



The Implementation of the Inclusive New School Model  
in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi; a School's Tale from a  
Teacher Perspective

تطبيق نموذج المدرسة الجامع الجديد في إمارة أبوظبي  
حكاية المدرسة من منظور المعلم

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## **Abstract**

In order to reduce the dependency on oil and to diversify its economy, the emirate of Abu Dhabi has identified education as one of the key enablers to achieve a transformation to a 'knowledge based' economy. At the centre of this transformation is the design and implementation of the New School Model (NSM) in the public schools. The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation, from a teacher perspective, of the New School Model in a public school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. The research aims to identify potential gaps between theory and practice as well as to explore challenges and formulate recommendations in implementing the New School Model in the daily routines and in the classrooms. This might provide a foundation for further research and contribute to additional knowledge about the implementation of the New School Model which could benefit teacher trainings and the gradual roll-out in further classes. In order to provide a profound perspective on the subject, this case study was mainly based on observations and interviews. Furthermore a document analysis was undertaken as well as a short questionnaire survey. As an outcome of this study the gaps identified between theory and practice in the implementation of the New School Model are specific to a number of elements but not to all of them. Teachers as implementers provide an in-depth perspective with overall challenges and tangible recommendations. Overall the empirical study indicates that the implementation is on track in the particular school.

## ملخص:

اعتمدت إمارة أبوظبي على التعليم كأحد مفاتيح التمكين للتحول نحو اقتصاد مبني على العلم والمعرفة وللعمل على تنويع مصادر الدخل و تقليل الإعتماد على النفط ، ويقع في صميم هذا التحول تصميم وتنفيذ نموذج المدرسة الجديدة (NSM) في المدارس الحكومية. يتمحور هدف الدراسة التي بين أيديكم حول تحري مدى النجاح في تنفيذ هذا النموذج من منظور المعلم في المدارس الحكومية في إمارة أبوظبي ، ورصد الثغرات المحتمل وجودها بين النظرية والتطبيق واستكشاف التحديات وصياغة التوصيات عند تنفيذ نموذج المدرسة الجديدة في الروتين اليومي للفصول الدراسية ، مما يمهد الطريق أمام إجراء المزيد من البحوث ويساهم في زيادة المعرفة بكيفية تطبيق هذا النموذج ويمكنه كذلك أن يفيد في برامج تدريب المعلمين والمعلمات و يعمل على نشره والتوسع في تطبيقه تدريجياً في صفوف أخرى. لقد قامت دراسة الحالة هذه بشكل رئيس على جمع الملاحظات وإجراء المقابلات بغرض التزود برؤية عميقة للموضوع ، إضافةً إلى القيام بتحليل الوثائق وتطبيق استبانة قصيرة. وتوصلت نتيجة الدراسة إلى أن الثغرات التي تم رصدها بين نظرية نموذج المدرسة الجديدة وتطبيقه مختصة بعدد محدود من العوامل وليس كلها ، وأن المعلمين والمعلمات بوصفهم مطبقين للنموذج على أرض الواقع استطاعوا تزويدنا برؤية متعمقة تحوي تحديات شاملة و توصيات ملموسة و قابلة للتطبيق. وعموماً ، بينت الدراسة أن التطبيق يسير على الطريق الصحيح وكما هو متوقع له في المدرسة المعنية.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ADEC – Abu Dhabi Educational Council

CEM – Center for Evaluation and Monitoring

Class teacher- teacher teaching the same students from grade one to six

CSR - Comprehensive School Reform

EMSA – External Measurements of Student Achievement

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IPP - Individual Professional/Performance Plan

K12 – Includes kindergarten grades and 1-12

KG1 – Kindergarten grade one

KPIs – Key Performance Indicators

LRC - Learning Resource Center

MoE – Ministry of Education

MP – Model Provider

NSM – New School Model

P1 – Primary school grade one

PE – Physical Education

PDP – Professional Development Program

PIPS – Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

PPP – Public Private Partnership

SEN – Special Education Needs

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a confederation of emirates, its origin dates back to the early 20th century, starting with a number of treaties between the United Kingdom and various tribes. According to Cervik, (2011) the Trucial State Council was formed in 1952 comprising seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umn al-Qaiwain. The council served as a platform for policy discussion and cooperation and during the course of the following years the council expanded its administrative structure, although sub-federal autonomy was preserved in favour of some emirates (Cervik, *ibid.*). In 1971 the UAE was formed as a provisional constitution to accommodate both the emirates favouring an integrated federation and those keen on preserving their autonomy. Over the last forty years the UAE witnessed a rapid development which attracted people from all over the world, as result approximately 85% of its population today are foreigners.

Out of the seven emirates Abu Dhabi is the largest in terms of population, size as well as economic wealth resulting from its vast hydrocarbon reserves which account for more than 95 percent of the total country's reserves. In order to reduce the emirates dependency on oil and to diversify its economy, education has been identified as one of the key enablers to achieve a transformation from an 'oil based' to a 'knowledge based' economy (the Executive Council, 2007). Already the late His Highness (H.H.) Sheikh Zayed, founder of the UAE envisioned the importance of education:

"The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education"

In continuation of Sheikh Zayed's vision his son, Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, has set a comprehensive vision for significant growth and diversification for Abu Dhabi defining education and a knowledge based economy as key pillars that will enable the Emirate to meet standards of excellence reached in the world's most highly educated nations (the Executive Council, 2007; Abu Dhabi Government, 2008). As a consequence an education reform in the emirate of Abu Dhabi has been undertaken and the Government has given national priority to improving educational outcomes.

The management and delivery of education in the Emirate is shared by a number of public entities. The Federal Ministry for Education and Youth establishes the educational strategy for the country. At an Emirate level, the independent Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), which was founded in September 2005, guides the delivery of the education in public schools. In January 2010, ADEC became responsible for the administration of all public schools. These schools are exclusively for national citizens. As part of the education reform in 2009 ADEC launched its research based 10-Year Strategic Plan in order to tackle challenges in the Public P-12 schools. The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC, 2009a; ADEC 2009b) recently publicized that 95 percent of students graduated from public schools need to attend remedial courses for up to two years to prepare for further education, mainly to improve IT and English language skills. Accordingly Gaad's (2006) research highlights that there is a misalignment in the education system of the young country. It shows that the teachers deliver the content without considering neither the context, the quality of delivery

nor the national goals. Furthermore the teacher evaluation does not reflect the latter either.

The Strategic Plan focuses on developing and educating students “with the skills required to excel in higher education and in their future careers” (ADEC, 2010e). The Strategic Plan emphasizes four main priorities:

- improve the quality of schools to meet international standards;
- provide great access to quality education for all children;
- provide students with affordable options for quality private education;
- preserve national identity and local culture.

To further facilitate the implementation of change and to reduce the role of the government as a service provider in favour of a stronger private sector (Government of Abu Dhabi, 2007; the Executive Council, 2008) the Abu Dhabi Education Council initiated ‘Public-Private Partnerships’ (PPP), which are various partners who will mentor the teachers in the public schools. After all the quality of education cannot exceed the quality of teachers. To further support teacher training, the UAE has invested AED 200 million to train 10,000 teachers in modern teaching techniques (Ministry of Education, 2008 in Al Ateeqi, 2009) At the centre of the above Strategic Plan is the design and implementation of the New School Model (NSM) in the public schools. ADEC’s NSM aims to improve student performance by developing all students as communicators, thinkers, problem solvers and well-rounded individuals who are appreciative of the country. The implementation of the NSM is starting with kindergarten to grade 3 in the academic year 2010/11 and will be gradually rolled out in additional grades until 2016.

## 1.2. Research Focus

Against this background the implementation of the NSM will be key to achieve the overarching goals laid out for the future of the emirate. Hall (2008) argues that there is a difference between development and implementation and that management and policymakers often lose interest when the policy development is done and implementation begins. Gaad (2006, p. 292) continues that "Lieberman and Miller (1999), Martin (2002), Goldberg (2001), Reynolds (1996) suggests that it has been far easier to propose new curricula or ways to implement new curricula than it has been to accomplish their implementation much less to achieve the integration of all the element since integration requires an even greater degree of coordination, something which seems to evade most governments". Huberman (1994 as cited in Hargreaves, 2010) argued that one intervention to bridge the gap between theory and practice is mutual interaction, instead of knowledge directed solely from policymakers to the practitioners.

Therefore the main organizational unit for making this change possible is now the schools where according to Fullan (1999) and Gaad (2006) teachers are the cornerstones. However in a survey made by the Abu Dhabi Educational council (ADEC, 2009a) shows that teachers do not feel that they are involved in school decisions nor having informal opportunities to influence what happens in the schools. Finally researchers argue that the essence of implementing change "is the ability to spot and act on problems at the earliest possible stage" (Goldstein; O'Neill in Murphy, 2009, p. 815). Therefore one year after the implementation start in a public school an empirical research will be undertaken from a teacher perspective.

### 1.3. Research Questions

Based on the above discussion the overall aim of this research is to explore the implementation of the NSM from a teacher's perspective. In order to gain an understanding, it is essential to identify the gaps between theory and practice, potential challenges arising during implementation and to formulate recommendations to facilitate the same. Therefore, within the context of this study, the specific research questions are the following:

1. Are there any gaps between theory and practice in the implementation of the NSM?
2. Are there any challenges implementing the NSM?
3. What could be recommended to improve the implementation of the NSM?

Questions one and two focus on emerging issues related to the implementation, whereas it is in question three where this study will make a key contribution. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight the fact that the three questions are neither separate nor independent in their nature, but interlinked. Since this is a snapshot study of perspectives held by teachers within a real-life context and the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not obvious (Yin, 2003) this empirical research will be a case study. To gain an in-depth understanding of the complex situation in the particular school and in an attempt to make sense of the phenomenon in relation to the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln in Biggam, 2008) mainly qualitative methodology will be used.

## 1.4. Value of Research

Since the reform stands or falls with the implementation in the schools, answering the above three questions and the included literature review adds value to the current and future implementation of the NSM in public schools in a number of ways. As highlighted the school and specifically teachers are crucial when it comes to implementing educational change. It is therefore crucial to the logic and value of this empirical research to explore the teachers' perspective and experiences in their specific context, at the specific time related to the implementation of the NSM. By obtaining the views of the teachers as well as exploring other sources a rich picture of the on-going implementation can emerge, allowing a meaningful comparison between theory and practice.

This understanding, in conjunction with the identification of specific challenges and formulating potential recommendations how to support the successful implementation of the NSM are areas worthy of studying. Ultimately PPPs, principals and teachers at additional schools in the emirate may relate to the outcome of this study since the vast majority of these schools are acting in a similar however not alike school context. Furthermore ADEC's teacher training, which aims to educate teachers in applying the NSM, might benefit from these findings as well. The aim of this case study is not generalizability, however 'relatability' (Biggam, 2008); any teacher and public schools implementing change such as a comprehensive education model may relate to its findings. Additionally Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 228) adds in his study regarding case studies as a methodology that "formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development whereas the 'force of example' is underestimated".

Furthermore the findings of this study could be used as a base for undertaking interventions in order to support the implementation.

The literature review regarding the NSM, gaps between theory and practice and implementation challenges and recommendations will be undertaken and adds value by putting the empirical research into context. Furthermore the importance of research in this field of implementing the NSM in the emirate of Abu Dhabi becomes even more apparent given the lack of related studies previously done since the project started in academic year 2010/2011.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Introduction to literature review**

As outlined in the last chapter the aim of this study is to identify the gap between theory and practice, explore challenges and formulate recommendations regarding the implementation of the NSM from a teacher's perspective in a public school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. The theory of the NSM is founded on a number of key elements and objectives, which are supposed to be implemented. In the literature review the overview of these elements and objectives form the basis of the comparison between theory and practice, which relates to the first research question. The empirical research then reflects the current status of implementation and, by comparing to the described overview of the key elements and objectives, allows identifying potential gaps between theory and practice. However, since the focus of this study lays on the implementation and not the research-based NSM, no critical analysis of the policy itself will be undertaken. The overview is based on a variety of documents such as policies, handbooks and manuals published by ADEC, the sources are listed in the research protocol (appendix (A.) F) and the reference list. In case additional overview information is required, mind-maps (A.D), PowerPoint presentations (A.E) as well as an annotated bibliography (A.G) made by the researcher can be found in the appendix. In order to ensure its cogency these documents have been shared with staff members of ADEC and the particular school. Furthermore, in order to put the research in context and to provide an in-depth and broad view on the subject, a critical evaluation of literature related to challenges and recommendations in implementing change from a teacher perspective and in relation to teachers, will be included.

## 2.2. Gap between theory and practice

### 2.2.1. Overview of the New School Model

As mentioned above, this section will provide a short overview of the NSM, its key objectives and will continue with a profound review of its key elements which teachers are currently implementing in the public schools.

ADEC's NSM is a comprehensive reform which encompasses all areas of education from curriculum, assessment, teaching methods, environment, resources and physical education. As part of the overall objectives, the NSM will be crucial to standardize the curriculum, pedagogy, resources and support across all ADEC schools and to foster a child-centred learning environment, which is supported by families, teachers and community. Furthermore ADEC (2010a; 2010b; 2010d; 2010f) emphasizes that the model is grounded in a 'whole child philosophy' which addresses social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical learning domains. The firstly mentioned domain develops confidence and the personality of the student; the cognitive domain enhance creativity, imagination as well as problem solving and thinking skills; the language domain improves communication both in Arabic and English, fluency, receptive and expressive ability. Finally, the physical domain support the development of fine and gross motor skills, as well as becoming a healthy and confident individual. Additionally the NSM develops students as individuals appreciating the UAE's national identity and heritage as well as community members who are able to develop positive relationships.

As a global outcome the NSM seeks to develop students as lifelong learners by developing these capabilities. Furthermore "these outcomes serve as overarching goals and will shape the choices schools make about learning experiences, resources and assessment practices"

(ADEC, 2011, p.13). As stated above, the vision is up to date with current research and the focus of this study is the implementation of this whole system change and its various elements into everyday routines.

#### 2.2.2. Key elements of the New School Model

According to Fullan (2001), change is not a single entity but dimensional and the implementation occurs in the schools, specifically at a classroom level. He points out that at least three aspects are of importance in implementing a new policy which influences teachers in their daily routines. All three change aspects are crucial since together they represent the means of accomplishing specific educational set of goals. The key elements of the NSM will be described along these three possible aspects:

1. The adjustment of beliefs, e.g. pedagogical theories behind novel policies;
2. The usage of new teaching approaches;
3. The usage of new or revised materials, e.g. a new curriculum or technologies).

##### 2.2.2.1. Beliefs

The NSM is based on the two core beliefs that all children are capable of learning and that teachers are responsible for teaching and learning. According to ADEC (2010a) this philosophy is the root of the model that makes educators accountable for ensuring that all students' needs are met and that each individual is able to develop to his or hers utmost potential.

It is noteworthy to mention that since the introduction in 2006 of the Federal Law No. (29) "Concerning the Rights of People with Special

Needs" students with special needs are now included in mainstream schools and therefore form part of the NSM. According to Gaad (2004, p.161) "a negative attitude towards such students in all aspects limits their opportunities to be successful in regular classrooms". Therefore implementing these beliefs among the teachers will be crucial to include all students in the classroom.

#### 2.2.2.2. Approaches

The new approaches in the NSM concern the learning environment, pedagogical approaches, partnerships and assessments.

##### A. Learning environment

The teacher in the NSM has to create a supportive and enabling learning environment as well as meaningful learning opportunities which encourage active student involvement. Furthermore relationships are ought to be positive and respectful. ADEC (2011, p.8) further details the learning environment and the relationships which a teacher has to create:

##### 1. A supportive and enabling learning environment

- The physical space, routines and storage of resources act as a support for students, promoting independence
- The physical space acts as an invitation to engage with materials and is an invitation to learn
- Teacher questioning is open and responsive to student thoughts and ideas
- Classroom dialogue moves from student to student as well as teacher to student.

##### 2. Meaningful learning opportunities that encourage active involvement

- The teacher establishes a meaningful context for learning
- There is a balance of focused teaching, demonstration, discussion and practice
- Children are encouraged to explore their learning actively through creativity and problem solving
- The learning program is flexible and emergent, based on children's interests and needs
- Children are engaged in purposeful practice as they move toward independence
- The teacher provides sequenced learning opportunities in response to student needs
- Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning.

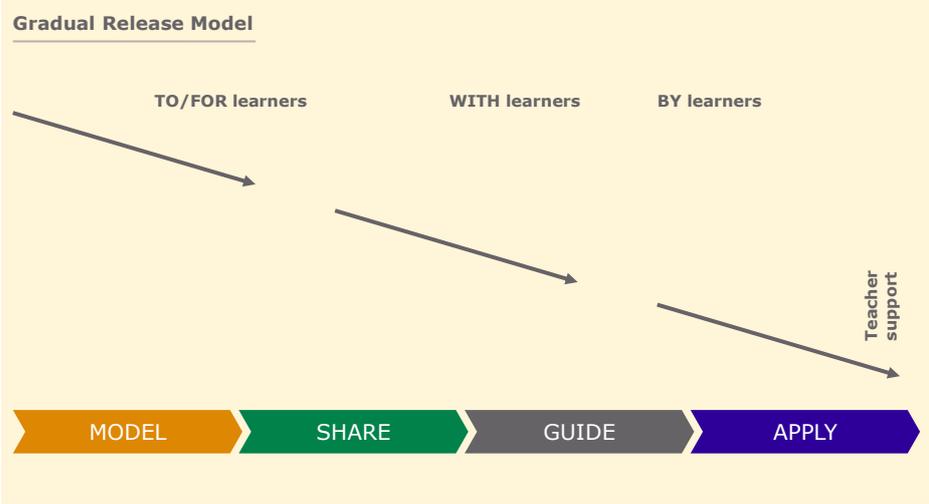
### 3. Positive and respectful relationships

- The teacher encourages collaboration
- The teacher values the home language, culture and identity of the students

#### B. Pedagogical approach

ADEC is introducing more interactive and varied teaching methods in the classroom in order to move students away from 'rote memorization' and dependency to become independent problem-solvers and thinkers. To achieve this teachers are to apply a specific 'gradual release approach'. This approach is adjusted to the specific subject since each subject; science, health & physical education, mathematics and Arabic and English literacy, information communication technologies requires different types of thinking.

**Figure 1: The gradual release approach (ADEC, 2011, p.9-12)**



**Health and Physical Education**



**Information Communication Technologies**



#### Arabic and English Literacy



#### Science



#### Mathematics

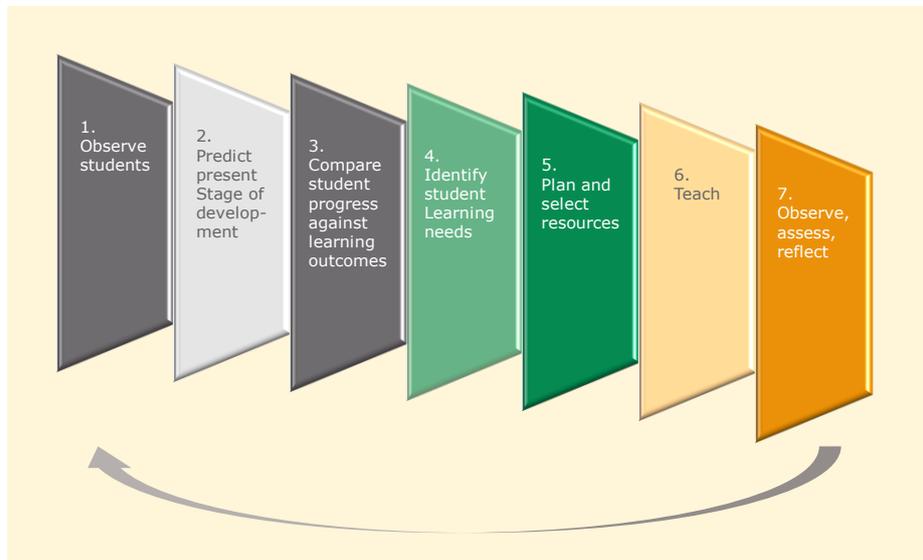


Additionally a 'student centred teaching process' is introduced, which is a seven step planning and delivering instruction approach which is centred on student learning.

The seven steps in the process, for the teacher to follow, are:

1. Observe students;
2. Predict present stage of development;
3. Compare student progress against learning outcomes;
4. Identify student learning needs;
5. Plan and select resources;
6. Teach;
7. Observe, assess and reflect.

**Figure 2: The student centred teaching process** (ADEC, 2011 p.14)



Furthermore since November 2011 there is a NSM Pedagogy Matrix in the teachers' handbook. However this was not included in the study since the teachers have not had a chance to familiarize themselves with this approach at the time of the research.

### C. Partnerships

Healthy partnerships between teachers, community, parents, students and their peers is another central feature that will support teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to form partnership in five specific areas:

1. Teachers plan together and collaborate (according to individual professional/performance plan)
2. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management (school behaviour policy)

3. Parents are participating as partners (to parent involvement policy)
4. All students' needs are met (ADEC's special education policy)
5. Accountability for student learning is shared (community)

#### D. Assessment

The researcher is aware of the fact that instructions, assessment and curriculum are interlinked, however for the purpose and clarity of this study these will be looked at separately. Assessment in the NSM will no longer be utilized to only determine a child's performance results but to also inform teaching and learning. Assessment information will be utilized by the teachers to determine the student's stage of development and to plan learning experiences accordingly.

Specifically the approach to inform teaching and learning includes:

1. Formal assessment (Diagnostic assessment: PIPS in KG1-P2 and summative assessment: EMSA in KG3 and above);
2. Informal and continuous assessment (e.g. teacher observation);
3. Assessing the students in terms of physical, emotional, social and attitudinal behaviours.

The formal assessment includes new material which brings us to the next aspect.

#### 2.2.2.3. Materials

In order to support teachers in achieving the described outcomes, the NSM provides updated resources and a new curriculum.

#### A. Resources

Resources will be upgraded both in terms of school facilities as well as classroom resources. Schools will have 'Learning Resource centres'

(LRCs) to promote an integrated learning environment and extracurricular facilities to support physical and social development. Furthermore classroom resources such as 'Information and communication technology' (ICT) will be provided. The NSM resources include; set up materials (e.g. printers, clip boards, headphones), teacher support (e.g. CD-ROMs), picture books, take home readers, guided readings, health resources, Arabic big books, English big books, UAE Alphabet Kit, readers online subscription, consumables, active learning material, math manipulative, science consumables. These will support students to gain knowledge and understanding through exploration and experimentation.

#### B. Curriculum

As stated above a novel curriculum is being implemented, which integrates active learning, science, health and physical education (this subject is mandatory in the emirate of Abu Dhabi since 2010) and technology. Furthermore new learning outcomes for the grades 1-3, in each subject have been defined. Newly included, since September 2011, are the outcomes for grade four.

**Figure 3: Overview of New School Model elements**



### 2.2.3. Literature related to gap between theory and practice

According to Fullan, (2001) the awareness of a gap between theory and practice and concerns about implementation surfaced in the late 1960's after a great amount of reforms failed to make sustainable change.

However already in the late 1950s Gagne stressed the difficulties of applying theory to practice. Field (1996) writes that Gagne was aware of the resulting gap between theory and practice and therefore he highlighted the importance of investigating practical challenges.

In 2010 Fullan states that a strengthened interest and attention on 'whole system reform' is expected in the future. International comparisons studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have awakened a focus and curiosity on the top performing countries. However according to Fullan (2010) interest is starting to shift from performance test scores to strategic questions.

Learning how to implement whole system change, including "raising the bar and closing the gap" is the main challenge before us (Fullan, 2010, p.27). Hargreaves et al. (2010) state that it is time for an educational change, since it is essential to prepare the students to meet the challenges of our future society if we are to transform our communities into a creative and inclusive knowledge economy. Chadwick (2011) argues that this requires a different kind of education than any of us received, which replaces solely remembering and understanding; normal cognitive skills with highly structured critical thinking skills, habits of lifelong learning and knowing how to use information to create something valuable. Fullan (2010, p.27) continues that "the race now is to figure out how to get major improvements across the system by mobilizing educators, parents, students, and communities to engage in the collective efforts necessary for success. The next few years could

represent a quantum jump in whole system reform initiatives as we all build on the most recent successes”.

Hargreaves et al (2010) recommends glimpsing at the most successful countries educationally and economically when implementing and sustaining change, like Finland. Which leaves flexibility and innovation in implementing teaching and learning and puts great trust in the highly qualified teachers without controlling everything from the top (McKinsey, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2008 as cited in Hargreaves et al, 2010). Fullan, (2001) on the other hand criticizes the practice of imitating 'best practice' when implementing change. He claims that the existing conditions and relationships in each school have to be addressed in order to move toward reform. After all large- scale reform is implemented locally (Couros, 2003).

Over the past three decades, research and practice has focused on identifying main factors in bridging the gap between theory and practice. In this study it has been noticed that there are a few researchers and authors who have been involved in implementing change in schools for at least the last two, some of them three, decades and still are today. Therefore the in-depth critical analysis will mainly concentrate on books, articles and studies regarding challenges and recommendations made by Fullan, Hargreaves, Hall and Hord. Further relevant literature will be included in order to provide a broad view on the subject. Nevertheless the 'knowing-doing' (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000) gap is still a complex challenge and there is no simple solution to implementing a comprehensive NSM.

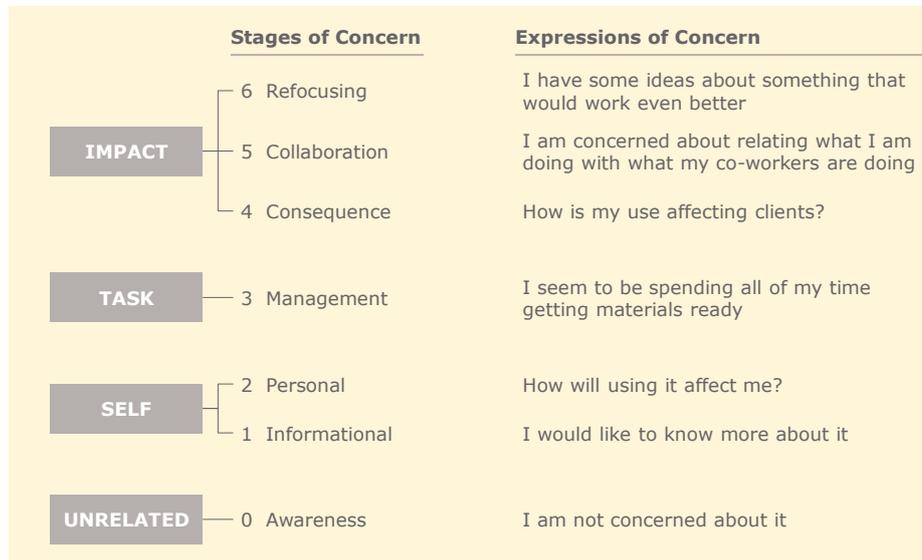
### 2.3. Literature related to challenges and recommendations

The first research objective which attempts to identify the gap between theory and practice has been explored above. This part will provide a critical evaluation of literature related to the second and third research objectives; namely exploring challenges and determining recommendations from a teacher's perspective.

Taking into account the teachers' perspective, attitudes and views when implementing a NSM is crucial to ensure a successful implementation. Their perceptions about implementing change can be sorted and classified in to what Hall et al. (2006) calls concerns. Hall et al (ibid.) continues that research indicates that concerns have a strong effect on the implementation process and define the necessary support teachers may need. Change which is in accordance with the belief systems of teachers has a greater likelihood of acceptance. It is therefore beneficial to understand the teachers' concerns and perspectives before and during the implementation of a school reform (Fullan 1999). This idea regarding 'stages of concern' was proposed by Fuller in 1969, after undertaking several in-depth studies. He divided the concerns into the stages: unrelated, self, task and impact concerns (Hall et al. 2006, p.135).

Based on further research, Hall et al. (2006) have developed additional paragraphs and definitions for each of the above mentioned stages. This model is relevant to anyone undergoing change; policy makers, model providers, principals, teachers, parents and students.

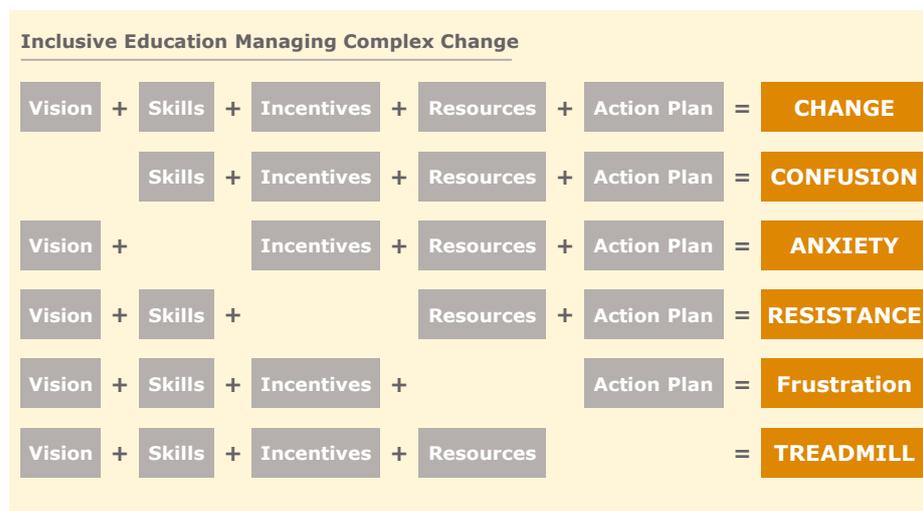
**Figure 4: A concern model when implementing change** (Hall et al. 2006, p. 140)



The described change process, according to Hall et al. will move the implementer from the self-concern to the ultimate impact stage if carefully facilitated. The impact stage with concerns regarding consequences, collaboration and refocusing is usually reached after three to five years implementation.

According to Gaad (2010), specifically five elements need to be considered when managing complex change, namely vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plans. In case one of more of these elements is not fully covered no change will happen and specific concerns at teacher level will be the result.

**Figure 5: Managing complex change** (Gaad, 2010)



It is generally believed that the implementation of any education policy, in this case the NSM, is a steep challenge for all parties involved. As published in a case study on the dynamics of education policymaking, Haddad (1999, p.27) states that policy implementation always brings some challenges no matter how well planned and anticipated. One of the challenges frequently mentioned in the literature is the teachers' confusion regarding the task they are supposed to carry out. According to Hall and Hord (2006) the teachers, who are expected to implement change, are not clear about what they are asked to do in practice. It is still a big difference between theory and practice. All the teachers may share the same nomenclature, however how and what they are executing in their classrooms may look very different. This confusion may result in teachers implementing their own version of the proposed change (Bantwini, 2009). Hall and Hord (ibid.) therefore recommend identifying a concept and tool that can be used to construct a common understanding of the change by the teachers and everyone involved.

This way the tendency to adapt, modify, and/or mutate parts of the reform will be reduced.

Recent research recommends reviewing the importance of the 'critical mass' for bridging the implementation gap (Reeves 2009). Changes are usually spearheaded by a passionate three percent who, in best case, persuade a few others to participate. One year down the road, the remaining teachers who were waiting for the 'change to pass' and were not actively involved declare the failure of the initiative. Fullan (1991 as cited in Moffet, 2000) continues that a further challenge that is likely to occur is that the teacher will experience an 'implementation dip'. This often happens when teachers are to apply the knowledge learned into practice. Research over the last two decades has shown that the amount and quality of support provided to the implementers of a comprehensive education reform are critical (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990 in Moffet, 2000). Furthermore research has indicated that central office staff and principals need to offer meaningful support but also exert pressure to ensure the success of change which ought to be adapted. According to Moffet pressure is the catalyst of change while organizational, administrative and individual support facilitates teachers to learn and assimilate new skills and practices, furthermore it enables teachers to cope with concerns shifting from the former, well-practiced routines to new and therefore unknown practices. Without support pressure proves to be counter-productive and only results in conflict and dissent, however without pressure too often no change will take place.

Additionally the implementation of new policies can overwhelm teachers due to scope and complexity; as a result the intended implementation falls short of its objectives. In order to tackle this challenge a reduction in fragmentation and overload is recommended. According to Fullan

(1999), coherence and coordination are key as otherwise teachers start to prioritize a single objective, often the state-level testing program, since the linkages between the different policy elements are not clear to them. Both the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America emphasize on standardized test. Finland on the contrary, despite not having standardized tests, attains high score in the International Student Assessment (PISA) by enabling highly qualified teachers with supportive working conditions and a clear vision of inclusion and creativity as well as trust in their capabilities (Sahlberg, 2011). It needs to be stated that the goal of the school reform in Finland was never excellence but equity. Since the last two decades the key driver is that every child should have exactly the same opportunity to learn. There are no private schools in the country. Critics claim that Finland's outstanding results are linked to its homogeneous population. As of 2010 the number of foreign born residents doubled over the last decade, nevertheless the country did not lose its edge in education (Statistics Finland, 2011).

However any implementation process needs to reflect its specific context (Murphy, 2009). Walter et al. (2004) therefore also recommends that an honest look at where things stand can help uncover areas that are in need of immediate attention as well as long-term challenges. While the literature mentioned in this review shares a western background, challenges specific to the UAE are according to Ateeqi (2009) quite similar. Specifically highlighted are the quality of teacher education and the need for culturally appropriate pedagogy and educational administrators at all levels, who are able to work with local teachers as equal partners. Furthermore, Ateeqi states, some teachers still believe in the traditional methods, which cause resistance on the building level. According to Gaad (2005, p.8) a specific challenge in the UAE that should be changed is "the current way of throwing international teachers into classrooms with no cultural orientations". In

the emirate of Abu Dhabi only 4,319 of the 10,854 teachers working for ADEC are Emirati nationals (ADEC, 2010g). As Lieberman (1990 in Gaad, 2006) states, the old ways will not be easily changed, unless they are inadequate for the majority. As demonstrated by research and practice over the last decade district leaders focus primarily on the build-up of infrastructure to support reform but are inclined to neglect the importance of culture building. While the adaptation of structures is necessary, it is only in combination with the development of a professional culture that sustainable change can be achieved. As a consequence literature frequently mentions the challenge; lack of involvement of teachers. Fullan (2010) states that "whole system reform means that every vital part of the system – school, community, district, and government – contributes individually and in concert to forward movement and success". He continues that successful implementations with sustainable change are policies that acknowledge the value of structural and cultural influences on educational performance.

District and school administrators need support when implementing and sustaining whole system change due to the complexity of the matter. Research show that not only teacher leadership but external and internal facilitators or change agents are necessary to support schools as they "navigate the labyrinth of change" (Louis & Sieber, 1979; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Miles, Saxl, & Lieberman, 1988, 1989 in Moffet, 2000). According to Hargreaves et al, (op.cit.) the highest performing nations like Singapore implement and maintain their standards by having schools that work with and affect the communities, which also in turn affect the schools. Not all responsibility for implementing change is the responsibility of the teachers and schools. In accordance to this, one of the features of the NSM, as stated in the above overview, is involving the community and the parents in the education of the children.

## 2.4. Conclusion

Over the last twenty years a number of authors, most prominently Fullan, Hargreaves, Hall and Hord, have published several pieces of literature on implementing change. However they have yet not found a common voice. As a leading example Fullan (2010) and Hargreaves et al. (2010), who jointly wrote their first book on this subject together in 1998, have taken different later views on how to implement change. While Fullan (op.cit.) suggests no longer focusing on achievements and that best practices cannot be transferred. Hargreaves et al (op.cit.) recommend transferring best practices from the highest performance achieving countries when implementing educational reforms.

Moffett (2000) claimed that we know enough to implement and sustain educational changes to prepare the students for the future challenges of our society. He specifically believes that: "we cannot afford to ignore the research because time again and again we hear the mandates: Focus on culture, stick with it for the long haul, frontload support during implementation, build relationships, insert professional development at every opportunity, build reform support infrastructures, train and use change facilitators, strengthen communication, reduce overload and fragmentation, seek coherence, stabilize turnover, remember the implementation dip, restructure the use of teacher time, balance pressure and support" (Moffet, p.6).

In contrast according to Hall et al. (2006) systemic change and reform are terms that have been used in literature for decades but have only recently reached the school environment. Murphy (2009) agrees that even though turnaround management has been present in non-profit organizations and various sector it is now espousing application in the educational sector. However, he continues that the context issue attends to industry type, what works elsewhere and especially in the

corporate sector may not apply to the primary education sector. In Murphy's review of the turnaround literature research in education, the conclusion emerge that due of the relative recent trend of the turnaround management in education, there is not much research to support policymakers and teachers in the implementation phase.

The divergent views of these authors who are dealing with the subject suggest that there is no standardized solution for implementing change. What can be stated however is that implementation of change is context dependent and what is agreed on in the literature is that it needs early and continuous analysis and interventions to adjust and prevent various issues supported by transparency and flexibility. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus claimed; change is the only constant.

### **3. The Present Study**

As highlighted this study concerns the implementation of a comprehensive NSM in a public school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Research emphasizes the importance of early empirical studies in the implementation phase of educational change. Fullan (op.cit.) petitions for further case studies of what the implementation looks like at the building level. However, according to (Flyvberg, 2006) the choice of method in empirical research should depend on the issue of the study and its context. In this particular research a unique case was selected, in which the external model provider of the Public Private Partnership's (PPP) accomplishments in the educational field are of world class, which is aligned with the goal of the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Before discussing the research strategy and its limitations, data collection and analysis in detail, it has to be noted that in order to undertake research in the particular school a request to conduct research in the emirate of Abu Dhabi was submitted to ADEC in April 2011, containing:

- Abstract,
- Research proposal,
- Ethics form,
- Interview framework,
- Annotated bibliography,
- Letter of consent for participating in research.

After submission of the proposal an interview was conducted with personnel at ADEC research office. In July 2011 the security approval was

granted, however with requirements for some research design modifications. In October 2011 the final approval for conducting research in the public school was given.

As stated this empirical research will explore the implementation of the NSM in the daily routines from a teacher perspective. According to Markula (2010) a case study closes in on real-life circumstances and explores views in relation to the phenomena as they unfold in practice. Gillham (2000, p. 1) also states that a case study is a unit of human activity embedded in the real world and adds that case studies;

- can only be studied or understood in context;
- exist in the here and now;
- merge in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw.

Bell (1993, p.9) continues that a case study also "illustrates relationships, micro political issues, and patterns of influence in a particular context". Data was collected in accordance to the research objectives; identify a potential gap between theory and practice, explore challenges and determine recommendations. According to Hutchins (in Lichtman, 2010, p.37) "education is a kind of continuing dialogue, and a dialogue assumes, in the nature of the case, different points of view". Therefore mainly qualitative methods were used in this particular case to study the implementation of the NSM. Addressing the first research question; identifying the gap between theory and practice provided an overview on the implementation and its status quo. As stated earlier, this is of importance since all elements of an education model need to be aligned for change to happen. The second question is interlinked with the first and

attempts to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges implementing the NSM into daily routines. The third question will determine recommendations from a teacher perspective on what could improve or facilitate the implementation. Since this research does not attempt to test a hypothesis, an exploratory case study was undertaken. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, in Biggam, 2008, p.86) in-depth exploratory studies are linked to in-depth qualitative research since "qualitative research involves studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". Furthermore Flyvberg (2006, p.222) claims that as for "predictive theory, universals, and scientism, the study of human affairs is, thus, at an eternal beginning. In essence, we have only specific cases and context-dependent knowledge. Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals". He continues that on a personal level, only experiences with context-dependent case studies will support the development of a researcher from a novice to an expert. Context-independent knowledge and regulations, that e.g. makes the foundation of textbooks and computers, will not move a novice from its level in the learning process. Therefore it could be said that not only is a case study the most suitable strategy to answer the research questions but also according to Flyberg (2006, p.222) "conducting case studies and gaining knowledge in the process is central to human learning".

### 3.1. Empirical study

In order to learn and to gain an understanding of the teachers' view on the implementation of the NSM, an empirical study was undertaken in a public primary school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Approximately five-hundred female students, of which twenty-four have an 'Individual Education Plan' (IEP), are educated by sixty-five teachers and six additional employees, such as social workers, librarian and science lab assistance. Furthermore two faculty heads, one external principal from the PPP and one 'ordinary' principal from the school are supervising the institution. For the purpose of this study, the regular, long term public school teachers will be called 'ordinary' teachers since they will stay and continue working once the five year PPP period is terminated. The PPP-teachers will be called 'external' teachers. Four ordinary teachers with additional training regarding the NSM volunteered to participate in this research. Since qualitative research attempts to include people who are likely to provide the most insightful answers and given the nature of the research questions, teachers with experience and additional training regarding the NSM were chosen as a target group. However, to put the study in context additional individuals were included on a voluntarily basis; namely two regular class teachers who are functioning as mentors in the school, one special needs teacher, due to the fact that students with special needs are being included into the main stream classrooms, finally one PE teacher formed part, since health and integration of Physical Education is a new and important focus area in the NSM. Staff in leading positions and additional school staff were included as well as ADEC personnel in order to put the teachers' perspectives in context. For further clarification details will be provided for each method described below.

### 3.1.1. Methods of data collection

As mentioned above four ordinary teachers volunteered to participate and will form the target group. The process started with a kick-off meeting where the researcher informed the teachers about the study using a PowerPoint presentation (appendix E). Focused interviews, semi-structured group interviews and observations provided an in-depth, open approach. Furthermore for the purpose of using multiple sources of evidence a document analysis was undertaken and a short questionnaire was distributed. This ensures the validity of the research during the data collection phase as well as of the result analysis. Additionally in order to assure the quality of the research and its reliability, transparency was strived for. A case study data base (appendix A; Interviews transcript (T.) 1, observations T.2, document analysis T.3 and questionnaire survey T.4) and additionally a short case study protocol (appendix F) in adapted form of Yin (2003) have been developed. Hence, a replication of this study by another researcher should come to the same findings and conclusions. The protocol illustrates further details regarding the data collection phase and timing which was distributed between the 1st of October 2011 and the 22nd of February 2012.

#### 3.1.1.1. Interviews

According to Gillham, (2000) semi structured interviews are standardized and flexible, which makes every interview unique even if it covers the same ground. They allow a discussion of the main themes, at the same time unexpected issues may be continued and further discussed. The interview framework was pre-discussed with the dissertation supervisor. Pilot interviews were undertaken with two teachers. The researcher

conducted focused interviews individually with participants of the target group and additionally four interviews were undertaken; one interview with an ordinary teacher and three with external teachers (appendix A, T.1.2). These were short interviews with the purpose of getting a general impression and understanding of the teachers' perspective on the implementation of the NSM. Therefore more focused questions were asked, like "what the NSM in your opinion is and what could facilitate the implementation". The researcher used prompts (T.1.2) based on themes from the pilot interviews and the elements of the NSM. In this context solely open questions like "how about" in a reminding way were used. That way the researcher can make sure that all the participants have a similar coverage due to the wide-ranging and complex matter. This will furthermore be of importance for the analysis of the findings. According to Gillham (op.cit.) this is not classified as 'leading' since it is not determining the answer or indicating it. Interviews regarding the various elements of the NSM were conducted as group interviews (T.1.3) with the two main teacher cluster groups. The group interviews were based on a short categorizing questionnaire which will be described and discussed in the next section. These various interview approaches were undertaken in order to provide a more rounded perspective on the implementation from the teachers as individuals and as a group.

Furthermore as mentioned above to put the study in context and to cross-reference data, guided conversations were conducted with ADEC staff (T.1.1.1), staff in leading positions in the particular school (T.1.1.2; T.1.1.4) and managers of the external model provider/ PPP (T.1.1.3). Questions were asked on an individual level but also on group, organizational and societal levels.

### 3.1.1.2. Questionnaire survey

The theme being researched covers a wide range of subjects. Therefore as preparation for the group interviews a short questionnaire (T.4) was distributed to categorize the elements and to point out potential problem zones. This helped the researcher to prepare and make the group interviews more efficient since the information was analysed and formed the base for the in-depth group interview. The researcher designed the questionnaire based on the elements of the NSM. Robson (2002) states that a questionnaire can be used to describe the current status of a phenomenon in accordance to the research objective; in this case identify the gap between theory and practice which will indicate the status quo of the implementation.

The questionnaire was discussed with staff at ADEC working with and developing the NSM. A new modified version was produced and in the presence of the researcher two teachers separately filled out the questionnaire as a test. After some minor changes the researcher distributed the questionnaires via email to the four teachers in the target group. Further nine questionnaires were distributed at the school location from the researcher to external teachers. However only five were submitted back to the researcher and one of them was unfinished and therefore eliminated from the sample. All four questionnaires were received from the target group. These were handed over to the researcher on a visit to the school a few days after distribution. Analysis of the data will be further discussed in chapter four. However the researcher would like to highlight that this questionnaire was mainly analysed with the criteria of categorizing and giving indication for potential issues to be discussed in the group interviews. Frequency or findings of a

representative selection of the teachers of the school were not the main aim of this method.

#### 3.1.1.3. Observations

Data was also collected through non-participating observations in the empirical setting. Robson (2002, in Buchler-Eden, 2010) identifies observations as watching actions and behaviours of individuals, documenting them and then describing, analysing and interpreting what was observed. This was an effective way to support and compliment the other methods used, especially the interviews. Cohen and Manion (1995, in Biggam, 2008) state that a case study researcher typically observes an individual unit, like a school or class. Aligned with this definition, observations, mainly of the teachers, were undertaken in classroom contexts and during the breaks. Field-study notes were made by the researcher during the observations. Actions, behaviours and emotions were noted and data related to the study can be found in transcript 2. Vash (2001, in Gaad, 2004) highlights that how we feel and what we believe about a matter largely determines our actions and behaviour, as an individual and as a group, therefore this was included in the study. Furthermore the NSM focuses on the whole student including the social-emotional domain and the beliefs of the teachers. Additionally, the environment that the teachers are supposed to create will be included in the observations since this is an important part of the NSM.

Since the social reality is interpreted from the researcher's perspective it might make an impact on the interpretations of the observations. It has been claimed that the lack of proof of observations undertaken in a classroom makes the method less scientifically appropriate. However in

this study the observations were mainly conducted to focus on the specific themes of the elements and functioned as a supplementing method. Furthermore being aware of the above, supported the researcher to objectively observe a lesson.

Ten non-participating observations were undertaken in the classrooms. Four lessons were held by the target group teachers and five by external teachers, additionally observations during the breaks and of the school environment were undertaken. The teachers knew that during a few weeks the researcher may ask on the same day for permission to undertake an observation of the lesson and class. This way the lesson could not be specifically prepared. The observations took place in various subjects like mathematics, arts, science, Arabic and English with the third or fourth grade. Observations or access to seminars or teacher-trainings of the PPP in the school was not permitted.

#### 3.1.1.4. Document Analysis

Analysing documents and records allows the researcher to access otherwise unavailable information (Mertens and Mclaughlin, 2004). Copies of the assignments undertaken during the observations, other typical assignment tasks, tests, weekly letters, lesson plans conducted in teams and information send to parents were collected mostly for evidence for the first research question which deals with the gap between theory and practice. Neither implementation plans nor training content for the Professional Development program were available for the researcher since they are intellectual property of the external model provider in the school.

### 3.1.2. Data analysis techniques and reporting

According to Yin (2003, p.130) not all events progress linearly and a reform might not solely progress in one direction. Analysis of qualitative data is also not a linear activity therefore the case study analysis was based on the "description, analysis and interpretation" (Wolcott 1994, in Biggam, 2008) approach. Biggam (2008) continues that this is an iterative and reflective approach to capture and understand themes. Furthermore all sources and the literature review will be used as a cross-reference when analysing the findings. The second and third research questions; are there any challenges and what are the recommendations when implementing the NSM from a teachers perspective, will be further categorized and based on the 'concern-model' (Hall et al, 2006) described in the literature review (figure 4) to get an overview of categories of issues that are more pertinent. For instance if there is a greater amount of concerns regarding the 'self', the 'task' of the teacher or 'impacts' caused by the change.

Finally the reporting followed a "linear analytic structure" (Yin, 2003, p.153) typical for research. The exploratory study firstly covers the issue being explored, the methods used and then the findings from the empirical research. Finally the conclusion and recommendations for further research was established.

### 3.2. Ethical issues and methodological limitations

According to Yin, 2003 case study research offers the investigator less specific procedures to follow. The researcher therefore needs to be aware of potential bias influencing handling of unexpected situations, data collection, findings and conclusion. The researcher is intruding into the

world of the participating school and individuals, ergo according to Yin (2003) the behaviour of the researcher and not of the participants, is likely to be constrained. The researcher will try to leverage her multicultural background with living and working experience in Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, USA, UK and the UAE when conducting the research and analysing the findings. Nevertheless, since the outcome of an exploratory case study is not predictable, the researcher continually pondered on why matters appear as they do. Exploring material regarding the NSM and understanding the policy issues helped the researcher search for clues and make analytical judgments throughout the data collection phase. Further steps taken to minimize bias, ensure reliability and validity of the research were discussed in the previous sections.

In respect to cultural aspects no tape-recordings was undertaken. The researcher depended on her memory and note taking during interviews, guided conversations and observations. However since memory is not always reliable, transcripts were written down as soon as possible when the event was still fresh in memory. Additionally key informants were offered to read a draft of the interviews. This was informed at the first kick-off meeting where letters of consent were distributed (appendix C) and the participants were informed regarding the research. The letter of consent included information about confidentiality, that participation is voluntary, the purpose of the research and contact information in case of questions about anything not understandable to be asked before deciding whether or not to participate etc. Further ethical considerations were submitted in an ethics form (appendix B) approved by ADEC and the British University in Dubai. A short version of this information was repeated to the participant before the interviews or observations to let the participant know that the interview can be interrupted at any time without

consequences. Safe and appropriate storage and handling of data was ensured through coding procedures and the data was kept in a locked room. Only the researcher had access to this room. After the study was done only the coded documents continued to be maintained in a safe place as evidence.

The empirical research of this study is an exploratory case study from a teachers' perspective. Specific limitations regarding the various methods have been stated in the subsections above. Further limitations with an exploratory study are that the findings might seem enough convincing to make premature conclusions. This is not an exhaustive study about implementing the NSM since such a study would be too time and resource consuming to produce a meaningful result. So, the researcher is aware of the fact that the results from a case study cannot be generalized. However according to Eklund (1999, in Buchler-Eden, 2010) the insights gained might be leveraged and related to in similar situations and facilitate the perception of a similar situation in a different context. Furthermore in-depth studies might not provide a result of adequate representation of diversity. Therefore various participants were included for cross-referencing and the evidence is linked in many different ways. The researcher adjusted to the time schedule of the participants however due to relocation of the school and other duties, finding suitable slots was sometimes difficult, which resulted in a lengthy phase of data collection. Additional limitations with interviews and open questions might be that the respondent is trying to give the 'right' answers. It was noticed in the beginning that the participants were reluctant to criticizing anything or anyone. The principal and the management of the PPP encouraged honesty by the teachers which helped them open up to the researcher. Furthermore the group interviews allowed the teachers to open up due to

the support of each other. The group interviews were also a good solution for some language issues. Some of the teachers were a bit shy and insecure about the English language; however in the group interview the teachers translated for each other. As final point, these numerous interviews and case studies in general, generate a great deal of data to be reviewed (Biggam, 2008). Therefore the relevant data and findings will be structurally described, analysed and interpreted in the next chapters.

## **4. Case Study Findings**

The findings from the empirical research explained in the last chapter, will be described in this section. The case study results are structured and approached in the theme of the elements of the NSM. Additionally an overall section of the challenges and recommendations that do not relate to a specific element however are relevant to the implementation from a teacher perspective will be provided. The research objectives are embedded in the findings of the elements. A summary of the key points for each research question, with reference to the literature review, will be provided in the next chapter. The research is focused on the targeted group the teachers and the cluster groups within. Additional perspectives will be included in order to put the findings in context. These various perspectives collected from interviews and additionally other sources as observations, questionnaire responses, and documents analysis will be described. The data base for these transcripts can be found in appendix A; interview transcripts (T.) 1, observations T.2, document analysis T.3 and questionnaire T.4.

### **4.1. Background**

A short background overview will be provided in order to put the research in context and in order to understand from where the change origins this next subsection is included. According to an interview (T.1.1.1, paragraph (P.) 5) conducted with staff at ADEC teachers in public schools in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, who are to implement the NSM, come from various countries with different educational backgrounds. Since outcomes can be reached and interpreted in many ways a pedagogical approach for the

NSM was manifested. A research regarding beliefs of these teachers in public schools was made. Two core beliefs were developed based on the most important issues (T.1.1.1,P.4). Firstly that all children can learn and secondly that the teacher is responsible for students learning. However collaboration is stresses since the teacher, parents and the community should feel responsible for student learning. The assessment in the former system was not informing teaching and learning only deciding on the academic performance of the students. Therefore a new system to assess the students seemed necessary. There was no common consistent system or criteria for teachers to follow (T.1.1.1,P.3). A matrix is now used where the teachers can tick the box that best suits the level of the student and the outcomes. Staff at ADEC will then determine the final grade. Furthermore as new feature behaviour is part of the assessment.

A participant in the research stated in an interview that: "the NSM questioned the tradition of using the subject text books as the curriculum and following them every minute. The impact on the teachers is that they will have to pause to reflect and use critical thinking. Ask them-selves; what is the meaning of this. Furthermore thinking and acting differently in the new learning environment is needed when implementing the NSM. E.g. not only sitting in the classroom but rather using various methods as undertaking excursions" (T1.1.2,P.9). All of the ordinary teachers agree that in the past education system the text book was memorized and the exams assessed the memorization not the content (T.1.2.1,Q3,T1;T.1.2.1,Q3,T2;T.1.2.1,Q2,T1).

At the moment Abu Dhabi Education Council is offering all teachers training regarding the NSM (T1.1.3,P1-3). Furthermore the PPP in the school is providing training. Due to the 'trademarked' training no access

was granted to materials, training content or seminars. Nevertheless, the main steps were revealed which will be to firstly create general awareness; the teachers should get to know and become familiar with the NSM.

Secondly they need to understand the NSM and thirdly to implement it.

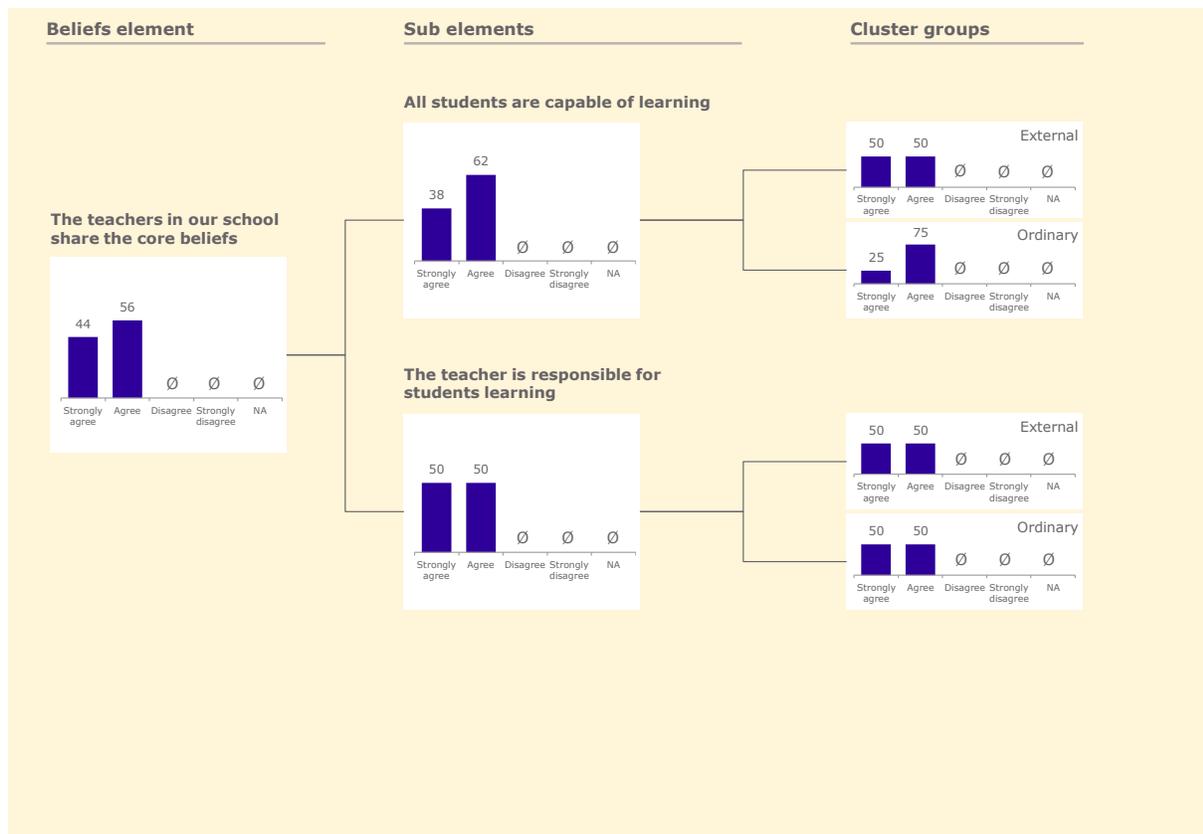
The teachers started a course in November 2011, to get familiar with and research about the NSM in detail (T.1.1.3,P.2).

## 4.2. Findings regarding the Elements of the NSM

The graphs show the results in percentage.

### 4.2.1. Beliefs

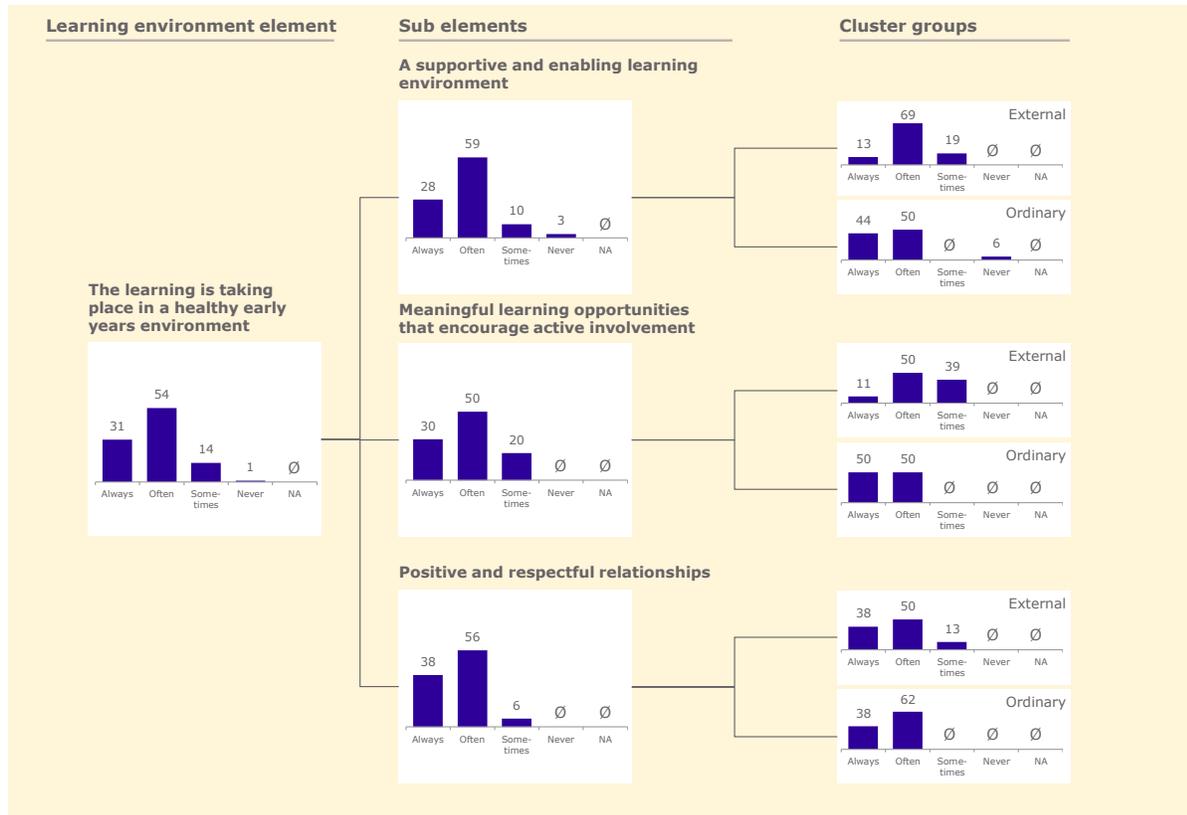
**Figure 6: Overview beliefs** from the questionnaire survey



100 percent of the participating teachers share the core beliefs of the NSM, 44 percent 'strongly agree' and 56 percent 'agree' respectively. The percentages for the two core beliefs 'all students are capable of learning' and 'the teacher is responsible for student learning' are almost equally positive. As evident from the interviews, teachers see no gap related to the core beliefs. One teacher states "...my number one role is to support the children. The teacher should try to motivate all the students to work on their tasks and homework" (T.1.2.2,Q2,T1). However flexibility is crucial to implement these beliefs as one teachers points out "Every individual is different; if you are not flexible this will be a challenge" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T4). One teacher recommends that "Now I have realized that if a student doesn't learn you just have to concentrate more on the student and the issue. Try to find a different view, take some extra time with the student. Now I will try to direct the students thinking in another way. Or try to show the student the right way for her to study. E.g. I noticed with one of the students that did not learn easily that if we use the computer she is learning and is excellent" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T4).

#### 4.2.2. Environment

**Figure 7: Overview Environment** from questionnaire survey



31 percent of the teachers find that the environment is 'always' supporting, enabling learning, provides meaningful learning opportunities that encourage active involvement with positive and respectful relationships. 54 percent marked 'often' and 14 percent 'sometimes'. As illustrated in the graphic above there are not great differences in the percentage between the three sub-elements.

In the literature review the environment that is to be created is described in detail. Starting with a supportive and enabling learning environment an interviewee informs: "I have seen some wonderful things happening in the classrooms. When I unannounced visited a class last week they were putting together a magazine. In the small groups, one of the students was

responsible. They encourage each other and helped each other (T.1.1.2,P.5). As mentioned in the literature review, this shows that the dialogue moves from students to student as well as teacher to student. Student dialogues were also witnessed in the observations where the students were helping each other with questions and answers (T.2.2,P6). Moving on to the second sub-element, the teachers state that they encourage active involvement: "in the beginning of the year, we asked what the students would like; to get them motivated and involved" (T.1.2.2,Q7,T4). Furthermore, meaningful learning opportunities are provided: "I can undertake some outside practice if that fits the theme. (T.1.2.1,Q3,T4;T.1.2.1,Q3,T2). One of the ordinary teachers adds: "we started to progress already. The student feel important since the teacher now gives them more attention. The students feel that the teacher cares about her feelings. I can think, explore and the teacher will give me a chance to finish the task. No pressuring or too difficult work but playful learning. The students are acting differently now, they are not just sitting and listening anymore" (T.1.2.1,Q8,T1).

According to the teachers the children are encouraged to explore their learning actively through creativity: "the students seem to like this NSM. They like to undertake research on their own. Go to the library etc. They are now interested to learn and to be active" (T.1.2.1,Q8,T3). This was also observed in lessons where e.g. a joint experiment was conducted regarding distance and height (T.2.5,P.3,9,10). Further field notes were done during the observations regarding the learning environment, which show that teachers apply a balance of focused teaching, demonstration, discussion and practice (T.2.2,P.1-8). The students are also encouraged to reflect on their learning. On the walls posters hang with the text: "what did we learn today". There are also "thinking hats". Above them it says

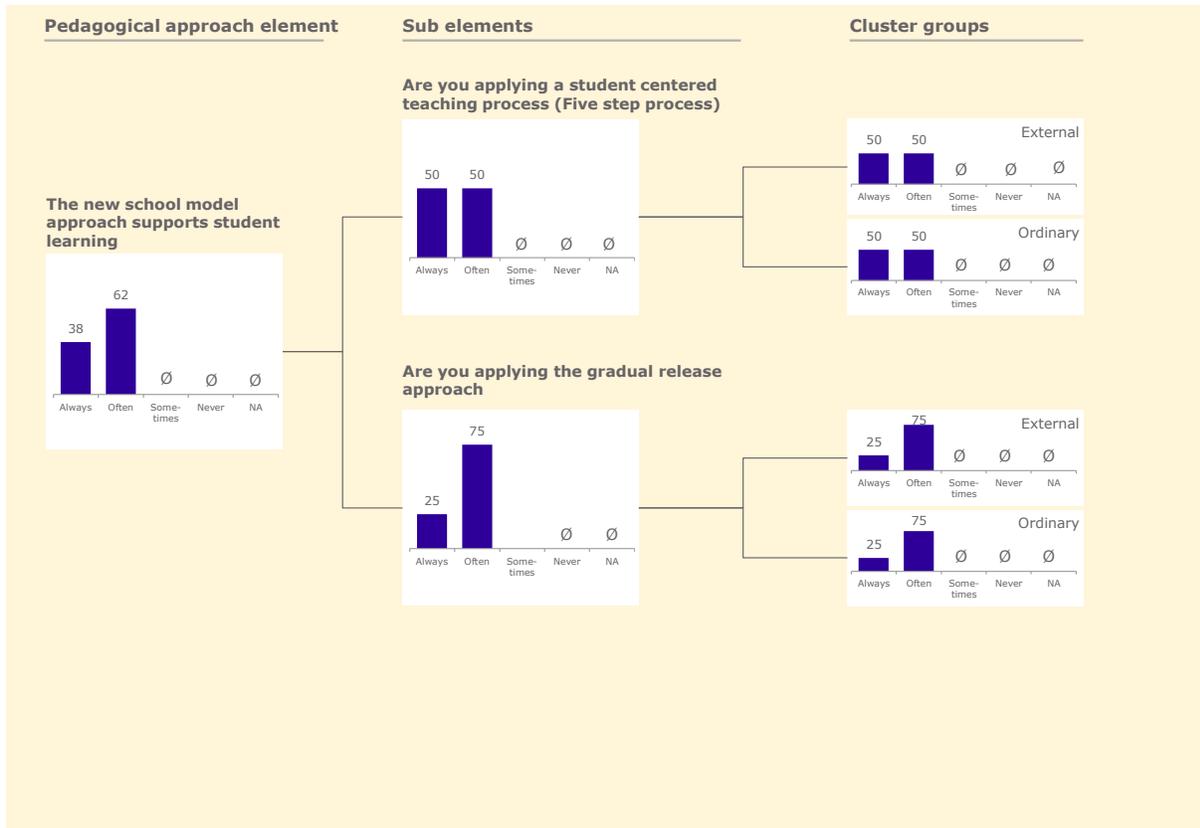
“these are different thinking hats” (T.2.4,P.6). The teachers provide sequences learning opportunities in response to students’ needs. The field notes show one example of a teacher adapting the lesson in accordance to the behaviour, understanding and needs of the students (T.2.5,P.5-10).

Observations further showed positive and respectful learning relationships with safety rules hanging on the walls (T.2.1). The whole school environment shows a value of the country’s culture which is encouraged in the NSM. Work created by the students has been placed on clipboards as information and photos about UAE heritage and culture. Pictures of traditional handicrafts are exhibited in a ‘UAE heritage corner’. On the wall it is written “past embraces the present” with paintings of the desert and Burj Khalifa (T.2.1). An observation of an art lesson showed a focus on the traditional art of Henna painting and encourages the students to apply their own designs (T.2.3,p.4-5). This art lesson plan and task is included in the appendix (T.3.1;T.3.2).

Two of the teachers ponder on the implementation of NSM learning environment and their role to create it: “to implement the features of the NSM or elements is sometimes a bit contradicting. It encourages the student to be appreciative of the UAE and its culture but at the same time English seem to be the most important language” (T.1.3.2,P5).

### 4.2.3. Approach

**Figure 8: Overview approach, questionnaire survey**



As evident in the questionnaire survey overall 38% of the respondents 'always' apply the NSM approach and the remaining 63% follow it 'often'. More specifically 50 percent 'always' follow the student centred learning approach. They stated in interviews that: "we use more ways to interact with the students" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T3). "As a teacher you keep a track on if a student rather writes, reads or listens. We integrate different ways to teach and learn" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T2). Furthermore "as a teacher I try to support the students to open their minds, ears, eyes, energy, everything. I will try to get the student interested in a task. Try to 'go into the mind' of the student" (T.1.2.2,Q1,T1). The remaining 50 percent apply the approach 'often'. Other interview partners, however not the teachers,

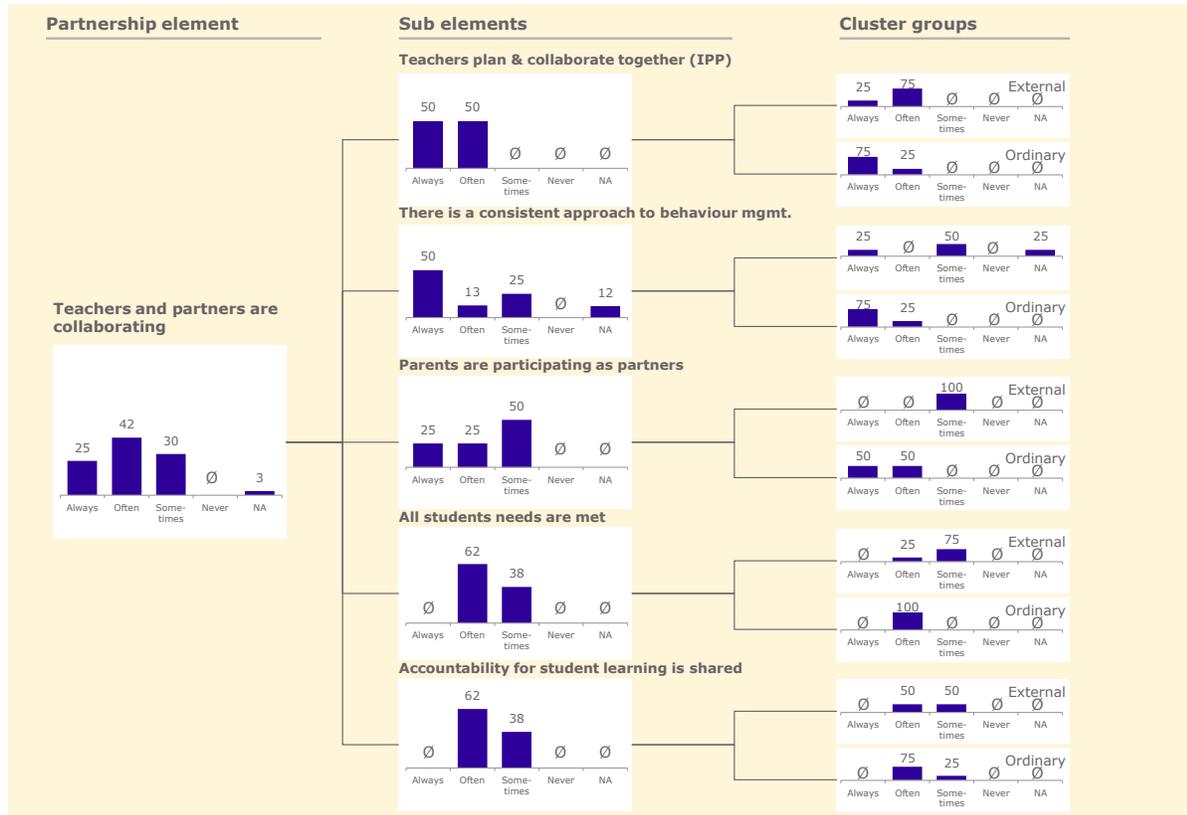
pointed out a gap: "teachers are still predominately focusing on teaching their subject(s) instead of putting the child in centre" (T.1.1.2,P.4). The focus needs to lay on the child and not on the subject as pointed out by another interview partner: "concentrate more on the child instead of the content of your subject – do not teach Arabic or English, teach the child. Focusing on learning will have an impact on your teaching and you will reach your results that way" (T.1.1.2,P.4).

25 percent of the respondents 'always' and 75 percent 'often' apply the gradual release approach, which aims at moving students from a state of dependence to one of independent practice and skills. Teachers mentioned that: "we are undertaking projects were the students are arranging everything themselves. They learn to take responsibility and work together" (T.1.2.2,Q6,T4). One teacher stated that "I mainly try to guide the students, observe the students and show them how to use information. The students should not only receive but also search and present their own information" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T1). Furthermore the application of the gradual approach was observed by the researcher in the class rooms as highlighted in the field-notes: "the gradual release approach was applied in the science class" (T.2.4,P.1-6) and "the students are working independently during an English lesson where they are choosing artefacts for their houses. Individually they are looking up the English word for the artefact" (T.2.10,P.1-4.).

Recommendations from only two of the teachers when implementing this learning environment is trying to evolve the environment and everything even more around the student (T.1.2.1,Q6,T1).

#### 4.2.4. Partnerships

**Figure 9: Overview partnerships, from questionnaire survey**



Overall the experience of teachers to work in partnerships is mixed. 25 percent of the teachers 'always' collaborate with their partners in various fields, 43 percent do the same 'often' and 33 percent only 'sometimes'. The three percent 'never' is related to one teacher's experience in the field of behaviour management and will be discussed separately under the specific section.

#### 4.2.4.1. Teachers plan together and collaborate

The difference in answers from the two cluster groups could be related to their cultural background as mentioned in the interviews "Cultural differences are also an issue. E.g. external teachers ask for support when needed. Ordinary teachers work more individually and seldom asks for support but try to manage it themselves" (T.1.1.1,P.6).

Teachers pointed out during interviews that collaboration is improving over time as they get acquainted with each other and their mutual trust deepens (T.1.2.2,Q8,T2). Furthermore: "We will start to make Individual Professional Plans (IPPs). The teachers recently received training on that subject" (T.1.1.1,P.7). Additional evidence of collaboration was narrated in the following interview: "...this year it has been better you do not have to do everything alone. We have unit meetings and the information gets around. We additionally have weekly planning. Before it was on your own responsibility to arrange things, it was the responsibility of one person. Now with the NSM it is the joint responsibility of the unit. New ideas, more ideas and more fun organizing are the impact" (T.1.2.1, Q8,T1). As included in the document analysis teachers started to jointly establish monthly plans (T.3.5) as well as newsletters to parents (T.3.4).

Challenges mentioned to plan together and collaborate are time constraints: "the challenge is to find time for joint planning since it is not clear where and when in the timetable it should be" (T.1.1.2,P.7). Therefore the suggestion that: "some further tangible planning guidelines would be helpful" (T.1.1.2,P.7).

Additionally collaboration in English can be challenging according to interview participants: "to discuss in English with teachers can also be an issue" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T4.) and furthermore "collaboration is sometimes a problem due to the language difficulties" (T.1.1.1,P.6).

The external teachers who act as mentors to the ordinary teachers acknowledge that they have to drive the collaboration process: "My role as a mentor is to get the teachers to open up, to feel safe. I try to give the teachers support, encouragement. Give them the feeling that yes, you can do it!" (T.1.2.2,Q3,T2). Furthermore as stated "when the mentors or 'expert' teachers show that they also make mistakes as a teacher in the classroom and also need to learn and develop then it is easier for the other teachers to open up and try themselves" (T.1.2.2,Q7,T2).

#### 4.2.4.2. A consistent approach to behaviour management

The spread in answers in the questionnaire might be a result of the fact that the final school behaviour management policy is still under construction. One interviewee explains that "...each teacher is responsible for the classroom rules. Each teacher will then bring the classroom rules with her to the unit meeting. What was discussed in the unit meeting will be discussed by the advisory committee. From these partnerships and collaborations unit rules are formed. The school rules are based on the unit rules and from these the final school behaviour plan will arise in the near future. It is still under development" (T.1.1.1,P.7). For the same reason one external teacher gave 'not applicable' as an answer in the questionnaire. However over the course of time one external teacher saw a clear improvement in student behaviour towards the teachers: "The students treat us with more respect now after one year. They have more

respect for the ordinary teachers, so seeing them respect us, the external teachers has a good impact on the students too" (T 1.2.2,Q.8,T3).

However one teacher states that: "setting limits is a challenge for the moment" (T.1.2.2,Q5,T1). Another teacher explains that she wants to see the students enjoy however "that it is difficult to keep the students quiet then but I guess that is how children are" ( T.1.2.1,Q9,T2). Furthermore as observed in the classrooms teachers reinforce positive student behaviour: "three girls are talking then the teacher waits quietly until they stop and then praise them for not talking anymore. Furthermore the teacher reminds the class about the 'happy faces' that can be allotted anytime" (T.2.5,P. 8). The observations furthermore showed that the teachers apply a positive approach to behaviour management (T.2.5,P.1,5, 8,10;T.2.3,P.3,7-8.).

Teachers recommended that continuity as a class teacher might facilitate a consistent approach to behaviour management since the students get familiar with the teacher:"... furthermore the teacher knows her students after one year which makes an impact (T.1.2.2,Q.8,T3.).

#### 4.2.4.3. Parents are participating as partners

Overall 25 percent of the teachers state that parents 'always', respectively 'often' participate as partners while the remainder 50 percent only 'sometimes' see them as engaged partners. Noteworthy is the difference in perception between the cluster groups where 100 percent of the external teachers marked that parents only 'sometimes' participate as partners versus a more positive view of the ordinary teachers where both 'always' and 'often' account for 50 percent each.

The document analysis gives evidence that the teachers actively seek to engage the parents in their role as partners, e.g. a 'weekly planner' in Arabic (T.3.6) is handed out to them as well as letters in English: "we have three basic rules in the classroom, we wish you would discuss these rules with your children" (T.3.4;T.1.2.2,Q7,T1). Teacher themselves suggest to "... integrating and cooperating with the parents in the education of their children. Most parents have good ideas and are open minded. Maybe our parents are not however the parents of the younger generation are [laughing]" (T.1.2.1,Q6,T2). Another recommendation is to include parents through sending suggestions for tasks which parents can jointly undertake with their children at home. A specific task suggestion can be found in the document analysis section (T.3.3).

The level of English language skills was identified by both external and ordinary teachers as a challenge to engage parents. "Another challenge is the English language. Also for the mothers of the students, they too only recently started to learn English" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T1;T.1.2.2,Q5,T1). As a recommendation teachers suggest to involve parents in learning English along with their children since the NSM is built on a bilingual model: "they even ask the teachers for English language support. We also got requests if the teachers could send home some homework with their children for the mothers to learn English. One mother stated: as my child does homework I could do it at the same time" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T1;T.1.2.2,Q7, T1).

As mentioned in interviews presentations regarding the NSM have been given to parents (T.3.9). According to teachers it is important to familiarize them with the new concept: "it is challenging to explain to the

parents that we are not memorizing the text books anymore. The ideas have changed. It is part of the education to guide the students now. It is difficult to make it clear that it is different" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T1.). Teachers recommend; "explaining to the parents. The parents want to see the book that the teachers, according to the former system, are supposed to teach from. They ask us what we are doing during the lessons. They want to know and be involved" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T3). Furthermore "a continuous connection with the parents should be strived for. We need to ask them about their opinion and foremost if they have any suggestions. This could also be done with a confidential questionnaire. With questions; what they could do for the school, we could get the parents more involved. A suggestion box could be permanently placed in the entrance for parents to use and get involved"(T.1.2.1,Q6,T1). Additional channels of communications recommended by the teachers include a website with information on the NSM and the school itself (T.1.2.1,Q6,T3) as well as a 'mother-council' (T.1.2.1,Q7,T1).

#### 4.2.4.4. All students' needs are met

Overall 63 percent of the teachers believe that all students need are 'often' met while 38 percent gave 'sometimes' as an answer. An interviewee mentioned regarding the implementation of the NSM's special education policy that: "we finally have five special education teachers, they arrived three weeks ago. Therefore we are in the middle of the assessments for IEPs and special needs analysis" (T.1.1.1,P.8). Accordingly in a special education lesson the researcher observed the teacher providing tasks to the specific needs of the students.

Specific challenges regarding the implementation of the NSM's special education policy relate to the number of students in a class and therefore the limited attention a teacher can give to all students' needs: "Some of the students' need more time for flexible settings and groupings. They cannot yet benefit in large classes. About 17-23 female students attend the classes" (T.1.1.1,P.8). To mitigate these challenges teachers recommend shadow teachers, smaller classes and even individual or individual support: "To support the implementation of inclusion and the support for students with special needs there should be more time for separate or individual support. This is when everything else according to the policy and steps has been tried out. When none of the support for the particular student to be included in the classroom is sufficient, additional individual support lessons would be what I recommend" (T.1.2.2,Q6,T1) Furthermore teachers suggest that specific training would benefit them and the students (T.1.2.1,Q7,T2). Along the same lines another teacher mentioned: "what was a challenge in the beginning was including the students with special needs since I didn't receive any additional or special education before that I was not used to it. The students did not quite know how to react in the beginning either. However, now after a while together the students have gotten used to each other and the situation has improved" (T.1.2.2,Q5,T4).

Another teacher advocates that flexibility is of great importance when meeting the needs of all students: "during a lesson I do not push through what I planned to do if it is not working. I do what the students need me to do" (T.1.2.2,Q3,T1) and that furthermore individualized teaching benefits the students: "I will try to figure out what is going on in the students' head, what interests them. If a student's strength is mathematics then we will use that as a starting point to build on. Or I will

try to work around it if there might be something else on her mind so that she cannot concentrate. If somebody is e.g. shouting all the time, I will first ask myself; is it because of the new language [English] being used, is the child hyperactive at the time or what lies behind this behaviour” (T.1.2.2,Q2,T1).

#### 4.2.4.5. Accountability for student learning is shared

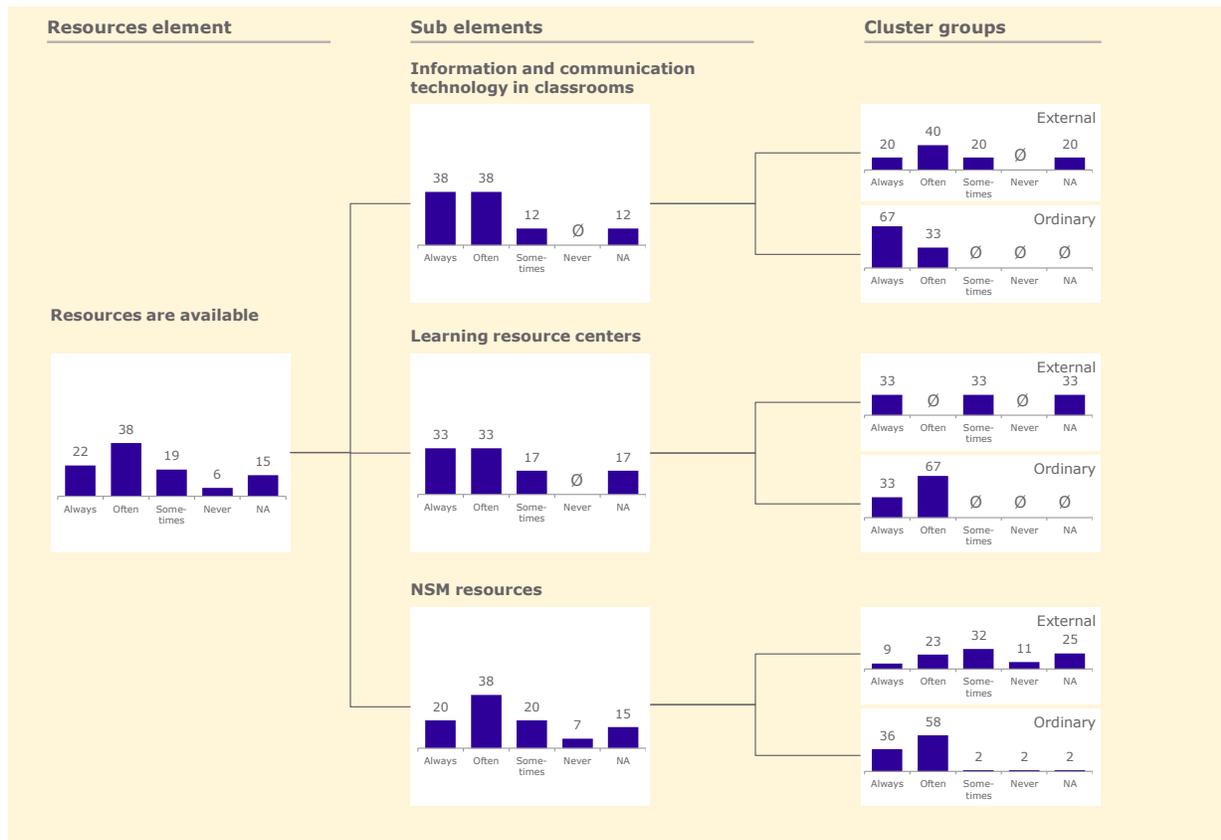
63 percent of the teachers feel that accountability for student learning 'often' is shared and 38 percent 'sometimes'. A higher percentage of the ordinary teachers than the external teachers marked 'often'. Excursions into the community are undertaken with the students. This way the students learn about the community (T.1.2.1,Q5,T2) and another result is that the community gets in contact with the students.

However one teacher states in an interview that: “collaboration is an issue since the teacher, parents and the community should feel responsible for the student” (T.1.1.1,P.4).

The teachers recommended starting with including the parents more, as stated above.

#### 4.2.5. Resources

**Figure 10: Overview resources, questionnaire survey**



As illustrated in the questionnaire survey above according to 22 percent of the teachers the resources listed in the literature review are 'always' available. 38 percent state that the resources are 'often' available, 19 percent 'sometime', 6 percent never and 15 percent answer not applicable. In relation to the first sub element in the questionnaire and according to the management there will be 'Information and communication technology' (ICT) in classrooms in the new location and building that the school is moving to (T.1.1.4,P.2). According to some of the participants and staff at ADEC there are some logistic issues regarding resources. It has been a

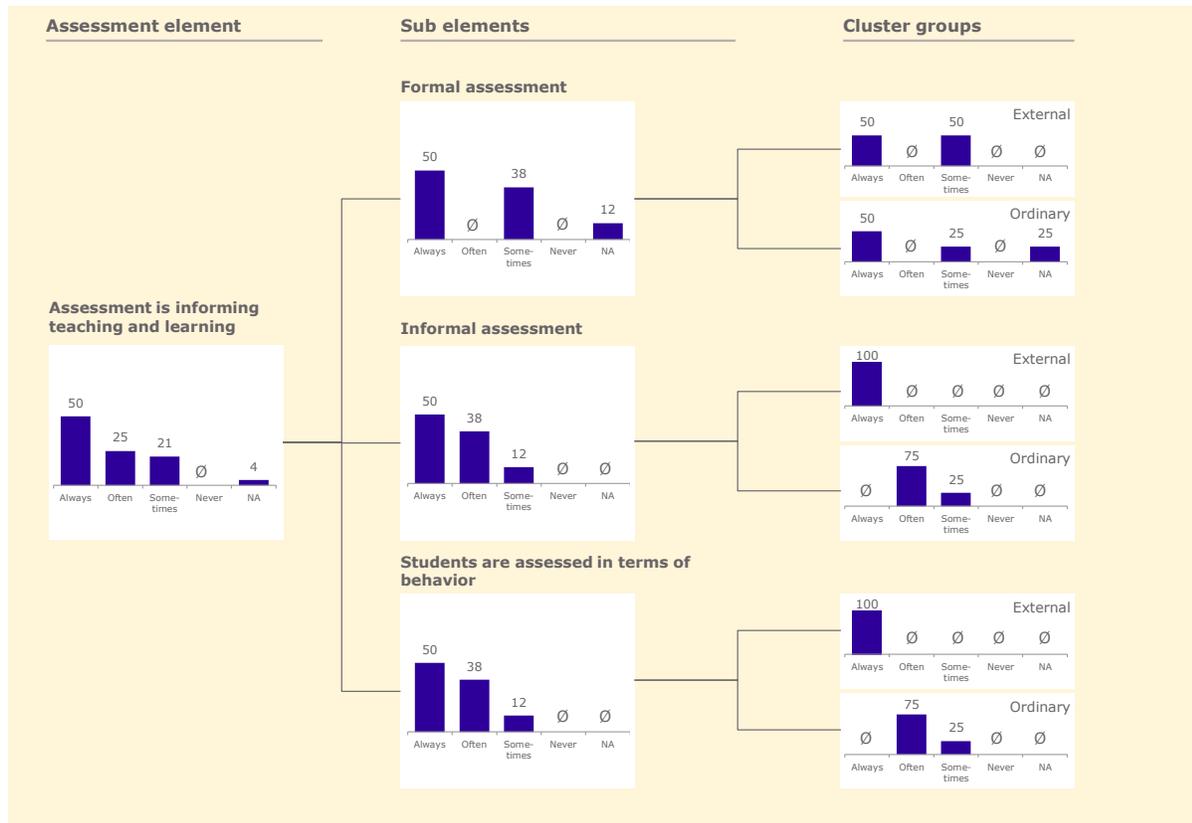
problem to get them delivered to all the schools. (T 1.1.1,P.8;T.1.1.2,P. 1). According to managing staff: "no NSM resources are available" at the time, from the resources listed in the questionnaire (T.4) and in the literature review only set up material like joint printers and some teacher support like CD-ROMs are available and used (T.1.1.4,P.2). A teacher explains that "there is a lack of resources at the time however we will move to another building in the near future. This is great in the sake of further resources and additional rooms". (T.1.2.2,Q5,T1).

The challenges are according to the teachers that "it will be time consuming for the students and for the teachers to get used to the new surrounding and environment. It will take time for all of us to become familiar with the building and to settle in" (T.1.2.2,Q5,T1). Additionally that "the good will is there from everybody's side however we are losing time due to lack of resources. Nevertheless, we try to do our best since it is not all dependent on the resources (T 1.1.2,P.1). These were answers from the external teachers whereas the ordinary teacher did not experienced the lack of resources as a major challenge (T.1.2.1,Q5,T3).

As recommendations regarding resources the teachers suggest: "assistants or shadow teachers in the classrooms" (T.1.2.1,Q6,T4) and that moving to the new location and building will solve and facilitate the implementation (T.1.2.1,Q7,T1;T.1.2.2,Q7,T1). In the observations (T2,O.2-10) the ICT room, projectors, math manipulative items, picture books and science consumables were used. The spread of answers show some confusion among the teachers regarding definitions of resources and its availability.

#### 4.2.6. Assessment

**Figure 11: Overview Assessment, questionnaire survey**



Only 50 percent of the teachers 'always' use assessment to inform teaching and learning and assess students in terms of physical, emotional, social and attitudinal behaviours. 25 percent do the same 'often' and 21 percent 'sometimes'.

Both in the questionnaire and the interviews a difference in answers between external and ordinary teachers can be observed. The ordinary teachers are familiar with formal assessment; "We have learned to use the result to teach the children" (T 1.3.1,P.2) and "We have worked with KPI's before. We are used to it. We received a lot of training how to do it" (T1.3.1,P.3). As an outcome of the questionnaire illustrated above,

informal assessment is being utilized to a lesser extent by the ordinary teachers compared to the external teachers to inform teaching and learning. An example of informal assessment is included in the document analysis where a teacher has written 'good!' on a mathematics task, which indicates that the teacher has seen and informally assessed the paper (T.3.7).

In contrast according to the external teachers in the interviews the key reason which makes implementation challenging is the time consuming effort to produce evidence of student performance instead of using assessment to inform teaching and learning. One teacher stated that "... the challenge is the national exams and the key performance indicator which are driving the focus on assessment and outcomes, not learning. With the national tests and the expectations for that, time goes to prepare for exams and inspections. We have to provide evidence and use too much energy on bringing these results. Five year old students need a various amount of time for different matters; they cannot be on the same level in the exact same time" (T.1.1.2,P.5). Especially the external teachers are not used to this concept of producing evidence of performance "We are not used to the pressure of producing "evidence" of the performances of the students. However it proofs performance and not that learning is taking place" (T.1.3.2,P.1;T.1.2.2,Q8,T1).

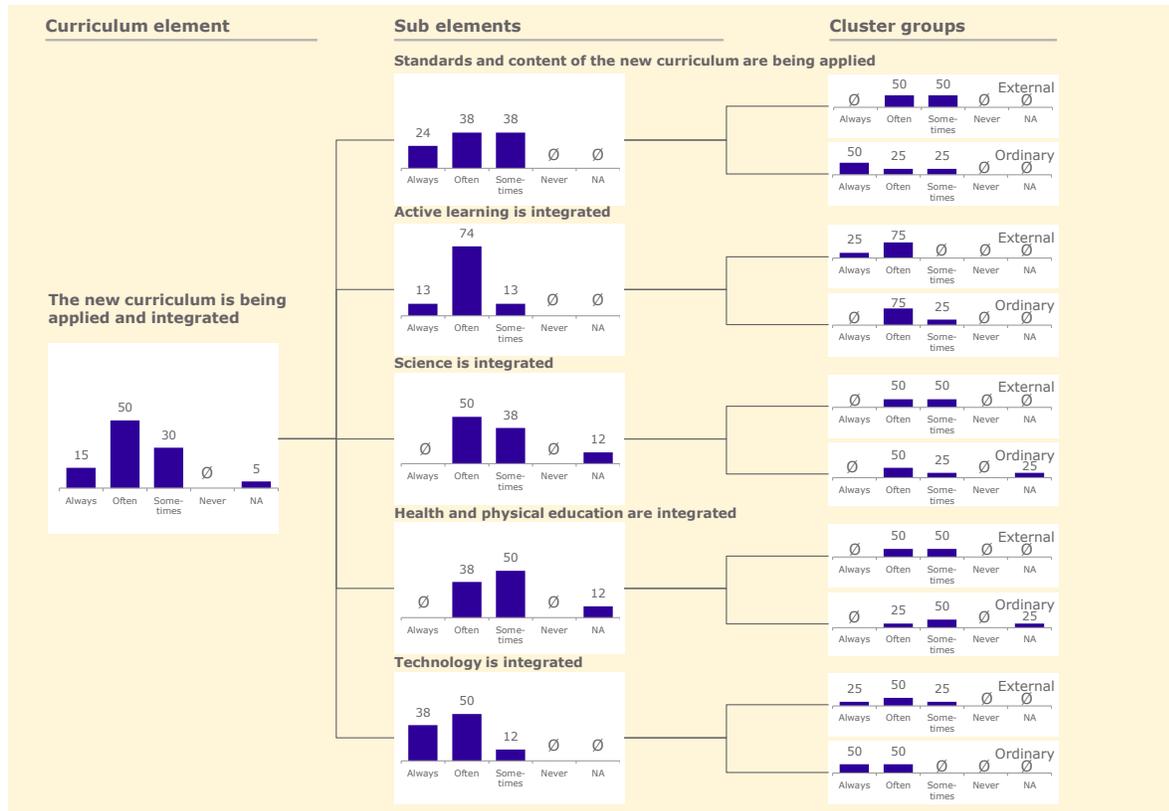
Furthermore 100 percent of the external teachers assess students in terms of physical, emotional, social and attitudinal behaviour. As a teacher stated "...what about the whole child? Sometime a student learns a lot and progress but then it is just the grades and marks that are important. However improvement is personal" (T.1.3.2,P.2,E1). "The outcomes are very precisely defined. However, assessing how to hold a pen is in my opinion not encouraging. This does not include or see the whole

personality and knowledge of the student" (T.1.1.2,P.2). According to ADEC they are aware of these shortcomings however "...it is a start to get the teachers acquainted with the process" (T.1.1.1,P.3).

In order to achieve the implementation of this element teachers recommend trusting in their capabilities. "I believe in the power of trust. The school should trust its teachers and encourage them to be trustworthy. The school needs to concentrate on learning. The process in the classroom is more important than assessment and performance. This is how I would like the school to be managed; even more child centred" (T.1.1.2,P.3). The same was recommended by other teachers (T.1.3.2,P.1; T.1.3.2,P.2).

#### 4.2.7. Curriculum

**Figure 12: Overview curriculum, questionnaire survey**



According to the questionnaire survey illustrated above the first sub-element; standards and content of the new curriculum are being applied, 25 percent of the teachers marked 'always', 38 percent 'often and 38 percent 'sometimes'. This is the lowest percentage for 'always' in comparison to all the elements. The ordinary teachers have a higher percentage in following the curriculum more often than the external teachers. Nevertheless, the ordinary teachers generally answer more positively in the questionnaire survey than the external teachers.

The former curriculum was, according to the teachers, the text book in the subject (T.1.2.1,Q2,T1). One teacher states that the NSM curriculum is

more interesting and that: "the students collect their own experiences" (T.1.2.1,Q3,T2).

The second graph of the sub-elements show that 75 percent of the teachers answered that they 'often' integrate active learning. This was also demonstrated in the classrooms and evident in observations, where the students were experimenting and actively learning (T.1.2,O.3,5,7,9-10). Excursions with the students are undertaken in order for them to actively learn about the community: "also we undertake a lot of trips, so it takes a lot of time to plan for all the trips. I discussed this with the principal however the principal explained to me that this is how the students learn about community and the environment" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T2).

The third sub-element: integrating science, show that 50 percent of the teachers do this 'often' and 38 percent 'sometimes'. The document analysis illustrates a combining homework in Arabic, English and science (T.3.11).

38 percent of the teachers are integrating Health and physical education 50 percent 'often' do the same. Here there are a higher percentage of external teachers who integrate the subject more often. One teacher says that: "since one month we have additional health education. We have started doing a health theme during one month in the beginning of the semester and one month in the end of the semester in Physical Education. We will make e.g. fruit salads and talk about eating healthy (T.1.2.2,Q1, T4). The teachers continue that: "the students are keen on bringing beautiful fruit baskets now instead of chocolate [laughing] (T.1.2.2,Q8, T4).

Technology is 'always' being integrated from 38 percent of the teachers, 50 percent 'often' and 13 percent sometimes. The ordinary teachers have

a higher percentage of more frequently integrating technology. In one of the observations, technology was integrated in a science class about the solar system. The students utilized computers in the ICT classroom to establish PowerPoint slides (T.2.4,P.1-4).

The overall challenges for this element is according to the teachers "...some confusions regarding the curriculum. So, specifically more training would be needed regarding the new curriculum" (T.1.3.1,P.4). Another teacher states generally that more training how the NSM looks in the classroom with real examples in practise would be needed (T.1.3.1,P.4). Another challenge was that the curriculum for year 2010 and 2011 was published and send out in November 2011 (T.1.1.1,P.8). One teacher mentions that: "some of the curriculum was not provided in Arabic last year. We only had some of the outcomes" (T.1.3.1,P.2). Both external and ordinary teachers recommend more training and one teacher adds laughing: "every teacher is also different. The teacher training should be more individualized" [smiling] (T.1.3.1,P.2).

#### 4.3. Overall challenges and recommendations

The above discussed findings and elements belong, according to Fullan (2001) and as discussed in the literature review, to the three aspects which influences teachers in their daily routines and that need to be considered when implementing change in classrooms. These concern new materials, practices or behaviours and beliefs. From a teacher perspective there are however further challenges when implementing a school reform. These issues do not relate directly to a specific element or feature of the NSM. As highlighted in the literature review research shows that when implementing change, concerns usually emerge on various levels, not only

regarding the task itself (Hall et al. 2006). These concerns are also important to attend to since they might help to define the necessary support teachers need.

#### 4.3.1. Language challenges

According to the teachers there are some language issues. "That the school is supposed to be bilingual is a problem in implementing the NSM. It is a problem now and it will probably be one in the future if Math's, English and science are to be thought in English" (T.1.2.2,Q5,T2). To facilitate the implementation of the NSM one of the teachers recommended language support. "I think there should be a professional translator working in the school. Now we understand each other better than in the beginning. However a permanent professional translator would facilitate cooperation tremendously. E.g. for the agenda for a meeting some support of a translator would be great (T.1.2.1,Q7,T4). Or "some extra support for English language would facilitate the implementation" (T.1.2.1,Q7,T2) another teacher adds.

Another recommendation to facilitate the implementation would be to start with English at a later stage: "the starting point of English is already in KG1. In my opinion this is too early; at this age the children should rather focus on Arabic" (T.1.3.2,P.4). However one teacher states that: "it is starting to work here; some of the features just need time to sink in" (T.1.2.2,Q1,T2).

#### 4.3.2. Time

Time is a concern and challenge that all of the teachers mentioned at some point (T.1.2.1,Q3,T2;T.1.2.1,Q5,T2). One teacher states that she needs more time to prepare for the lessons (T.1.2.1,Q6,T4). Another

teacher states that "one challenge is that the implementation is time consuming since the whole staff needs to get the concept" (T.1.2.2,Q5, T3). One teacher states that one of the main challenges is lack of time (T.1.2.2,Q5,T4). According to an additional teacher the main challenge to implement and the whole NSM is that: "the teacher has to work and prepare more to create this" (T.1.2.1,Q8,T2). Also "the administration does not have enough time to handle everything. There is of course no simple answer how to resolve that" (T.1.3.2,P.1).

According to staff at ADEC they are aware of that the speed of the change might be an issue. Therefore a planned 'review' project is planned to take place in the near future (T.1.1.1,P.8).

#### 4.3.3. Flexibility

Teachers recommended that flexibility makes it easier to focus on the students (T.1.2.2,Q1,T4;T.1.2.1,Q3,T4). It is a process that takes time (T.1.2.2,Q3,T2), furthermore "you need patience" (T.1.3.2,P.6;T.1.2.2, Q6,T4). As mentioned earlier it is planned that the school will have external support during five years. However one teacher thinks it will be a challenge to implement the NSM in five years: "it will take a generation" (T.1.3.2,P.4). One teacher stated that: "it is not as complex as it seems if we plan together and take the time" (T.1.2.1,Q9,T1).

#### 4.3.4. Communication and transparency

From a teacher perspective there are some challenges regarding communication and transparency (T.1.2.2,Q6,T2;T.1.2.1,Q8,T4.); "in the beginning we didn't get a clear explanation regarding the whole change

and for some of us it was not tangible what was going on or why. This was a challenge since "you cannot give what you don't have" (T.1.2.1,Q5,T4). One teacher expressed concern regarding the plans for next year; "some of us do not know what will happen next year. In the subjects English, Mathematics and science it is a bit unclear what will happen" (T.1.3.1,P.5). Therefore additional "overviews and explanations" were recommended (T.1.2.1,Q8,T4) as well as additional information and lectures for the teachers about the NSM (T.1.2.1,Q6,T3).

#### 4.3.5. Critical mass

Some of the teachers showed a concern that not all of the teachers are enough involved in the implementation of the NSM; "the whole staff needs to get involved. I recommend involving the other teachers more in implementing the NSM" (T.1.2.2,Q6,T3).

On the other hand the majority of the teachers feel that all teachers are involved; "last year they were not but this year I would say yes, definitely! Now everybody has opened up and we are discussing more. Everybody is considerate and we share a joint vision. Observations are done in classes all over the school. Teachers observe each other and give permission to be observed. Everything takes time and we are slowly improving. It's not perfect but I have the feeling that all teachers are willing to commit themselves to make this work. Another teacher also stated that "now they are, yes. We send them emails and do presentations. We tell them about the NSM and we even made videos. They also get training from ADEC (T.1.3.1,P.7).

#### 4.3.6. Training and support

It was pointed out that there is a need to become more acquainted with the NSM, preferably by continuous trainings. Particularly training how the NSM looks in the classroom with real examples in practise, furthermore: "the trainings could be broader; we would like to be able to exchange experiences with other schools" (T.1.3.1,P.4,T2). All teachers stated that even though they feel the support and are learning a lot, additional training would be needed (T.1.3.1,P.1;T.1.3.2,P.4). Furthermore more support like assistance was recommended; "that the teacher and the students would have somebody to help in the classroom" (T.1.2.1,Q6,T4).

## **5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter is structured along the three research questions and provides a summary of the key points for each of them, an overall conclusion and recommendations for further research.

### **5.1. Identification of gaps between theory and practice**

As an outcome of this study the gaps identified between theory and practice in the implementation of the NSM are specific to a number of elements but not to all of them. The two elements where no significant gap was identified include beliefs and environment. In both areas interviews, questionnaire survey, observations as well document analysis suggest that the implementation is on track.

Teachers share the core belief that they are 'responsible for student learning'. By applying various teaching and learning methods and by taking into account various learning styles and devoting time to each individual student, teachers became aware that 'All students are capable of learning'. Teachers stated that allocating sufficient time for planning and collaboration is key to the implementation of the NSM learning environment, which creates a 'supportive and enabling learning environment', provides 'meaningful learning opportunities that encourage active involvement' and establishes 'positive and respectful relationships'.

Some of the gaps are temporary in nature and will likely be closed over the course of time. Specifically at the time of research the resources, which are described in the literature review, are not fully available due to a shortage of stock. In relations to the partnership sub-element 'All student

needs are met' the Special Needs teachers only arrived in November 2011. As a consequence not all IEP's had been fully developed at the time of the empirical study. Challenges regarding this sub-element will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Other temporary gaps in the partnership element are that the policy for student behaviour management was under development and yet to be implemented and training related to Individual Professional/Performance Plan (IPP) recently started and therefore also the implementation.

Gaps between theory and practice in the implementation were identified in the areas of assessment, curriculum and pedagogical approach. In case of the assessment element the research implies an imbalance between formal and informal assessment as well as students being assessed in term of behaviour. Teachers argue that the emphasis lays on formal assessment in order to produce evidence of student performance. As far as the curriculum element is concerned interviews and questionnaire surveys suggest that not all sub-elements are being consistently applied and integrated. The challenges related to assessment and curriculum will be discussed in the next section.

When it comes to the pedagogical approach ADEC and other school staff pointed out the following gap that teachers are still focusing on their subject rather than applying a student centred teaching and learning approach. Ateeqi (2009) points out that some teachers in the UAE still believe in traditional methods and therefore restrain to embrace new approaches. The researcher disagrees that the teachers still believe in the traditional methods, but rather suggests that teachers find themselves in a transition period from the known to the unfamiliar and therefore do not fully apply the approach. As evidence teachers did not mention challenges related to the implementation of this element.

## 5.2. Explore challenges and determine recommendations from a teacher perspective

Challenges and recommendations will be jointly discussed since they go hand in hand. Firstly, more specific challenges and recommendations in relation to the elements will be looked at. Teachers pointed out challenges and concerns for the partnership, assessment and curriculum elements. As previously mentioned no major challenges and recommendations were highlighted for the two elements beliefs and environment. In the case of resources the challenge teachers are facing is the delay in delivery of resources. However this is compensated to an extent with creativity and use of temporary resources. As far as the approach element is concerned teachers did not specify any specific challenges, however two external teachers recommended that an even more child centred approach would be beneficial. Secondly, an overall section of the challenges and recommendations that do not relate to a specific element, however relevant to the implementation from a teacher perspective will be discussed.

### 5.2.1. Partnerships

For the three sub-elements 'Teachers plan together and collaborate (IPP)', 'Parents are participating as partners', 'All student needs are met' as well as 'Accountability for student learning is shared' teachers identified challenges and formulated recommendations for implementation.

#### 5.2.1.1. Teachers plan together and collaborate

The teachers find it challenging to find the time to plan together. Some more tangible schedules when joint planning is to take place is asked for. That the NSM is bilingual causes some barriers between ordinary and external teachers. According to the literature review researchers claim that communication is important for implementers. The implementation becomes a greater challenge when teachers do not master the language. Improvement is seen already after one year though since the teachers know each other better and open-up to each-other. Since the problems are general further challenges and recommendations regarding time constraints and language barriers will be discussed in the overall section.

As discussed in the literature review and as demonstrated by research and practice over the last decade district leaders focus primarily on the build-up of infrastructure to support reform but are inclined to neglect the importance of culture building. While the adaptation of structures is necessary, it is only in combination with the development of a professional culture that sustainable change can be achieved. A challenge is that various professional cultures of the teachers. The ordinary teachers are used to working more individually whereas the external teachers ask for support. This is in line with Gaad (2005, p.8), who highlighted that a specific challenge in the UAE is "the current way of throwing international teachers into classrooms with no cultural orientations". However in this particular school the teachers are, after over one year of collaboration, finding their joint professional culture.

Even though the external teachers are temporary working in the school this is important for the implementation phase to succeed.

#### 5.2.1.2. All student needs are met

As mentioned in the literature review it is a relatively new phenomenon to include students with special needs in mainstream schools and therefore still a challenging element in implementing the NSM. The special needs teacher late arrival to the particular school is not the only challenge. According to Gaad (2004, p.161) "a negative attitude towards such students in all aspects limits their opportunities to be successful in regular classrooms". As stated above the teachers believe that all students can learn however it is still a challenge for the teachers to tend to all student needs. Therefore the teachers wish for further training and skills regarding this important sub-element. To mitigate the current challenges teachers recommend shadow teachers, smaller classes and even individual support. Further recommendations were to be flexible and try to individualise the teaching according to interests of the students.

#### 5.2.1.3. Parents are participating as partners'

The teachers state that it is a challenge that the parents are not familiar with the new concept that is being implemented in the school. Therefore further information channels are recommended as a communication/suggestion box for parents, a website with information regarding the NSM and the school of their child as well as presentations. As already mentioned as an over-arching issue, is the implementation of the NSM as a bilingual model. The English language skills of the parents are a challenge at this stage. The teacher recommended sending home English assignments to the parents that can be done at the same time as their children are attending to their homework. Further recommendations will be given in the overall section below.

#### 5.2.1.4. Accountability for student learning is shared

The NSM aims for that accountability for student learning is shared. A challenge from a teacher perspective is to accomplish that everyone feels responsible for the students. As stated in the literature review, due to the complexity of implementing and sustaining whole system change, school teachers and administrators need support. Fullan (2010) argues that large-scale reforms mean that all parties; government, community and school "contribute individually and in concert to forward movement and success". According to Hargreaves et al, (2010) the highest performing nations like Singapore implement and maintain their standards by having schools that work with and affect the communities, which also in turn affects the schools. Not all responsibility for implementing change is the responsibility of the teachers and schools.

Fullan (2010, p.27) continues that "the race now is to figure out how to get major improvements across the system by mobilizing educators, parents, students, and communities to engage in the collective efforts necessary for success. This is in line with the teachers concerns; however they feel that specifically parents want to be involved. Making excursions into the community is recommendation from the teachers to facilitate the implementation of this element.

#### 5.2.2. Assessment

As stated in the literature review, assessment in the NSM will no longer be utilized to only determine a child's performance results but to inform teaching and learning as well. Assessment information will be used by the teachers to determine the student's stage of development and to plan learning experiences accordingly. According to the teachers there is a

pressure on teachers to produce evidence of student performance results and a focus on formal assessment. The formal assessment is but only one of three sub-elements that should inform teaching and learning.

The management of the school and the teachers recommend trusting the teachers and concentrating more on learning and on the 'whole student' instead of focusing on the results. Hargreaves et al (2010) recommends something similar and states that glimpsing at the he most successful countries educationally and economically when implementing and sustaining change shows that they leave flexibility and innovation in implementing teaching and learning and put great trust in the highly qualified teachers without controlling everything from the top (McKinsey, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2008 as cited in Hargreaves et al, 2010). This will be further look at the next overall section.

### 5.2.3. Curriculum

The previous section showed a gap between theory and practice in relation to the curriculum. The teachers stated some challenges and specifically confusion in applying and integrating the novel NSM curriculum. This is one of the challenges frequently mentioned in the literature; teachers' confusion regarding the task they are supposed to carry out. According to Hall and Hord (2006) the teachers, who are expected to implement change, are not clear about what they are asked to do in practice. The recommendations from the teachers were more and continuous training how the curriculum looks in practice and additional exchange opportunities between schools.

#### 5.2.4. Overall challenges

As mentioned above to the specific elements there are some challenges that are over-arching. The most common concerns are time constraints and language barriers. The time constraints regards time for planning and due to a prioritization of formal assessment there is little time left for other things. According to the literature this could also mean that the teachers are still overwhelmed by the scope of the NSM, therefore they focus on one subject rather than the entire system. Fullan suggests that the implementation of new policies can overwhelm teachers due to scope and complexity; as a result the intended implementation falls short of its objectives. In order to tackle this challenge a reduction in fragmentation and overload is recommended. Fullan continues that coherence and coordination are key as otherwise teachers might start to prioritize a single objective, often the formal assessment, since the linkages between the different policy elements are not clear to them. This could be a reason for the focus on formal assessment. Therefore the researcher suggests further research regarding this element.

#### 5.2.5. Overall recommendations

As overall recommendations to the above mentioned challenges the teachers suggested a permanent translator to facilitate the implementation of the NSM. To start the education of the English language at a higher grade was also a suggestion. Flexibility and patience were traits that the teachers expressed as necessary for the on-going phase as well as enabling the teachers through continuous training and support. Research over the last two decades has shown that the amount and quality of support provided to the teachers are critical during the implementation of

a comprehensive education reform (Moffet, 2000). The teachers also recommend including all the teachers in the implementation, which is in line with Gaad (2006), who states that the majority need to be willing to change for the old ways to transform. As also Reeves (2009) forecast the importance of the 'critical mass' for bridging the implementation gap. This was a challenge in the beginning however as stated in the 'findings chapter' after one year this has become a minor challenge.

### 5.3. Conclusion and recommendations

To summarize this study, it aimed to provide an overview of the current implementation status of the NSM in a school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi from a teacher perspective. In order to grasp the most relevant concepts and theories the study contains an extensive literature review, which investigates the topic across different geographies and several decades. Methodologies applied in this study are numerous; semi-structured individual - as well as group interviews, questionnaire survey and non-participant observations were carried out involving both ordinary and external teachers as well as ADEC and other school staff in order to put the study in context. Furthermore documents published by ADEC on the NSM and documents established by the concerned school for implementation purpose were reviewed and analysed in-depth.

For the researcher it was of great value to experience the implementation of the educational reform taking place in the emirate. This taught the author of this study to appreciate the significant effort which teachers, policy makers and government in the UAE are making to successfully deliver and implement the NSM. The NSM which functions as an enabler to achieve the overarching goals laid out for the future of the emirate of Abu Dhabi. The latter was also the base for the rationale of the study. As a

result a rich picture of the on-going implementation has emerged, allowing a meaningful comparison between theory and practice. This understanding, in conjunction with the identification of specific challenges and recommendations how to support the successful implementation of the NSM were areas worthy of studying. Ultimately, additional schools and teachers in the emirate may relate to the outcome of this study. ADEC's teacher training, which aims to educate teachers in applying the NSM, might benefit from these findings as well. Furthermore the findings of this study can be used as a base for undertaking interventions in order to support the implementation.

Due to the nature of the research questions and the fact that the implementation of the NSM is a new phenomenon an exploratory study was undertaken. As stated in the 'present study chapter', conclusions based on an exploratory study should be made with diligence. However this study serves as a basis for further research. What is agreed on in the literature is that it needs early and continuous analysis and interventions to adjust and prevent various issues supported by transparency and flexibility. Therefore as obvious in the above discussion further research in the areas of assessment, curriculum, and partnerships with the sub-element; all students' needs are met as well as bilingualism are features that need attention in order to keep the implementation on track. As Fullan (1999) and Gaad (2006) points out; teachers are the cornerstones to make an educational reform possible. Therefore it is of great importance to capture their views and experiences during the implementation, specifically how to balance formal and informal assessment as well as behaviour assessment. The confusion how the curriculum looks in practice should be followed up as well as the status of 'all students' needs are met'.

The challenges with implementing a bilingual model are another area to keep an eye on. At a later stage, research regarding the pedagogical approach might be necessary.

When comparing to the concern model described in the literature review, the teachers have, already after one year as implementers, concerns about impact. According to Hall et al (2006) the implementers usually reach this stage after three to five years of implementation of a school reform. Teachers have already reached the last stages with concerns regarding consequences, collaboration and refocusing. The researcher recommends continued research and communication between all parties for the exciting journey in front of them.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Transcripts

##### 1.1 Interviews

###### 1.1.1 Guided Conversation

###### Background information:

The following guided conversation was conducted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of NOV, 2011 with personnel from Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). This is a summary including the data related to this paper. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were undertaken. Furthermore the researcher previously emailed the participant the letter of consent [appendix C]. At the start of the conversation the researcher informed the participant again that participation is voluntary and confidential. Additionally thanking the interviewee for participating.

###### Key / Explanations of the format.

Additional information and explanation can be found in the "abbreviation" part, chapter 1; "Introduction" and chapter 3; "The Present Study".

[A] Stands for the interviewed individual working with the NSM at ADEC in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ADEC] Abu Dhabi Education Council

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership (partner who will mentor the teachers in the public school and support the implementation of the NSM)

[PIPS] Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

### Summary of the guided conversation

- 1) A regarding the background for the New School Model (NSM):  
It started with new objectives for the Kindergarten. Afterwards it was decided to create a new curriculum and eight-hundred educated teachers and principals from various countries were "shipped" over to work in schools and form Private-public-Partnerships (PPP) with local schools in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.
  
- 2) A and R discussion:  
A matrix regarding the elements and content of the New School Model (NSM) made from R was discussed [T4]. The input from A was incorporated into the overview.
  
- 3) A regarding assessment:  
Children learn a lot in the beginning, which is tested with PIPS. In grade two, something happens and a lot is lost. Performance level is under average. The former system was also assessing however the results from the assessment were not used for anything. A new system to assess the students seemed necessary. There was no common consistent system or criteria for teacher to follow. A matrix is now used where the teachers can tick the box that best suits the level of the student and the outcomes. Staff at ADEC will then determine the grade. They try to place most of the students somewhere in the middle in order to motivate the students in the beginning and on the other hand not getting a good grade too easily. Tests were made and the outcomes and expectations needed to be lowered. ADEC is aware of that it is not the most optimal way yet but it is a start to get the teachers acquainted with the process. Furthermore as new feature behaviour is part of the grade.

4) A regarding beliefs:

A research regarding beliefs was made in nine-hundred classrooms. This was seen as the most important issue that needs to change. The two core beliefs A. All children can learn and B. The teacher is responsible for students learning were created. Collaboration is an issue since the teacher, parents and the community should feel responsible for the student.

5) A regarding the background of the teachers and pedagogical approach:

As mentioned earlier, teachers come from various countries with different education backgrounds. Since outcomes can be reached and interpreted in many ways a pedagogical approach has been manifested.

6) A regarding bilingual schools:

The schools and the students are supposed to be bilingual with English and Arabic as main languages. Collaboration is sometimes a problem due to the language difficulties. Cultural differences are also an issue. E.g. external teachers ask for support when needed however the principals argue that they never had a problem with that before. Ordinary teachers work more individually, seldom ask for support and try to manage it themselves.

7) A about the particular school where the research is planned to take place:

In the particular school that the research is being conducted the teachers have been handpicked and come from a country with one of the best education systems in the world, therefore it is interesting to follow. I believe that the implementation of the NSM is proceeding particularly well in this school. Usually there are differences between girl-schools and boy-schools.

8) A regarding challenges:

Resources have been a problem – to get them delivered to all the schools. Furthermore the objectives and curriculum for year 2010 and 2011 was published and send out in November 2011.

Additionally the speed of the change is an issue. Therefore a planned “review” project is planned to take place in the near future.

9) A and R discussed relevant readings and policies relevant for the research [please see protocol, appendix F].

### 1.1.2 Guided Conversation

#### Background information:

The following guided conversation was conducted on the 16th of NOV, 2011 with personnel in leading position from the particular school. This summary includes solely data related to this particular study. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were made during the conversation and the participant was offered to read the summary of the guided conversation if wanted. Furthermore the researcher previously handed out the letter of consent [Appendix C] to the participant. At the start of the conversation the researcher reiterated parts of the information from the letter of consent orally to the participant. Additionally thanking the interviewee for participating.

#### Key / Explanations of the format.

Additional information and explanation can be found in the dissertation chapter 1; “Introduction”.

[P] Stands for the personnel in leading position, in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ADEC] Abu Dhabi Education Council

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership (initiative with various partners who will mentor the teachers in the public schools and support the implementation of the NSM)

[IPP] Individual Professional Plan

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

Summary of the guided conversation

1) P on challenges implementing the NSM:

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a young nation. ADEC is currently forming the path for quality change. It is time consuming and there are some logistic issues regarding resources. The good will is there from everybody's side however we are losing time due to lack of resources. Nevertheless, we try to do our best since it is not all dependent on the resources.

2) P on implementing Assessment and Curriculum:

I see assessment and curriculum holistically; here they are sometimes looked upon as separately. It is the backbone of the school, the basic values, how to bring the students up is agreed on in the curriculum. The outcomes are very precisely defined. However, assessing how to hold a pen is in my opinion not encouraging. This does not include or see the whole personality and knowledge of the student.

3) P on leadership and trust:

I believe in the power of trust. The school should trust its teachers and encourage them to be trustworthy. The school needs to concentrate on learning. The process in the classroom is more important than assessment and performance. This is how I would like the school to be managed; even more child centred.

- 4) P on implementing child centred teaching and learning:  
Concentrate more on the child instead of the content of your subject  
– You are not here to teach Arabic or English, you are here to teach the child! Focusing on learning will have an effect on your teaching and you will reach your results that way.
  
- 5) P on implementing evaluation:  
If you follow this message (above) you also have to trust the teachers with evaluation. However the challenge is the national exams and the key performance indicator which are driving the focus on assessment and outcomes, not learning. With the national tests and the expectations for that, time goes to prepare for exams and inspections. We have to provide evidence and use too much energy on bringing these results. Five year old students need a various amount of time for different matters; they cannot be on the same level in the exact same time.
  
- 6) P on implementing the New School Model teaching and learning approach:  
I have seen some wonderful things happening in the classrooms. When I unannounced visited e.g. a class last week they were working on putting together a magazine. In the small groups, one of the students was responsible. They encourage each other and helped each other. We are not just following or teaching from the books.
  
- 7) P on implementing partnerships:  
We are starting to open up to each other. We will start to make the Individual Professional Plans (IPPs). The teachers recently received training on that subject. The challenge is to find time for joint planning since it is not clear where and when in the timetable it should be. Some further guidelines and tangible planning would be

helpful. Regarding the partnership with students and behaviour management each teacher is responsible for the classroom rules. Each teacher will then bring the classroom rules with her to the unit meeting. What was discussed in the unit meeting will be discussed by the advisory committee. From these partnerships and collaborations unit rules are formed. The school rules are based on the unit rules and from these the final school behaviour plan will arise in the near future. It is still under construction.

8) P on "All student needs are met" and implementation of ADEC's and the NSM's special education policy:

We finally have five special education teachers, they arrived three weeks ago. Therefore we are in the middle of assessment for potential IEPs and special needs analysis. Some of the students' need more time for flexible settings and groupings. They cannot yet benefit in large classes. The classes are in a range of 17-23 female students. I would recommend class assistants and division lessons. However the challenge there is that we don't have enough space and rooms. This might change next year though; we are relocating to another, newly build bigger school.

9) Impacts of the NSM:

It questioned the tradition of using books and following them every minute. The impact on the ordinary teachers is that they will have to pause to reflect and use critical thinking. Ask them-selves; what is the meaning of this. Furthermore thinking and acting differently in the new learning environment is needed when implementing the NSM. E.g. not just sitting in the classroom but using various methods as group-work and excursions.

### 1.1.3 Guided Conversation

#### Background information:

The following guided conversation was conducted on the 11th of NOV, 2011 with personnel in leading positions from the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a model provider in the particular school. The initiative is working with the public school in implementing the New School Model and supporting the teachers with the help of external teachers from a country with one of the world best education systems. This is a summary including the data related to this paper.

#### Key / Explanations of the format.

[M and D] Stands for the interviewed individual working for the model provider or Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership (partner who will mentor the teachers in the public school and support the implementation of the NSM)

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

#### Summary of the guided conversation

1. M and D explains that additional to ADEC's teacher trainings they are offering a few teachers a professional development program. However regarding further details about content and plans the researcher was informed that the model provider has a "trademarked" product hence no access was granted to materials, training content, products or courses /seminars.
2. Nevertheless the information that an overview of the steps will be to create general awareness;

Firstly the teachers should get to know and get acquainted with the New School Model. Secondly they need to understand the NSM and thirdly to implement it.

3. So right now the teachers just started the course (November 2011), in which they will get familiar with the New School Model in detail and do research about what material is available regarding the NSM etc.

#### 1.1.4 Guided conversation

Background information:

The following guided conversation was conducted on the 16th of NOV, 2011 with personnel in leading positions in the school. A letter of consent [Appendix C] was previously handed out to the participant. At the start of the conversation the researcher reiterated parts of the information from the letter of consent orally to the participant. Additionally thanking the interviewee for participating.

Key / Explanations of the format.

Additional information and explanation can be found in the dissertation chapter 1; "Introduction".

[B] Stands for the interviewed individual in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ICT] Information and Communication Technology

[LRC] Learning Resource Center

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

Summary of the guided conversation

1) R on implementing the resources:

The warehouse which was supposed to deliver the New School Model resources ran out of supply. The resources will therefore be delivered at a later stage.

The researcher and B discuss the gap between the resources that was supposed to be delivered based on the planned resources of the New School Model and the ones which have been delivered and can already be applied and implemented. In the new building and school we will probably get "Information and communication technology" (ICT) in classrooms and a "Learning Resource centre" (LRC).

2) From the New School Model resources;  
Set up materials (e.g. printers, clip boards, headphones) – B: we have some joint printers, yes.

Teacher support (e.g. CD roms) - B: Some yes.

Picture books – B: No

Take home readers – B: No

Guided readings – B: No

Health resources – B: No

Arabic big books – B: No

English big books – B: No

UAE Alphabet Kit – B: No

Readers' online subscription – B: No

Consumables – B: No

Active learning material – B: No

Math manipulative – B: No

Science consumables – B: No

For English, science and Mathematics we have folders and books. The books for grade five have been changed; we now use books from ADEC. Grade three to four use the NSM books and level one to two use folders.

## 1.2 Focused interviews with teachers

1.2.1 Interviews with ordinary teachers who are attending a Professional Development (PD) program.

Background information:

The following focused interviews with teachers were conducted during the 16<sup>th</sup> of NOV to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2011. The interviewees are ordinary teachers who are attending a Professional Development (PD) program offered by the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in the school. Ordinary teachers are used for the teachers who will stay after the five year Public-Private-Partnership project. The external teachers are mentors of the ordinary teachers and/or supporters of the implementation of the NSM in accordance to the PPP initiative. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were made during the conversation and the participant was offered to read the summary of the interview. The researcher used some prompts and probes during the interview, which has been listed below. These were based on the pilot interviews and were only used if the teacher did not know what to answer. Furthermore the researcher previously handed out the letter of consent [Appendix C] to the participants at a previously held kick-off meeting [Appendix E]. At the start of the conversation the researcher orally reiterated the information from the letter of consent to the participant. Additionally thanking the teacher for participating.

Key / Explanations of the format.

Additional information and explanations can be found in the dissertation chapter 1; "Introduction" and chapter 3; "The Present Study".

[T1-4] Stands for the ordinary teachers, in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ADEC] Abu Dhabi Education Council

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership [various partners who will mentor the teachers in the public schools and support the implementation of the NSM]

[MP] Model provider

[PIPS] Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

Summary of the interviews

Q1. Since how many years are you a teacher in the UAE?

In order to maintain the anonymity the exact amount of years the teachers have been working in the school will not be revealed. However they have all been working more than nine years in the UAE.

Q2. For you, in your perspective - what is the new school model?  
Key features?

T1. The curriculum has changed. Before it was all about the text books, we studied to memorize the book. Then an exam was undertaken on the memorized content. However the memorizing was assessed not the content. The current New School Model is more flexible and open. It consists of a comprehensive concept. We use other recourse and material than the dedicated course books.

T2. The New School model for me means many things; new curriculum, learning, community, it is child centred. It improves the learning for the child; it doesn't only improve the teacher. I studied it on the papers we got. It is a good chance for the teacher to develop.

T3. It has been a good experience. The system is different. We use e.g. smart boards, computers and research new material. The new material is easier.

T4. For me, the aim of the New School Model has been to change the curriculum and strategy of the school. Teacher quality should develop and it should be a bilingual school, Arabic and English. New technology, which I guess will change in the new building that we are moving to. This model suits our culture. It is good to help us develop. Every level needs different or special things e.g. younger students or children should still play more and be in a different environment. Nevertheless all the students now learn while they are playing.

Q3. What is your expected role as a teacher in the New School Model?

T1.

It used to be to explain to the students how to memorize the book in the particular subject. Now I mainly try to guide the students, observe the students and show them how to use information. The students should not only receive but also search and present their

own information. The aims are different, now the students should graduate as thinkers and problem solvers.

T2.

For the teacher it is more to prepare. I think students enjoy the New School Model more than the teacher [laughing]. It is a lot of administrative work. You need to work just like a machine [laughing] and work and work. The earlier method was based on the books and we only prepare the students for the many exams. This New School Model is more interesting. The curriculum is also more interesting. The students collect their own experiences. As a teacher you keep a track on if a student rather write, read or listen. We integrate different ways to teach and learn. Before we only used the book. Now we "think outside the box...and book" [laughing].

You need to be open minded. The students can depend on them self but you need to check that it is student safe information.

T3.

We use more ways to interact with the students. Now we can decide ourselves how to arrange the lessons.

T4. For my role as a teacher now, I need to change my thinking. Before I concentrated on the given materials for the subject, nowadays I can e.g. undertake some outside practice if that fits the theme. I know now that every class has a different pace, therefore I don't need to stress nor only concentrate on the book of the subject. However every individual is different. As a teacher in the New School Model you need to be flexible otherwise change is hard.

My beliefs are different, or thinking. Now I have realized that if a student doesn't learn you just have to concentrate more on the

issue. Try to find a different view, take some extra time with the student. Now I will try to direct the students thinking in another way. Or try to show the student the right way to for her to study. E.g. I notice with one student that didn't learn anything that if we use the computer she is excellent!

Q4. Do you follow a specific implementation plan and have you received related training?

The teachers all answered that we are learning about the New School Model right now. The content of the course is finding out everything we can about the New School Model.

ADEC is providing all the teachers with monthly trainings regarding the New School Model. Additional training for some of the teachers is taking place after school for 1 hour / 4 days a week. However regarding further details about content and plan the researcher was informed that the model provider has a "trademarked" product hence no access was granted to materials, training content, products or courses /seminars.

Q5. What are the main challenges in the implementation of the New School Model?

T1. It is challenging to explain to the parents that we are not memorizing the text books anymore. The ideas have changed. It is part of the education to guide the students now. It is difficult to make it clear that it is different.

There are still many things to improve. Another challenge is the English language, even though we practice every day. Also for the mothers of the students they too only recently started to learn English. They even ask the teachers for English language support.

We also got requests if the teachers could send home some homework with their children for the mothers to learn English. One mother stated: "as my child does homework I could do it at the same time".

T2. The long hours are a little problem. Your mind is always on work, always thinking about it. Also we undertake a lot of trips, so it takes a lot of time to plan for all the trips. I discussed this with the principal however the principal explained to me that this is how the students learn about community and the environment.

T3. Using the new resources and explaining to the parents. The parents want to see the book that the teachers, according to the former system, are supposed to teach from. They ask us what we are doing during the lessons. They want to know and be involved.

T4. As a teacher you have to be able to change, to be very flexible. For some this is a challenge. To discuss in English with the other teachers can also be an issue for some teachers. And if you are e.g. over forty years old and suddenly you are supposed to change your role as a teacher. In the beginning we didn't get a clear explanation regarding the whole change and for some of us it was not tangible what was going on or why. This was a challenge since "you cannot give what you don't have".

Q6. What would you recommend to improve the implementation of the New School Model?

T1. The environment and everything should evolve more around the student. A continuous connection with the parents should be strived

for. They need to feel that they are a part of the New School Model. They need to know what it is. The teachers should present and inform the parents thoroughly about the change taking place in the school of their children. We furthermore need to ask them about their opinion and foremost if they have any suggestions. This could also be done with a confidential questionnaire. With questions; what they could do for the school, we could get the parents more involved. A suggestion box could be permanently placed in the entrance for parents to use and get involved.

T2. Earlier parents only turned up in the school when their child had e.g. failed an exam. I would recommend integrating and cooperating with the parents in the education of their children. Most parents have good ideas and are open minded. Maybe our parents are not however the parents of the younger generation are [laughing]. We need to involve them, since if they do not like the curriculum they will take their children to another school.

T3. There should be more lectures for the teachers about the New School Model. A website could be created for the teachers and the parents, which would be a good way of getting more info regarding the New School Model and about what is going on in the school.

T4. I would prefer a less load of work for the lessons etc. Furthermore more time to prepare. On the whole we are a rich country so everybody could finish their bachelor degree.

However these not so well educated people could support the teacher in the class room. This is what I recommend, so that the teacher and the students would have somebody to help in the classroom.

I am happy with the New School Model. I need to develop as a teacher if I have a weakness. Nevertheless, as I said "If I don't have the things I can't give it". We are encouraged as teachers and it is nice to learn the newest but we need more support training.

Q7. What would facilitate the implementation of the New School Model?

Prompts: Resources, collaboration

T1. Well the involvement of the parents but also the new building that we will move to, hopefully next year. That will facilitate the implementation of the New School Model.

Furthermore to form a "mother-council", a home-school team could facilitate. In this school we now have volunteers, mothers who want to participate. If we can change the thinking of the parents we can change the school.

T2. Some extra support for English language would facilitate the implementation. It is interesting; earlier you needed to travel to e.g. Great Britain to know and hear the English language and now the language is coming here. Now we learn it from grade one. Furthermore more support for students with special needs. Before these students attended special schools and we need skills to teach them.

T3. The website as I mentioned earlier.

T4. I think there should be a professional translator working in the school. Now we understand each other better than in the beginning. However a permanent professional translator would facilitate cooperation tremendously. E.g. for the agenda for a meeting some support of a translator would be great. Small points or things can make a big difference.

Q8. What is from your point of view the impact of the New School Model?

Prompts: for you as a teacher, for the school, for the students, long term, short term

T1. From my point of view the collaboration between the teachers is an impact. We do group work, this year it has been better, you do not have to do everything alone. We have unit meetings and the information gets around. We additionally have weekly planning. Before it was on your own responsibility to arrange things, it was the responsibility of one person. Now with the New School Model it is the join responsibility of the unit. New ideas, more ideas and more fun organizing is the impact.

Furthermore, we may now use the internet and new technology. For cooperation between schools we have started two projects from this school. We are planning to connect all schools with each other via video.

The Arabic teachers seem different. We practice English every day.

We started to progress already. The student feel important since the teacher now gives her more attention. The students feel; the teacher cares about my feelings. I can think, explore and the teacher will give me a chance to finish the task. No pressuring or too difficult

work but playful learning. The students are acting different not just sitting and listening anymore.

T2. The teacher has to work and prepare more.

However learning and development are now easier with the New School Model, also to continue the learning process. The students enjoy the many ways of learning. They are especially keen on using the computer. Another impact is furthermore the many trips we are conducting.

T3. The students seem to like this New School Model. They like to undertake research on their own. Go to the library etc. The students are now interested to learn, to move, to be active.

T4. A negative impact is that not all the teachers are aware of what is going on in the school. We didn't get a clear explanation. We just got the order without knowing why. Some of the teachers were wondering if they had been bad teachers. We should get an overview and explanation otherwise some of us don't understand.

Q9. Anything you would like to add?

T1. It is not so complex as it seems if we plan together and take time.

T2. When I see my students enjoy I feel relaxed. It is difficult to keep them quiet then but I guess that is how children are.

T3. No, thank you

T4. Parents need to participate. Sometimes student are different in school. We need to meet up and send parents letters.

1.2.2 Focused interviews with external teachers and one ordinary teacher not attending an additional Professional Development (PD) program.

Background information:

The following interviews with teachers were conducted during the 16th of NOV to the 5th of December 2011. The interviewees are external teachers are mentoring the ordinary teachers and / or supporting the implementation of the NSM in the public school in accordance to the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiative. Also one interview with an ordinary teacher attending ADEC trainings however not attending an additional Professional Development (PD) program was undertaken. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were made during the conversation and the participant was offered to read the summary of the interview if requested. The researcher used prompts and probes during the interview, which has been listed below. These were based on the pilot interviews and were only used if the teacher did not know what to answer. Furthermore the researcher previously handed out the letter of consent [Appendix C] to the participants at a previously held kick-off meeting [Appendix E]. At the start of the conversation the researcher reiterated the information from the letter of consent to the participants. Additionally thanking the teacher for participating.

Key / Explanations of the format.

[T1-4] Stands for the teachers, in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ADEC] Abu Dhabi Education Council

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership [explanation dissertation chapter 1]

[MP] Model provider

[PIPS] Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

Q1. Since how many years are you a teacher in the UAE?

Due to confidentiality issues the answers where not included.

Q2. For you, in your perspective - what is the new school model?  
Key features?

T1. For me the New School Model means to personalize teaching; to personalize guidance and time for the students.

As a teacher I try to support the students to open their minds, ears, eyes, energy, everything. I will try to get the student interested in a task. Try to "go into the mind" of the student.

T2. The New School Model means changes from a curriculum perspective, the main content. It is age appropriate, bilingual and uses new technologies. Mathematics, science and English are thought in the English language.

T3. It is not too different from the one in my home country. It concentrates on the whole person or student.

It is starting to work here. Some of the features just need time to sink in.

T4. As a Physical Education teacher I haven't noticed much of the New School Model. Only that we since one month have additional health education. We have started doing a health theme during one month in the beginning of the semester and one month in the end of the semester. We will make e.g. fruit salads and talk about eating healthy.

Q3. What is your expected role as a teacher in the New School Model?

T1. As a teacher I will try to get the "rules" and then try my best to melt in.

During a lesson I do not push through what I planned to do if it is not working. I do what the students need me to do! I try to focus on the positive in the lesson and of the students. Instead of seeing the negative or sad parts I let the positive come through.

I will try to figure out what is going on in the students' head, what interests them. If a student's strength is mathematics then we will use that as a starting point to build on. Or I will try to work around it if there might be something else on her mind so that she cannot concentrate. If somebody is e.g. shouting all the time, I will first ask myself; is it because of the new language (English) being used, is the child hyperactive at the time or what lies behind this behaviour.

As a teacher my number one role is to support the children. The teacher should try to motivate the students to do the work, tasks or homework.

T2. My role as a mentor is to get the teachers to open up, to feel safe. I try to give the teachers support, encouragement. Give them the feeling that yes, you can do it! I believe in the teachers in this school and I try my best to show it.

Otherwise to implement the New School Model there are some barriers on personal, school and country levels. However it is a process that takes time.

T3. We are here to support the teachers, who attend the PD – programme.

T4. My role as a teacher is to do mainly gymnastics and athletics.

Q4. Do you follow a specific implementation plan and have you received related training?

Regarding further details about training the researcher was informed that the model provider has a “trademarked” product hence no access was granted to training content or courses/seminars.

Additional to that ADEC is providing all the teachers with monthly trainings regarding the New School Model.

Q5. What are the main challenges in the implementation of the New School Model?

Probes: immediate, long-term issues

T1. There is a lack of resources at the time, however we will move to another building in the near future. This is great in the sake of further resources e.g. additional rooms. Nevertheless, it will be time consuming for the students and for the teachers to get used to the new surrounding and environment. It will take time to get familiar with the building and settle in for all of us.

It is a challenge to set rules when some of the students might have different rules at home. Setting limits is a challenge for the moment.

Furthermore there are quite a lot of students with special needs. As we just started to test all the students and therefore we are still in the process of finding out what the needs of all the students are.

The last thing that I come to think of is the parents' letters in English. It is a barrier that a lot of the parents do not speak English.

T2. That the school is supposed to be bilingual is a problem in implementing the New School Model. It is a problem now and it will probably be one in the future also if Math's, English and science are to be thought in English.

The personal choices of the teachers are crucial; do they chose to avoid or oppose implementing the New school Model.

We have little resources. I bring my own paper [laughing]...

T3. One challenge is that the implementation is time consuming. The whole staff needs to get the concept.

T4. The main challenge for me is time and facilities. We have one minor gym hall for approximately 500 students. We are three teachers and have four lessons a day. It is a challenge to squeeze in e.g. going horseback riding or skating in a day, or rather it is impossible.

What was a challenge in the beginning was including the students with special needs in the Physical Education lessons. Since I didn't receive any additional or special education before that I was not used to it. One of them was crying in the beginning due to some special needs (in order to maintain anonymity the researcher excluded further details). Now it is fine but in the beginning it was problematic. With five students with special needs in a class it was a challenge. The students did not quit now how to react in the

beginning either. However, now after a while together the students have gotten used to each other and the situation has improved. Specifically in the fourth and fifth grade it is now improving.

Q6. What would you recommend to improve the implementation of the New School Model?

T1. To support the implementation of Inclusion and the support for students with special needs there should be more time for separate or individual support. This is when everything else according to the policy and steps has been tried out. When none of the support for the particular student to be included in the classroom is sufficient, additional individual support lessons would be what I recommend.

T2. Well, it is an on-going process not realized yet. I do not know if the message has gone through yet that the external teachers are only here for planned five years and then the permanent, ordinary teachers of the school will continue with the New School Model on their own. At least they didn't know why in the beginning nor what is ahead of them. I would also recommend that it would be made clear that it is a slow process.

T3. The whole staff needs to get involved. I would recommend that the PD- students involve the other teachers some more in implementing the NSM. Now it is more up to the external teachers.

T4. You need patience and time. After a while, at least in the higher grades the students get used to each other and the students with special needs and they are like a family. Furthermore I recommend more flexible hours. If you have four lessons a day there will not be enough time to go e.g. swimming. We are undertaking a so called "athletic kid" were the students are arranging everything them self. They are measuring the results and are players themselves. We are running, jumping and throwing things and the students are timing and measuring. They learn how to take responsibility and work

together. We will try to do this more often and include it in additional activities.

Q7. What would facilitate the implementation of the New School Model?

T1. I presume that in the long run moving to the new building will facilitate the implementation of the NSM.

Furthermore the homework could be kind of a connection to the home. Teachers and parents could set up some joint rules and responsibilities for the school and home.

Since the NSM is built on a bilingual model it would be helpful when the parents would also develop their English knowledge.

T2. The situation is already better, the cooperation between the teachers are better. When the mentors or "experts" teachers show that they also make mistakes as a teacher in the classroom and also need to learn and develop then it is easier for the other teachers to open up and try themselves.

T3. Thorough information of the key features of the New School Model for all the teachers would facilitate the implementation. Not only for the teachers attending the PD -programme. Or they involve the rest of the ordinary teachers.

T4. In the beginning of the year, we asked what the students would like; to get them motivated and involved. The most popular activity was swimming. The second choice of the majority was skating and the third was horseback riding. Do undertake some of the thing that the students have chosen.

Unfortunately we won't be able to do any of it this year anymore, due to lack of resources and time.

Q8. What is from your point of view the impact of the New School Model?

T1. We are not there yet. In my opinion and experience it is too early to talk about impacts. We already need to show a lot of proof for the development therefore I do not want to waste the time that I can concentrate on teaching instead.

T2. The impact at this stage is that the ordinary teachers are opening up and cooperation between all teachers is improving.

T3. When students have the same teacher, a class teacher that follows then from grade one to six, the students know what the teacher expects from them. Furthermore the teacher knows her students after one year which makes an impact. They know what will happen and how I act.

The students treat us with more respect now after one year. They have more respect for the ordinary teachers, so seeing them respect us, the external teachers has a good impact on the students too.

T4. The students are keen on bringing beautiful fruit baskets now instead of chocolate [laughing].

Q9. Anything you would like to add?

T1. If I can help one person or student then that is my gift [laughing]!

T2. This question was not asked since the participant had to leave due to time constraints.

T3. Not only should the teachers who joined the PD- programme know what is going on but also the rest of the teachers.

T4. In the new school building I believe there will not be any additional facilities for Physical Education.

### 1.3.1 Semi-structured group interviews

### Background information:

The following group interview was undertaken on the 25th of January, 2012 with ordinary teachers who are attending an in house Professional Development (PD) program in accordance with the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiative. 'Ordinary teachers' is the definition used for the teachers who will stay after the five year PPP project. The 'external teachers' is the definition used for the mentors of the ordinary teachers and/or supporters of the implementation of the NSM. This interview was based on earlier individual interviews and a questionnaire. Three of the volunteers were present on this particular day. The interview took place in a calm group room area. This is a summary including the data related to this paper. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were undertaken. Furthermore the researcher previously handed out letter of consent [Appendix C] to the participants. At the start of the conversation the researcher informed the participant again that participation is voluntary and confidential. Additionally thanking for the participation.

### Key / Explanations of the format.

[T1-3] Stands for the interviewed individuals in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[ADEC] Abu Dhabi Education Council

[NSM] New School Model

[PPP] Public-Private Partnership (partner who will mentor the teachers in the public school and support the implementation of the NSM)

[KPI] Key Performance Indicators

Non-verbal communication are added where essential e.g. [laughing]

Additional information and explanation can be found in the dissertation chapter 1; "Introduction" and chapter 3; "The Present Study".

### Summary of the group interview:

1.

R: So, let's talk about things that were mentioned in the interviews. In your opinion is pressure versus support in balance implementing the NSM?

T2. We need support and training. It is however a sensitive subject.

T1. They (teachers T2 and T3) want to say something...

T1. We have 24 lessons plus projects and administration. Additionally we attend one hour training every day/four days a week. This is good. See our job is not easy. Every job has its ups and downs but we care about children, humans and their safety. The students should be comfortable and treated equal. So we need support but also a bit of pressure. It is a lot right now but we are learning a lot too. We like this experience and the pressure makes us work more.

T3. Speaks in Arabic and T1 translates:

Some unnecessary stress and pressure is when the planning was changed in the middle of the year. We had already planned the year and then it was decided to undertake evaluations in the middle of the year. We are supposed to handle these things and we do however it causes a bit of stress. In the end however this procedure was better; to do the evaluation in the middle of the semester. We notice that it will be better in the long run but at the time it was stressful.

2.

T2. Every teacher is also different. The teacher training should be more individualized [laughing]!

T2. And some of the curriculum was not provided in Arabic last year, only now in 2012. We only had some of the outcomes.

T3. The evaluation is different now which is good. We have learned to use the result to teach the children.

3.

R: So the assessment is supporting or stressful?

T1. We have worked with KPI's before. We are used to it. We received a lot of training and practise how to do it. That is fine.

4.

R: What motivates /or would encourage you?

T2. Training.

R: would you want more training in relation to something for example some of the elements? (R shows an overview of the NSM elements, which can be found in T.4)

T2. We would like to have some more training how it looks in the classroom. Real examples in practise. The trainings could be broader; we would like to be able to exchange experiences with other schools.

T1, T2 and T3 discussing with each other:

T3. There is some confusion regarding the curriculum. So, specifically more training would be needed regarding the new curriculum.

5.

R. So the definitions regarding the NSM are clear?

T1. We get training every day. We practise new things and new ideas.

T2. And T3 discuss in Arabic.

T1. However some of us do not know what will happen next year. In the subjects English, Mathematics and science it is a bit unclear what will happen...

6.

R: Do you feel you are included in the decision process in the school and in general?

T1. Yes, we can add and change things if we want. Not the goals of the curriculum or the decided books but we can add lessons. If something is to be decided we all discuss. Nobody can decide important things alone. Teachers from all unites get together to make decisions.

7.

R: How about the other teachers who are not included in the Professional Development program?

T1, T2 and T3:

They are sad not to be in the program now [laughing].

T1. In the beginning all had the chance but they were a bit unsecure about what it means, how much extra work it would be etc. Now they regret not attending, when they see how much we learn.

R: So, in your opinion, all teachers are involved in implementing the NSM?

T1. Now they are, yes. We send them emails and do presentations. We tell them about the NSM and they also get training from ADEC.

We also include the parents and do presentations for them.

T3. And we even made videos.

Here the time was up and the teachers needed to go to their classes.

### 1.3.2 Semi-structured group interviews with external teachers

Background information:

The following group interview was conducted on the 25th of January, 2012 with external teachers working in the school supporting to implement the NSM. One of them is a mentor to the ordinary teachers and has been

working in the public school since the binning of the project, September 2010. The other participant is working as a Special needs teacher. The interview was based on earlier individual interview and a short questionnaire. The two teachers volunteered to participate. The interview took place in a calm group room area. This is a summary of the data related to this paper. In respect of the culture in the UAE no recorder was used however hand notes were undertaken. Furthermore the researcher previously handed out letters of consent [Appendix C] to the participants. At the start of the conversation the researcher informed the participant again that participation is voluntary and confidential. Additionally thanking the participants for taking their time for the interview.

Key / Explanations of the format.

[E1-2] Stands for the interviewed individuals in order to maintain anonymity

[R] Stands for the researcher

[NSM] New School Model

[KG1] Kindergarten grade 1

Intonation, expression and gestures including non-verbal communication are added where necessary e.g. [laughing]

Additional information and explanation can be found in the dissertation chapter 1; "Introduction" and chapter 3; "The Present Study".

Summary of the group interview

1.

R: In your opinion do you feel that the pressure is in balance with the support in implementing the NSM?

E1 and E2. It is a lot of pressure - for everybody involved. And the administration does not have enough time to handle everything. There is of course no simple answer how to resolve that but people are tired.

E2. We have a one year contract and have to decide if we will stay for additional years. The problem is that in our home county we have our regular jobs waiting and after two years away they will get impatient. Furthermore we will lose some benefits not working in our home country. We also feel the pressure to be the "experts". We have to live up to the image and expectations.

We are not used to the pressure of producing "evidence" of the performances of the students. This evidence is an evidence for performance and not evidence that the children are learning.

E1. Yes, we are not athletes attending the Olympics!

2.

E2. It should be about the learning process. That should be captured somehow.

R: Would you have a suggestion for that? How to capture it in everyday routines?

E2. Not concretely right now but that should be possible... honesty, just being honest regarding the learning process.

E1. Yes, how about the whole child? Sometime a student learns a lot and progress but then it is just the grades and marks that are important. However improvement is personal. It needs to be consistent. Just recently we had a completion to pick the "best" 5 students in the class. One teacher wanted to pick the whole class but that was not possible...

E2. The assessment concentrates on the wrong things. The tests results from the assessment are then the basis for the curriculum. It should be the other way around! I believe they are influenced by the western culture with competitions. Earlier they used to have a class teacher system; one teacher follows the students from grade one to six. It is interesting to hear that many features of the NSM and our approach has been used here before. There has been so much change that somebody should say that this time it is for the long run. This is now the change to stick with.

3.

R: Are all teachers involved?

E2. Last year they were not but this year I would say yes, definitely! They are very curious on the in-house professional development program. The "ordinary" teachers ask: what are you talking about in the training sessions? You are so privileged. And there were a few misunderstandings and not enough explanations provided. However now everybody has opened up and we are discussing much more. Everybody is considerate and we share a joint vision. E.g. observations are done in classes all over the school. Teachers observe each other and give permission to be observed. Everything takes time and we are slowly improving. It's not perfect but I have the feeling that all teachers are willing to commit themselves to make this work.

4.

R: Is there a specific feature of the NSM that would need, in your perspective, more training or explaining? (R shows an overview of the features of the NSM)

E2. Everybody involved need more knowledge and information. I believe after five years it will not be fully implemented. Five years is not enough! It will take a generation.

Furthermore the bilingual teaching would need more attention. Adjustments are going on but the starting point of English is already in KG1. In my opinion this is too early. The children should rather focus on Arabic in this age.

E1. The mother tongue should come first.

5.

E2. To implement the features of the NSM or elements is sometimes a bit contradicting. It encourages the student to be appreciative of the UAE and its culture but at the same time English seem to be the most important language.

E1. Some students are not able to read Arabic fluently.

E2. Some time I have the feeling that Arabic is not appreciated. Families do not support the language and the society is business and English focused.

6.

R: What is needed for the implementation of the NSM?

E2. Teachers are tired of change; there has been change during the last 10 years with various reforms. Therefore patience and time is foremost needed and that the NSM is adjusted to the local values.

## Transcript 2 - Observations

### 2.1 Summary of field notes from observation 1:

#### Background information:

The following observation was made during two breaks in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The surrounding and environment in the school is included in the observation. The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

Safety rules and weekly letters are hanging on the walls. Furthermore work created by the students has been placed on clipboards as information and photos about UAE heritage and culture. Pictures of traditional handicrafts are exhibited in a "UAE heritage corner". On the wall it is written "past embraces the present" with wall paintings of the desert and Burj Khalifa. A castle with the writing "Salama abdhultrahman" has been placed in the entrance. One of the teachers has created stories with two imaginary figures which are also placed in the entrance lobby. The school has additionally to the classrooms, a music room, a gymnastic hall, outdoor facilities like basketball court and a football (soccer) field.

At the school yard, all female students are playing with each other. They play in groups however none of the students are currently sitting, standing

or playing alone. There are two to three teachers on the school yard during the breaks. The atmosphere among the students seems playful. They are running around and laughing.

Suddenly one of the younger girls start crying however one of the older girls approach her and comfort her. Together they go to see the principal.

## 2.2 Summary of field notes from observation 2:

### Background information:

The following observation was undertaken during an Arabic lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 4, a class teacher and 24 students were present. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom in order to undertake a non-participant observation.

The notes are filtered and summarized is only data related to this paper.

### Observation template

Observation no.: 2

Day: Tuesday

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Arabic

No. of students: 24

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): some in pair and some in a group of four

Field notes:

1. The teacher speaks in Arabic. The students take out a book. The students are calm and when the teacher asks a question the students answer all at ones. The teacher shows a movie about an ant which is eagerly watched by the students. The students sing along when the aunt "Suleiman" sings a song. In the film, the ant knows the language of the birds and the soldiers. The students are fascinated. The teacher discusses with the students and asks if they believe that something is not important only because it is small. The students all say no and then discuss the subject and why this is not the case. The girls also discuss with each other. It gets a bit loud and the teacher changes task.

2. They start the activity to read out loud from the text book one at the time. All the students are concentrated and follow in the text book except one who is only listening.

3. The teacher asks a few girls to stand up and they move like Suleiman thru the class room. In the end all students are in a line walking between the desks. The teacher tells a story as they all walk around. When the teacher asks something they give exhaustive answers. They all sit down again.

4. The teacher reads out loud from the book and the students listen and follow in their own books. Some of the students are moving their lips as they follow the text and some follow with their pen or looks at the teacher and listens to her. When the girls have a question they ask. The teacher move to the middle of the class room and stand there reading out loud, which calms the students down a bit. She is using a lot of gestures and various face expressions during the story telling. When asking a question the girls get so excited that they all answer at the same time.

5. The teacher asks one student to stand up and come to the middle of the class to read out loud. The teacher gives her a lot of time since her reading is a slow. However nobody stresses her. The teacher encourages her and says "Shukran" [Intonation is higher at the end and the teacher sound happy and satisfied, which makes the student look happy also]!

6. All read together. The teacher writes something on the board and when she asks questions the students come up to the white board to write down

the answers. Almost all students come up to the white board at some point to write something. The students are also helping each other. When one student has written something on the board another student reads it out loud. It gets quite loud and the teacher encourages the students to raise their hands when they want to say something.

7. The next activity is a role play. The students have different roles and read a section together. The other students start talking and the teacher holds her hands over her ears and says listen! After the role play all give applause.

8. The teacher is telling a story and walks to all corners of the classroom. The students write something in their note books. The students write, discuss with each other and help each other. They all "brainstorm" and it gets a bit loud but the atmosphere is exciting and encouraging. The teacher goes to all tables checking and helping the students.

9. They pack their things and end the lesson.

10. Environment: Arabic and English posters are hanging on the walls.

### 2.3 Summary of field notes from observation 3:

#### Background information:

The following observation was made during an Arts lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 3, a class teacher and 12 female students were present. Half of the class is practising singing at the time due to an upcoming special event. The researcher sits in the back of the classroom to undertake the non-participant observation. The lesson plan made by the teacher can be found in Transcript 3.1 and 3.2.

The notes are filtered and used is only data related to this paper.

#### Observation template

Observation no.: 3

Day: Sunday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Arts

No. of students: 12

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): rows

Field notes:

1. The students in this class are curious about the researcher even though I'm sitting in the back of the class. They come to me and ask who I am. The researcher says that she is here to observe the teacher only and that they do not have to think about me. They want to show some posters on the wall which shows the rulers of the UAE.
2. The teacher comes in and starts the lesson. She tells the girls to come and stand behind her back and they walk through the classroom and sing at the same time. One girl draws the pattern/line how they walked, on the blackboard.
3. They sit down quietly. The teacher discussed with the students and they all raise their hand before answering.
4. A film regarding Henna designs and lines is being showed. The students watch concentrated.
5. The teacher distributes papers of hand samples. She asks the girls which colours of the pencils they want and they calmly wait for their turn to pick the colours. The students start to work independently. Standing up to get other colour pencils if they want to then sit down at their desk making a Henna design on the "paper-hand" in front of them.
6. The teacher shows the rest of the film with Henna patterns and the students watch and afterward they continue to paint. It is quiet and calm

in the room. The teacher walks around the class. A song sang by children is playing in the background. The atmosphere is enjoyable.

7. After a while the teacher shows the work of the children one after one to the class. The result is individual and differs from student to student. The students applaud each other work and the teacher is very positive; saying wow!

8. The teacher asks the student to come and pick up some scissors and them they cut out the hands. The girls show each other what they have made. All of the students are included in the discussion.

9. Environment: Arabic and English posters hanging on the walls. The room is decorated for the UAE national day. The teacher informs about an art display that they have arranged in the entrance hall.

#### 2.4 Summary of field notes from observation 4:

Background information:

The following observation was made during a science lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 4; 17 female students, 1 external class teacher and 1 ordinary information and communication technology (ICT) teacher were present. The researcher sits in the back of the ICT-classroom to undertake the non-participant observations.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

Observation template

Observation no.: 4

Day: Monday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Science and ICT

No. of students: 17

Teacher/s: 2 teachers

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): rows in front of computers

Field notes:

1. The students are working on a project about the solar system and the planets on the computer. Two teachers are co-teaching. One is teaching in English and one is speaking Arabic and sometimes English. The ICT teacher instructs the students what to do and how to do the task on the computer. The students start working and when they are finished with a task or are waiting for support from the teacher they play a game from ADEC's website on the computer. The students also try to help each other.
2. The students are working individually with PowerPoint. They are speaking in Arabic to each other and mostly with the ICT teacher in Arabic. It gets loud since the students do not understand a task. The Arabic teacher tells them with a clear voice to sit down and listen. The girls then quietly raise their hands instead when needing help or support.
3. The ICT teacher shows on a big screen how to insert a picture to the slide. The students try and the teacher encourage the students with comments like "excellent". They write together, the teacher on the big screen; the earth is etc. The teachers encourage the students to answer in English and to write in English.
4. The students keep drawing and playing on their slides, like moving the planets. They use touch screen computers.
5. One teacher prepares the students to end the lesson in English and then the other teacher instructs the same in Arabic. The students pack their things, put their chairs in and line up.

6. Environment: Poster on the wall with the text "What did we learn today". There are also "thinking hats". Above it says "these are different thinking hats".

## 2.5 Summary of field notes from observation 5:

Background information:

The following observation was made during a science lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 2 with 20 female students and 1 external class teacher were present. The researcher sits in the back of the classroom to undertake the non-participant observations.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

Observation template

Observation no.: 5

Day: Thursday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Science

No. of students: 20

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): rows

Field notes:

1. The teachers start with greeting the students and asking if anybody needs to go to the toilet. And continues with; let's see who will get a happy face today! Who is sitting nicely and waiting for the teacher to

start? The teacher divided happy faces on a projector slide in front of the class. "Faces" from last time go away and we start from the beginning. Anybody can get a happy face. The students are waiting quietly.

2. A surprise is announced and the students look curious. The teacher describes the surprise and the student guess by raising their hands. The teacher says well done, you guessed correctly, it is a little car.

3. The teacher asks the students: have you ever played a game with two cars to see which ones goes faster? Today we will measure how long a distance the car can go with from different heights.

4. Teacher: Who would like to try? All students raise their hands. A student walks up in front of the class and the teacher instructs her where to put the car. The students build a ramp and puts adhesive tape on the floor to measure the distance. One of the students is ready to let the car go and the hole class counts together: 1, 2 , 3 go! The students are counting how far (how many pieces of tape) the car went.

5. Most of the students are following what is going on in the class however four students start chatting with each other. The teacher starts to give out a paper with a task. The students look concentrated again. Before the next race, let's put a number on our calendar. The teacher asks; which day is it? Today is the...

6. A student comes up to put the date on the calendar. The teacher instructs all of the students to write the date on their paper and illustrate it on the projector slide. They continue to fill out which grade etc. together on the paper. The teacher then instructs the class to write their names on the paper. Then they continue with racing.

7. On the paper in front of the students, all of them write up the result. The teacher writes with them on the projector and explains at the same time what she is writing and why.

8. Three girls are talking then the teacher waits quietly until they stops and then praise them for not talking anymore. Furthermore she reminds the class about the happy faces that can be put on the board anytime.

9. The activity continues and various students come up in front of the class to see how far the car goes from different height. They write the results up on their individual papers and the teacher does the same on the projector slide. The teacher asks the students, before the attempts, to guess how far the car will go this time.

10. A student says something in Arabic. The teacher reminds the students that they all can have a try with the car. The students are getting restless so the teacher stops the experiments and states: The ramp is higher but the car went the same distance? The students guess. The teacher instructs the students not to push the car just let it go without pushing. All students are excited to see how far the car goes.

11. The teacher summaries the lesson regarding distance and speed and tells the students to read their homework. She tells the students to put their task papers in their folders.

12. Environment: Colourful pictures of fruits and vegetables with Arabic and English texts hang on the walls. Posters with the weekdays, the alphabet and the schedule, all in colour can be seen on the walls. The students now run around in the classroom before going out to the break.

## 2.6 Summary of field notes from observation 6:

### Background information:

The following observation was made during an "exhibition" made by the external teacher in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 4 and 1 external class teacher were present. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom to undertake the non-participant observation. NB: Due to confidentiality reasons about nationalities of the teachers this observation has been filtered.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

### Observation template

Observation no.: 6

Day: Tuesday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: "Exhibition"

No. of students: 19

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): groups

Field notes:

1. The teacher explains that today we will visit an exhibition in the room next doors. I will divide you into groups and the rest of you will stay in this room playing this game until it is your turn. The teacher divides the students into groups. The first group of six walks over to the opposite door with a class door. The other students sit calmly on their seats and play the game that they were given. One girl starts to angrily scream something in Arabic, the teacher goes to tell her to calm down and another student also calms her down. The student says something to the teacher in Arabic who reminds her to speak in English. The teacher tells two of the girls that they are in charge now and things calm down.

2. The exhibition makes the students curious and they ask the teacher a lot of questions. In between they speak to each other in Arabic also. The teacher explain and how various things and subjects to the students about the origin country of the external teachers. The students look exited and curious.

3. After 15 min the students change and another group comes to visit the exhibition and the former group goes back to the classroom to play a game.

2.7 Summary of field notes from observation 7:

Background information:

The following observation was made during a science lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 4 and 1 class teacher were present. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom to undertake the non-participant observation.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

Observation template

Observation no.: 7

Day: Sunday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Science

No. of students: 20

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): groups

Field notes:

1. The students stand up when the teacher comes into the class. The teacher starts in English and continues in Arabic. The subject of the class is electricity in the UAE.
2. The teacher writes on the whiteboard and asks what do we need for electricity? The students are concentrated and raise their hands. All of them are eager to answer. The teacher continues; why do we need a switch? They class experiments with switching the lights on and off.
3. The teacher talks in Arabic and writes in Arabic and English on the whiteboard. The students are interested and listen. The teacher divides some "switches with lamps" for the students to do their own experiments on, in groups, to try to make the lamps glow. The students are working

together and are discussing in Arabic. All of the groups manage to solve the task and the teacher explains the task once more. To check if all lamps are glowing, the main light in the classroom is switch off. It gets loud in the room since the students are happy to have succeeded with the task. The teacher knocks on the table and the students calm down.

4. The students are experimenting again and it gets loud. They are exited and shout out their questions some without raising their hands. The teacher calms them down and gives them another task. They all have a note book in which they start to draw and write what they just did in the experiment. The students work concentrated.

5. The teacher walks around the various tables and checks and helps if necessary. Then the teacher draws and writes on the white board and explains in Arabic. Continue to walks around the classroom and encourage the students and says very good!

6. The teacher sits down at the desk in front of the class and the students come up and show the tasks when they have finished them.

7. The teacher raps up the lesson and the students pack their things to disappear for the break.

Environment: A poster on the water circulation is hanging on the wall.

## 2.8. Summary of field notes from observation 8:

### Background information:

The following observation was made during a special education lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Two students and 1 special education teacher were present. The researcher sat in the back of the group room to undertake the non-participant observation.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

### Observation template

Observation no.: 8

Day: Thursday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Special education

No. of students: 2

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): groups

Field notes:

1. The teacher comes to the group room with one student. It is supposed to be two however one of them wanted to stay in the classroom. The teacher explains that usually I am in the classroom but sometimes a bit one on one time is necessary. The student gets a paper to work on regarding capital letters. She finishes the task very fast and the teacher exclaims "that was very fast, wow" and the name of the student! The student laughs and looks happy.

2. In the second task the student should arrange things from the smallest to the largest. This seems difficult and the student asks the teacher how it should be. The teacher informs her that she cannot give her the answer but that they can try it together. What about this one the teacher asks, what comes after this one? They go through the task step by step.

3. A short mathematics test is the next assignment. The student wants to count with the support of the teacher's fingers. The student keeps sharpening the pen and undertaking other things however the teacher is encouraging and taking it step by step. The teacher use manipulative materials (physical objects) like the cap of bottles to ease the task.

4. The second student turns up and the teacher greets her happily. She gives the student the same mathematics task to do. This student does not

speak English well and therefore the other student starts to speak to her in Arabic. The teacher reminds them to speak English. The student already taken the test wants to help her peer-student however the teacher reminds them that she will have to try managing alone. Only that way she will learn.

5. The student arriving later is not in a good mood. The teacher guides her thru the task. Telling her that she can do this, furthermore the teacher keeps motivate both students and explains the tasks to them.

6. She tells them that they have both done a good job. Now we can play a game. Both students look a bit happier. The teacher gets some boxes and starts to explain. They will play separately practising how many "blocks" are in the game. After wards a mathematics game is played. The teacher is counting, explaining and motivating the students.

7. One of the students can now choose a game of her one. She gets the other student started with a task and then helps the second student. They start playing and the teacher says this is fun!

8. The lesson is ending and one student packs her things and go to lunch however the student who came late wants to stay and finish the game. She looks happier now.

9. The teacher reminds her that see; if you want to do things you can do them. Well done! The teacher asks her how she feels now. However the student goes off to lunch.

Environment: Posters are hanging on the walls and there is a round table in the middle of the room.

## 2.9 Summary of field notes from observation 9:

### Background information:

The following observation was made during a Mathematics lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 3, 22 students and 1 teacher were present.

The researcher sat in the back of the group room to undertake the non-participant observation.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

Observation template

Observation no.: 9

Day: Wednesday

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: Mathematics

No. of students: 22

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: -

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): rows

Field notes:

1. Half of the class is with the special needs teacher taking a test. The other half of the class is having a lesson regarding geometry. The teacher has cut out triangles, squares and circles. She shows them to the students and they all answer in a group what they are called. They practise this a few times.
2. The second task is to place the right from to the right word. Triangle etc. is written on the white board. The students get a template or pattern with a triangle and should put it to the right word on the white board. The other students help and read out the word aloud to which the student in action should put the template. The students are concentrated and interested.
3. The students get too loud and the teacher waits quietly until they calm down.

4. The next part is a short film about the various existing forms. The teacher pauses, repeats and explains during the clip.
5. The other half of the class arrives and they change locations. The teacher instructs the other half of the class to stand in line. The special need teacher comes to pick them up.
6. They run over the school yard following exactly the movement that the teacher is doing. Jumping, turning around, waiving with the hands and "flying like an airplane" holding the arms out on the side. The students are laughing and enjoying themselves.
7. They sit down in rows and another teacher, who is already in the classroom, explains in Arabic what they are supposed to do. The students start with the test working concentrated. They are supposed to finish some tasks e.g. drawing the exact same picture that is in front of them. When they are done they can leave for the break. The two teachers walk around checking how the students are doing.

## 2.10 Summary of field notes from observation 10:

### Background information:

The following observation was made during an English lesson [appendix 4.4] in a public mainstream school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Grade 3, 21 students, 1 teacher and 1 assistant were present. The researcher sat in the back of the group room to undertake the non-participant observation.

The notes are filtered and used are only the data related to this paper.

### Observation template

Observation no.: 10

Day: Thursday (school week is Sunday to Thursday in the UAE)

Setting: Public school in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Subject: English

No. of students: 21

Teacher/s: 1 teacher

Other adult: 1 assistant to a student with special needs

Class room arrangement (pairs, rows, groups or others): rows

Field notes:

1. The students are greeted by the teacher who instructs them what to do. First they listen and answer as the teacher goes thru some words. With the help of the projector the teacher explains and shows pictures on the words that the students are supposed to use later on in a task. The students are asking and giving suggestions.

2. The task of the lesson is to draw a house. They have all gotten empty frames for a house and will now fill the house with things that they want.

3. The students are working and colouring and are discussing with each other and helping each other. If there is an artefact that they would like to include in the house they look it up and then write the name of the artefact. They can fill the house with things that they like.

4. The student with special needs is working and discussing with her assistant. The other students also walk over to her to see how she is doing.

Due to a setup discussion with the special needs coordinator the researcher did not observe the whole lesson.

## Transcript 3. Document Analysis

### 3.1 Arts lesson plan Arabic and English

# نقش الحزن

الوحدة : الثانية

الدرس: الثالث

عنوان الدرس: نقش الحنا

المجال الفني : تعبير فني بالألوان

الخامات والأدوات: ألوان فلوماستر ،أوراق مقص

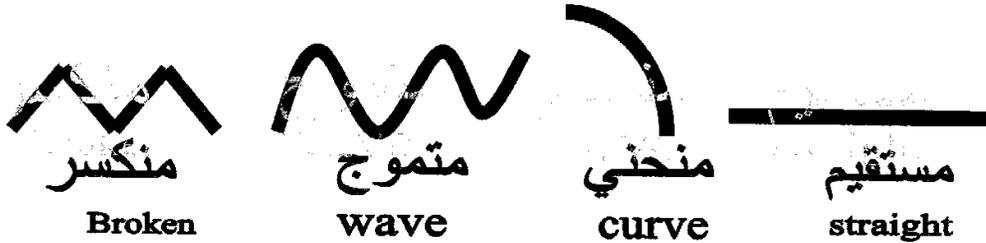
، صمغ

الوسائل المعينة: - عرض ميديا شو بالكومبيوتر. - بيان

عملي إمام الطالبات. - عرض نماذج معدة مسبقا.

المفهوم الأساسي:

اختلاف الخطوط



## الاهداف الإجرائية

الهدف المعرفي : أن تتعرف الطالبة على أنواع الخطوط

الهدف المهاري : أن توظف أنواع الخطوط المختلفة في

عملها الفني

الهدف الوجداني : أن تحترم عمل الآخرين .

## سير الدرس:

ندخل الطالبات الفصل على شكل قطار يسير خلف المعلمة ، وتتعمد المعلمة السير بخط مستقيم تارة ومتعرج أو منحني تارة أخرى، ثم تجلس الطالبات في مقاعدهن، فأبدأ بالنقاش معهن :  
كيف سار القطار من تستطيع رسم المسار، إلى أن توضح لدينا على السبورة أنواع الخطوط.  
أتحدث مع الطالبات عن اقتراب مناسبة عزيزة على قلوبنا وهي العيد الوطني السابع والثلاثون ومدى استعدادهم له وكيف سيمضين أيامه ..... إلى أن نصل إلى موضوع الحنا وزخارفها الجميلة . وما رأيكم لو نعتمد على أنفسنا في رسم نقوش الحنا لنا ولأخواتنا دون اللجوء إلى مراكز الحناء التجارية ؟  
نسترجع معاً أنواع الخطوط وكيف يمكن الاستفادة منها في رسم الزخارف مع البيان العملي أمامهن بمساعدة بعض التلميذات.  
أعرض لهن وسيلة بالميديا شو توضح سهولة الزخرفة بدمج أنواع الخطوط في العمل ، وعرض بعض النماذج المعدة مسبقاً من قبل طالبات من فصل آخر، ثم أترك لهن حرية التعبير بعد أن ترسم الطالبة طبعة كفتها على الورقة وتبدأ بنقش الحنا عليها باستخدام ألوان الفلوماستر.  
مع التأكيد على تطبيق جميع أنواع الخطوط على العمل ومراعاة إخراج العمل بشكل فني جميل حتى يتسنى لنا في نهاية الحصة لصق الكفوف المحناه على لوحة وعرضهم بشكل جميل.

## التقويم:

من خلال المتابعة المستمرة والبحث باستمرار على توظيف معظم أنواع الخطوط في العمل لتحقيق الهدف المرجو.

## السلبيات وطرق علاجها:

وجد إن حجم كف يد الطالبات صغير مما أضعف العمل , لذا طبعت لهن الكف بحجم أكبر وزخرفت الطالبات عليه مما أعطى نتيجة أفضل.

# HENNA

**Unit:** 1

**Lesson:** 3

**Title:** Henna

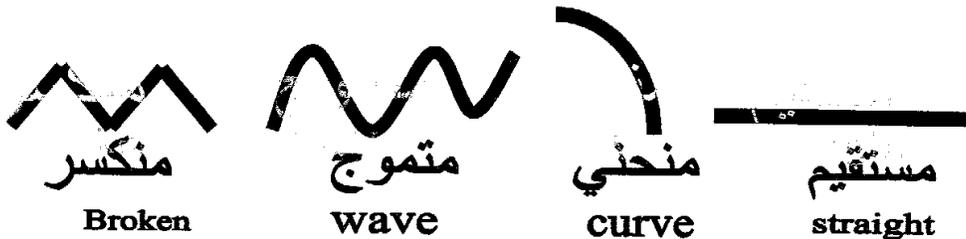
**The artistic Field:** Artistic expression with colors

**Tools:** Flomaster colors – papers – scissors – glue.

**Additional materials:** 1- Presentation of media show.  
2- Practice in Front of the girls.  
3- presentation of some Samples.

**The main meaning:**

Variation of lines



**Objectives:**

**The educational objective:** To know the different types of lines.

**The skillful objective:** To use the different types of lines in her artistic work.

**The psychological objective:** To respect other's work.

## **Lesson procedures:**

The students enter the classroom in a train shape following the teacher who first al; in a straight line, then she changes to a curve and wave.

After that ,the students take their seats and I begin my lesson:

- 1- How was the train walking? Who can draw the path? Can you see the difference between the lines?
- 2- At the level of my lesson, talk with the students about an important coming even: The 37<sup>th</sup> National day, how they are preparing for it and how they will spend it hence, the Henna and its popularity in the U.A.E.
- 3- The next step is the following:  
What about making Henna alone without resorting to the commercial Henna centre?  
But ,before we start that, lets revise together the various kinds of lines and how we can use them to make Henna.
- 4- Now, I present my method / tool with the media show to clarify things for them. I also show them samples made by other students from other classes, and I ask them to draw her design on her hand print on a sheet of paper . Meanwhile, they should use all the types of lines trying to do the work artistically so that they can paste the painted hands on a board and present it beautifully.

## **Assesement:**

I assess my students my monitoring and controlling their work continuously .

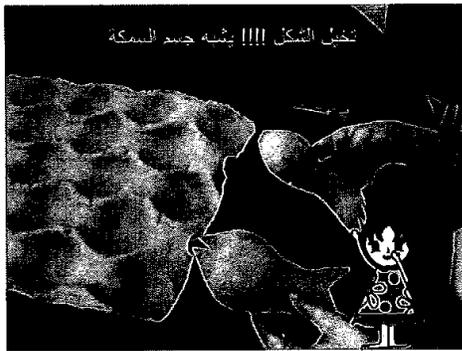
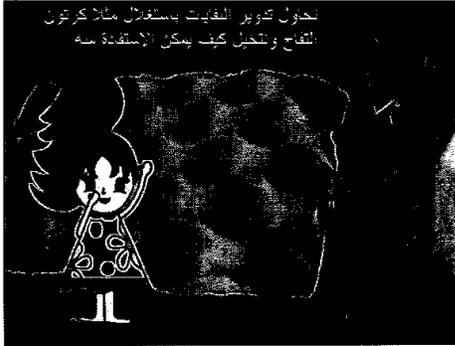
I also encourage them to use most of the types of lines to achieve my objectives.

**Difficulty and solution:** Some hands are small which decrease the importance of the work, that's why I copied big hands for them which made things much better.

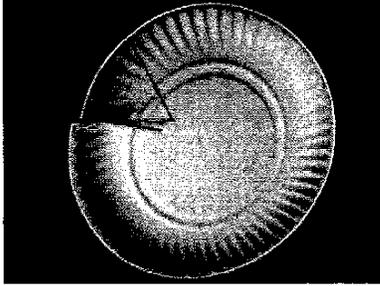
### 3.2 Task; decorate hand with Henna



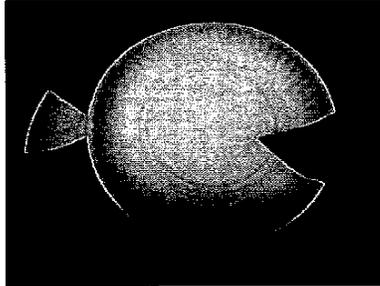
### 3.3 Task for parents to undertake with their child/children



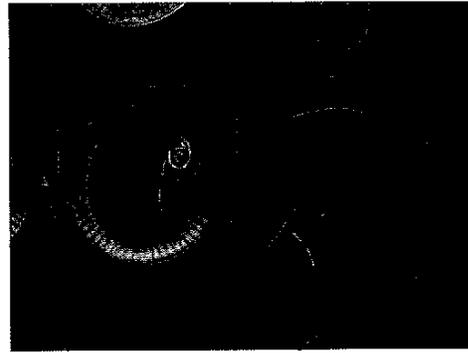
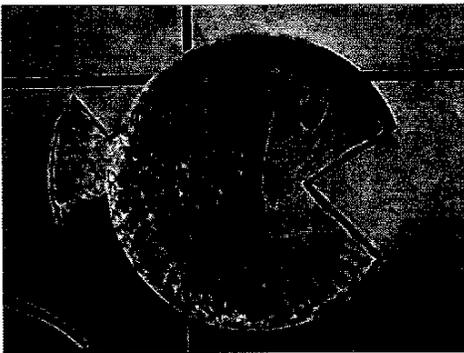
## السمكة العجيبة



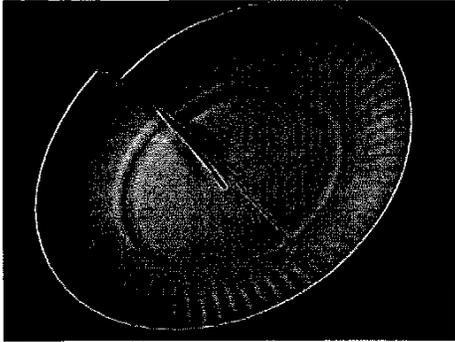
نرسم مثلث بسيط على الصحن الورقي  
كما مبين في الشكل و نقصه.



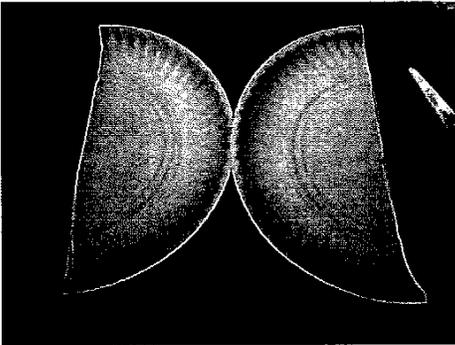
نضع المثلث الذي قصناه من قبل  
في الجهة المقابلة للصحن ليظهر  
لنا شكل السمكة , ثم نبدأ بالتلوين  
كل بطريقته الخاصة.



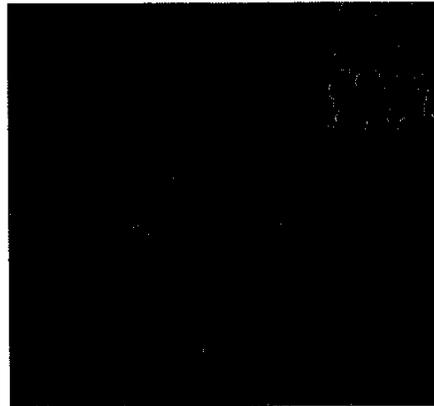
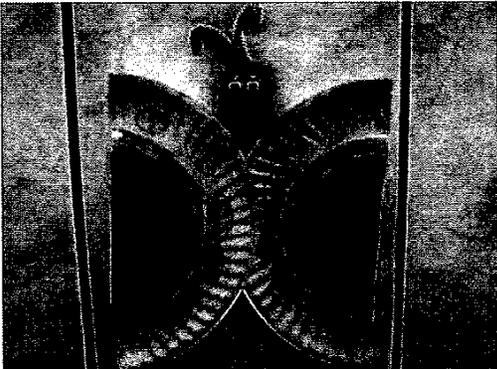
# فراشتي الجميلة



نقص الصحن الورقي إلى قسمين  
متساويين



نعكس القصاصة الورقية ليظهر  
لنا شكل الفراشة ونبدأ بالتلوين  
بالوان جميلة وزاهية كالمبينة  
في الشكل



### 3.4 English letter to parents

**1.11.2011**

**Dear parents,**

**During the first school months children have settled down to everyday school routines. We have three basic rules in the classroom: listen to the teacher, sit still and raise your hand if you want to speak. We wish you would discuss these rules with your child.**

**In November we will continue learning high frequency words in English. There are 5 new words every week that must be studied. Each week there is a test of these words. Please study the words at home and bring the little notebook back to school every day.**

**In Math we will practice adding, subtracting and understanding two-digit numbers. In October in Science our theme was different materials and their properties. In November we will explore the concept of energy.**

**Almost every day the children will get some homework. Please check the bags for homework books and worksheets. The homework needs to be returned the following day. We would appreciate it if the parents supervised their children while they are doing their homework.**

**After the week's hard work and good behaviour we have a Thursday Fun class. This class is for the whole unit 2.**

**Kind regards,**

**Class teachers:**

3.5. Monthly plan made jointly from 5 teachers

Grade: 2 ABCDE Month: November Academic Year 2011-2012

Teachers:

ADEC curriculum outcomes:	Learning objectives: (What will the pupils learn?)	Implementation: (What will the pupils do?)	Assessment: (Objectives, outcomes, pupils' achievement)
<p><b>English Writing Student</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-begins to form most letters with correct point/letter height</li> <li>- reads back own writing</li> <li>- spells high frequency words that have been taught (5 per week)</li> <li>-writes simple sentences</li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to form letters correctly</li> <li>- to read back own writing</li> <li>- to study, memorize and learn 5 HF-words per week</li> <li>-to write simple sentences based on pictures</li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-handwriting practice</li> <li>-smartboard activities</li> <li>-dictations</li> <li>- picture based writing</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing assessment</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Small tests and quizzes</p> <p>Dictations</p> <p>Homework</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reads a number of high frequency words (continues, 5 per week)</li> <li>-reads 15-25 HF words</li> <li>-begins to recognize some content words in texts</li> <li>-reads using letter/sound cues</li> <li>-attempts to read short sentences</li> <li>-names and identifies question mark and exclamation mark</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to read syllables, words and short sentences</li> <li>-to recognize HF-words that have been taught in school</li> <li>-to recognize question marks and exclamation marks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reading homework</li> <li>-revision of phonic sounds</li> <li>-stories</li> <li>-phonics games</li> <li>-online materials and activities</li> </ul>	<p>Participation in classroom activities</p>

Curriculum Team 2011

<p><b>Talking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-follows a sequence of instructions</li> <li>-attempts to talk about familiar topics</li> <li>-communicates simple observations</li> <li>-pronounces familiar words correctly</li> </ul> <p><b>Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-topic 1 energy changes</li> <li>-to explore concepts of energy, sound, vibration &amp; movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Mathematics Student</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- solves simple addition and subtraction problems (0-20, continues)</li> <li>-introduction to tens and units</li> <li>-reads, writes and represents two-digit numbers</li> <li>-revising shapes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Talking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to act according to instructions given</li> <li>-to communicate in English about familiar topics</li> <li>-to pronounce familiar words correctly</li> </ul> <p><b>Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-that sound is a form of energy</li> <li>-that sound is caused by vibration/movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Mathematics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to solve simple addition and subtraction problems (0-20)</li> <li>-to recognize tens and units from a number</li> <li>-to read and represent two-digit numbers</li> <li>-to recognize and name different shapes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Talking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-everyday communication</li> <li>-short dialogues in classroom</li> <li>-vocabulary practice</li> <li>-songs, rhymes, various media</li> </ul> <p><b>Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Primary Science material</li> <li>-online activities</li> <li>- experiments</li> <li>-worksheets</li> </ul> <p><b>Mathematics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-math book</li> <li>-independent and group activities</li> <li>-classroom games</li> <li>-worksheets</li> <li>-notebook</li> <li>-online activities</li> </ul>	
--	---	---	--

*Evaluation: (How did the plan work? How did the pupils perform?)*

Curriculum Team 2011

### 3.6 Arabic weekly planner



### تراثي هويتي وانتمائي

School:	
Phone:	Fax:
Teacher: grad 4-	
التاريخ : من 27/11/2011 إلى 2011/11/30	

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته: نشكر حسن تعاونكم:

اللغة العربية (معارف لغتي)

- ❶ قصة سليمان عليه السلام
- ❷ الاثنين 28-11-2011 اختبار كتابة قصة علي (لسان الحيوانات)
- ❸ حروف الجر (نحو)
- ❹ املاء حروف تلمظ ولا تكتب
- ❺ أمي الحبيبة: زيني شعري بشرائط الوان العلم وسرحي شعري الجميل جدلين صغيرين او جدل والبسني طوق العلم لاني اريد مشاركة زميلاتي بفرحة يوم الاتحاد وكذلك زوديني ببعض الصور والاعلام لبلادي لأزين مدرستي الجميلة.

\*\*\*\*\*

التربية الإسلامية

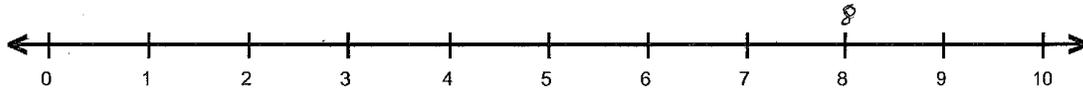
\*سورة الاعلى (تسميع)

\*اداب المنزل

تنبيه: الرجاء حفظ سورة الاعلى فقد لوحظ عدم اهتمام الطالبات بحفظ القرآن الكريم حبيبتي أمي أنا اصلي مع معلماتي وزميلاتي صلاة الظهر جماعة في المدرسة احتاج سجاتي وحجابي لأصلي .

### 3.7 Mathematic task; informal assessment from the teacher

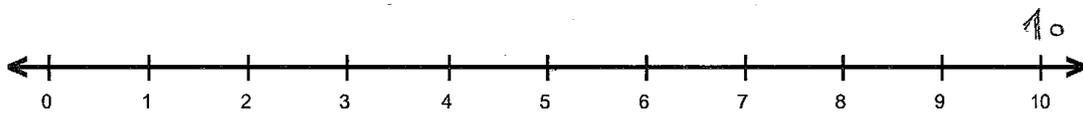
#### Number Lines



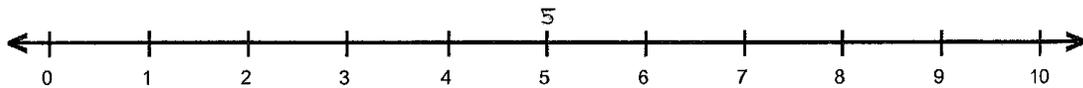
$$7 + 1 = \underline{8}$$



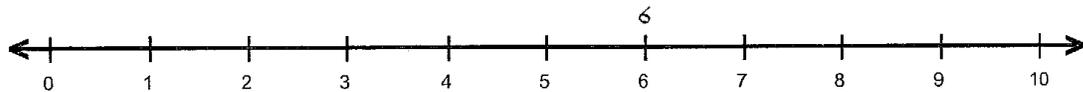
$$9 + 1 = \underline{10}$$



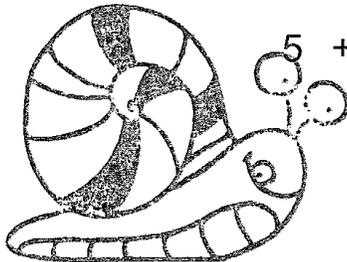
$$3 + 7 = \underline{10}$$



$$1 + 4 = \underline{5}$$



$$5 + 1 = \underline{6}$$



*Good!*

### 3.8 Assignment; sorting and using material

#### Sorting and using materials

Name.....

Colour in the pictures.

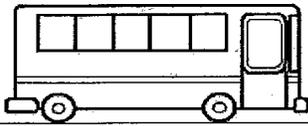
Then choose words from the list below to describe each thing.

**Umbrella**



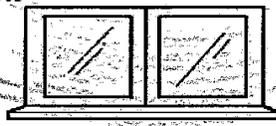
waterproof

**Bus**



heavy

**Window**



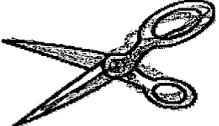
transparent

**Scarf**



soft

**Scissors**



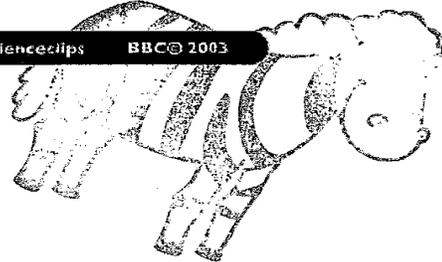
sharp

**Stone**



rough

hard	dull	strong	heavy
soft	magnetic	sharp	light
rough	transparent	blunt	wet
smooth	bendy	cold	dry
shiny	waterproof	warm	



### 3.9 Homework; combining English, Arabic and science

#### Science homework

Find and write these words in Arabic

Clay

---

Brick

---

Plastic

---

Wood

---

Metal

---

### 3.10 Task; learning colours and shapes



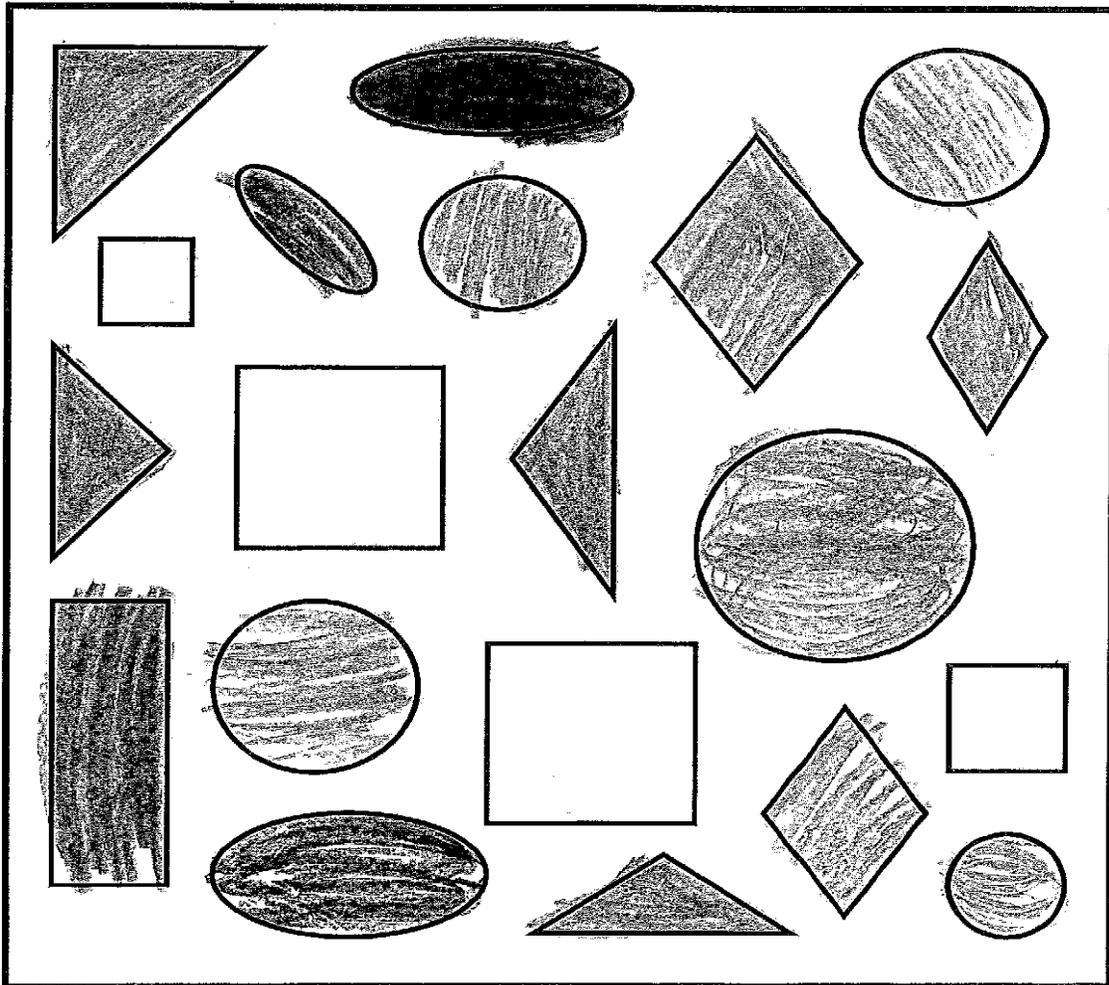
Colors and Shapes Worksheet

## Learning Colors and Shapes

Identify the different shapes below and follow the instructions to color the shapes the right colors.

Color the triangles purple  
Color the squares yellow  
Color the rectangles orange

Color the circles green  
Color the ovals red  
Color the Diamonds blue



## Transcript 4 – Questionnaire page 1/2

<b>BELIEFS - the teachers currently share the beliefs:</b>	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not applicable
<b>1. All students are capable of learning</b>					
<b>2. Teacher is responsible for student learning</b>					
<b>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT- learning is taking place in a healthy early years environment:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
<b>1. A supportive and enabling learning environment</b>					
The physical space, routines and storage of resources act as a support for students, promoting independence					
The physical space acts as an invitation to engage with materials and is an invitation to learn					
Teacher questioning is open and responsive to student thoughts and ideas					
Classroom dialogue moves from student to student as well as teacher to student.					
<b>2. Meaningful learning opportunities that encourage active involvement</b>					
The teacher establishes a meaningful context for learning					
There is a balance of focused teaching, demonstration, discussion and practice					
Children are encouraged to explore their learning actively through creativity and problem solving					
The learning program is flexible and emergent, based on children's interests and needs					
Children are engaged in purposeful practice as they move toward independence					
The teacher provides sequenced learning opportunities in response to student needs					
Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning.					
<b>3. Positive and respectful relationships (positive student behaviour)</b>					
The teacher encourages collaboration					
The teacher values the home language, culture and identity of the students					
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH - the New School Model approach support children to learn:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
<b>1. A student centered teaching process ( 7 steps in planning and delivering instruction) is being applied</b>					
<b>2. The Gradual release approach (move students from a state of dependence to one of independent practice and skills application) is being applied</b>					
<b>PARTNERSHIP - Teachers and partners are collaborating:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
<b>1. Teachers plan together and collaborate (Individual Professional/Performance plan)</b>					
<b>2. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management (school behaviour policy)</b>					
<b>3. Parents are participating as partners (parent involvement policy)</b>					
<b>4. All students needs are met (ADEC special Education policy)</b>					
<b>5. Accountability for student learning is shared</b>					

## Questionnaire page 2/2

<b>RESOURCES - Resources are available:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
Information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms					
Learning Resource centers (LRCs)					
<i>NSM resources;</i>					
Set up materials (e.g. printers, clip boards, headphones)					
Teacher support (e.g. CD roms)					
Picture books					
Take home readers					
Guided readings					
Health resources					
Arabic big books					
English big books					
UAE Alphabet Kit					
Readers online subscription					
consumables					
active learning material					
Math manipulative					
Science consumables					
<b>ASSESSMENT - Assessment is informing teaching and learning:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
1. Formal assessment (PIPS KG1-P2, EMSA KG3 and above) is used to inform teaching and learning					
2. Informal assessment (e.g. teacher observation) is used to inform teaching and learning					
3. Students are assessed in terms of physical, emotional, social and attitudinal behaviours (Approaches to learning)					
<b>CURRICULUM - the new curriculum is being applied and intergrated:</b>	always	often	sometimes	never	not applicable
1. Standards and content of the new curriculum are being applied and strived for					
2. Active learning is integrated					
3. Science is integrated					
4. Health and Physical education are integrated					
5. Technology is integrated					
Anything you would like to add?					

## Appendix B - Ethics form

### Guidelines for Ethics in Educational Research

#### Basic Principles

Three *basic ethical principles* underlie the Faculty of Education Guidelines for Ethics in Educational Research:

- **respect for persons**, that is, that persons should be treated as autonomous individuals, and that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection;
- **beneficence**, that is, that there is an over-riding obligation to maximise possible benefits and minimise possible harms. Harm, in this context, includes psychological or emotional distress, discomfort and economic or social disadvantages. Researchers exercise beneficence in assessing the risks of harm and potential benefits to participants, in being sensitive to the rights and interests of people involved in their research, and in reflecting on the social and cultural implications of their work; and
- **justice**, that is, that the question of who ought to receive the benefits of research and bear its burdens should be explicitly addressed.

These principles apply to all forms of educational research, including research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behaviour.

#### Considerations in Data Collection

Researchers should take special care to avoid research activity in which the information collected is recorded in such a manner that:

- participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
- any disclosure of the participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of professional liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability or reputation; and
- the research deals with sensitive aspects of the participants' own behaviour, such as sexual preference, illegal conduct, use of alcohol, drug use, or includes information about health status.

Educational researchers should:

- ensure confidentiality;
- not use data of a confidential nature for their own personal advantage or that of a third party;
- obtain the free and informed consent of human subjects.

### **Informed Consent**

The principle of obtaining informed consent from the participants in research is considered to be one of the most important ethical issues in research involving human participants. In almost all cases participants should be provided with a written summary of the research procedure, its benefits, harms and risks, and that they be able to retain this information. What is provided to potential participants should be brief and clearly written, and written from their point of view. When consent is obtained from research participants, it should be voluntary, competent; informed; and understood.

The decision of a person to consent to participating in a research project should always be based upon their knowledge of the research proposal and the requirements for their participation (as participants) in the project. Aspects of informed consent are:

- consent to participate in the research is given freely and without coercion;
- subjects have the capacity to understand the research project;
- the information sheets given to research subjects are understandable and have taken consideration of the anticipated level of competence of potential research subjects;
- inclusion of a clear explanation of the likely risks to the research subject arising from participation in the research project;
- the information sheet includes a clear explanation of the likely benefits of the research project itself;
- proper communication by the investigator of the risks and benefits of the research project to potential subjects;
- confirmation that the consent of the research subject is not influenced by financial inducement, improper pressure or any form of misrepresentation and that the research subject is competent to consent. It is the responsibility of the researcher to place the issue of payment within the context of the particular research project and determine as best she or he can at what point the incentive becomes an inducement that puts undue pressure on participants to take part;
- assurance that a research subject may withdraw at any time from the research without loss of benefit or penalty; and

- the need to exercise special care in cases where the subjects are unable to consent for themselves (for example, in the case of intellectually impaired students).

### **Responsibilities to Participants**

Research involving treatment and control groups should be evaluated in terms of the benefit of the research and the individuals' overriding right to know and to have access to the best educational practice available in all circumstances. The methods should not result in harm to the participant. In assessing covert or deceptive research, the following two guidelines should be observed:

- participants should not be subject to any procedure which is reasonably likely to cause physical harm, psychological harm (which is distinguished from temporary embarrassment, mild alarm, etc), or enduring educational disadvantage ;
- participants should be fully informed at the conclusion of the study as to its nature and the disposition of results;
- the full benefits of the intervention should be made available to all participants as part of the outcome of the comparison of programs.

## Ethics Form

To be completed by the student and submitted to the Ethics Research Committee

NAME OF RESEARCHER: Hanna Buchler-Eden

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

DATE: September 9, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: The new school model in the emirate of Abu Dhabi; a school's tale

BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROJECT (100-250 words; this may be attached separately. You may prefer to use the abstract from the original bid):

Please see attachment

MAIN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION(S) OF THE PROJECT (e.g. working with vulnerable adults; children with disabilities; photographs of participants; material that could give offence etc):

The researcher may encounter issues regarding research diversity; the theme is complex and the range of subject that it includes wide. Furthermore some cultural difficulties with sensitive questions of differences of benefits of methods in the classroom have been considered and thought through thoroughly before hand.

Diversity research challenges also include issues related to accessing participants' cultural knowledge in appropriate ways which can be problematical for researchers

DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT (please provide dates as month/year):

05 / 2011– 03 / 2012

DATE YOU WISH TO START DATA COLLECTION:

As soon as possible; 05/2011

**Please provide details on the following aspects of the research:**

1. What are your intended methods of recruitment, data collection and analysis?

Please outline (100-250 words) the methods of data collection with each group of research participants.

Views from the teachers will be gathered through qualitative methodology; interviews. Additionally observations in the specific school will be undertaken. Furthermore the study will include document analyses and reviews.

2. How will you make sure that all participants understand the process in which they are to be engaged and that they provide their voluntary and informed consent? If the study involves working with children or other vulnerable groups, how have you considered their rights and protection?

A letter of consensus will be written and handed to the participants in the school, giving the information that: All participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The information provided about the purpose and interviews can be read beforehand and questions about anything not understandable may be asked before deciding whether or not to participate.

The above and the below information will be repeated to the participant before the interviews or observation in one of the teachers classes start.

If a participant chooses to volunteer to be in this study, she or he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. The teacher will be informed of the right to refuse to answer any questions he or she doesn't want to answer. There is no penalty if the teacher wishes to withdraw from the study.

3. How will you make sure that participants clearly understand their right to withdraw from the study?

As mentioned above; written information will be distributed and the researcher will inform the voluntary participant orally before the participation in the study begins:

You as volunteer in this study may withdraw at any time without any explanation to the researcher or other consequences or penalties of any kind. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

4. Please describe how will you ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Where this is not guaranteed, please justify your approach.

In the written letter and orally before any participation starts confidentiality of the participant will be ensured. The participant will be informed that:

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a code number to let the researcher know who you are. There will be no use of your name in any of the information received from this study or in any of the research reports. When the study is finished, I will destroy the list that shows which code number goes with your name.

Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. The researcher will, however, use the information collected in her Master of Education thesis. Any information used will not identify you individually.

5. Describe any possible detrimental effects of the study and your strategies for dealing with them.

The researcher expects that any risks, discomforts, or inconveniences will be minor and I believe that they are not likely to happen. If discomforts become a problem, the participant may discontinue the participation.

6. How will you ensure the safe and appropriate storage and handling of data?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with participants will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participant's permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of describe coding procedures and the data will be kept in a closed up room. Solely the researcher will have access to it. After the study is done only the coded document will be kept in a safe place as evidence.

7. If during the course of the research you are made aware of harmful or illegal behaviour, how do you intend to handle disclosure or nondisclosure of such information (you may wish to refer to the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2004; paragraphs 27 & 28, p.8 for more information about this issue)?

If the research project identifies a child or young person at risk of abuse, neglect or harm from themselves or someone else, as required, the researcher will make a report to the school principal and ADEC.

The researcher would follow the MOE and ADEC's policies.

8. If the research design demands some degree of subterfuge or undisclosed research activity, how have you justified this?

This will not be applicable

9. How do you intend to disseminate your research findings to participants?

During the research documentation of the interviews will be shared if the participant wishes to and the interviewee will have the possibility to correct the content afterwards.

A summary of the results of the research will be provided to ADEC and/or participating school on request.

The researcher is furthermore willing to discuss the result of the study with the participating school.

If the results of the descriptive research allow and an opportunity arises for a doctorate, the researcher would like to continue with an exploratory study undertaken in schools with the "New School Model".

## APPENDIX II

### Declaration by the researcher

I have read the University's Code of Conduct for Research and the information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

I am satisfied that I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations as researcher and the rights of participants. I am satisfied that members of staff (including myself) working on the project have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached document and that I, as researcher take full responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research in accordance with the Faculty of Education Ethical Guidelines, and any other condition laid down by the BUID Ethics Committee.

Print name: HANNA BÜCHLER-EDÉN

Signature: Hanna Buchler-Edén

Date: 9/24/2011

### Declaration by the Chair of the School of Education Ethics Committee (only to be completed if making a formal submission for approval)

The Committee confirms that this project fits within the University's Code of Conduct for Research and I approve the proposal on behalf of BUID's Ethics Committee.

Print name:  
(Chair of the Ethics Committee)

Signature:  
Date:

  
Dr. Eman Saad  
Dean of Faculty  
of Education

## Appendix C - Letter of consent

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mrs Hanna Buchler-Eden, who is a student of the master of education program at the British University in Dubai. The researcher is conducting this study for her master's thesis.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a teacher in this school and therefore an integral part of this study.

#### **• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of the "New School Model" in the public school. The researcher hopes that the result from the study can help to contribute to identify challenges and areas of improvement. This potentially could contribute to additional knowledge about the current approach and practices in your school.

A summary of the research results will be given to your school on request.

#### **• PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will kindly ask you to participate in one or all of the following:

1. Take part in one short questionnaire.
  - This interview will include questions about the implementation of the "New School Model" in your school.
2. Take part in 1-2 short interviews.
  - The interviews will include questions about the implementation of the "New School Model" in your school.
  - The participant may read a summary of the interview if wanted.
3. The researcher will observe your class during 1 lesson.

#### **• PARTICIPATION, POTENTIAL RISKS, DISCOMFORTS AND WITHDRAWAL**

I expect that any risks, discomforts, or inconveniences will be minor and believe that they are not likely to happen. If discomforts become a problem, you may immediately, without any consequences discontinue your participation.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The research should help to identify the current state, from a teacher perspective, of the “New School Model” in your school. Possible recommendations will be discussed.

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participation in this study. Nor will you incur any costs.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law or due to “duty of care” obligations. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a code number to let Mrs. Hanna Buchler-Eden know who you are. The researcher will not use your name in any of the information received from this study or in any of the research reports. When the study is finished, the researcher will destroy the list that shows which code number goes with your name.

Information that can identify you individually will not be released towards anyone outside the study. The researcher will use the coded information collected in her thesis Master of Education at the British university in Dubai (BUiD). BUiD does not publish this study however retain the rights to this study. ADEC may choose to feature reports on their website and the result of the research. However, any information we use for publication will not identify you individually.

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- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

Mrs. Hanna Buchler-Eden  
Master of Education Researcher

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- **RESEARCH PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

I understand and have read the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I confirm that my involvement is voluntary. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

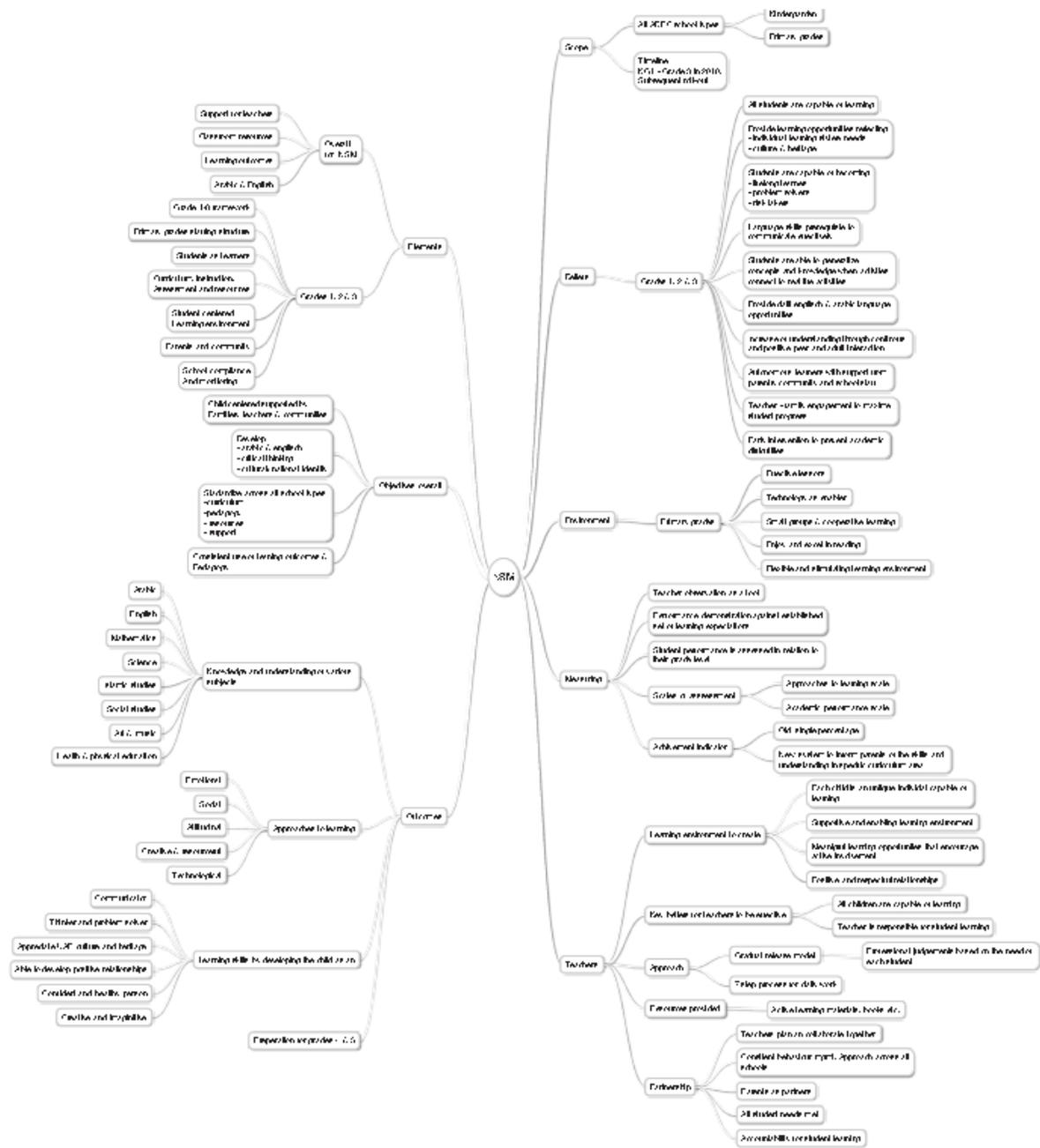
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Signature of Researcher

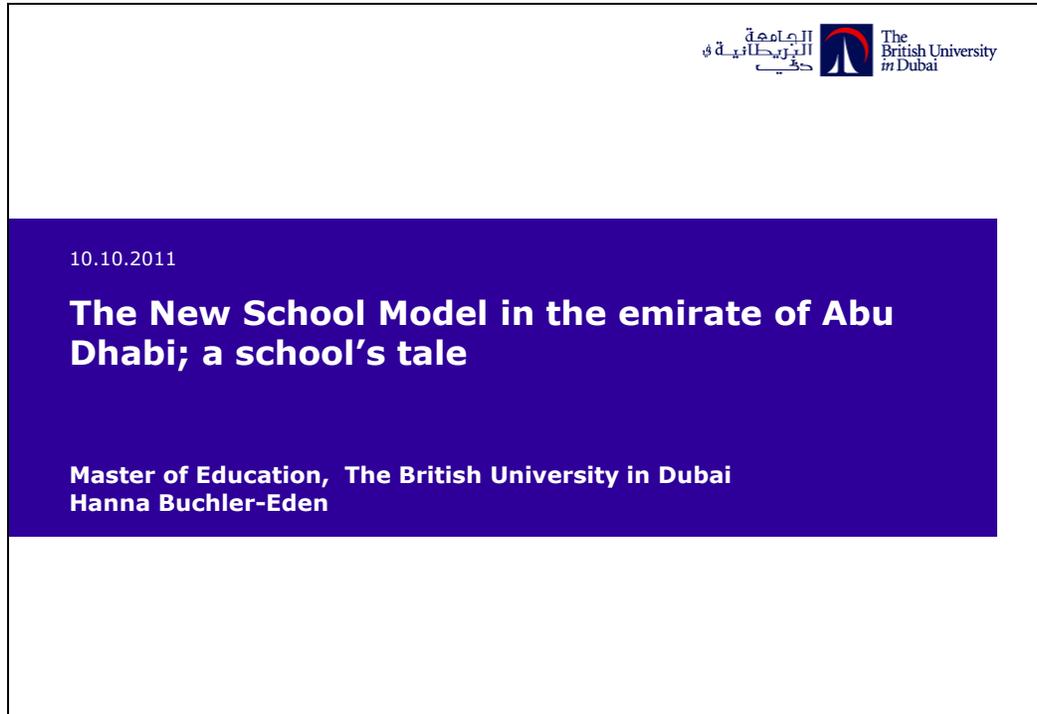
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## Appendix D – Mind-maps





## Appendix E - Kick-off presentation



10.10.2011

**The New School Model in the emirate of Abu Dhabi; a school's tale**

**Master of Education, The British University in Dubai  
Hanna Buchler-Eden**

الجامعة  
البريطانية  
في  
دبي

The  
British University  
in Dubai

## Research overview

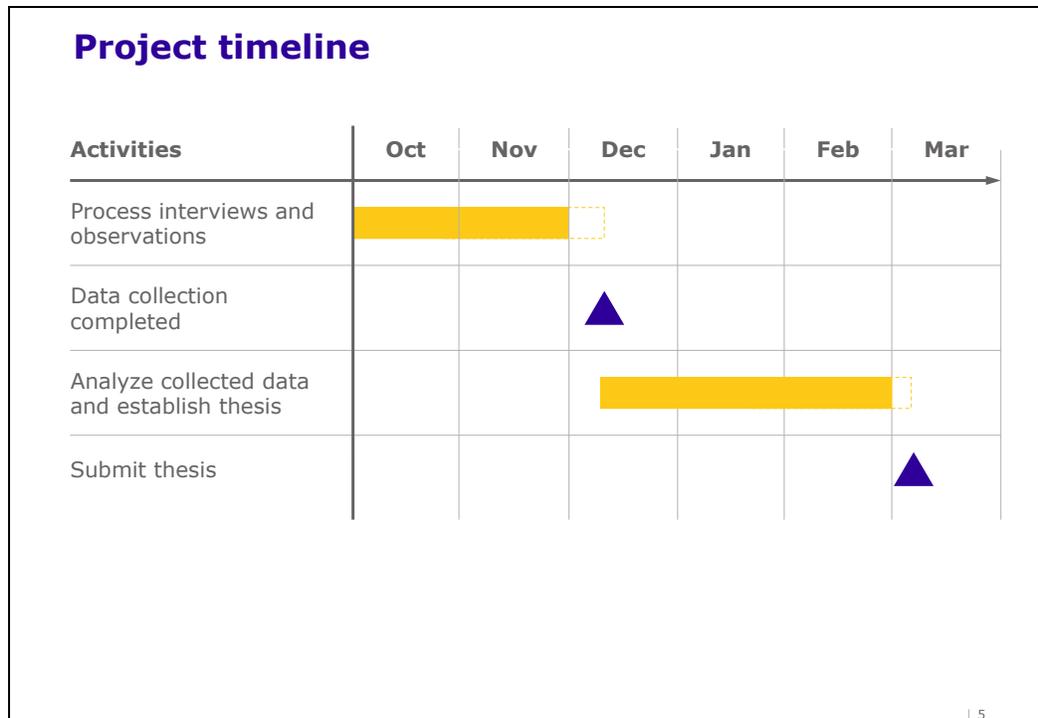
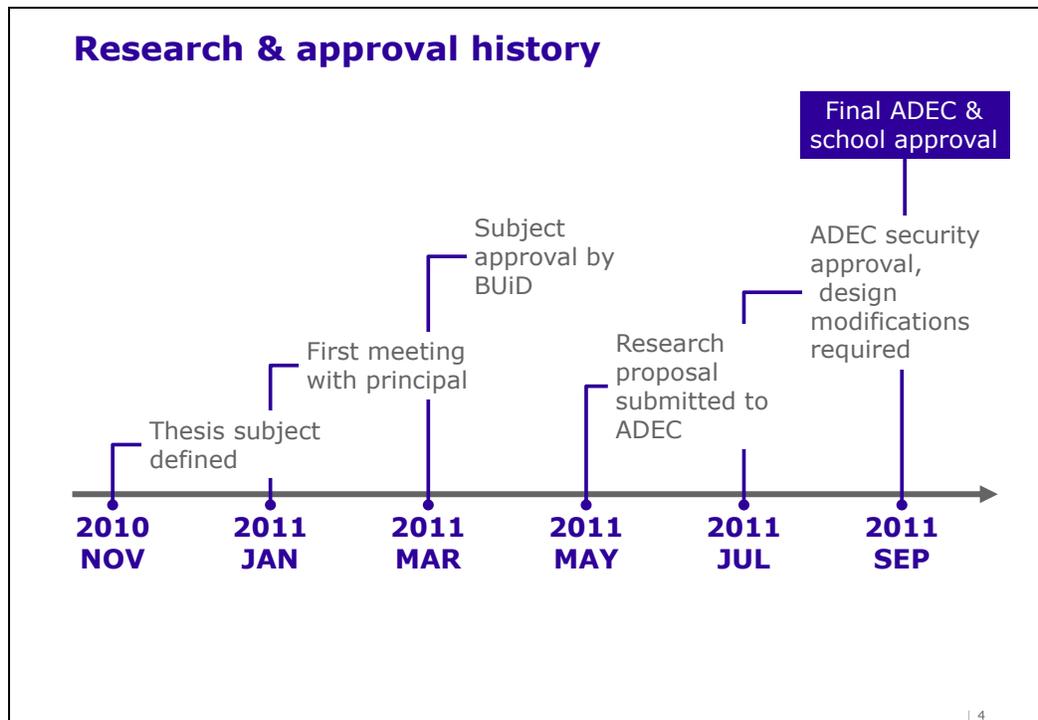
<b>Purpose of this study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To explore the implementation of the New School Model (NSM) from a teacher's perspective</li><li>• This might contribute to additional knowledge about the process which could benefit your school and the gradual roll-out in further classes</li></ul>
<b>Research questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1</b> Are there any gaps between theory and practice in the New School Model from a teacher perspective?</li><li><b>2</b> Are there any challenges implementing the New School Model?</li><li><b>3</b> What could be recommended to improve the implementation of the New School Model?</li></ol>

| 2

## Research information

<b>Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take part in 1-2 short interviews. These interviews will include questions about the implementation of the New School Model in your school</li><li>• The researcher will observe your class during 1 lesson</li></ul>
<b>Participation &amp; Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your participation in this research is voluntary</li><li>• You can discontinue your participation at any time</li><li>• Neither the school's name nor your identity will be disclosed to any party involved in this research</li></ul>

| 3



## Next steps

- Communicate interest to Hanna or principal either today or by next week
- Kindly collect consent form
- Set date for interview with Hanna
- Hand over filled out consent form to Hanna at start of interview
- Timeframe for class observation to be discussed

| 6

## Questions?



**Any questions or input  
from your side?**

**You can reach me at:**

...

| 7



## Appendix F – Protocol

### Protocol development and review

(The protocol is in an adapted form with guidance by Yin, 2003)

To increase the reliability a protocol will be used.

### A . Overview of the case study Project

#### A1. Background

Teacher's view on the implementation process of the NSM. Gap between theory and practice. Challenges and recommendations.

Relevant readings:

- New School Model Policy Manual, ADEC 2010
- School leadership handbook, ADEC 2010
- Values and commitments, ADEC 2010
- Frequently asked questions, ADEC webpage accessed SEP 2011
- Strategic Plan for P-12 Education (2009-2018), Abu Dhabi Educational Council
- Comprehensive New School Model, ADEC 2010
- 2010 statistical fact book emirate of Abu Dhabi, Education Statistics first
- The executive council - Policy agenda, The emirate of Abu Dhabi
- (The New School Model, Lynne Pierson, SEP 2010 webpage accessed on 8.11.2011)

Recent (since NOV 2011) available literature:

- The foundation of the New School Model: An introduction for teachers. Teacher guidebook. ADEC NOV, 2011
- 2011-2012 Learning outcomes (new also included for grade four).
- PD Curriculum. NB: Not available due the fact that the content is intellectual property of the model provider.

Kindly see annotated bibliography in Appendix G

#### A2. Design

Exploratory, embedded case study

#### A3. Case selection

This is a unique case; only school in the UAE of the kind.

### B. Data collection

1. Multiple sources of evidence: triangulation (increases validity)
2. Data base (notes, tabular materials such as mind maps made by the author of this study – collected and created)
3. Chain of evidence

Please see xl- protocol below for link between initial Research questions and methods.

#### B1. Data collecting procedures

- Focused interviews
- Group interviews
- Document analysis
- Observations
- Questionnaire survey

#### C. Data analysis

Analytic strategy: Manual case description.

Technique: 'describe, analyse, and interpret'.

#### D. Plan validity

Construct validity – multiple sources of evidence, chain of evidence, key informants was offered to review draft

Reliability – study protocol and database

#### E. Limitations

Please see the Present study chapter 3

#### F. Reporting

Reporting – Linear Analytic Structure

The literature review will be a cross-reference when analysing the findings.

#### G. Timeline

For additional information kindly see Kickoff presentation (appendix E)

NOV 2010 - First discussion over phone with principal of the targeted school for the case study.

JAN 2011 – First meeting with the principle and visit of the school.

APR 2011 – Interview with personnel at ADEC research office.

OCT 2011 – Meeting with school principal and managers from the two partner programs at research site.

OCT 2011 – Kickoff meeting with teachers in participant school. Presentation regarding the study made by researcher.

OCT 2011- two Pilot interviews were conducted at research site.

NOV 2011 – Interview with ADEC staff regarding background information about the NSM in Abu Dhabi.

NOV 2011 – Discussion with Model Provider manager in Abu Dhabi

NOV 2011 – During three weeks the researcher visited the school for observations and interviews and document collection.

JAN 2012 – Group interviews were undertaken.

## **H. Divergences**

Minor changes like paraphrasing the interview questions were undertaken after the first discussions and the pilot interviews (OCT, 2011). Furthermore a questionnaire was added at a later stage since the researcher noticed that discussing the wide-ranging theme would be too time consuming.

## Appendix G - Annotated bibliography

Abu Dhabi Education Council (2009). *Strategic Plan for P-12 Education (2009-2018)*. Abu Dhabi

- This plan provides the researcher with the frameworks for the Finnish class teacher approach should strive for. The strategic plan addresses the long-term strategies albeit the immediate improvement imperatives.

Abu Dhabi Education Council (2009). *Comprehensive New School Model*. Abu Dhabi

- The "New School Model" is based on the "whole Child Philosophy". It strives to enhance student performance by developing the student as a communicator, a thinker and problem solver; this in order to become a leader in a knowledge based global economy and a well-rounded individual. Hence the above mentioned plan and its goals are of importance for the researcher and her thesis since it attempts to describe the effectiveness of the Finnish approach adapted to the new school model.

Bell, J. (1999) *Doing your research Project- A guide for researchers in education and social science*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Open University press Buckingham.

- This book guides the reader in doing research. It provides support in planning your research and choice of methodology. In this proposal it will be a qualitative approach. The author explains when and for what the particular method is applicable. Furthermore it contains ethical advice when doing interviews and while I am investigating cultures this might be of support.

Fulton David (2010). *Equality, Participation and Inclusion. Diverse perspectives*. Routledge. New York.

- The new school model is driven by a student centred learning approach. The above mentioned book provides the reader and researcher with the latest research on systems and practices to support including all students in the mainstream classroom.

Gaad, E. (2005/2006) *Crossing the Barriers: Culturally Diverse Teachers Teaching in Culturally Diverse Mixed Abilities Classrooms in the United Arab Emirates*. International journal of diversity in organizations, communities and nations. Volume 5.

- This qualitative study is of importance for the research. An investigation regarding “the challenges involved when culturally diverse experienced teachers teach in culturally diverse mixed abilities classrooms in the UAE”. The reader learns about teachers from various countries in mixed ability classrooms. What is specifically interesting for the researcher is the impact various cultures can have in the classroom.

Gaad, E. (2004) Cross cultural perspective on the effect of cultural attitudes towards inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. *The International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Volume 8, Issue 3. Common ground.

- The author of this research writes about including children with special needs in regular school classrooms. Furthermore it offers the reader a cross-cultural approach that is of important for the research. The article investigates the effect that cultures can have and has on educational decisions and attitudes toward inclusion of all students. The author also emphasizes the importance of educating people about inclusion. Information and attitudes were collected through interviews, personal experience and literature reviews. Hence, the article is highly relevant for the theme of the study.

Good, T. Brophy, J. (2003) *Looking in classrooms*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson Education, Inc. Boston.

- Good and Brophy provides the reader or researcher with various types of methods for doing an observation. The researcher will elaborate the interviews with “passive participating” observations; hence, they have to be conducted properly.

Hall, G. Hord, S. (2006) *Implementing change: Patterns, principles and Potholes*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pearson Education Inc. Boston.

- This book presents a research based models how implementing change can be facilitated. The complexity of the process of change in schools is looked at from the perspective of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM), which has been applied and studied in various countries. The book will support the researcher in describing the implementation process of the New School Model in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Lorin W. Anderson and David R. Krathwohl (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing – A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Longman. New York.

- Since ADEC's aims to enable students to become independent learners thru active learning this book is of relevance because of Bloom's taxonomy looks at the cognitive process; remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, creating. It also addresses the learning domains in line with the new school model, namely social, emotional, the cognitive, the language and the physical.

Mertens, M. (1998) *Research Methods in Education and Psychology: Intergrading Diversity with Quantitative & Qualitative Approaches*. Sage Publications, London.

- This book is more detailed than the above mentioned. Since the researcher of this proposal will be investigating diversity and using one of the methodologies mentioned in the title, this book is of great importance. It guides the reader in the choice of participants, data collection and analysis.

U.A.E Federal Law No. 29/2006. Abu Dhabi: United Arab Emirates.

- In respect of the rights of people with special needs. Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15 are specified in the education of people with special needs. Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as "a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education for All". The new model will be based on the individual needs of the students however this law needs to be implemented and therefore the researcher finds it important to the research.