Teachers as agents of change

AMAL NETWORK
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“In my view, teaching is an intellectual and scientific profession, as well as a moral profession. That means that schools have to constantly process knowledge about what works and that teachers have to see themselves as scientists who continuously develop their intellectual and investigative effectiveness.”

FULLAN, 2000
ACCESS AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE
ACCESS’ Objectives

- In view of the difficulties facing the Bedouin sector in Israel, the Amal Network – with the continued support of the U.S. Embassy – operates a project aimed at increasing the chances of Bedouin students to pursue academic studies.

- The main project objectives were to:
  - increase the number of students who will take the 4-point English matriculation exams in six of the Amal high schools in the Negev.
  - train teachers to excel in working with high-level students.
  - foster cross-cultural awareness and promote tolerance.
Teachers as Career-Long Learners

- Teachers have been meeting every two weeks for three years to exchange ideas and create new materials.

- They have been observed at least two times during the school year and received feedback.

- They have been learning English literature and grammar.

- They have been learning different methods of teaching English.
Teachers as Leaders

“Leaders who are effective operate from powerful conceptions, not from a set of techniques.”

So, Access has encouraged teachers to become leaders. The project has encouraged them to reflect on what they were doing and why they were doing it. But if leaders are taught techniques without conceptions, the techniques will fail. Techniques are tools that must serve a set of conceptual understandings. When conceptions and techniques go hand-in-hand, we create breakthroughs.
Teachers’ Commitment and Training

Teachers are committed to and skilled in:

1. Working with all students in an equitable, effective, and caring manner by respecting diversity in relation to ethnicity, race, gender, and special needs of each learner,

2. Being active learners who continuously seek, assess, apply, and communicate knowledge as reflective practitioners throughout their careers,

3. Developing and applying knowledge of curriculum, instruction, principles of learning, and evaluation needed to implement and monitor effective and evolving programs for all learners,
4. Initiating, valuing, and practicing collaboration and partnerships with students, colleagues, parents, and community,

5. Appreciating and practicing the principles, ethics, and legal responsibilities of teaching as a profession,

6. Developing a personal philosophy of teaching.
“It has become increasingly clear from various sources that we need professional learning communities in which teachers and leaders work together and focus on student learning. But they must be infused with high-quality curriculum materials and assessment information about student learning”
Access Teachers as a Community

- Teachers have been meeting for learning.
- Teachers have been meeting for fun.
- Teachers have been talking to each other by e-mail or phone.
- Teachers have been discussing their beliefs and methods.
- Teachers have been testing each other’s students.
- Teachers have been exposed to various cultural activities.
Curriculum Materials and Assessment

- Teachers have developed curriculum materials adapted to their own students. With the help of the trainers they read materials and discussed their relevance.

- Moreover, they learned many methods of assessing their students, focusing on the process rather than the product.
Teachers as agents of change

“Teacher education programs must help teaching candidates to link the moral purpose that influences them with the tools that will prepare them to engage in productive change.”

If we check what has been done in ACCESS, we have indeed reinforced the teachers’ beliefs that the Bedouin community must change and adapt to the surrounding society and offered the tools to engage in that change.
So, how do we proceed? 

Teacher Empowerment

- Professional empowerment is correlated with task motivation and stems from the teachers’ willingness to take responsibility and control over their work and be able to demonstrate higher levels of professional commitment.

- The first stage is personal empowerment.
Personal empowerment is about raising one’s feeling of self competence, thus enabling her/him to deal effectively with challenges.

Self advancement and self management can serve as vehicles through which the educational – professional goals are achieved.
The following are the topics of our workshops for 2008-2009:

1\textsuperscript{st} session: “Self- identity”
- Self image & self esteem, points of strength & weakness and personal effectiveness.

2\textsuperscript{nd} session: “Using Our Resources”
- How to use our resources such as- skills, intuitions, beliefs & feelings to reach our goals.
3rd session: “Stories of success”

- Analysis of successful events that we went through & tips on how such events can be duplicated.

4th session: “Soaring Our Self Competence”

- will deal with the issue of self competence. How can teachers cater to the pupils’ needs and build up their sense of responsibility and commitment?
5th session: Professional Skills

- How to aspire to better professional performance, to define goals & benchmarks as standard points for assessing progress.
Five workshops will be held throughout the year during the holidays. These sessions will aim at empowering the teachers by the proposed coaching program thus improving their performance and enabling them to become better agents of change.

In addition, professional observation and modeling will continue.