

The computer and the Internet As Factor Which Influence Teaching Method: A Case Study of the City Of Lod

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Abstract

In January 2000 the Israeli government decided on a project called "tipul nekudaty", (also known as "ofek project"). This project was intended for eleven cities around the country, cities that have an exceptionally high unemployment percentage and prolonged economic distress. The goal of the project was to advance the social-economic status of these cities. The project was to advance the social-economic status of this cities. The project was planned to take place between 2001 and 2003. Its focus was on an educational and developmental base. Therefore, the city councils of these cities focused on education, welfare and employment in addition to promoting people who liv in these cities (Mazkirut memshala, 2000 a) (government decision).

The rationale behind this project was to make basic changes in these cities in a systematic metjod. The main purpose was to create human changes by professional training programs. (Bitan, 2003).

One of these cities was Lod, a mixed city in the middle of Israel near Tel Aviv. Lod's city council decided to allocate most of the money to enhance computer rooms and internet as factors which will improve the teaching process in the city.

The goal of this research was to examine the ability of municipal project to influence using the computer and the internet on teaching methods. In other words examine computers and the internet as a factor which has influenced teaching methods in Lod during those years.

The research examined the professional development of teachers as they gained knowledge in computers and integrated it into their teaching

Six questions and hypotheses were derived from the aims of the project. The first question was to examine the differences between teachers' level of computer and internet usage at home and at school during class hours. The second question examined the correlations between frequency of guidance and the teachers' perceived contribution of the project.

Another question dealt with frequency of guidance and participating in continuing program as influence on the level of computer and internet usage on teaching methods.

The fourth question tests the measurement prediction of school principal encouragement on his staff to use the computers beyond variable training (frequency of guidance and participating in continuing education program).

Another question checks the differences in the level teachers' encouragement by their school principal's involvement in leading this change and bringing the integration of computers and internet in teaching processes at school. The last question examines the examinees' viewpoint of joining the project.

The hypotheses of the research deal with a positive influence of the project on teachers in using the computers and the internet in their teaching process.

179 teachers who teach at government non- religious elementary schools in Lod were selected in a random sampling. They responded to a questionnaire which was especially composed for the purpose of the research. The questionnaire consisted of six parts. The first part examined the teachers' level of usage of computers and internet at home. The second part examined the quality of using computers and internet in general (the purpose of using those tools for given tasks). The third part dealt with the teachers' level of usage of computer and internet at school with their pupils.

The fourth part was the teachers' level of encouragement by their school principle and management team to use the computers and internet at school for educational purposes.

The fifth part is the personal contribution of the project to the teacher. The last part asks some background questions of the person who answers the questionnaire, like age' seniority, advanced studies etc.

The findings indicate that this project contributed significantly to Lod's teachers. The teachers who were on the project increased their usage of computers and internet at home and also at School in their teaching process. They said that the project gave them the guidance they needed.

Another factor that influenced their use of these tools, according to the teachers, was the courses that their principal took to learn the importance of these tools for advancing education within the limits of the project. They were thankful to the people who decided on the project and gave them the chance to learn how to use computers and the internet at their teaching processes. This was expressed by increased usage of those tools at home and at school. The hypotheses of the research were supported: there is a correlation between the guidance and principal's encouragement to the growth in usage of computers and the internet in their teaching processes. Therefore all these research assumptions were fitting to the evidence.

These matters were discussed in depth within the framework of the discussion and a number of ideas for continued research were raised such as doing the same research in all sectors. Another idea was to do a follow-up research three years later and see if there is another increase in computers and internet usage in teaching process. (Researcher's remark –at ten cities around the country the project ended. The prime minister's office decided to continue the project in Lod until 2007).

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