimes also known as “Internal quality assurance analyst.” The job description and responsibilities of that position (Annex 1) extend over the domains of: leadership and institutional supervision, teaching and learning processes, quality assurance and accreditation, professional development, and community participation.

It is worth mentioning that the core of this position’s responsibilities lies in the enactment of the school-based quality units through designing on-going professional programs and plans that address the needs of the local school community. The role additionally extends to providing guidance, support, and continuous constructive feedback within a framework of supportive school culture that encourages teachers to experiment new modes of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the position holder’s responsibilities extend beyond the school walls with neighboring school clusters to furnish the exchange of expertise and wider-scope professional dialogue among teachers of different schools. Finally, the position holder supervises the school-based accreditation action teams and acts as the liaison between NAQAAE and his/her school.

The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT)

The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) was established in 2008 as part of Egypt’s education reform plan. The PAT, as a regional center for excellence, has set many goals to build teachers’ capacities and enhance teachers’ empowerment. The goals of PAT include setting standards for teachers’ promotion, setting standards for teachers’ professional development, accrediting teachers’ certification, granting teachers’ licensures, and supporting educational research studies.

The PAT was able to achieve accomplishments, in partnership with some donors, in the field of Egyptian education. Some Examples of PAT’s achievements are (as cited in El Kharashy, 2010): The strategic plan for The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT); The promotion matrix for teachers; Job description teachers’ cards; Teachers’ performance evaluation tools; Teachers’ skills and knowledge matrix; Human resources management system; and a proposed framework for the professional development of school leadership.

It is worth mentioning that one of the main objectives of The National Reform Strategy, launched by the Egyptian government in 2007, and of The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT), is to enhance and ensure all-inclusive professional development plans for all Egyptian teachers working in the public sector (MENA-OECD, 2010). Nevertheless, the existing professional development strategy is fragmented. It is currently implemented on small scale, rather than covering the whole public teaching force. One of the attributes of this situation might be that education reform hasn’t been among the priorities of Egypt’s former regime. Another attribute is that endeavors that have taken place so far are the results of small-scale initiatives that are done on the part of donors of worldwide organizations such as the World Bank and the
United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Egypt (MENA-OECD, 2010).

Some assessment reports claim that PAT has many gaps to fill in the field of implementing formative professional development strategy and procedures with respect to initial teaching training, induction programs for veteran teachers, which are primarily aimed at teacher empowerment and teacher involvement in decision-making as well as policy-making.

El Kharashy’s (2010) assessment report summarizes the gaps that PAT need to fill. He states that PAT has accomplished many achievements. However, it still faces some challenges. Some of the gaps that PAT needs to fill are insufficiency of qualified human resources and lack of assessment tools to evaluate them, absence of internal quality system that ensures ongoing performance self-evaluation, and absence of data base for local and regional professional development needs. Finally, the report emphasizes the need for PAT to reinforce communication with professional educators across the Arab region, in addition to, promoting its programs, mission and vision through various mechanisms locally, regionally, and internationally.

Examination of the policy discourse on the international, regional, and national level reflects the emphasis on school-based professional development for teachers. In the next section, I shall present a case study that represents an in-depth examination of public experimental schools in the Cairo governorate.

**Research Methods and Design**

The study follows a qualitative approach that includes document review and conducting individual and focus group interviews using semi-structured open-ended questions in addition to the researcher’s observation during the school’s field visits.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed. Male and female teachers from different disciplines, years of experience, and school stages, primary, lower secondary, and high secondary, were sampled. Thirty-two participant teachers who fulfilled the above characteristics were nominated and by the key informant (school principal) to be interviewed.

Semi-structured open ended questions were used to collect data that explored teachers’ perceptions and experiences with school-based teacher professional development in their work place. The key informant for this study is the school principal who introduced me to the nominated teacher participants at their work place.

I used thematic analysis where I read my raw data, my field notes, and personal memos several times to extract themes that both represent and reflect participants’ responses. During the process of thematic analysis, I recurrently referred to participants for clarifying some emergent ambiguous points, and/or validating my analysis of their responses.

**School Profile**

School X is a compound school that is located in one of Cairo’s middle class neighborhoods. It comprises three schools: kindergarten & primary school, preparatory school, and secondary school. Each school has a deputy principal that reports to the general principal of
all three schools. The compound was founded in 2004 as a donation from one of the Gulf countries’ monarchs to act as a model language experimental school compound. Among the 528 language experimental schools in Cairo governorate, school X is considered the top in terms of facilities, infrastructure, and teachers’ academic caliber. School X currently houses 1708 students placed in 55 classes and 145 teachers, in addition to 13 personnel and two custodians. Most of the teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience and about half of the teachers have been appointed at the school since its foundation.

The school facilities include a language lab that is equipped to serve 28 students, a multimedia room, library, large theatre, traffic city in the kindergarten building, large dining room, kitchen, cafeteria, clinic and two well equipped lecture halls. It is worth noting that the theatre, cafeteria, dining room and lecture halls appear to be in need of some maintenance and renovation because, according to the teachers, those facilities serve not only the school, but also all other schools located in the same educational zone.

When the school was founded and for several years after, it was considered a privilege to join the school either as a parent or as a teacher. For parents the school offered good delivery system with affordable fees for the middleclass families through experienced and well prepared teachers that could compete with those of private language schools. Furthermore, the teacher student ratio was 1:25, which is quite less than its alternative at a public school that could reach 1:75. Teachers at the school were privileged because they received 200% bonus over their basic salaries, which as per the Egyptian education law, is the highest among all state public schools. Teachers were appointed after screening through interviews and written English test. Likewise, students were admitted after their parents were successfully interviewed. While not abiding to the geographical zone regulation set by the Ministry of Education, the school would accept students from any part of Cairo provided they are qualified for admission. Since 2011, the school started accepting a larger number of students, increasing the class capacity to 33, after a considerable decrease in the school fees, a procedure that wasn’t positively received by the teachers as they thought that this was leading to a decline in the quality of the service they are providing.

As with the rest of most of the experimental schools in Egypt, school leadership in School X was chosen from the English Language department; except for the last two years when the school leadership was appointed from the Math department.

Findings and Discussion
The overall findings show teachers’ perceptions and experiences with school-based teacher professional development, in addition to how teachers view their roles and responsibilities inside their schools.
Teachers’ Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers as Leaders

The majority of participant teachers identify themselves as leaders but only on the classrooms level. They identify their roles as teachers who deliver lesson plans, instruct and assess students’ academic performance, proctor and grade exams, attend weekly department meetings, in addition to, carrying out some super visional duties in the school playgrounds during break time and on the school corridors during classes.

During the focus groups interviews, I noticed that most teachers refrain from leadership roles, that are either voluntarily or mandatory, because they think leadership roles would make them more accountable before the principal, or more liable to receive blame and criticism from both the principal and their colleagues which they did not want at all.

More importantly, participant teachers view leadership roles as more responsibility and work load that “will not be appreciated” as the head of the English department says. He adds that he has around five teachers in his department, plus himself, that hold the Professional Educator Diploma in educational leadership from the American University in Cairo which is: “one of the best educational institutions in Egypt,” as he proudly states. Nevertheless, he is struggling to implement some of the things he learnt because the school leadership doesn’t favor implementing new ideas or initiatives and prefer to “adhere to the known and experimented, rather than fostering innovative approaches.”

Despite all the above mentioned challenges, the head of the English department has managed to implement delegation among teachers of the foundation stage since “it is always easier to coach a young group especially if they are homogeneous.” He adds that teachers in the foundation stage are more responsive to change and implementing new approaches in instruction than teachers in the middle or high school. The main helping factor, according to him, is that they are a mixed age group that contain able veteran teachers as well as novice teachers that represent “new blood and thirst for learning.” When I interviewed those teachers, they described themselves as a family that helps one another. They don’t know how it began, as the most experienced teacher says, “but it was always the culture here to volunteer and help one another and any new teacher joins, it catches on and she starts behaving the same.” Another supporting factor is that those teachers do not give private lessons, accordingly, there exists no rivalry that would negatively affect their work as a team. In spite of the fact that those teachers are, to some extent, fulfilling their roles as teacher leaders, they were reluctant to identify themselves as leaders. They say that they are unqualified to become leaders and that they are not “equipped” enough to benefit and support one another professionally as they would want. They believe that they need an off-site school expert and coach to teach them new trends and techniques in teaching and learning, help them grow professionally, and motivate them to perform their best. The ideal case, as described by one of them, is to have “professional development that is balanced between an off-site coach and a school based professional development coordinator because we can’t do it alone.”
Teachers as Decision Makers 

The majority of participant teachers’ responses state that teachers have no role in the decision making process inside the school whether or not it pertains to school-based professional development for teachers. The majority of responses suggest that none of the teachers were involved in the design or delivery of any workshops or sessions targeting teacher professional development. Many of the respondent teachers, especially in the foundation and primary stages, did not know the name of the person in charge of the school-based training unit. It should be noted that all accredited schools must have a school-based Quality and Training unit that is responsible for school-based teacher professional development activities and that is also linked to the Quality and Training head office in the Directorate of Education.

Two identified exceptions are a high school Arabic teacher and another high school English teacher. The Arabic high school teacher states he has once designed a 30-minute power point presentation for the Arabic language department. In this context, the Arabic teacher explains he volunteered to do so because he had been working for seven years in an American school in Saudi Arabia where they used to do that periodically and he wanted to transfer this experience to the school in Egypt because he thought it will be beneficial for teachers. The teacher adds that he was never approached by his head of department or the head of the school based training unit to design or deliver any professional development sessions afterwards.

Continually, the high school English teacher says he has designed a comprehensive teacher professional development program for the entire high school. He then adds that the program was never implemented on the grounds that it was designed to fulfill the accreditation dossier requirement set by NAQAAE.

The vast majority of respondents have not participated in any “needs assessment” conducted in their schools. However, most of the participants exhibited knowledge of needs assessment as a requirement for school accreditation by NAQAAE. A middle school English teacher describes the Needs Assessment as “perfectly set in the school accreditation dossier.”

Teachers agreed of their role as “passive recipients of the decisions taken by the school leadership,” as described by a female primary school Arabic teacher. To elaborate more on this point, participant teachers said that during the past year, the school leadership decided to use surveillance cameras that were placed in the school playground, gates, and corridors. None of the teachers were consulted by the school leadership before taking this action. In fact, teachers did not learn about the cameras until they were actually fixed in their places, even though there is a teacher representative on the school-board. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that nearly only the English department teachers knew the name of the elected teacher representative on the school-board because he was their head of department, whereas the majority of teachers from other disciplines did not know who their representative on the school-board was.

Cameras were purchased by the parents through the parents’ council. The school leadership introduced the idea to the parents who regarded the idea as a safety measure given the security conditions the country was going through.
Lack of Professional Dialogue

Participant teachers say they are burdened with substitute periods almost on a daily basis due to the relatively high-rate of other colleague teachers’ absence. As one primary school science teacher says, “There is no time for conducting professional dialogue or discussing any academic problem.” She adds that the weekly department meetings are mostly devoted to informing teachers about new decisions or instruction that have been issued by the school leadership or the educational district. A high school math teacher adds that he and colleagues face a challenge in that they cannot attend weekly department meetings since they are usually teaching primary or middle school at that time to cover the shortage in teachers at the school. In this respect, teachers are also absent because they are busy with private lessons and must leave their school during the school day to deliver private tutoring—a huge source of income especially among teachers of math, Arabic, English, and science in the middle and high school stages. When I asked how the school leadership deals with this, as it seems that it was a well known information across the whole school, some participant teachers said that those things could always be worked out or as a geography middle school teacher puts it, “things are to go smoothly if you are on good terms with the principal, or if you are a math teacher because the principal used to be the head of the math department and he treats the math teachers with nepotism.” The other reason behind teachers’ absence is that some teachers work in more than one school within the same educational district because of the shortage in the number of teachers teaching certain subjects, mostly English, math and sciences.

Teachers’ Perceptions on School-based Professional Development for Teachers

School Leadership as a Support Base

The majority of participant teachers do not feel they are supported by the school leadership to fulfill their role as teachers. They don’t see the school leadership playing any role in the professional growth of teachers. The vast majority suggests that the role of the school leadership is managerial more than anything else. As a high school math teacher puts it, “they all are, our principal is no exception.” The majority of participant teachers say that the principal is responsible for all administrative issues that concern teacher attendance, punctuality, and classroom management among other managerial tasks. With respect to teacher professional development, it is the responsibility of the district supervisor and the school-based head-of-department or senior teacher of the subject matter. Most of the teachers don’t think it would be beneficial if the principal acts as an instructional leader. Only the teachers who hold a diploma in educational leadership expressed that the school leadership could help all teachers develop professionally if it adopts the transformational leadership model. However, all participant teachers agree that the school leadership is not fulfilling its role in fostering a culture that promotes professional dialogue and exchange of experience. A primary school French teacher says that she heard that there are teachers at the school who hold a professional diploma and that she wants to learn from them how to develop herself as a teacher and learn about new trend in
Holders of the same diploma express similar feelings, for example, a middle school science teacher says he would love it if the school allocates time for them by rotation to exchange experience with their fellow teachers and implement some of the things they learnt. “It is very frustrating to look at my diploma hanging on the wall when I can’t implement what I have learnt even on my department’s level,” a high school math teacher says.

Nepotism is one of the factors that most of participant teachers identify as hindering the school leadership to act as a support base for school based teacher professional development. Participant teachers, from disciplines other than math, think that the school leadership favors math teachers over other teachers. In this context, it is interesting to mention that some math teachers stated that English teachers used to be favored by the previous school principal who used to be an English teacher.

Lack of a structured system for school based teacher professional development

The majority of participant teachers expressed that they lack a systemized structure for school based teacher professional development, as mentioned earlier by one of the high school teachers. Participant teachers, who have participated in preparing the school dossier for accreditation, say that such structured system exists but only on paper. A high school French teacher says that he doesn’t believe that the head of the school-based training and quality unit could help him become a better teacher. He adds that, “that person was chosen for this position not because she is competent or qualified, but because she had the least packed schedule as she teaches an elective subject.” This comment represents a shared view among many participant teachers who express that there should be a monitoring and evaluating process that is transparent to make sure what’s on paper is implemented on the grounds. It should be mentioned that the ministry of education has set a criteria for the position of the school-based head of the training and quality unit that also include the job description and responsibilities, nevertheless, they are not implemented as designed for on the grounds.

Dominance of the Centralized System

Despite the fact that the education system in Egypt has been trying to shift from the centralized system towards more decentralized approaches, which is clearly reflected in Egypt strategic plan for education reform 2005 and the draft issued in 2014, the majority of participant teachers’ responses suggest that the centralized administering system is still domineering over new trends of delegation and distributed leadership that aim at building teachers’ capacities.

A middle school science teacher says that “it is futile to initiate change or development in teachers’ capacities when our seniors or those in positions hold the same centralized mindsets.”

The majority of participant teachers did not know that the PAT provides professional development sessions and training for teachers. The few teachers that exhibited knowledge stated that PAT used to provide the service free of charge, however, at the present time, teachers who wish to register for professional development training must pay for it.
Teacher professional development is currently managed by the district supervision. Professional development workshops are designed by the district supervisor that gathers teachers of the same subject matter for training, but according to the majority of participant teachers, this happens once or twice at the most throughout the entire academic year.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

*An education system is good as its teachers. Unlocking their potentials is essential to enhancing the quality of learning. Education quality improves when teachers are supported - it deteriorates if they are not.* (GMR, 2013/4 p.i)

This study has initially aims at examining the policy discourse on school-based professional development for teachers to identify to what extent the government has adopted school-based professional development for teachers as an approach. The second purpose for this study is to identify the extent to which public schools in Egypt implement this approach through examining teachers’ experiences and perceptions on school-based professional development for teachers. Finally, the study aimed at identifying the gaps between the policy discourse and the actual practice at school level.

The results of the study reveal that there exists a huge gap between policy discourse and practice at school level with respect to school-based professional development for teachers. Participant teachers’ responses identify the main impediments that stand between realizing the policy discourse into practice.

School leaders play a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment, while the policy discourse in Egypt emphasizes the significant role of the autonomous school leader that can communicate a vision of shared goals that ultimately improve the learning outcomes of learners. Responses of the studied sample reveal that the school leadership does not support their professional growth or nurture a school culture that is cooperative, collegial, and conducive to teacher life-long learning. The deeply rooted bureaucratic system is still dominating school leadership practice that is supposed to be autonomous. Participant teachers say that the school leadership is burdened with administrative tasks that are extremely time consuming leaving very little or no time at all to building their teachers’ capacities in terms of fostering school-based teacher professional development. Nevertheless, participant teachers state that they have had three previous individual female school leaders that were initiators, proactive, innovative, and transformational in their leadership style. In light of this, school leadership is proposed to be subject to individual differences among school principals which should not be the case as all school principals should be practicing through a guiding framework that considers each school’s individual culture and environment. In this context, the sample responses point blame at the process of preparing, monitoring, and evaluating the capabilities and leadership practices of school leaders. They recommend an air-tight selection process for school leaders that is based on competency. Examining the policy discourse, it was found that there are screening tools for the
selection process of school leaders. After potential school leaders have been accepted as qualified, they receive training and preparation courses, however, most of the training is devoted to managerial, administrative, and fiscal issues with quite minor focus on leadership skills and styles in a way that should enable those leaders to be the catalyst for change at their own schools.

Dominance of the centralized system is also another factor that is hindering schools to adopt and implement school-based professional development for teachers. While the school-based Training and Quality unit is responsible for, among other responsibilities, school-based professional development for teachers, we find that the district supervision is also primarily responsible for the professional development for teachers with each subject having its general district supervisor that is in charge of several schools within his/her district managing teachers with the help of the senior school based teacher in a clear centralized and cascaded process. In this context, it is important to have a clear organizational flow chart that demonstrates the job responsibilities for each of the heads of the school-based Training and Quality unit, the district supervisor and the school principal with respect to conducting and fostering school-based professional development for teachers, which could act as the first building block in establishing professional learning communities. More importantly, there should be a well structured system and process for monitoring and evaluating the performance of all stakeholders that are accountable for teacher professional learning.

Institutions’ failing to fulfill their designated role represent an obstacle in the implementation of school-based professional development for teachers. The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT), according to some assessment reports, has many gaps to fill in terms of professional development for teachers. El Kharashy’s (2010) assessment report summarizes the gaps that PAT needs to fill. He states that PAT has accomplished many achievements, however, it still faces some challenges. Some of the gaps that PAT needs to fill are insufficiency of qualified human resources and lack of assessment tools to evaluate them, absence of internal quality system that ensures ongoing performance self-evaluation, and absence of data base for local and regional professional development needs.

Finally, teachers must be considered as “allies” and not merely “tools” in the process of school-based reform where school-based professional development for teachers occupies the central place. The concept of teacher leadership needs to be emphasized in the policy discourse and this concept must be transferred and communicated at school level. Policy makers need to understand that maximizing the learning outcomes for the students comes in parallel with enhancing and maximizing teacher learning, for if we want to have a generation of life-long learners as students, we need to cater for a generation of “reflective practitioners” and life-long learners of teachers as well.

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TEACHER MARGINALIZATION AND ITS EFFECT ON TEACHING
TECHNIQUES, CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT
BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

Farah Abdel Kerim

Introduction

The issue of the importance placed on certain subjects taught in international schools in comparison to others has become the debate of school leaders and administrators today. According to the study conducted in this paper in this particular school, subjects that were once considered to be amongst the most important topics taught to students are slowly losing the respect they deserve by the school administration and the students. Some would argue that the rapid rise of international English based schools that has been taking place in Egypt during recent years could be one of the contributing factors. Others may argue that the importance placed on integrating religion and Arabic subjects in the curriculum of internationals schools has decreased. Students attending international schools are only expected to pass high school Arabic and religion ministry exams in order to enter into university. International school administrators are highly aware of this fact and therefore, when it comes to the organization of subjects based on their importance, these two subjects are placed at the bottom of the organizational bar. Based on a semi-structured interview conducted with the Arabic Head of Department (HOD) at the school, teachers who teach Arabic, religion, and civics are highly aware of this fact. They know that the subjects they teach are not deemed as important as the subjects taught in English because these subjects are not a part of the cumulative grade point average (CGPA), and therefore, the students become very reluctant to study, and the teachers in turn feel that they are not important in comparison to their fellow teachers. Thus, they feel marginalized and depreciated in the school.

To add to the above mentioned issue, the introduction of other subjects that are integrated as part of the curriculum, like character building classes, has also become questionable. Upon asking several members of the academic staff at the school where the research was conducted about their opinion regarding the inclusion of this subject into the student’s studies, almost 98% answered that it was unimportant. Their responses may have been due to their knowledge about the effectiveness of the teacher or about the topics discussed during these classes.

Issues arising in schools today related to a teacher’s status in the school based on the importance of the subject they are teaching in relation to the student, the administration and their fellow teachers is causing many negative drawbacks. One example of these drawbacks is the teacher’s knowledge that their subject is not as important as the other subjects taught in English. This realization alone coupled with the teacher’s status in the school fosters many problems regarding teacher’s ability to perform adequately in the classroom. Also, it holds back their enthusiasm when they are preparing the materials for the class and when they come to teach. All of this becomes very evident in their classroom management techniques and in the way they choose to handle class interruptions from the students. These feelings in return are projected on
to the students, which then shapes the way they start treating these teachers, with a higher level of respect and ability to take the subject seriously. These conclusions have all been based on the study and observations that were conducted in this paper.

In class observations have been done to show to what extend power struggles between marginalized teachers and teachers that teach core subjects—such as English, math, and science—at the school affect the ways in which the marginalized teachers are able to manage their classroom. Moreover, the class observations were also used to see how students behave within the classroom setting based on their awareness of the status of the teacher instructing them and the importance of the subject to the school administration and to their future.

This research focuses on examining the effects that teacher marginalization stemming from administration policies, power struggles, and the internalization of the importance of certain subjects have on teacher’s classroom management, teaching techniques and student’s in class behavior.

In the next section I will explain the effects of teacher marginalization on the overall quality of teaching. I will especially highlight the effect of marginalization on three aspects; classroom management, teaching techniques, and student’s in class behavior.

Literature Review

Marginalization, Inequality, and Internalization

Maria Maulucci (2010) argues that the marginalization of certain subjects in schools occurs when these subjects are deemed unimportant. This step is usually initiated by the administration of the school. When this takes place, the students within this school start adopting the same wave of thinking towards these subjects. Maulucci (2010) goes on to explain that the culture of the school accompanied by the set of beliefs that govern the ways the rules are set are also among the important factors affecting marginalization and inequity. Marginalization takes place when school administrators and policy makers start giving more attention and prestige to specific subjects over others. In that case, it does not only cause marginalization, but also inequity between the importance placed on subjects and teachers (Maulucci, 2010).

More problems of equity arise when teachers are convinced that the school and its administration are not taking any initiatives in amending these issues, or in giving them the respect they deserve. Maulucci (2010) writes that what makes the situation even worse is when the policy makers within a school start to hire teachers that are not necessarily very qualified for the central subjects and start giving them more salaries. Demotivation starts clouding the work place and the marginalized teachers start to formulate theories of internalization about themselves, their qualifications and their place at the organization. Paulo Freire explains the theory of internalization and relates it to how this affects the outcome of work. The internalization theory is when “the oppressed”-or in this case the marginalized- start to believe the opinions of others; that they are unproductive or unworthy or even unimportant, and start acting accordingly. This presents a huge problem in the work place and especially in schools. Accordingly, the more the administration, students and staff members believe that some subjects are unimportant, the more likely for the teachers teaching these subjects to believe it themselves. This results in great inefficiency at work, which affects the teacher’s in class management and teaching techniques. It makes them believe more in what Freire (2000) termed “self-depreciation” and helps them in solidifying their status at school (which they believe is unimportant).
The Theory of Teacher Burnout

Freire’s concept of internalization and “self-depreciation” correspond very well with H.J. Freudenberge’s (year) theory of “burnout”. Barbra J. Bank (2007) writes about Freudenberge’s burnout theory and concentrates on “teacher burnout”. According to Bank (2007), teacher burnout occurs when the teacher feels that the students are unwilling or unable to learn. A state of “wearing out” takes over the teacher, where “they no longer perform their tasks effectively and sometimes even no longer care about the welfare of their clients” (Bank, 2007, p.693). Later on however, other psychologists came up with three essential themes related to the theory of burnout. Fundamentally, they believe that the professional—in this case the teacher—starts to put the blame of their feelings of un-appreciation and physical depreciation on their client—the student. (Bank, 2007).

Bank goes on to explain that when professionals—teachers included—go through the burnout process, this is the beginning of a crisis related to inquiries of self-doubt and questioning of importance of one’s work and self. Professionals begin to see themselves and their work as one thing; meaningless. The implications of this are great and very dangerous. At this point, according to Bank (2007), professionals begin to question the importance of what they are doing and whether their work is valid or not. This poses a problem because once teachers start to question the importance of their mission as educators, it begins to directly affect the outcomes of their work, which is their students, learning, and future. When teachers become unable, or rather reluctant, to educate the future leaders and economists of a country, then they are directly “jeopardizing the economic future standing of the country” (Bank, 2007, p. 692).

When this occurs, the teachers begin to see themselves as the victims of the vicious system they are a part of. Self-pity is seen as another very important contributor to teacher’s decrease in efficiency. An important factor that is also highly affected when teachers’ efficiency in decreased is their ability to manage student’s behavior within a classroom setting. Students become very difficult to manage the class and it becomes difficult for the teacher to carry on their class session. The problem remains, however, that because the teacher is unmotivated and feels marginalized, they do not try to change the student’s perception. They start losing interest in the classroom, their subject, and the student’s learning as a whole. (Maulucci, 2010).

Teacher Marginalization and Classroom Management

When teachers feel marginalized and start believing that the administration is not supporting them as educators in the institution, they begin to lose focus in the classroom and their classroom management is affected accordingly. They become unable to manage the students and the class time is not utilized effectively (Compilation of professional development core content to support the new teacher induction program: A resource for broad NTIP teams, 2010). Therefore, this results in the overall teaching quality to decrease and the students do not get the maximum outcome out of the educational experience. Emmer and Stough (2010) explain that effective classroom management is key to having a successful and well-maintained learning environment. They believe that teachers who possess adequate classroom management techniques and are able to handle their students are more effective and that it is more likely for students to benefit and learn from them more. They also argue teachers themselves feel more self-worth when they are able to effectively manage their students and utilize class time in a way that would benefit learners. That is because they then view themselves as successful educators who are able to make benefit their students. (Emmer & Stough, 2010).
Therefore, it is important to understand the outcomes and effects that teacher marginalization has on teacher’s ability and willingness to manage their classroom. When teachers start believing that they are unimportant in the institution and that they are not being treated as fairly as other employees, they begin to lose interest in their job. This would then be reflected in the teacher’s ability to have a well managed classroom. Therefore, the entire learning experience is jeopardized and the students do not gain the quality education they deserve. (Maulucci, 2010). According to Yoon, Ducan, Lee, Scarloss & Shapley (2007), classroom management is named one of the main contributing factors relating to student achievement. Consequently, teachers should always have a well-managed classroom and they should also be motivated and encouraged to do so.

Teacher Marginalization and Teaching techniques

In this research I refer to teaching techniques as the ways in which teachers choose to deliver the contents of the lesson to the students. In the school where the research was conducted, all the classrooms are equipped with computers, smart boards, and data show projector to display materials to the students through PowerPoint and other technological gadgets. It was observed that teachers who teach core subjects are always urged by the administration to use these materials and to engage the students in the lesson through introducing the content to them through different mediums. This results in the student’s being more engaged in the lesson and in the development of class discussions and an overall effective and engaging learning environment.

When it comes to the marginalized teachers, I observed that they rarely ever use the technologies provided in the classrooms because they are either unfamiliar with how to operate it, or they do not feel the need to use them since they are not encouraged by the administrators or the students. This results in the lessons being teacher centered since the way in which the students receive the content of the lesson is only through the instructor and there is no room for the students to be engaged or participate in the lesson.

Teacher’s skill and knowledge are of great importance and value to the education of students, however it is also very important for teachers to have the necessary pedagogical skills needed for them to excel in their job. Being able to present educational concepts to students requires a lot of skill and patience. It also requires that educators be trained to constantly look for new ways to introduce concepts to their students in order to be able to engage them in the classroom and make them active participants in their learning process. (Ben Perez, 2011).

Therefore, the use of technology in the classroom is important in order to reach as many students as possible. One of the main reasons why the use of technology is important is because students learn in different ways, some students learn better through watching videos, others learn better through reading and so on. That is why it is important for teachers to consider that and to always make it a point to try and reach students through different ways of instruction and through different mediums of technology. It is significant to note, “it is thought that students will learn more quickly and easily if they are able to utilize their preferred style” (Robertson, Smellie, Wilson, & Cox, 2011, p.37).

Teacher Marginalization and Student’s behavior

When teachers begin to lose control of the classroom we begin to see how the student-teacher relationship fails. Joan F. Goodman talks about the student-teacher relationship and how respect is the most important factor in it. She explains that respect should be earned from both
parties, and what helps a person gain respect of another is their qualities and personality (Goodman, 2009). The problem faced in this study is the lack of respect from the student to their teacher that stems from their lack of respect to this teacher’s subject. The fact that teachers themselves fall under the spell of “self-depreciation” and “teacher burnout” mentioned above does not help. Teachers begin to question their own importance and begin to internalize certain aspects about themselves like their productivity and the level of respect they have earned from the school administration. All of these feelings are then projected on the students, which makes it difficult for them to respect their teachers. This brings us back to Goodman’s theory about “respect earned”. She writes that respect is not to be taken for granted and that one–teacher or student–should work very hard in gaining the respect of the person in front of them (Goodman, 2007).

Goodman goes on to explain that respect is the “cardinal virtue in schools” (Goodman, 2007). Essentially, it is important to understand that respect comes before anything else in the educational community. That is why it is something that we cannot compromise. When respect is achieved in the learning environment, this environment becomes healthy, nurturing, and beneficial for both the teacher and student. Wubbels (2005) compliments what Goodman says by stating that amongst the most important factors in the educational process is the learning environment.

One factor that must be considered that is an essential part in elevating the self-esteem of teachers, is how the school and the educational community chooses to recognize its teachers. Therefore, for teachers to be reintegrated in the school spirit and start to lose the sense of self-worthiness’, they should be motivated. Schools should work very hard to give the marginalized teachers the respect they deserve and start providing them with motivational incentives. This could be a very good stepping stone in bringing them back to their full potential, and help them realize that their work could possibly be the starting point to remedy the faults that accompany the reputation of their subjects.

Teacher Motivation as a Tool for Change

An important aspect that we need to consider is teacher development. Maulucci (2010) argues that the more we develop our teachers and start paying more attention to their professional needs, the more invested they will become in their work. This will lead them to have better classroom management, more effective teaching techniques, and better relationships with their students. The Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) also realized the importance of developing teachers and stated that in order for the Egyptian educational system to improve, the MOE has to have a plan for developing both teachers and the curricula they teach and tailor them in a way that would benefit the Egyptian student. (Development of curricula and teaching methods and evaluation methods, 2011). Part of the teacher development is developing their teaching methods. This ensures that the learning experience is maximized. Providing teachers with the necessary training they need that is related to their special areas of expertise and related to their personal professional development would lead to having better qualified teachers in the classroom. Professional development for teachers ought to encompass courses that support classroom management as well as techniques to engage students in the lesson. Once the students are engaged enough in what they are learning, they will start being active participants in their learning experience. This interactive relationship between student and teacher will foster the concept of mutual respect that has been discussed earlier. In turn, the concept of the marginalized
The other very obvious motivational tool is that of monetary incentive. Again, the Egyptian Ministry of Education realized the importance of such an incentive to teachers and began acting accordingly. It states that in order for the teacher to feel well compensated and motivated, they have to receive the monetary incentive that shows how appreciated they are and to further establish the point that they are recognized in society (Attention to Conditions of Teachers, 2011).

School administrators and policy makers have an even bigger role in trying to motivate their employees. Nohria, Groysberg& Lee (2008) write that the manager’s most important task is encouraging people to work as best as they can even if the circumstances are very difficult. The authors also mention that there are four drives that underline motivation. The second one is the drive to bond. Mainly, they explain that in a working environment it is very important for employees to feel that they all belong to the same community. When this drive is achieved, there a common sense of love and caring that is established. This commitment to the workplace and to one’s colleagues helps one feel like one is part of something important. They feel like they share a strong bond and this creates a sense of pride and belonging. All these feelings help employees’ spirits rise higher. They become motivated to work and get the feeling that they constantly want to do more. When relating this to teachers and education, the marginalized teachers would then feel that they belong to the school, and if the school administrators and policy makers help them become integrated in this society, then the positive outcomes will be endless. They will become motivated to do more in their job and they will feel feel like a part of the institute. This will result in better classroom management, and a better understanding of their audience (students) and a mutual respectful relationship will grow between the teacher and the student. There will also be a respectful relationship between the marginalized teachers and their fellow colleagues. (Nohria, Groysberg& Lee, 2008)

In order to better understand this topic, a qualitative study has been conducted. The sections that follow will describe the methodology, research findings and analysis, further observations that were gathered and the conclusion of the paper. Moreover, the limitations that were encountered will be discussed along with the future potential of study in this subject area.

Enhancing Teacher’s Performance through Professional Development

School leaders and administrators ought to always provide their teachers with continued professional development in order to help them in becoming better educators. It is also the teacher’s responsibility to always seek professional development in order to be able to perform their job in the best way possible. Marginalized teachers should also make it a point to engage in professional development. That is because when teachers are professionally developed they know techniques that can assist them in having a controllable and well-managed classroom (Malm, 2008). They are also aware of how to foster a mutual respectable relationship between themselves and their students. When educators are treated with respect in their classroom and when they know that the students in their class are listening to what the they have to say because they actually want to learn rather than just having to be in the classroom, they get an incentive to try and do more (Goodman, 2009). All of these factors are important and should be present in the educational system. Moreover, these rules ought to be fostered inside and outside the classroom for education to be beneficial for students. Therefore, educational leaders have to make the effort
to arm their educators with the necessary skills and talents they need to achieve these tasks (Malm, 2008).

Therefore, teacher professional development needs to be effective and ongoing. This will result in a well managed classroom and better instructional techniques since “effective professional development focuses on improving instructional practices by giving teachers new knowledge and techniques for assessing learning with the ultimate goal of improving the learning of students” (Systemic vs. one-time teacher professional development: What does research say?, p.36). That is why it is important to understand the benefits of professional development for both students and teachers.

**Research Methods**

To further understand the issue at hand I carried out a classroom-based research where I observed four teachers in their regular classroom setting. I compared teachers who teach core subjects and marginalized teachers in terms of teaching techniques, classroom management style, and student’s in class behavior. Two of the teachers observed taught a core subject, which is English, and the other two taught marginalized subjects, which are character education and religion. This subject classification is based on a semi structured interview with the head of the MOE subjects at the school. Based on the interview, it was concluded that Arabic and religion are considered to be core subjects. The school has to allocate a specific number of classes to these subjects in each grade level. Moreover, the MOE constantly monitors the progress of these subjects in International schools. However, as per the interview with the Arabic head of department (HOD), that is not always the case. Students are expected to pass Arabic and Religion subjects up to grade 10. After that, these subjects are not counted in the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of the students. In the event that the students do not pass these subjects, they are later on expected to take an exam when they enter university. According to the Arabic HOD, the students and the teachers are well aware of this fact, therefore, he explained that the students do not pay attention or exert any effort in passing these subjects. He went on to explain that this was “very frustrating” to MOE teachers.

To better understand the issue at hand, I also conducted a semi-structured interview with the Human Resource director at the school in order to see if there are any differences in treatment between core teachers and marginalized teachers. To protect the identities of the four teachers and the students observed, I did not refer to any names throughout this paper. Instead, the Character Building Coach is named Mr. C, the Religion teacher is Ms. R, the high school English teacher is Ms. E and the middle school English teacher is Ms. L. Moreover, the HR director is referred to as Ms. H and the school as a whole is named Blue School.

**Site Description**

The school used to perform this study is an Egyptian international school that has been operational for five years. The school includes class levels from pre-k to grade 12. It is located in the First Settlement of New Cairo. The total number of enrolled students is 543. It is a coeducational school and the students vary in nationalities, religions, and backgrounds. This specific school was chosen for two main reasons; first because I used to be employed there, therefore it was easy to gain access to teachers and students and get the necessary approvals needed to perform this study. Second, I wanted to perform the study in this particular school because I wanted to present the school management with a detailed explanation of what they
could do in order to enhance the teaching and learning process in this school and therefore make it a better institution.

Sample Description

For this particular research, four teachers were observed. The school director recommended these teachers since she was familiar with their experiences and with the subjects they teach. After approaching the teachers and explaining to them the intent of the research and how it was going to be conducted, I then asked them to sign consent forms indicating that they agree to participate in the study and promising that their identities will remain anonymous during and after the study was conducted.

The first teacher was Mr. C, who is the Character Building Coach, a subject that is considered to be one of the marginalized subjects at this school. He is 28 years old and has been teaching for five years in nine different schools as part of a program called A’akhlakona. He has a bachelor degree in Islamic Studies from El Azhar University. This is his second year as a Character Building Coach at the school and he is responsible for teaching grades Pre-K to grade 11—that is to say the whole school. Before analyzing Mr. C’s performance, we have to look at a key fact: he is responsible for teaching the whole school. Although Mr. C enjoys his job very much and his main objective is making students ready for the future by helping them reach their full potential, he is under a lot of pressure based on his work-load.

The second teacher who also teaches a marginalized subject was Ms. R. She is the religion teacher for grades 6 through 11. Ms. R is 47 years old and has been a teacher for 15 years. She has taught at two different schools and this particular school where the research was conducted is her third. She has a bachelor degree in Archeology and a diploma in Islamic Studies. Currently she is in the process of completing her first semester in the American College Studies in English program (ACSE) to gain her masters degree in teaching. This is in accordance to advanced-education requirements. Ms. R has been a religion teacher at the school for four years. I was able to attend three classes with Ms. R, one with grade nine, one with ten, and one with eleven. The reason why I was not able to attend more classes with Ms. R is because two of the scheduled classes were taken by two other teachers who teach English to work with the students on their reading and writing.

The next two teachers teach core subjects in the school. The first one was Ms. E who is a Language Arts teacher at the School. She is also the Head of the English Department for Middle and High School, the Teacher Professional Development Manager, and one of the co-founders of the school. That is to say she is an extremely important teacher at school who, from what I observed, is very feared and respected from both students and some of the staff members. Ms. E is 57 years old and has been a teacher for twenty years. She has taught at two other schools, and this school is her third one. She has a masters degree in the Art of Education. Ms. E is responsible for teaching only two classes; one in grade eleven and the other in grade ten.

The final teacher that was observed was Ms. L who was the English Language teacher for two grade eight classes. She is 30 years old and has been working as a teacher for the last five years in schools in the United States and China. She has worked as a teacher in two schools and this school is her third one. Ms. L has a bachelor degree in Sociology and English and a master’s degree in Education. This is her first year as a teacher in this school.
Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect the necessary data for this study I chose to attend classes with the selected teachers over a period of a month in order to assess their behavior in the classroom based on the status of the subject they teach – whether it was a core or a marginalized subject. Therefore, I attended the classes as a silent observer and took notes based on the observations I have made. A total of thirteen classes ranging from grade eight to grade eleven were observed over a period of a month. Out of these classes, six were with Mr. C, three with Ms. R, two with Ms. E, and two with Ms. L. A total of 75 students were observed to assess their behaviors in the above-mentioned classes and to observe if there were any differences in the ways they treated their teachers and concentrated in class.

I was also keen on understanding the school’s perspective regarding the core and marginalized teachers. Therefore, I interviewed the Human Resource (HR) director in order to be able to understand if there are any differences in treatments – salaries, and status in the school included-between teachers. This would later on help me in my analysis of the situation in the school.

For this particular study, I believe that classroom based research is the most appropriate because it provides details of how teachers and students act in the classroom. It is a natural setting where I was able to observe how teachers go about their daily routines in class and how they choose to relay the information to the students. Moreover, I was also able to observe the student’s in class behavior in a natural setting and this helped me a lot in drawing conclusions and understanding the issue that is being investigated.

Data Reporting

In order to enable the visualization of what I observed during conducting this classroom-based research, a very thorough explanation of the classes, class dynamics, and teacher’s way of instruction (tone of voice, body language, subject discusses…) was to be examined. After the examination of these factors, a conclusion was drawn to show why Character Building and Religion teachers’ classes are so different from the English Language classes. The analysis is organized based on the four teachers and their individual classroom experience. Essentially, I will discuss in detail every class attended and explain the observations that were drawn based on how the teachers were managing and conducting their classes. Each criterion is presented separately in order to provide a sense of how students behaved in each of the classes and the manner in which they chose to treat their teachers, and also to observe how the teachers chose to manage their classrooms and the techniques used to educate the students.

After the data reporting, I proceeded to analyze the information presented and draw conclusions based on the classroom research that was conducted and the literature that was reviewed. This enabled me to set recommendations for the school – if needed- in order to help the school administration and teachers provide students with the quality education they deserve.

Findings and Discussion

I was able to attend and observe six classes with Mr. C ranging from grades eight to 11. There was a common theme between all the classes observed that was present in all these four grades, and that is a general disrespect to the teacher. This being a Character Building class, the students ought to be disciplined and polite, since after all this is one of the main reason behind adding this class to the children’s schedules. However, it was the complete opposite. A general
sense of disorder took over the Character Building classes that made the 45-minute session seem as if it were only a 15-minute session. Essentially, the teacher was unable to deliver the planned material due to the student’s inability to concentrate, the constant interruptions that took place, and the general lack of order in the class. There was not an appropriate channel of communication set between the students and their teacher, and every time they wanted something they asked for it in a very rude manner and in a very impertinent tone.

During the first class that I attended with Mr. I was stunned with the student’s behavior. The first thing that was observed was that the students came late to class, up to seven to ten minutes tardy. The first 20 minutes of this session were spent on an endless discussion by the students to “force” Mr. C to give them a free lesson. The way in which the students chose to plead their case was done in a way that was not professional; shouting and screaming and being extremely ill-mannered, although, as stated by Mr. C at one point in our discussion, this class was aimed at teaching student how to be respectful of adults (amongst other things). However, it was the complete opposite. After the first 20 minutes were lost in vain, the class started, however out of the sixteen students present in class, only two or three were actually looking at their teacher, however none seemed to be concentrating. Mainly, some of the students were engaged in side talks, others were day dreaming, and others were engaged in disrupting the class in general. This was also seen in Ms. R’s classes; however, it was not as sever as what was observed in the character education lessons.

The themes observed in Ms. R’s classes were not very different than what I observed in Mr. C’s classes. The Students who were observed before in Character Building classes were different than those in Religion classes. The differences in behavior, however, were not very great, though the general overview of their behavior was in a sense calmer. There were still some students who were talking out of turn and others who were trying to disrupt the flow of the lesson. However, the level of class disruption was not as sever as what was observed in the Character Education lesson.

Although Ms. R had to stop the lesson every five to 10 minutes to make sure everyone was concentrating, it seemed that she had a stronger grip on the class as a whole. The problem that I observed, however, was that some of the students were not paying any attention to the class or to what their teacher was saying. They lacked concentration and were sometimes laying their heads on their desks and daydreaming. It seemed to me that they were either uninterested in the topics, or did not really care about the subject as a whole. Ms. R would try to get them to sit straight and concentrate, however, after two or three tries she would give up all together and complete her session normally as if these students were not in class.

When it came to Ms. E’s class, the students seemed extremely different. The first common theme that I was able to come up with was a mixture of respect and fear of Ms. E. The first class attended was with grade 11 and it was right after the break. I observed that the children were in their classroom, seated in their chairs, books and notebooks out before their break ended waiting for Ms. E. These are the same students that were observed before in both Character Building and Religion classes, but with different behaviors and attitudes. While observing I started asking myself, was that because of Ms. E’s reputation at school that she was a very tough teacher? Possibly. Maybe it was because the students did not want to miss out on any detail that Ms. E mentioned in the English class or perhaps they just respected her very much and did not want to upset her.

Throughout the entire observation period I could not help but wonder if these were the same students that were observed before. They were extremely behaved; none of them spoke out
of turn or interrupted the teacher. They all seemed very alert and were ready for their class. They respected their teacher very much and listened to every word she was saying. Ultimately, they acted completely different than the way they did in their other two “marginalized” classes.

Ms. L class was not that much different from Ms. E’s. The students were very well behaved in comparison to the Religion and Character Building classes. I observed that the teacher stands at the classroom door to welcome the students into the class and she shakes hand with every one of them before entering. This was something very interesting to observe, and the students seemed to appreciate this very much. This builds an atmosphere of trust and relaxation in the classroom, which in turn helps the children respect their teacher. The students were not only respectful of their teacher, they also paid attention to what she had to say and made the effort to participate in a constructive classroom discussion with their teacher and with each other.

Classroom Management Style

When it comes to classroom management, I observed that each teacher had a specific way of managing the students, some ways worked and some did not. Mr. C chose to adopt a very calm personality when managing his classes. He rarely gets angry, almost always has a very broad smile on his face and chooses to selectively hear what the children have to say. After one of the classes observed, Mr. C came up to me to discuss the events of the class. After a long conversation he stated that he knew that the kids were extremely “difficult” but that his job was to “build their characters correctly and that is why I have to be very clam all the time”. I did not understand this very much so I explained my concern that the students are still out of control and that he should be taking a stronger stand. Mr. C’s response to that was a very small laugh followed by “I have been getting this exact same reaction from the kids” he said, “They always ask me how I never get angry at them”. Then he went on explaining that if he is always very calm and rarely loses control, then the students will eventually learn to be the same way.

Moreover, when explaining his lessons in class Mr. C chooses to use a very low tone of voice that lacks authority and control. He speaks to the students in grades eight through 11 in the exact same way he speaks to the KG 1 children, as if they were babies who could not understand what he was saying. Throughout the classes observed, I rarely saw him use a stern tone with the students and he was always talking down to them. While I am not advocating using force and punishment to teach children, some discipline should be installed in classrooms. The way in which Mr. C holds himself in class and his body language is also meant for the wrong audience. When he is talking or explaining his lessons he usually tilts his head to the side a little and moves it in a very slow manner. Although he always uses his hands while speaking, his hand gestures are always very slow in movement. While explaining the lesson to the students he usually chooses to lean on the wall or the white board and does not move around in class a lot.

Mr. C chooses to have the students participate in class by having them role-play; yet this activity is very poorly managed. During each encounter with his students (no matter what their grade level is) Mr. C has four pieces of paper printed out that have four different situations that are supposedly related to the subject discussed in class. He divides the students up into four groups, gives each group a piece of paper, and asks them to act out the situation they have on their paper. During this time –which is usually between 10 to 15 minutes of the total class time– the students are almost always out of control. They are constantly speaking and laughing, sometimes even playing with their cell phones, and rarely looking at the paper in front of them. Mr. C keeps going around the class to each group almost begging them to start working and come up with an appropriate short play for the scenario they have. When they are finally done
with this task, each group is asked to come up in front of the entire class and act out their play. Needless to say, the students were not taking this task very seriously. The scenarios they came up with were very poorly constructed, and most of the time did not even reflect the scenario that was written out in the paper. Of course not all of the groups were like that, however, the majority of the children chose to view this exercise as a game and nothing less.

Upon entering Ms. R’s classroom, I observed that the students were very loud and not prepared for class. They would talk, walk around, look at their cell phones, and pay little to no attention to Ms. R. She would start by drawing their attention to the fact that their class session has started and that they should start to concentrate and sit in their places. This process would always take up to five minutes, just to get them all seated and ready to learn. What really amazed me is the step that came next. She would stand at the top of the class and call onto any student and say, “time please”. At this point I noticed that the students started to quiet down and they were mumbling things to themselves. It is important to note, however, that not everyone one was doing that and that they were not all quiet, but the majority were. If anyone was not doing that exercise Ms. R would look at them and tell them to start; however, I was confused and kept thinking “start what?” When almost a minute had passed Ms. R—who was also mumbling quietly to herself—said, “now start asking for forgiveness”. In later classes I observed that Ms. R allocates the first three minutes of class for silent prayer; the first minute and a half are for praying on the prophet Mohamed “may piece be upon him” and the second minute and a half was to ask for forgiveness from God. This usually got most of the students in the mood for their religion class and got them a bit quiet and ready to start the lesson.

Based on the observations I could say that 90 to 95% of the students came into the class prepare. That is to say they had their notebooks and religion books with them. They however were mostly reluctant to get them out of their bags and some even waited until Ms. R called on them and asked them to get their materials out. This is however a very huge difference between Mr. C’s and Ms. R’s classes. In Mr. C’s classes the students did not even have a pen with them, let alone papers or handouts. In Ms. R’s class, however, they were mostly prepared for the session and had the materials needed for the class with them.

Another important observation that I made from attending classes with Ms. R is her tone of voice and the way she held herself during the lesson. Ms. R would never shout at the students, she would sometimes use a stern voice to get them in order, but she never shouted. She would try once or twice to get the students to concentrate; nonetheless, if they did not, she never paid a second thought to it. I got the feeling that she disregarded the ones that did not pay attention and just wanted to concentrate her efforts on the ones that were actually paying attention in class. This is a problem, however, if the teacher is unable to make all the students participate in the class, then maybe the teacher should look at some ways to engage the ones who are not participating in order to maximize the learning benefits for all.

Ms. R’s body language was very different form Mr. C. She never moved very fast or very slow in the class, and her hand gestures were always kept to the minimum. She always made sure that she walked around to see if all the students had their books and notebooks ready for the session. She was never over reacting in the way she moved around and that is one of the things that made the class relaxing.

One problem that I found during attending religion classes with Ms. R is her teaching style. In short, it lacked innovation. It was the same old techniques used by teachers when I was still a student. The teacher goes into the classroom, writes the points to be discussed and the page number of the lesson they were discussing on the board, and then start talking about the lesson.
She would constantly look back at the book and explain from it the points that were mentioned on the board before. After she was done explaining, she would let each student read a paragraph from the text, and if anyone had any questions they would discuss it. There was no originality in transmitting the information to the student. That might very well be one of the main reasons why the students are not very interested in the class or in the topics discussed.

Ms. E on the other hand managed her class with great ease for the students were always very careful not to do anything that might get them a warning from Ms. E or a break detention. No student dared to speak out of turn or to even attempt to speak without raising his or her hand. If a student was asked to answer a question and they did not know, or if the teacher got the feeling that they were unprepared for class, they would instantaneously be told off.

No one spoke to their neighbor or looked anywhere other that at the teacher or at their books. The entire class was expected to participate “willingly” and if they did not, then the teacher would call on the ones that were not participating and demand to find out why they are not a part of the discussion. The students were very well behaved and they actually benefited from the 45 minutes of the class.

Ms. E appeared to be very relaxed in the classroom and did not have to worry about any factor that might disrupt the flow of the class because the students were always very well behaved in the class. She was comfortable enough in dealing with the students and expected them to know what they were talking about. Unlike Mr. C and Ms. R, she was in total control of the classroom and of the students as well.

Her tone of voice was very authoritative and her words were very concise and to the point. She has a loud tone that made everyone very attentive to what she was saying. Whenever she feels like someone is about to speak out of turn or if she needs to get the attention of any of the students she starts pausing between every other word. Also, most of the time she chose to raise her voice in order to make sure everyone was listening and she has no problem shouting at the students if she thinks any of them is out of line.

Her body language is also very confident. She moves around the class with her head raised high and with both her hands placed in front of her stomach in a joined fist. The way she moves around in class is usually in very slow steps, unless she is trying to make a point about something, then she starts walking around a little faster.

Based on the class observations that I conducted and the student’s responsiveness in the class, I would say that Ms. L managed her classroom excellently. The students come into class completely prepared with their books and notebooks laid down in front of them on the desk and ready to work. As soon as they are seated they open their notebooks and start working on their specified task. The amazing thing is that the teacher does not have to tell them what they should start doing for she has already written the “To Do” list on the board. They have five minutes to complete their task and then they start their class discussion. During the completion of their task, the teacher would walk around reminding them of important concepts such as punctuation, grammar, plagiarism, and citation. The students were quiet and concentrating on the task they were doing and they were writing eagerly in their notebooks.

After they finished with their To Do’s, Ms. L would call on a random student to read their summary. She would start commenting on his or her work and ask if anyone wanted to add anything to what has been said. After that Ms. L would tell them that they were going to start working in their “Reading Circle” and that all what they needed to have was a writing utensil, their notepads and their books. I did not really understand what the Reading Circle was at first, but then the students started moving out of their chairs and reorganizing the classroom layout.
into a circle that accommodated all of them. The teacher was seated in this circle as well and they started working on their reading assignment. I was very interested at the way Ms. L managed her classroom and in how the students were seated. In the Reading Circle she was able to see all of the students and they were in return able to see each other, which was very beneficial for them. The classroom dynamics was very organized and the students worked with ease and were able to collectively participate in the topic.

Ms. L’s tone of voice is very even and easy to listen to. She is not monotonous and knows when to raise her voice a little if the students were losing focus and when to adjust her tone back again to its normal. However, she had no problem in occasionally raising her voice to get the students to focus if they started to lose attention in class. Her body language was also very appropriate, no sudden or rapid movements, and her hand gestures were kept to a minimum.

The students seldom spoke out of turn and if they did she was quick to remind them that they should raise their hands. If anyone was being disruptive of the class or began to misbehave she would immediately put on her firm face and say, “if I am talking that means you should not be talking,” and she gave them a look that meant this was enough. They usually complied. I noticed that the students were calm in Ms. L’s class and liked participating.

Topics Discussed in Class

Based on the observations I noticed that Mr. C chose to teach the exact same topic in the exact same way in all the classes from grades eight to 11. Furthermore, what is more astounding, is that some of these subject matters were being taught by Mr. C in KG 1 classes. One of the topics that were discussed during Character Building class in grades eight through 11 was “How to Think Before Speaking”. Since the topic is not a very strong one, the students rarely paid attention and were never paying much attention in the class. Mainly, based on the side talks that I over heard from the students, the topics were not of interest to them. That is one of the main reasons why they did not pay attention to what the teacher was saying. The problem however was that Mr. C actually chose to teach this exact same topic to grades nine, 10 and 11. I failed to see the rationale behind this. I expected that Character Building classes constructed for students in middle and high school would focus more on pertinent issues that students face in their daily lives and how they should deal with them. This stage in the student’s lives is considered to be amongst the most important stages of development. That is why Character Building classes ought to be constructed in a way to help them get through this difficult stage that is full of peer pressure that could lead to very dangerous outcomes. The subject is called Character Building, so this should be one of the major aspects tackled by the teacher. Helping students realize who they are and helping them reach their full potential is among the most important lessons that ought to be learned through this subject.

The other subject matter that was discussed during the observation period was “How to Express Oneself Politely”. This is another topic that is not very well suited for students who are in middle and high school – the same students whose behavior was discussed earlier. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the students rarely paid attention because the topics were not constructed in a way that might have them interested in what the teacher was saying. Moreover, these topics did not leave room for peer discussion; therefore, the classes were not very dynamic. During his explanation of this particular topic Mr. C was talking with the students and giving them examples related to how they were supposed to speak to their parents, and how that is different from how they speak to their teachers and even more different from how they should
speak with their friends. Also he was discussing the ways in which children should learn how to ask for something politely from others.

Unlike Mr. C, Ms. R actually had a book to work from, and it was the one sent from the Ministry of Education (MOE). This made it easier for Ms. R to plan the sessions because she had a reference to go back to. The religion topics the MOE chose to include in the textbooks for each grade were fairly reasonable and rather enjoyable for the students. There was the usual explanation of the topic in question with either versus from the Quran or Hadeeth from the Prophet to validate what the students were learning. This brings me to perhaps the most important finding noted during the short time spent observing Ms. R; and that is the reason for learning these verses. Every time the students came across one of the Quran verses or the Hadeeth Ms. R would say, “this is to be memorized.” So one time a student came out and said, “but Ms. R do we have to memorize every one of them?” Her response was “Yes, because that is what is going to be coming from the ministry exams, that is why we memorize them.” I noticed that this was not the only thing the students had to learn about, they still had to learn many other concepts only because they will be included in the exam. I expected Mr. R to say that the students must memorize these verses for example for their religious significance or because of the lesson that they entail; however, it was not expected to see that the teacher asks the students to memorize just to pass their exams.

Another point related to the topics discussed in class is that Ms. R always made it a point to never disregard any question the students had, whether it was related to the topic discussed or not. She actually encouraged students to ask questions related to religion and was always prepared to answer any concerns or questions they might have. This is another thing that I found beneficial in Ms. R’s way of teaching and I got the feeling that the students actually cherished the fact that they were able to address any questions they had and that the teacher was more than willing to answer them. However, these feelings were not reflected in Ms. E’s classes.

When it comes to the topics discussed in Ms. E’s classes, I observed that the students found them to be very interesting and they were also very appropriate for the age group they were assigned to, therefore, the level of participation was high. During the observation of grade 11’s class session, they were in the process of discussing a project they had about which was more effective, written words or the media. All the students were very attentive in the class and almost everyone was participating. The way that the teacher chose to manage the lesson motivated the students to participate in the class. Moreover, since the topics discussed were of interest to the students, therefore, the discussions, arguments, and debates that took place in class were stimulating and interactive. The students were consequently working from bell to bell, hence, there was no place for the students to misbehave or waste class time. The objectives of the class were also clearly stated and the students knew what was expected of them. Therefore, the class ran smoothly with little to no interruptions. The interaction between the teacher and the students in grade 10 however was different.

The topic discussed in grade 10’s class was not as interesting, yet still it had a lot of discussion potential. This class was disusing the reading of a short story they had as homework. During the class session, Ms. E brought up some questions and the class was supposed to reflect what they thought about these questions and try to answer them through their knowledge about their reading assignment. The conclusion that I reached in this class was different from the one discussed earlier. Although the students were extremely well behaved in class, ready and willing to learn and punctual, they did not possess the necessary eagerness that would have made their learning experience a more beneficial one. the students were merely passive recipients of
knowledge. The level of participation and engagement in the class was not apparent, and there was no room for critical thinking. This was the opposite of what was observed in Ms. L’s class.

The topic that was discussed in Ms. L’s observed classes was a short story by a Chinese/American author called Amy Tan. During the discussion of this class’s topic the teacher would always give small anecdotes of the year she spent teaching in China. This was very beneficial and it greatly engaged the students in the discussion because they were always eager to hear what she had to say. Also, the topic discussed and the writing references they were receiving in class were very appropriate for their age group and academic abilities. The students were somewhat interested in the lesson and they were motivated to participate in the discussion. The fact that the teacher was also very involved in the discussion made the students even more interested to learn. The overall learning experience in this classroom was very beneficial for the students.

**Handling Misbehavior in Class**

After the detailed explanation of how the students acted in the Character Building classes, it was expected that Mr. C does not handle misbehaving very firmly, or else the students would not have been that out of control. The first thing that Mr. C resorts to when anyone misbehaves is sending him or her to stand at the end of the class. The students did not really mind this punishment at all, they view it as a better way to chat with their friends and cause even more chaos in class. In short, they are completely unaffected by it. When Mr. C loses all hope that a particular student will comply and listen to him in class, he resorts to sending him or her to stand out of class while keeping the door open. This act takes up too much of the class time. Then while the student is standing outside, he is causing more of his or her classmates to lose concentration because they are constantly trying to get back in class.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, Mr. C refuses to raise his voice in class, he prefers to keep calm and absorb all the misbehavior done by the students. Throughout the six sessions that I attended with Mr. C, he never scolded anyone about any rude behavior that they have demonstrated, he chose to either let them stand at the end of the class, leave the class, or act as if he did not notice. At first his behavior created a bit of a dilemma to me, however later on after observing classes with other teachers, his behavior began to be a little clearer, this is a point that will be discussed in the conclusion.

Ms. R’s ways of handling misbehavior were different. Whenever a student misbehaved in class, the first reaction that Ms. R took was to calmly call out their name. If they persisted – which they would normally do- she would start saying things like, please concentrate, or that is enough. Her tone of voice would sometimes get a little stern, but apparently not stern enough because the students that were misbehaving rarely stopped. I had the feeling that Ms. R lacked the talent of keeping the students concentrating in class, although she was passionate about her subject. In all honesty, however, the students were mostly respectful of Ms. R.

Based on the observations of Ms. E’s classes, I noticed that there were little to no misbehavior or class disruptions. The students were always very polite and never did anything to disturbed the flow of the lesson. They were also very careful to not break any of the rules and upset Ms. E. This was obviously out of fear of the repercussions of their actions.

In Ms. L’s class the students sometimes misbehaved, however I was able to observe that they knew when to stop. Unlike their Character Building and Religion classes, the students knew there was a red line that they should not cross. On the whole they rarely misbehaved. However, when they did, Ms. L would give them a very stern look and ask them only once to be quiet and
to continue with what they were doing. That was usually enough to get them to focus on the task at hand again. Ms. L had a combination of both a very welcoming, nice personality and a very serious, strict one. The children were apparently aware of these two personalities and it was apparent that they liked dealing with the welcoming and nice one.

After reporting the observations that I was able to record through attending classes with the four different teachers, I will now report the results of the interview that took place with the Human Resource (HR) director of the school.

**Human Resource Interview**

I had an interview with the HR director –Ms. H- of the school to get a sense of how teachers were treated. Ms. H is 30 years old and has been working in schools for 3 years. She is one of the founding members of this school and has a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). The reason behind this interview was to fully understand what the school expected from its teachers and in return what the teachers should be given from the school in order to further grasp the difference –if any- between the “marginalized teachers” and the rest of the staff. Also, an in-depth analysis needed to be done in order to see if the “marginalized teachers” were being treated any differently from other teachers in the school. This analysis was mainly between the teachers that taught core subjects and the teachers that taught marginalized subjects. The main aim of conducting this interview was to see how the school regulations, hiring procedures, salary distribution and acknowledgment of teachers affects their self-esteem and quality of work. Also, I was looking to see if all of this is in anyway related to the theory of internalization discussed early on in the paper.

The interview with Ms. H provided a lot of explanations as to why Mr. C and Ms. R’s classroom management styles are so much different than the other two teachers. One of the main reasons that I was able to draw based on the interview is that they are discouraged and in turn feel marginalized. They are aware of their status at the school and consequently they are not performing to their full potential.

The first thing Ms. H stated in the interview was that all applicants have an equal interviewing process and are assessed in the same way. They are first asked to bring in their resume, fill in an application form, or to have recommendations from other teachers. Then, they are asked to give a demonstration lesson in front of two to three teachers. Next, after the notes are examined, an interview is set with the Executive Director of the school and the department head of the subject the teacher is applying for. Finally, a decision is made based on the years of experience, qualifications, and references—in the order they were stated.

The problem however starts when teachers begin to compare themselves and their subjects to other teachers. Ms. H stated that “by default, all expats earn more than locally hired teachers.” This is the case no matter their years of experience, qualifications, or if they have references or not. She went on explaining this point by saying, “after all, we have to give them an incentive to come here.” Based on what the HR director said, most of the expats are here to teach core subjects, therefore, they are not only paid more, but they are also treated in a more prestigious way based on the subjects that they teach. She went on to explain that when the marginalized teachers realize that their years of experience and professional certification—if any- are not important at this point because they do not possess a different nationality they start becoming very discouraged. This is a major contributor to why teachers fail to be enthusiastic in class and lack motivation in their jobs. Moreover, all of these issues affect their moral and self-
esteem and in turn end up affecting their classroom management style and their teaching effectiveness (Maulucci, 2010).

**Further Discussion**

Based on the literature reviewed, the classes observed, and the interviews conducted, I reached the understanding that a teacher’s status in the school coupled with the importance placed on the subject they teach shape the way in which they choose to conduct their lessons and deal with the students. The data that I gathered from the observations conducted was of great value and showed how teachers and students react to the different subjects. However, I believe that the interview conducted with the HR manager and the Arabic Head of the Department gave me greater insight into the issue at hand. The problem faced now is that students are expected to achieve a high grade point average in the subjects that will enable them to enter university. These subjects are the ones that are taught in English, and consequently they are seen as core subjects. Therefore, the students put all their efforts in trying to achieve high academic ranking to be able to pass the core subjects. However, according to the Arabic HOD, since the subjects taught in Arabic are not a part of the student’s grade point average, therefore, less efforts is put on achieving grades on these subjects. He explained that this leads the teacher to feel discouraged and consequently marginalized. Which connects very well with what the HR manager said earlier. The school spends a lot of money on teachers who teach subjects delivered in English because these are the subjects that will help students graduate and get into college. Moreover, according to the Arabic HOD, although the Egyptian MOE spends time and effort on allocating teachers in international schools and monitoring the progress of these teachers when it comes to the curricula they teach, discrepancies still happen in the system. This in turn affects the teacher and their overall performance in the classroom that is reflected in classroom management and the way they choose to manage the curriculum.

Subsequently, when it comes to classroom management, the marginalized teachers find it exceedingly hard to control their students and have a well-established learning environment. The core teachers were able to provide their students with an effective learning environment by being able to manage their classes. The core teachers were able to set classroom procedures that were effective and they used strategies that would make them able to handle a classroom and productively use class time. That is because classroom management also entails teacher’s ability to be able to manage time and provide students with tasks that would allow them to effectively use class time and not waste the lesson (Compilation of professional development core content to support the new teacher induction program: A resource for broad NTIP teams, 2010). Unfortunately, in some of the cases discussed, the marginalized teachers were not able to do the same because there was not mutual respect present between them and their students.

This leads to the second issue, which is the relationship between the teacher and the student in relation to the student’s in class behavior. When teachers gain the respect of their students they are able to formulate a relationship in the classroom that is based on mutual respect and understanding. This relationship helps educators provide their students with a beneficial learning environment. If there is no respect between the two parties, then the learning experience is jeopardized. Broad and Evans (2006) explain that it is very important for teachers and students to respect each other because this links both the student and the teacher and helps them both to achieve the task they are working towards, which is quality education.

Furthermore, based on the research and the observations conducted, I was able to gather that teaching techniques and using technology in the classroom are both an essential tool for the
success of the educational process. As previously mentioned, students learn in different ways, and that is why it is very important to educators to keep that in consideration in order to be able to reach all their students (Robertson, Smellie, Wilson, & Cox, 2011). The marginalized teachers are not very keen on using technology in the classroom because they do not view it as an important aspect. In comparison with the core teachers, they make it a point to use videos and PowerPoint in order to make their classes more interesting and to engage their students more.

All the above-mentioned issues and problems explain why the researcher concluded that Mr. C and Ms. R are marginalized in their own working environment. Whether the school does that on purpose or not is beside the point. The important thing to notice here is that the power struggles demonstrated in how the core teachers are treated in comparison to the marginalized teachers, and how the school administration gives prestige to some teachers over others affect how teachers do their job, which leads me to this paper’s conclusion.

**Conclusion**

Based on the research gathered and the observations that were conducted, I was able to reach the following conclusion. The teacher’s status in the school coupled with the universal knowledge of the importance of the subject they teach are directly related to the level of respect they receive from students and colleges. When students know that specific teachers and their subjects are not regarded as important in the school, they start acting accordingly. Their actions may be in the form of constant misbehavior, displaying disinterest in the subject and teacher, and a constant urge to break the class rules. All these factors start to build up inside the teacher causing them to lose interest in effectively managing the classroom and negatively affect their teaching techniques. This knowledge is then projected onto the students, which results in a vicious cycle and in the formation of the “marginalized teachers.”

Moreover, the knowledge that no matter how long their experience has been and how achieved they are, they are still placed on the bottom of the hierarchal chain because of the subject they teach is very discouraging. Issues such as the salaries they receive and their position in the school are enough to discourage teachers and hold back their performance.

This research could be taken further by looking deeper into power struggles in schools. More observations need to take place with a wider sample covering more schools. Arabic classes could also be observed to see if the predictions made in this paper involve the subject that teaches students how to think, read and write in their mother tongue.

**References**

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