

Report about the period from March- 1st September 2018
El Saiedia Prep School For boys
West Naser City– Administration

Naser City, Cairo

Prepared by
Dr/ Amal Shams



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School and University Partnership for Peer Communities of Learners SUP4PCL

FACULTY OF EDUCATION | AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY



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The school profile

El-Saidia Prep- school is located on 2 the Extension of Ramses St., Naser City,

The school is not yet accredited, it was tried to be accredited on 2013, but It did not succeed.

The school does not enjoy a positive working environment, The Team noticed that the Manager did not encourage good and activated teachers. the “routine” practices adopted by the school leadership may not have a desirable effect on the working environment. Where school leader cares about administrative tasks and regulations, also she has no flexibility in making decisions and assigns teachers more tasks than their burdens (from their Views).

Organizational structure of school comprises a school director, 1 school deputy, a training unit director, 2 social and psychological specialists, 2 workers and 30 teachers for all subjects.

The school houses one stage: the preparatory stage. The school is consists of 12 classes and includes one library in different branches. There are 1 science lab that include scientific models, samples, chemicals for experiments, physical experiments, charts and pictures. There is also one computer lab.

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The school is keen to develop not only the intellectual aspects of its students, but also their skills and attitudes through engaging them in activities such as drawing, singing, dramatization, and through sports activities such as football.

The following Table (1) indicates the number of students in each stage.

Table 1. Number of students in each stage

No. of students in grade One	120 students
No. of students in grade Two	130 students
No. of students in grade three	198 students

The organizational structure of the school consists of the school headmaster, a Student Affairs secretary, a Personnel Affairs secretary - Activities secretary - Head of every Department: Arabic – English, Math, Science, Social studies, Computer, Art, Music, Industrial field and Agricultural field.

Our first meeting with the teachers was held in the Library., a room that is used, if there are no training sessions, for teachers to engage in conversations including what is related to the educational process and some problems of them face with certain students.



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Right from the beginning, there was a positive interaction between the teachers and the ASU project team. This was demonstrated by their suggestions for development and their desire for professional development.

In 2018, the ASU team met the school supervisor and the teachers to present the aim of the project and to clarify its main domains: establishing learning communities, active learning, STEM education, global citizenship, special needs, technology and Quality Assurance.

Considerations taken in dealing with the Saidia school Teachers:

- Crowded classes, which affects the educational process
- A stability of learning Culture and non-exchange of experiences
- The director does not care to motivate and encourage teachers and outstanding teachers
- They failed to obtain accreditation due to lack of teacher cooperation and the dictatorship of the former director

Data Gathering Tools

For triangulation sake, we were able to gather data via three tools:

1- The Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NSA)

on teacher (18 teachers) with different specialties this questionnaire illustrated the teachers` experience, and asked about their participation in courses or workshops in their specialization or in teaching methods, or participation in educational conferences or group discussions or in Ph-D activities, finally asked them about if they observed their colleague in another school and the effect of this on their performance.

2- The Focus Group

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The focus group was composed of Eight teachers. In a brainstorming session with them, they talked about their needs and difficulties in teaching, dealing with the different students' styles, activated Learning, classroom management, and their attitude towards the application of the idea of learning communities.

3- Teacher Interviews

We interviewed with 18 teachers from different specializations: quality and training official, social and psychological specialist, science teacher, math teacher, Arabic and language teacher, so from this interview we determined their needs.

Results

1- The Needs Assessment Questionnaire

On Wednesday 05.03.2018, we administered the NAQ to 18 teachers. The following results were reached:

The total number of teachers are (32), the survey applied to (18) teachers 7 are females (38.9%) and 11 are males (61.1%).

Regarding the teachers' teaching experience, results indicated that five teachers (27.8%) has a teaching experience from 5-10 years, one teacher (5.6%) from 15-20 years, whereas the majorities., ten teachers (55.6%) have more than 20 years.

Regarding the teachers' Education, results indicated that (16) teachers (88.9%) are holders of bachelor degrees, one (5.6%) obtained master's degree, and one teacher (5.6%) was a Diploma holder.

Professional Development Activities

The number of persons that participated in courses or workshops in their specialized or in teaching methods or in topics that are related to education) are 12 (66.7%), while 6 teachers (33.3%) did not participate.

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When asked about the effect of such participation, two teachers (11.1) stated that such courses/workshops had little effect on their work; 5 (27.8%) teachers believed that their participation had medium effect, whereas, 5 teachers (27.8%) confirmed that those courses had a large effect.

When we asked if they are enrolled in a higher studies program, only 4 teachers (22.2%) confirmed that their participation had a large effect on their work, while 6 (33.3 %) believed that it had a medium effect, and one (5.6%) said there was no effect. As to observing their colleagues in another school, seven teachers (26.9%) had had the opportunity to do so, compared to 20 teachers (76.9%) who did not have such an opportunity.

In addition, 5 teachers (27.8%) believed that this activity had a large effect on their work, while 1 teacher (5.6%) stated that observing colleagues in another school had a medium effect on their work.

Furthermore, six teachers (33.3%) participated in: professional development groups for teachers while 11 (61.1%) did not

A large effect was reported by 5 teachers (27.8%) and a medium effect by 1 teacher (5.6%).

As a part of an official school policy, 10 (55.6%) confirmed they participated in peer mentoring or observation, compared to 6 (33.3%) who were not involved.

This participation had a large effect on their work as reported by 5 teachers (27.8%), while three teachers (16.7%) stated it had a medium effect, and a small effect was reported by two teachers (11.1%).



Results also indicated that almost of teachers want to participate in professional development activities 15 (83.3%) compared to 2 (11.1%) who do not want to participate.

; Responding to a question on the reasons that hinder them from participating in PD activities, the reasons they identified are:

- ✓ (The distance from my house: three teachers) (16.7%).
- ✓ (The activities of professional development are held during the official time of work: 2 teachers) (11.1%).
- ✓ (The activities are too expensive for me: one teacher) (5.6%).
- ✓ (Family responsibilities prevent me from joining these activities: 4 teachers) (22.2%).
- ✓ (I do not know where or when these activities are held: one teacher) (5.6%)

Finally, teachers Identified the following training needs that they want to urgently participate in, in descending order:

- Classroom Management: 5 teachers (27.8%).
- Assessment: 4 teachers (22.2%).
- Current Trends in specialization: 10 teachers (55.6%).
- New Teaching Methods of Different Subjects: 6 teachers (33.3%)
- Educational Technology Skills: 8 teachers (44.4%)
- Special Needs Student Assessment: 8 teachers (44.4%)



- **Student Misbehavior: 10 teachers (55.6.9%)**
- **Students' Counseling: 8 teachers (44.4%)**
- **Students' Building Capacities: 8 teachers (44.4%)**
- **School Administration and leadership: 6 teachers (33.3%)**
- **Content and Performance Standards for Different Specializations: 6 teachers (33.3)**
- **Entrepreneurship: 4 teachers (22.2%)**
- **Quality Assurance and Accreditation: are 4 teachers (22.2%)**

2-The Results of the Focus Group:

During focus group, we asked teachers different questions and we recorded their answers. Most of their talk focused on the difficulties they face them during the school day. They all pointed to the fact that they are not only teaching their subjects, but they have other administrative responsibilities teachers such as their participation in the preparation of the school time-table, that they have substitution periods due to the shortage of teachers in each in each discipline. They also highlighted the lack in materials in school, and the over crowdedness of their classes where the average number of students in class “Intensity of classrooms” was up to 60, where some of them said " we introduce the service to more than 60 students each one of them has different Background ,has different attitude, learning style and method of thinking , who can we improve the education and learning in Egypt"

When we asked them if they use any classroom rules, they affirmed that they did not do,



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when we asked them about their opinion about team-teaching, they do not used it,

The results of the interviews

Through our interviews with the teachers, we recorded their training needs. How they can incorporate new technology into their teaching, how they can improve their class room management skills came as important topics that need to be addressed. They also wanted some guidance as to developing their knowledge and skills regarding new trends in teaching methods, particularly for talented students, and for different ways of assessment and evaluation

Also, the training needs of social and psychological specialist were determined. These centered on having training on collaborative counselling, dealing with student violence, ways of identifying individual cases, skills of dealing with talented and special needs students.

Finally, the training needs of the QAU officer was focused on training in leadership skills, strategic planning, and new trends in school administration.

We noticed through these interviews that there were misconceptions teachers about STEAM, where teachers think that STEAM in only focused on designing models for any science concept. In addition, they had a negative attitude towards working in professional learning communities as well as towards team work and self-assessment. Finally, they had not known the Meaning of Global Citizenship and sustainable Development.

2-Description of PCL group

Our PCL group consists of 3 teachers:

- Mrs. Dalia is the first one. She is responsible for the QAU since 2012, besides being a Science teacher. She has a Bachelor of Science, she has a 12-years' experience in teaching Science at. She has experience in active learning, she is very active, ambitious, and love her work with students.

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- The second teacher, Mr. Seed, is responsible for Training Unit in addition to being a Math teacher. He has a BA in Mathematics. Mr. Seed has 16 years' experience in teaching Math for different stages.
- Finally, Mr. Hassam is the Arabic language teacher, who has Bachelor of Education and Arts (Arabic language). He has experience in teaching Arabic for 17 years. He really believes in student-centered learning.

The reasons for selecting these teachers

They are very active, interested, highly committed and they want to change the existing culture of the school. They have different experiences in teaching, training, and managing their units (QA unit, and T unit). In addition, we can depend on them to transfer our project concepts to other teachers in school to expand our learning community and eventually to their colleagues in the cluster schools.

The protocol of ASU team school visits

We agreed with our PCL group to meet weekly every Sunday. This gave us the chance to visit the school 3 times from (2. July, to 1. August.2018) and spend almost the whole day there, i.e. from 8.30 am to 1.30 pm. We also agreed with them that each visit would have a focused, meaningful conversation on one of the needs they identified. All of us shared data collected about these themes with the group.

Tasks carried out by ASU to fulfill the action plan

Right from the beginning the ASU team recognized the importance of building relationships with the teachers to drive home the idea of being one team, committed to learn from each other and having one ultimate goal, i.e. promoting our students' learning. Our relationship was developing smoothly each visit. It was very natural to have breakfast with them and share our mutual challenges in dealing with students. Soon creative ideas of, for example, techniques of dealing

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with classroom management problems were shared, carried out and feedback was welcomed.

Discussed with them was the idea of creating a magazine and They added that these activities would also be an avenue for meaningfully engaging their students and developing their talents as well as increasing their motivation to learn, where they said that " **why not participating students in designing this magazine to feel them that they have a role in a successful Learning and improvement the policy of the school** " .

In presenting the project, we began by eliciting what they know about the main domains of the project. Then the project was thoroughly explained during our meetings. Activities they carried out were shared to improve students' citizenship, sustainable development and STEAM.

In short, we believe to have succeeded in establishing a mutual relationship built on respect, trust and on the realization that whatever we all do is for the sake of our students' learning.

It is to be noted that one of our goals is to enhance our PCL teachers` pedagogical skills and content knowledge. That is why we worked first at identifying their previous experiences in teaching and their teaching skills. For instance, we discussed together successful teaching strategies, identified the nature of activities that they used with their students related to citizenship, sustainable development and STEAM. We illustrated to our PCL the meaning of STEAM approach and shared with them different activities based on it.

We encouraged our PCL group to be active learners and good researchers. We agreed that we all would research different themes related to different educational trends such as authentic assessment, enrichment activities, and dealing with special needs students. Then we would share what we all have read.

We were able to look at the nature of relationship between the school leaders and our PCL teachers. We interviewed the school principal and asked her

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if she is the only decision-maker or if there are other people who participate with her in decision making,. And she said that in each unit such as QA unit, training unit and head of each department are responsible for decision making, but any decision is taken , she must know about it

We interviewed the PCL group and other 7 teachers to know their opinion about the type of leadership in school and their relationship with the school leaders.

According to the action plan for this month we aimed to train the teachers to three subjects: (Complete confidence building - learning difficulties-

- 1st. Meeting (Complete the confidence building)



- 2nd. Meeting (learning difficulties)



- 3^{ed}. Meeting (Talking about the Next Trainings)

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5-Data collected through ASU Team visits

- Our PCL teachers began to cooperate with each other during teaching. In some Lessons. Mr. Dalia said that "at the beginning I Think it is difficult, because of the Variety and difference of subjects, but now I think that it is very good idea to take a help with another teacher, show the integrated between the subjects and improve our performance by exchange the experiences"

They used different activities about citizenship and sustainable development such as:

Activities through teaching Arabic (Mr. Hassam)

-Students used a simulation of a scene in the parliament to illustrate their rights and duties as a citizen. Students researched and wrote about Egyptian Martyrs. They were given real-life situations though which they were able to talk about tolerance and respecting the other. Mr. Hassam had prep. students teach primary one student reading and writing Arabic.

(Mrs. Dalia) is a believer in active learning, she used role-play with her students about the role of the Light, tried to develop her students' autonomy and interest by researching from various sources, Her Students made activities related to Sustainable Development.

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Role play in Science about Sustainable Development



Our PCL group mentioned that they face the following problems:

- Dealing with students learning difficulties**
- Over-crowded classrooms**
- Content full of irrelevant details that really prevents them to do new activities**
- Parents` attitude towards doing activities; they think that these activities are mere waste of time,**
- There are difficult, dry lessons that they can only the lecture method to explain.**
- More administrative tasks laid on them and traditional leadership**

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We began to make discussion between PCL and ASU team about these problems and if they tried to deal with these problems to share our experience and story of success

One of them, Mr. Seed, told us that he tried to deal with student with learning difficulties in reading and writing Arabic letters by drawing, and by using aids to show the relationship between the sound of the letter and its shape. he also resorted to put him in a group and sometimes he asked older peers to tutor him.

- They also affirmed that they utilize various strategies and techniques to enhance their students' learning. They mentioned using, Knowledge tree and thinking wall, brain storming, miming, role play, open discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, peer to peer learning. They stated that these strategies and techniques create a positive atmosphere in the classroom besides teaching their students life skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, citizenship, and values.

Observations through ASU Team visits

Real cooperative relationship between PCL group in their teaching.

Trust has already been established between the school PCL and the ASU team.

There is improvement in their performance, and they improved their activities with students. We sensed their desire to change and develop their performance.

Their attitude towards sharing their experiences and activities began to change, where one of them said: "I learnt from the performance of Mrs. Dalia through her teaching in my class".

All of them began to show different success stories such as changing the negative attitude of student towards studying Science into a positive one, and changing the bad relationship between some students and teachers into a productive relationship.

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They began to think, search and keep a diary about solutions to their own problems.

There is awareness of the meaning of reflection of their performance and the performance of others.

They began to share and transfer their new technological skills gained from the workshop at ASU Foe with their colleagues.

Strong and weak points

Strong points

- The school PCL group were given training courses on active learning, teaching with technology, student violence and how to deal with it and also training on the responsibilities of the Quality Unit and the Training Unit.
- There is documentation for all the school achievements. We can use these documents to build on their experiences.
- The leadership in the school is helpful.
- Their attitude towards working in team and share their experiences with each other has changed.

Shortcomings

- Active learning strategies are not used in teaching different subjects due to the large number of students in classes.

There is no trained specialist to deal with special needs students.

Many teachers are not aware of the meaning or importance of research, reflection, self- assessment or the different types of assessment.

Challenges that we are facing

How will we expand professional learning communities in this school?

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How will we change teachers' negative attitude towards reflection and peer-assessment?

How will we modify teachers' misconceptions about STEAM?

How will we help the school deal with special needs especially talented students?

How will we improve the performance of the Quality Assurance Unit?

How can we help teachers design different activities in order to improve their student's citizenship?

How can we help our teachers to apply suitable active learning strategies in overcrowded classes?

How can we help them they use different technological aids during their teaching?

How will we support our PCL group on their scientific conference about special needs and dealing with them and publish their research papers and success stories?

Our Action plan

Our action plan for the coming months will focus on the following activities:

- Designing an electronic magazine to spread the achievement of our project with our PCL group in the school

Adding 10 teachers who are active and interested to our PCL group

Encouraging our PCL group to be active learners as well as researchers

- Establishing a real relationship between the school and its community.

Aspects of benefit from our visit to Europe:

Reflecting on our visit to schools in 2 different European countries, we are working to apply many of the following ideas:

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- Providing teachers with different ways to enhance their professional developments, such as: e-learning, blended learning, school visits, peer to peer learning, lesson study, action research, seminars, invitation of expert teachers.
- Helping them in designing different activities about citizenships to improve different values to the students such as cooperation, respect the others, and so on
- Creating STEAM activities with students to make science and math more interesting, and to develop students` scientific skills such as observation, inference, classification, problem solving, design thinking skills and so on.
- Expanding learning communities in school between us as a university team and school team in order to help them to solve their problems in teaching, and share the experience between the PLC team
- Spreading the culture of PCL in the school between teachers in order to share their experiences, activities, problems, new teaching methods, and so on.
- Drawing teachers` attention on the importance of reflective practices inside the community of learners.
- Using Pre-lesson planning and post-lesson assessment meetings to help develop in-depth reflection about the quality of teaching and learning. The collaboration in lesson study can help teachers to develop a sense of collective efficacy.
- Determining the role of mentorship and its reflection on the teachers` performance
- Determining the effect of leadership on the building of PCL in schools.
- Encouraging teachers to use project work in various subjects so as to make learning meaningful to their students and to take pride in what they do.

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- **Using the OFSTED's criteria to assess schools against the following 4 dimensions:**
 - **Achievement of students.**
 - **Quality of teaching**
 - **Behavior and safety management**
 - **Leadership and management**

Finally, focusing on the integration of STEAM, global citizenship, and sustainable development in all subjects of the curriculum.

The Result of the Relationship between the ASU Team and El- Saidia Teachers in the time from March to December by Applied Two Action Plan for Training, that:

- the Prince of the school Select students with high grades when attending school -in the Beginning of school year-, to decrease the Crowded classes.
- to overcome of A stability of learning Culture and non-exchange of experiences, we have keen on to train the largest number of Teachers from school, not PCL team only.
- The director does not care to motivate and encourage teachers and outstanding teachers, so we talked with her about the Importance of Honoring the outstanding teachers and Students.
- They failed to obtain accreditation due to lack of teacher cooperation and the dictatorship of the former prince of School, so we gave to the Current prince of School, the teachers opinion about the best Characteristic of Leader (after the training of modern administration and the Characteristic of Leader), Also we encourage the PCL team of School to held a training with their colleague.
- they make a social partnership with Virginia international School.

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The Results of our efforts and the activity of Teachers:

This month (December, 2018) El- Saidia school get three awards

**1 the Best teacher at the west Nasser- city educational administration
(Mrs.- Dalia Ebrahim one of the PCL Team in School).**

2 the Best School At the west Nasser- city educational administration.

**3 the Best morning queue at the west Nasser- city educational
administration.**

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the new cluster schools:

- Martyr Shady Magdy Bader Prep. And Elementary school
- El- Saidia secondary school for Girl.

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