



Participatory Inquiry-based Practice for Fostering Organizational Learning in Egyptian Faculties of Education

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Introduction

Organizational Learning & Participatory Inquiry-based Practice

- Collinson, Cook and Conley (2006) emphasize the importance of inquiry and research within the process of organizational learning and change. For them, “inquiry generally occurs to resolve a problem, question, dilemma, or uncertainty and involves problem identification, data collection, analysis/ interpretation, and action” (p. 111).
- Participatory inquiry-based practice can be defined as **a collective systemic process for acquiring knowledge and provide evidence-based alternatives for improvement.**
- This is aligned with theorists’ perspectives of OL as a process of continuous cognitive and behavioral change through acquiring knowledge.(e.g., Austin & Harkins, 2008)

Teacher Education Programs in Egypt

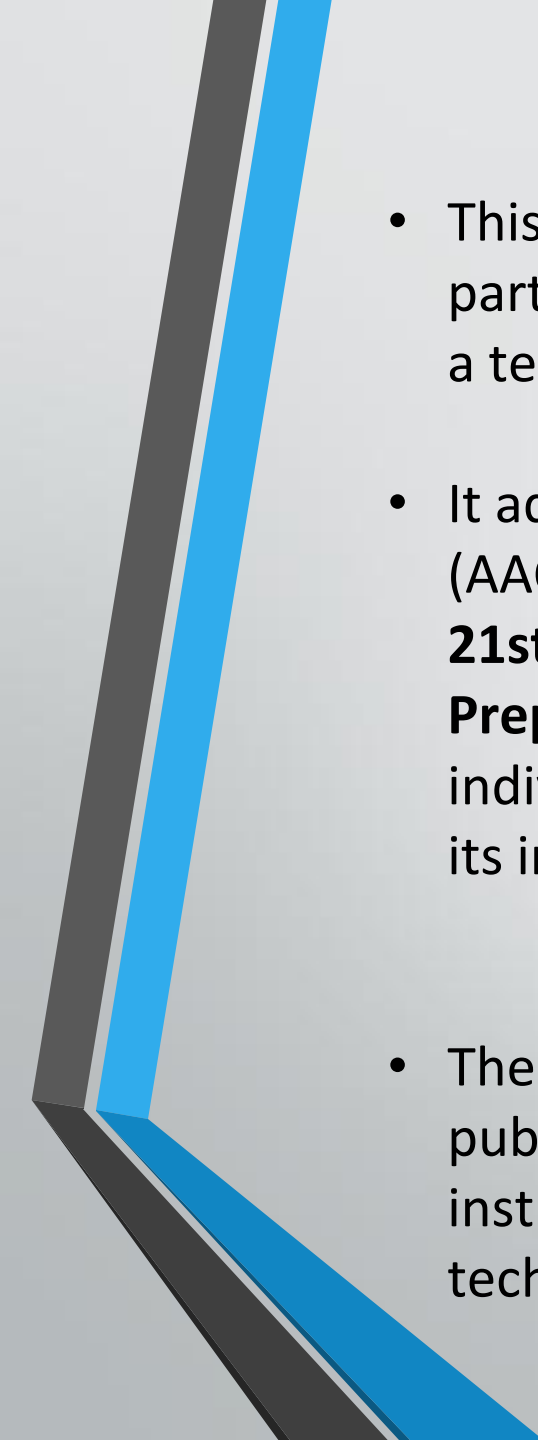
- At the beginning of the 21st century, Egyptian educators and government officials (as well as representatives of international organizations) raised criticisms and proposed changes in the organization, curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation mechanisms in teacher preparation programs.
- In 2004, the Egyptian government implemented concerted reform efforts, and demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of teacher education institutions. The World Bank and USAID put the issue of pre-service teacher education on their agendas – and committed funds to Egypt for this purpose.

Teacher Education Programs in Egypt (Cont'd.)

- However, almost a decade of international-supported reform efforts later, there have been limited studies to examine the extent to which the reforms have improved the organizational performance (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2011).
- In addition, a recent UNESCO report on technology integration shows that efforts in that highly emphasized area of educational reform has resulted in little change in teacher skills, knowledge and practice (UNESCO, TAG-Org, &UIS, 2013).

Research Problem

- Toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, teacher education institutions worldwide have been reforming their programs to be aligned with the expected learning outcomes of the 21st century.
- Yet, limited research has examined:
 - a) how individuals, groups and organizations have coped with these reforms,
 - b) what factors enabled or hindered changes, and
 - c) how the process of change influences organizational performance.

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- This research aims at answering these questions by employing a participatory research-based model to foster organizational learning (OL) at a teacher education institution.
 - It adapts the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' (P21) **“Framework for 21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems in Educator Preparation”** to trigger a process of improving organizational learning at individual and collective levels, and to examine its dynamics and evaluate its influences.
 - The research focuses only on teacher education programs offered at one public higher education institution, attention is given to curricula, instructional practices and assessment, with a special emphasis on technology integration.

Research Design

- A dual process is proposed to include:
 - a) capacity building through inquiry-based practice for fostering OL, and
 - b) documentation, monitoring, and evaluation of organizational transformation.

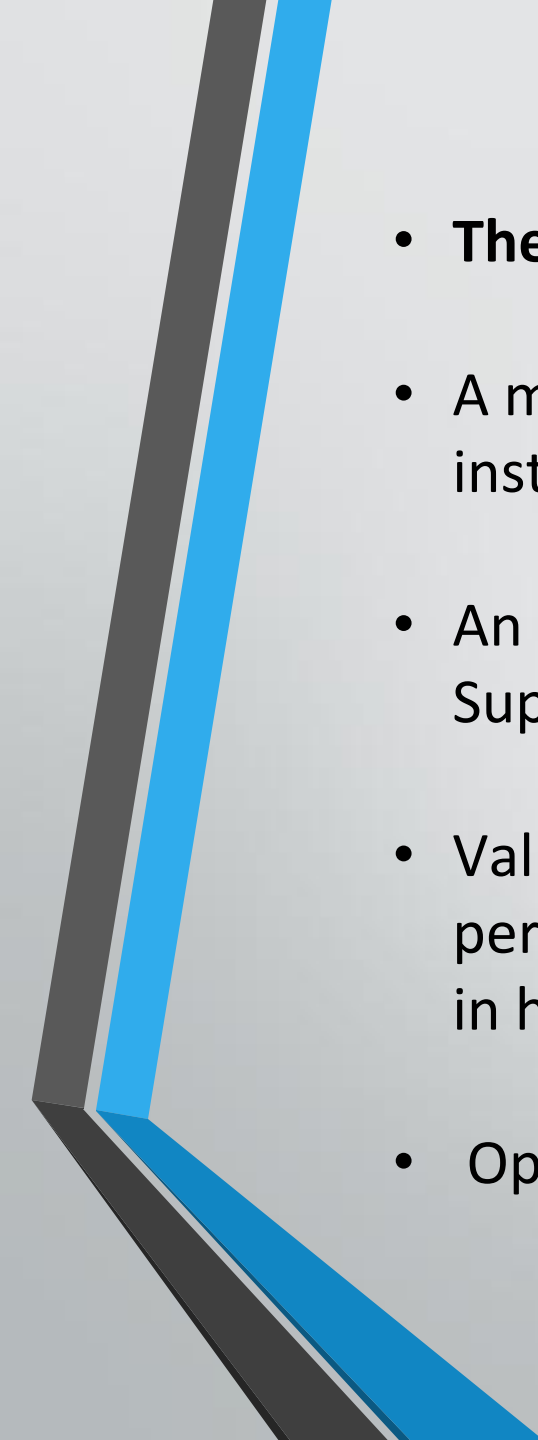
Faculty members and teaching assistants in one Egyptian teacher education institution have been engaged in assessing the current status of their program; identifying gaps in the integration of the 21st century skills and knowledge; and undertaking changes for bridging the gaps and improving organizational performance. Concurrently, the research team will report on this process and assess its impact on organizational performance.

Research Purpose

- Engaging faculty and students in a teacher education program in examining and reflecting on gaps in the design and practice of their programs.
- Coming up with bottom-up solutions to develop their institutions will allow for strengthening the organizational capacities to enable individuals and groups to learn from their experiences and to engage in inquiry-based practice in support of continuous improvement.
- This would offer insights from the Egyptian context on issues pertaining to the OL process and related factors that may promote or constrain organizational transformation.

Methods & Research Design

- **Participatory inquiry-based practice.**
- **A qualitative- quantitative mixed method approach.**
- **In addition to the research leading team (4), participants from a teacher education program at a public university include:**
 - A total of 14 participants:
 - Faculty members (6)
 - Research and teaching associates (4)
 - Research and teaching assistants (4)
 - A representative sample of faculty and students from different educational departments in teacher education programs.
- **Research Tools:**
 - Questionnaires with open-ended and close-ended questions.
 - Interview protocol.

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- **The research intends to offer:**
 - A model for a systemic intervention to foster OL in teacher education institutions
 - An adapted Egyptian Framework for 21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems in Educator Preparation
 - Valid tools for the monitoring and evaluation of organizational performance, thereby contributing to the general knowledge base on OL in higher education, especially Faculties of Education.
 - Opportunities for individual and institutional capacity building.

Work Plan

- **Phase 1: Preparation Phase (July 2015 – March 2016)**
 - **MoU, Orientation seminar and workshop.**
 - Baseline data- Current situation (faculty and students).
- **Phase 2: Implementation Phase (April- May 2016)**
 - **Workshops:**
 - The expected learning outcomes for 21st century teacher education in the American document and to adapt it to suit the Egyptian context.
 - Present and discuss the current situation for teacher education programs in light of the results of the baseline study.

Work Plan (Cont'd.)

- **Phase 3: Improvement Plan (Sept. 2016 – Feb. 2017)**
 - **Workshops:**
 - Prepare research tools to define appropriate interventions to develop teacher education programs based on the Egyptian document and the current situation, conduct fieldwork (faculty).
 - Determine appropriate interventions and ways for implementation based on the results of the fieldwork.
 - Present findings for suggested changes and ways of implementation.
- **Phase 3: Improvement Plan (Sept. 2016 – Feb. 2017)**
 - Prepare initial report that includes the Egyptian document, the current situation, suggestions for improvement and research tools.
 - Field work (faculty and students)
 - Prepare the final report.

Quantitative Tool

Adapted from: Ravits, J. (2014). *A Survey for Measuring 21st Century Teaching and Learning: West Virginia 21st*

Century Teaching and Learning Survey.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS refer to students being able to analyze complex problems, investigate questions for which there are no clear-cut answers, evaluate different points of view or sources of information, and draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence and reasoning

1. In your teaching of courses at this faculty, how often have you asked students to do the following	Almost never	A few times a semester	1-3 times per month	1-3 times per week	Almost daily
a. Compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Summarize or create their own interpretation of what they have read or been taught?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Analyze competing arguments, perspectives or solutions to a problem?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence or reasoning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single correct solution or answer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. To what extent do you agree with these statements about your courses at your faculty?	Not really	To a minor extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
a. I have tried to develop students' critical thinking skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Most students have developed their critical thinking skills in the courses I teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I assess students' critical thinking skills in a variety of ways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

اولا - مهارات التفكير الناقد: تشير إلى قدرة الطلاب على تحليل المشاكل المعقدة، والتحقق من الأسئلة التي لا توجد لها إجابات واضحة، وتقييم وجهات النظر المختلفة ومصادر المعلومات، واستخلاص النتائج المناسبة بناء على الأدلة و المنطق.

يحدث باستمرار	يحدث أحيانا	لا يحدث إطلاقا	<p>(1) من خلال المقررات الدراسية الخاصة بك، إلى أي مدى قمت بطلب الآتي من الطلاب؟</p> <p>أ مقارنة المعلومات من مصادر مختلفة عند تكليفهم بنشاط أو مهمة ما.</p> <p>ب استخلاص الاستنتاجات الخاصة بهم على أساس تحليل البيانات أو الحقائق أو المعلومات ذات الصلة.</p> <p>ج تلخيص أو وضع تفسيرهم الخاص لما تم قراءته أو تدريسه.</p> <p>د تحليل الحجج المتناقضة لوجهات النظر المختلفة.</p> <p>ه التوصل إلى حجة مقنعة تستند إلى الأدلة المؤيدة أو المنطق.</p> <p>و محاولة حل المشكلات المعقدة من خلال التوصل لإجابات على أسئلة ليس لها حل واحد صحيح.</p>
يتحقق بدرجة كبيرة	يتحقق بدرجة متوسطة	لا يتحقق	<p>(2) إلى أي مدى تتفق مع العبارات التالية عن المقررات الدراسية الخاصة بك؟</p> <p>أ قد حاولت تطوير مهارات التفكير الناقد لدى الطلاب.</p> <p>ب قام معظم الطلاب بتطوير مهارات التفكير الناقد لديهم من خلال المقررات التي أقوم بتدريسها.</p> <p>ج أقوم بتقييم مهارات التفكير الناقد لدى الطلاب بطرق متنوعة ومختلفة.</p>

Faculty's Reflection:

- Current problems in higher education institutions were echoed by faculty members.
- Faculty members emphasized structural/system problems that hinder the enhancement of teacher education program, more than reflecting on their own practice and/or actions to tackle these problems.
- They expressed high interest in participating in this modest initiative, yet they were not very optimistic that change will occur in the organizational (**individual and group**) performance.

Thank You
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© Megahed, N. and Osman, G. (2016). Participatory Research-based Model for Fostering Organizational Learning at Egyptian Faculties of Education. CIES Annual Meeting, 5 – 10 March, 2016, Canada: Vancouver