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ABSTRACT

This report describes how partnerships between educators and the community are helping improve education in Ghana. Though the basic education program, Improving Learning through Partnerships (ILP), Ghana is strengthening its educational foundation by using master teachers to help improve basic skills instruction and by involving parents and other community members in the educational process. ILP acknowledges that learning achievement depends upon many players within and outside of the educational system. In introductory workshops, ILP staff help partners recognize their common goals. Participants (educators, local government officials, PTA and school management committee members, and traditional leaders) draft school improvement plans that are shared with the broader community for their contribution. This report discusses challenges to ILP efforts, describes effective schools, and examines elements that have impacted learning in Ghana, highlighting ILP's strengths and effective strategies. It looks at appreciative inquiry as a methodology and philosophy for effective teaching, examines the role and importance of visits from master teachers, and explains reinforcement and follow-up activities used between visits from master teachers. Finally, the report discusses community empowerment, examining community-school improvement plans and changes in school infrastructure. (SM)

Making a Difference in Ghana's Classrooms

Educators and Communities
as Partners



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Making a Difference in Ghana's Classrooms

Educators and Communities as Partners

Barbara O'Grady
October 2000



Readings for Educational Development

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Many people helped make possible this story about basic education in Ghana. I am indebted in particular to four of the technical advisors for the Improving Learning through Partnerships (ILP) project—Rudi Klauss, Barbara Gardner, Stephen Manu, and Earl Brown—who spent so much time with me in Ghana, allowed me to draw freely on their written work, and reviewed and commented on early drafts. Much of this publication is their work. Marcia Ellis and Francy Hays, in the Washington, DC, office of the Academy for Educational Development (AED), also reviewed drafts and made valuable suggestions. The ILP field office staff, whose work is contributing to the success of the project, helped make my visit to Ghana a smooth one.

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The Ghanaian educators with whom I met went out of their way to assist me. I am grateful to all of them—in particular, to Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service officials who helped me to understand the larger education picture and appreciate the dedication of those in the education system; to the head teachers who met with me and permitted me to visit their schools and observe their interaction with teachers, parents, and students; to the teachers who so graciously put up with another visitor to their classrooms and talked to me about their work; to the master teachers who invited me to observe their classroom demonstrations. Their love of learning and their commitment to the children of Ghana inspire awe.

I wish to thank the USAID/Ghana staff, in particular, Peter Kresge, who met with me and encouraged AED to produce this publication. USAID's funding of the basic education activities in Ghana has contributed immensely to noticeable improvements in the classrooms.

This publication is about the work of AED and its ILP partners. But that work depends on the complementary activities conducted by staff of other programs also helping to improve primary education in Ghana—the Community School Alliances program staff, whose work with traditional leaders, parents, and other community members reinforces ILP's work; the Catholic Relief Services staff, in the northern regions of Ghana, who are helping to improve classroom teaching; and the Mitchell Group, whose evaluation work is essential to ILP. Like ILP, those projects are helping Ghana to build on its education successes and continue to improve teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

Barbara O'Grady

Ghana at a Glance

1999 (preliminary estimates)

Population, mid-year (millions)	18.9
GNP per capita (Atlas method, US\$)	390

Average annual growth, 1993-99

Population (%)	2.6
Labor force (%)	2.6

3

Most recent estimate (latest year available, 1993-99)

Urban population (% of total population)	38
Life expectancy at birth (years)	60
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	65
Illiteracy (% of population age 15+)	30
Gross primary enrollment (% of school-age population)	
Male	84
Female	74

Source: World Bank.

Introduction and Background

A retired teacher of mathematics and former district director of education in a system in which most district directors are male, Beatrice Osafo Affum returned to Ghana's workforce to participate in an innovative program that promotes good teaching in schools where children often struggle with many of the same difficulties she faced as a child.

One of 14 children in a poor family, she had not been chosen by her parents to attend school in their agricultural community. When she was six, however, her father overheard her parroting an older brother as he practiced his vowels and, impressed with her quick mind, decided that she, too, would be educated. Education did not come easily, however.

Bounced around from home to home and school to school after the deaths of her father and, later, her married sister guardian, she had to patch together an education in schools that often had undertrained teachers, few instructional resources, and only passing concern for girls' achievement. She succeeded eventually and earned an advanced degree. Not the least of her motivation came from overhearing, as a child, the conversation of two teachers discussing her mathematical skills and her academic promise. Their praise stayed with her over the years, helping her through educational hardships.

Now, Mrs. Affum is one of a cadre of 18 master teachers who are helping to

improve the quality of Ghana's primary education system by demonstrating teaching methodologies in mathematics and English to teachers in their classrooms and by encouraging parents to participate in their children's education.

This cohort of teachers, supported by active community members, is proving that certain practices, in combination, can make a difference in primary school learning. In this instance, the combination of master teachers who train classroom teachers in basic skills instruction with school-community partnerships, both in the framework of appreciative inquiry—a methodology that encourages a positive and visionary approach—are contributing to successful educational change in Ghana.

There is ample evidence in both the United States and the developing world that strong basic skills instruction and parent involvement in education make a difference. Twenty years ago, Ronald Edmonds, an educational reformer who studied successful practices in schools with disadvantaged children, determined that







there are seven characteristics of effective schools, two of which are a priority on classroom instruction in essential skills and parent involvement. (The other five are a safe and orderly environment, a climate of high expectations of every student, a principal who acts as an instructional leader, a staff with a clear educational mission, and frequent testing to monitor student progress.)

No Excuses: Lessons from 21 High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools, a recent publication of the Heritage Foundation, recounts success stories of schools in poor U.S. neighborhoods that are determined to educate children despite formidable odds. Studies determined that all high-performing schools have certain elements in common: master teachers with strong and continued training; clear goals and performance measurement, with an emphasis on basic skills; and active, engaged parents.

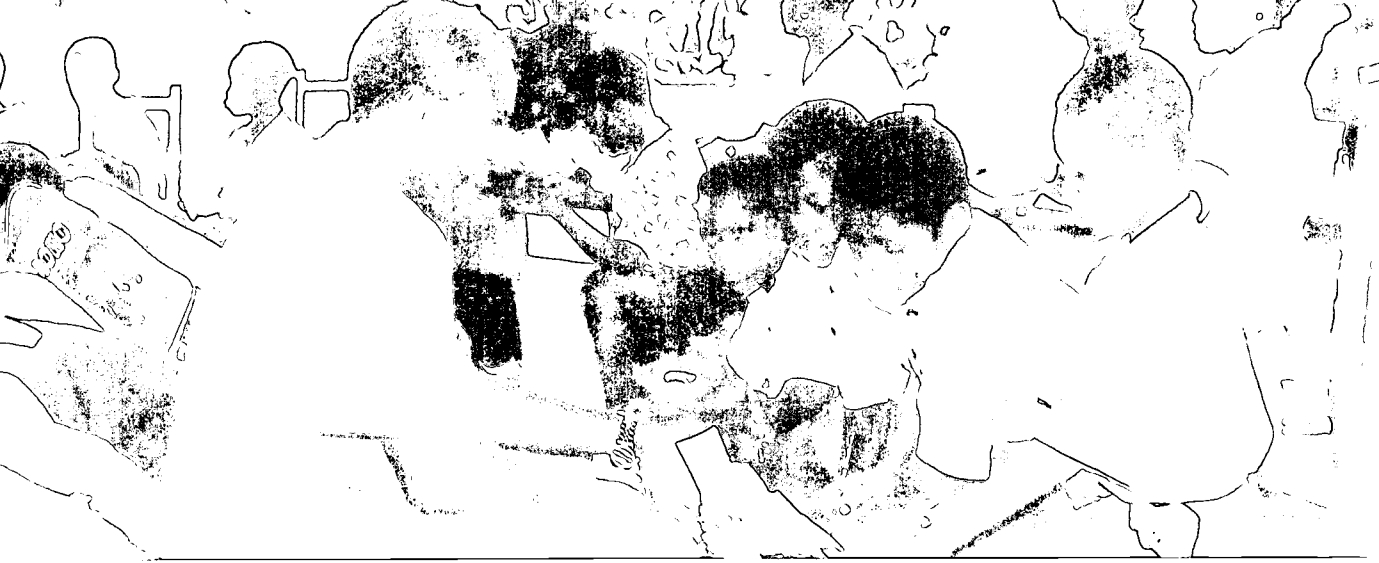
In Lesotho, in southern Africa, a Ministry of Education official, speaking about a master teacher program that began 12 years earlier with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development and is now fully funded by the ministry, remarked, "It is our success story. People come from all over Africa to see how the program works." The program uses "resource teachers" who travel to remote areas and spend days with teachers, demonstrating good classroom practices for teaching basic skills, helping

teachers design instructional materials, and providing encouragement.

Through the basic education program, Improving Learning through Partnerships (ILP), Ghana is strengthening its educational foundation by using master teachers to help improve basic skills instruction and by involving parents and other community members in the educational process. ILP is one component of a large, comprehensive program—Quality Improvements in Primary Schools (QUIPS)—that addresses many of Ghana's educational challenges and stresses quality improvement. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), QUIPS supports the goals of Ghana's initiative for a system of free, compulsory, universal basic education. The Academy for Educational Development, a U.S. not-for-profit organization, with assistance from the American Institutes of Research and Aurora Associates, implements the ILP program in partnership with the Ghana Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service (GES) and with support from numerous other Ghanaian organizations.

Partnerships

ILP acknowledges that learning achievement depends on many players within and outside the educational system. In partnership, teachers, head teachers (principals), community members, circuit supervisors,



Ghana is strengthening its educational foundation by using master teachers to help improve basic skills instruction and by involving parents and other community members in the educational process.

and other local government officials provide educational support and make decisions about what happens in the classroom. In this way, ILP is helping to narrow the gap between central-level policy makers and those close to the classroom, where the real process of education occurs. By collaborating as partners in pursuit of common educational goals, and by participating in exercises that strengthen certain education-related skills, parents and educators are proving that they can have a positive impact on their schools. In the 330 partnership schools (258 in the south of Ghana and 72 in the north) and communities and in the school districts in which they are located, simultaneous interventions to engage community members and improve teacher education and curriculum and instructional materials—as well as education personnel

management and organizational development, the supporting structures for classroom learning—address systemic deficiencies and ensure that children learn.¹

In introductory workshops, ILP staff help the partners to recognize their common goals. Workshop participants—teacher representatives, other educators, local government officials, PTA and school management committee members, and traditional leaders—draft school improvement plans that are shared later with the broader community for their contribution. These workshops are the first step in changing parents' and educators' behavior that will result ultimately in improved quality of primary education. The change model that guides ILP has as one of its key assumptions the belief that continuing intervention for two years or more in each school and

¹ ILP provides support to 258 of the 330 schools in teacher professional development, management, and infrastructure. The remainder of the schools, in the northern regions, receive teacher development support from Catholic Relief Services, through a separate agreement with USAID. ILP staff help train CRS teacher development staff and share with them instructional materials and tools developed for ILP. ILP staff implement the management component in the northern regions.

The lack of continuous assessment of students results in inadequate information about their academic performance and, therefore, a lack of motivation to improve teaching methodologies.

community will produce sustained behavioral change and improvement in student achievement. ILP staff further acknowledge that changing behavior requires enabling parents and other community members to participate substantively. ILP thus uses a variety of interventions that lead eventually to such empowerment.

Plans are underway to continue ILP's work in partnership schools, expand the project's outreach, and "mainstream" its methodologies into the larger educational system, even before USAID project funding ends. Some progress is already obvious as more districts request, and receive, ILP training; as ILP engages other donors in Ghana in discussions about integrating ILP interventions into their programs; and as ILP participants share their improved methodologies with other colleagues. The vision of USAID, project staff, and many Ghanaians is to expand ILP's impact, eventually introducing throughout the entire educational system the methodologies proven to be effective in the partnership schools. ILP's attention to strengthening the subject knowledge and pedagogical skills of head teachers and circuit supervi-

sors is particularly germane because continuation of the new teaching-learning practices will fall to them once the project ends.

The Challenges

Criterion-referenced test results available at the start of ILP in late 1997 reveal how acute the learning problems are at the primary school level in Ghana. Although English is officially the language of instruction after P3 (i.e., grade/standard three), fewer than 5 percent of P6 students achieve satisfactory scores in English; 43 percent of P5 students are unable to write more than 15 English words, and approximately 95 percent of them are unable to comprehend fully what they read. Fewer than 3 percent of P6 students achieve satisfactory scores in mathematics. By P6, one-quarter of the P1 cohort has dropped out. Those who make it are admitted to junior secondary school without examinations.

The poor quality of pupil learning reflects the poor quality of teaching. Most teachers, some of whom are barely out of school themselves, are products of inadequate training programs, and they lack





supervision of and feedback on their instructional practices. The lack of continuous assessment of students results in inadequate information about their academic performance and, therefore, a lack of motivation to improve teaching methodologies. The dearth of textbooks and other instructional materials—teachers lack standard reference books; many classrooms lack posters, wall charts, and other materials necessary to stimulate learning—forces teachers to stress memorization and copying from the blackboard, practices that result in minimal student participation and interest.

Whole-class teaching, a traditional approach in which a teacher lectures to children arranged in rows of desks facing the front of the classroom, is the most common methodology, more often than not resulting in neither good teaching nor learning. Even when teachers attempt to depart from the ineffective methods, their efforts are often thwarted. As one young teacher in a rural classroom remarked, “I have so many children in my class that, even when I seat them in small groups, I have trouble walking around the room to review their work.”

For various reasons, ranging from dissatisfaction with the system to a desire to return to school for a diploma or degree, there is high teacher turnover.

Often compounding classroom impediments to learning are obstacles at home. Many houses lack electricity, even

lanterns by which children can study. Some lack tables or space where children can do homework. Some parents are illiterate and unable to assist children with their studies. In the worst instances, orphaned children are left to fend for themselves or live with grandparents who are ill-equipped to educate them. The challenges are daunting—for parents, teachers, and children.

Given the educational challenges, no project can produce dramatic change in a short time. Incremental improvement, however, is possible—and that is what Ghana’s educational system is beginning to experience, with ILP assistance.

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Effective Schools

ILP’s approach to improving classroom conditions and compensating for deficiencies at home is based on research about teaching and learning interventions and on successful classroom practices. Test scores indicate that the approach is beginning to show positive results. In November 1998, a research center of Ghana’s University of Cape Coast administered baseline tests in English and mathematics to samples of students in 45 of the partnership schools. The post-test administered one year later indicates a combined overall improvement of 31 percent in math test performance (a 48 percent increase in one cohort of schools and a 12 percent increase in the other) and 17 percent in English



In addition to rising test scores, teachers report lively student-teacher interaction and, almost without exception, cite two elements as responsible for the change in classroom atmosphere: the new teaching and learning materials they have been taught to create and use and rearrangement of their classrooms into small groups of four or more so students can work independently and learn from each other.

(27 percent increase in one cohort, 6 percent in the other).

The July 1999 nationwide criterion-referenced test (CRT) results for primary 6 students also indicate that the ILP program is having a positive effect on the quality of English and mathematics teaching. English mean scores for students in ILP-assisted schools were 39.8 percent, in contrast to 36.9 percent for public school students. Mathematics scores were likewise higher for those in the ILP program: 35.0 percent vs. 32.2 percent.

Mastery scores—that is, the proportion of students getting at least 60 percent of the answers correct on the CRT—were also higher in both subjects for those in the ILP program: for English, 14.7 percent vs. 8.7 percent; for mathematics, 7.7 percent vs. 4.0 percent (Figure 1). As Ghana's Ministry of Education reports, "ILP has

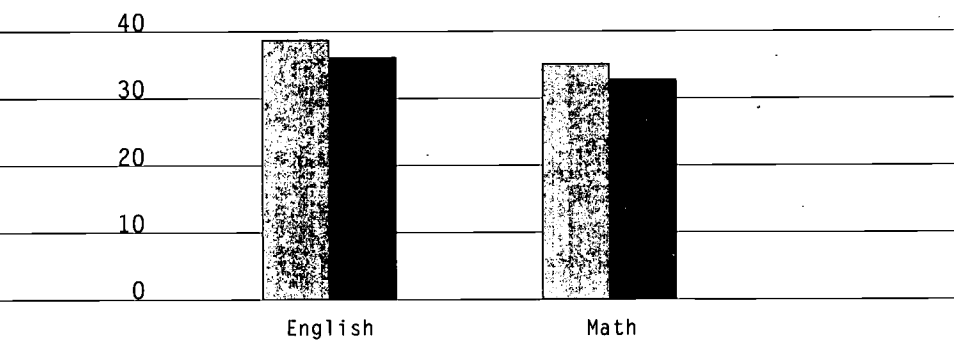
shown good results in English and Mathematics, and in the percentage number of pupils reaching mastery levels in the two subjects in the relatively short period of the ILP project."

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The following sections elucidate further the elements that have affected learning in Ghana, highlight ILP's strengths and effective strategies, and comment on their potential for being maintained once the project ends.

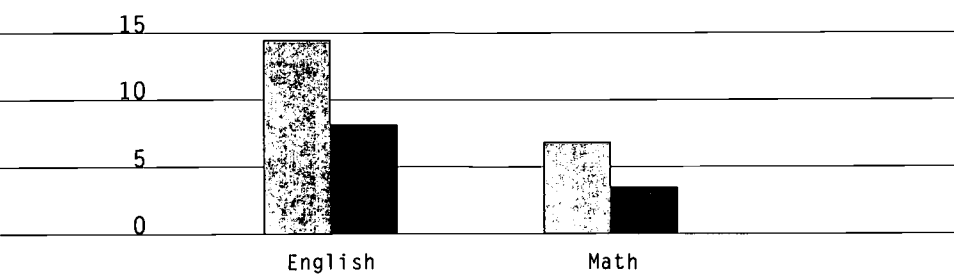
Figure 1: P6 Criterion-Referenced Test Scores, 1999

Mean Scores – Percentage of Pupils
ILP Public School



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MASTERY SCORES – Percentage of Pupils
ILP Public School



Appreciative Inquiry: A Methodology and Philosophy for Effective Teaching

Technical advisors and master teachers for the ILP project have described typical exchanges with teachers and head teachers before and after project workshops and other interventions:

Before

Advisor: Based on your experience, describe what you might say to a teacher whom you just observed teaching her P2 class.

Head Teacher: I might tell her that she did not wait long enough for children to respond to her questions; that she called on the same child twice in a row; that the children's classwork was hung too high on the walls.

12

After

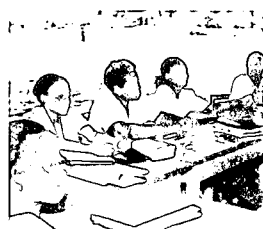
Master Teacher: Think back on the lesson you taught this morning. Tell us three or four things you did well during your lesson.

Teacher: I made sure the children all had pencils and workbooks. I made sure they were listening to me when I began to speak. I said, "Look at me. Look at me," to get their attention. I praised a shy child for raising her hand.

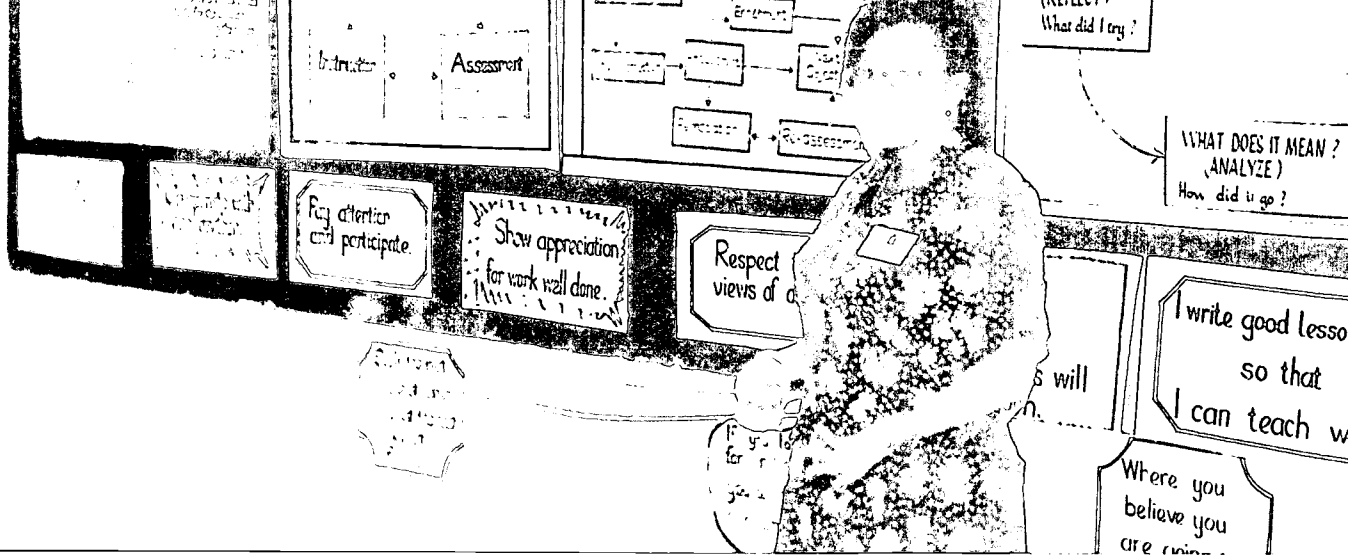
Master Teacher: What three or four things would you change about the way you taught?

The head teacher's response contrasts with that of the teacher who has just been observed teaching. In the first instance, before ILP training, the head teacher emphasized elements of a teacher's performance that need improvement; in the second, after training, the teacher stressed positive qualities she identified in her own classroom tech-

niques. By phrasing the request in positive terms—"Tell us three or four things you did well during your lesson"—the master teacher in the second instance forced the teacher to begin the discussion with positive examples, thus shifting the balance from judgment to a conversation about the lesson before turning to skills needing improvement.







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Since the mid-1980s, the corporate world has used appreciative inquiry to change behavior through a strengths-and-assets approach. Rather than just identifying problems and trying to solve them, or focusing on weaknesses and being demoralized by them, the appreciative inquiry methodology starts with positive aspects of an organization to help members create an empowering vision and to plan for the future.

All over Ghana, children, teachers, educational administrators, and community members participating in the ILP program are benefiting from an appreciative inquiry methodology, adapted from the world of organizational change. The “after” scenario on page 12 illustrates certain appreciative inquiry characteristics.

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vision and to plan for the future. In doing so, organizational members also address their problems.

In the mid-1980s, David Cooperrider and Shirad Srivastva, organizational behavior specialists at Case Western Reserve University in the United States, and Jane Watkins, an independent organizational development consultant, developed a multi-disciplinary approach to changing organizations. Drawing on research and writing about organizational behavior and from psychology, sociology, education, and their own organizational experience, they developed new ideas about organizational change that have since been tested and expanded by practitioners around the world.



Five core concepts undergird appreciative inquiry:

1. Image and action are linked (e.g., the placebo and Pygmalion effects or sports self-talk to psych oneself up to beat an opponent).
2. Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask.
3. Organizations have something they value about their past.
4. Organizations are not fixed: people create organizations and people can change them.
5. Building appreciative skills is a key leadership role. An effective leader keeps the eyes and minds of members of the group on its dream/vision for a better future.

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Appreciative inquiry uses a “4-D” cycle:

- Discover:** What are the good things you have, are doing?
- Dream:** Imagine the best organization you can have by working together.
- Design:** Plan the way you can work together to make the dream come true.
- Deliver:** Follow through with the plans; build on your strengths and talents.

The assets, or appreciative inquiry, approach does not ignore problems. It helps people deal with them more positively, actively, and creatively by seeking the root cause of success, not the root cause of failure. Damaging preconceptions of people tend to promote low expectations, even paralysis. Creating the expectation of excellence, on the other hand, often begets excellence.

In Ghana, the team implementing the ILP program seized on the idea of adapting the appreciative inquiry methodology for

educational change at all levels in the schools and communities that comprise the educational partnership. The thinking was that promoting self-esteem and the belief in the ability to succeed would reap significant educational results. Since 1998, appreciative inquiry has been the guiding philosophy and process being taught to inexperienced and experienced teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members to improve the learning achievements of primary school children. The approach,



combined with other interventions, is resulting in noticeable change.

"I am an old boy here," noted a father of two sons in a primary and lower secondary school in the capital city of Accra, using the term applied to graduates of the school. "For a while, there was a drastic decline. But now things have changed. I can see the difference in the classrooms since this new program started. I can tell that my children are learning." His pride in the school was apparent as he reported that "all schools think this school is one of the best." A new competitive spirit among some schools, according to one circuit supervisor, is a result of ILP.

The father serves on the school management committee, a mechanism for extending responsibility to various constituencies. The committee meets twice a term. Its members help strengthen the administration of the school, oversee certain infrastructural matters, and ensure that teaching materials are available.

Although he might not be able to define appreciative inquiry, the father

undoubtedly can see its results in a school where his sons are products of the approach. A dynamic, visionary head teacher figures prominently in the school's success and, in many ways, personifies much of what ILP's appreciative inquiry methodology stands for. Her open-door policy and warm, respectful approach encourage parents to visit classrooms and participate actively in their children's education. As a result, they understand that their involvement is essential for their children to succeed. "At one time, there was no homework for children," she pointed out. "That has changed. I ask parents to provide a lantern, a small table, and a stool for children to do homework at. Even if the parents can't read, at least they can give their children a place to study and a light."

Sometimes even that is impossible in certain homes. For those children the school provides a bench under a tree where they spend one hour after the school day ends doing homework. Teachers volunteer their time to supervise.

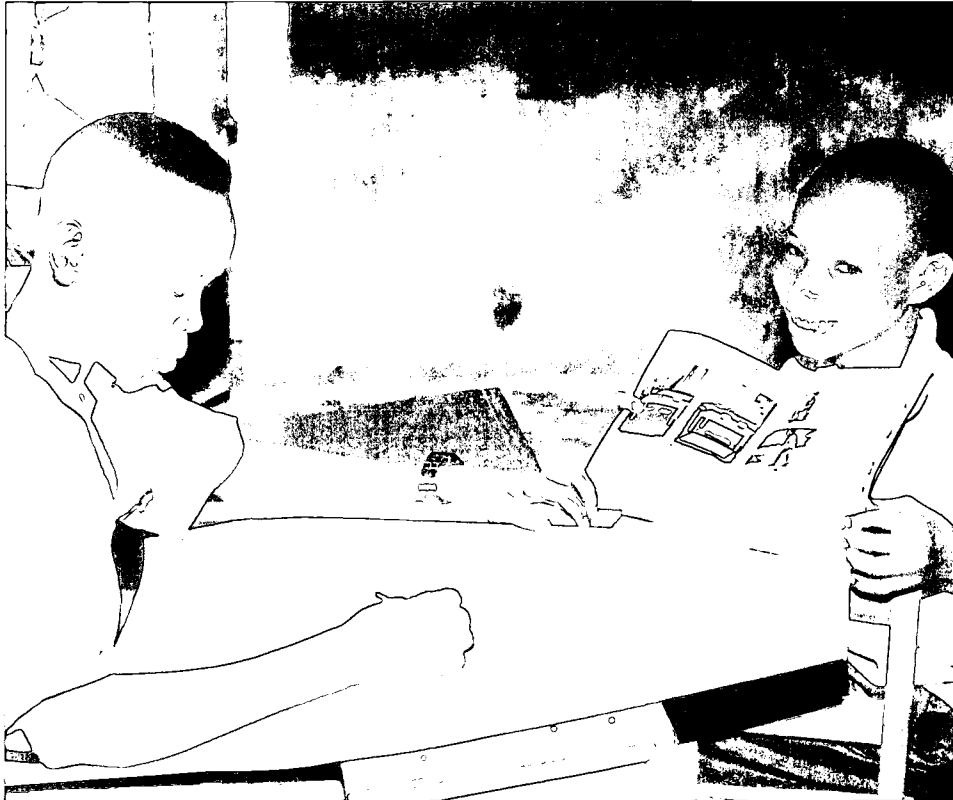
What we seek determines what we find.

What we find determines how we talk.

How we talk determines how we imagine together.

How we imagine together determines what we achieve.

—David Cooperrider



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The head teacher's positive approach and dynamism have trickled down to the teachers, whose teaching is energetic; classrooms are lively; and stimulating learning props are plentiful—posters, counting tools such as bottle tops for mathematics lessons, and a miniature desk-top grocery store set up with tea, cookies, and other foods so young children can practice exchanging money and giving correct change.

In effect, the head teacher is keeping teachers' and parents' eyes on the dream of

the best school possible and on effective ways to realize the dream.

As it does in the organizational world, the assets approach to working in schools and communities changes people's focus from identifying problems and deficiencies in their schools to focusing on their strengths. It is an energizing exercise that enables people to identify resources and current and past strengths of their schools and communities and increase their desire to make changes.

Applied to schools and communities, the 4-D appreciative inquiry cycle proceeds as follows:

Discover: What are the good things we have at our school?

What are the good things we are doing?

Asking positive questions elicits positive responses. When teachers focus on their good teaching experiences, they begin to learn about their qualities as teachers—that is, they become self-analytical. Head teachers, circuit supervisors, district officials, and community members also condition themselves to think positively and identify their assets: one or two good teachers; an effective school management committee and PTA; an effective head teacher; a successful son or daughter who is a graduate of the school; a good circuit supervisor who has a motorcycle and gets to the school regularly; and so forth.

Dream: Imagine the best school we can have by working together.

ILP trainers assist teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors in envisioning what they wish their schools to become. At a community meeting, parents and other community members have an opportunity to contribute to the vision so that it becomes the statement of the entire community's dream toward which it works to improve teaching and learning at the school. The dream is possible because the community has already discovered and affirmed its past and current successes.

The head teacher, charged with keeping the dream/vision in front of the staff and community, rallies them to do what is necessary to fulfill the dream.

Design: Think how teachers, students, head teachers, circuit supervisors, and the community can collaborate to make the dream a reality.

The community and school jointly prepare a community-school improvement plan that constitutes a design for improvements. The plan identifies those responsible for activities and includes the schedule. The plan is dynamic—that is, it changes and is modified as tasks are completed and new ones added. It is also a concrete guide for the school and community to monitor progress toward their dream.

Deliver: Follow through with the plans. Build on strengths and talents.

During school- and district-based and residential workshops, ILP staff begin working with school staff on the school improvement plan. After ILP staff depart, the head teacher, circuit supervisor, and teachers continue working on the plan together. The improved teaching, learning, and instructional leadership that occur daily also constitute the “delivery.” These are the steps to sustaining long-term and continuous change.



Certain assets are apparent in every partnership school and community: Teachers are open to change and appreciate support from master teachers.... Children are hungry for new methods. They actively participate in lessons taught by strangers; they stay past class time to master new skills...they insist that their work be graded; and they are cheerful and happy. And parents are concerned about their children's education and demonstrate their concern by good attendance at community meetings with ILP teams.

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The ILP training team introduces, and then reinforces, the assets-based approach during ILP's school-based interventions, which include a focus on lesson planning and presentation, continuous assessment, leadership, and learning from experience.

ILP project staff have found that, despite many problems and concerns, certain assets are apparent in every partnership school and community: Teachers are open to change and appreciate support from master teachers, and they are willing to

demonstrate improvement in preparation and presentation of lessons and use of instructional materials. Children are hungry for new methods. They actively participate in lessons taught by strangers; they stay past class time to master new skills, especially in mathematics; they insist that their work be graded; and they are cheerful and happy. And parents are concerned about their children's education and demonstrate their concern by good attendance at community meetings with ILP teams.

Master Teaching

Decades of teacher education programs around the world have yielded information that does not vary much from country to country. Teachers frequently feel isolated professionally and geographically and welcome the opportunity to speak with other teachers and learn from their experiences. They are anxious to have information about classroom management and creation of instructional materials.

They appreciate the opportunity to improve professionally and to work in their school settings; in some instances, teachers have attended training programs voluntarily after hours and on weekends, even without incentives such as promotions and salary increases. Teachers often feel threatened—and embarrassed—by school inspectors, whom they view as critics rather than supporters.

One teacher education methodology that has been received with acclaim is master teaching, a nonthreatening approach that enables teachers to learn effective pedagogical practices from experienced teachers with a reputation for excellence and demonstrated ability among their peers. ILP shares many characteristics of successful master teaching programs.

Two-day workshops launch the ILP project with educators, local government officials, teacher union representatives, traditional leaders, and community members in school districts across the country. ILP team members, consisting of Ghanaian master

teachers and ILP technical advisors, introduce the appreciative inquiry philosophy as a frame for the interactions and activities of the workshop as participants exchange perspectives and ideas on school quality and learning outcomes in their schools. The introduction of appreciative inquiry signals to the participants the positive and reinforcing approach the project will use in classroom interventions with teachers and students over the next few years.

The 18 master teachers, drawn from the retired teacher workforce and supported by a small cadre of teachers in service on loan from the Ghana Education Service, are the backbone of the project. These master teachers form three-person teams that visit each school three times a year (once each term) to demonstrate good teaching practices in the classroom for all P1–P6 teachers to observe. Over the life of the project, approximately 2,000 teachers and more than 60,000 pupils throughout the country will benefit directly from the demonstrations. After each visit, teachers sign a learning



THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

THE EXPERIENCE
(TEACH)

using a variety
of teaching aids

EXERCISES
TYPES OF ASSESSMENT
FORMAL & INFORMAL



The teacher moves among the seated children, talking to them and assisting them; children use the blackboard to demonstrate answers, and they help each other in their groups.

agreement (see Figure 2), committing themselves to specific actions before the next visit. Head teachers, circuit supervisors, and district training officers sign similar statements, agreeing to assist teachers with their activities and to share ideas with colleagues.

The idea of a contract, which the learning agreement suggests, gives a gravity to the undertaking that might not exist otherwise. It is a formal commitment with responsibilities and a schedule and suggests that, in return for carrying out its terms, the teacher will benefit by receiving additional classroom assistance and support from master teachers.

Early in the program, master teachers help teachers to rearrange their classes in groups of four or five children, replacing the traditional rows with tables or desks around the room. Teachers quickly begin to see the benefits: they are able to give extra attention to pupils who need it as the others work independently in groups; children learn from each other and from teachers; and children and teachers alike are energized by an approach that is out of the ordinary. The classroom is lively as both teachers and students move about: the teacher moves among the seated chil-

dren, talking to them and assisting them; children use the blackboard to demonstrate answers, and they help each other in their groups.

ILP concentrates heavily on the creation and use of low-cost teaching and learning materials. From the start, teachers see master teachers using effective instructional materials. With just a few lessons, most teachers become confident that they can create their own instructional aids from materials around them—or when unable to be creative themselves, find ways to get assistance. In one instance, for example, a teacher asked an artistic student to copy a picture from a book onto poster paper for her to hang in her classroom. Everyone benefited: the student felt needed and was able to contribute; the teacher received much-needed artistic assistance; and the students had an instructional poster on their classroom wall.

During each visit, master teachers demonstrate a mathematics and an English lesson, one lesson in a lower primary class and the other in an upper primary. In an immediate follow-up plenary session, teachers comment on what they observed—from both the master teachers and the students—ask questions, and get advice.



Figure 2: Learning Agreement

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

DISTRICT: _____

SCHOOL: _____

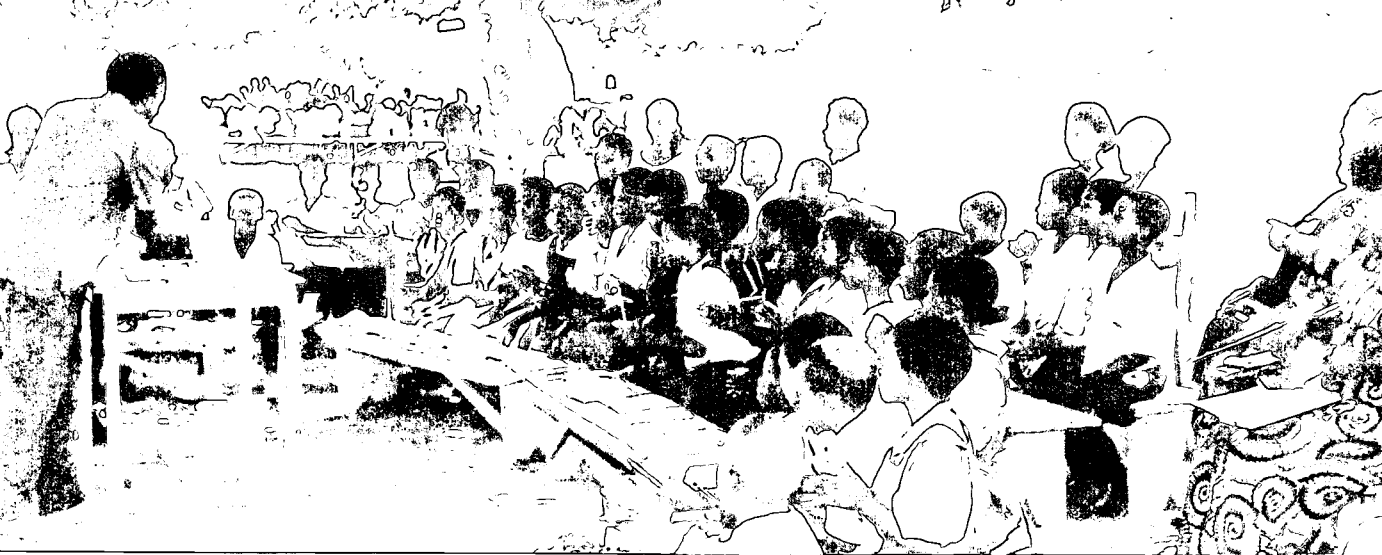
1. I, _____, agree to try two new teaching methods each week between today and the end of the school term. The teaching methods are:

2. I also agree to use two different teaching aids each, in English and in mathematics, between today and the end of the school term. The teaching aids are:

3. I agree to share any good practices that I discover while working in the classroom about the use of new teaching methods and teaching aids with my colleagues. I will also write in my journal about any successes and/or challenges I experience as I try new ways of teaching.

4. When the QUIPS ILP team visits my school next term, I will be ready to talk about some of my experiences and show what I have written in my journal.

SIGNED: _____



Master teachers do extensive preparation for the demonstration lessons. The day before the lessons, they follow eight steps, abiding by the precepts of appreciative inquiry in their interaction with teachers and pupils:

STEP 1: Visit the teacher and pupils of the class to be taught and become acquainted with them.

STEP 2: Observe the space, furniture, and books.

STEP 3: Ask the teacher where he or she is in the English/mathematics syllabus.

STEP 4: Ask the teacher which topics are difficult to teach and, therefore, may have been skipped over in the syllabus or taught poorly. Compare the information with what the ILP project has found, in general, to be difficult for teachers to teach.

STEP 5: Review a random sample of math and English exercise books to determine the number of assignments students have worked on and how many have been graded.

STEP 6: Ask the teacher about the general ability of the pupils in English language proficiency, reading, knowledge of basic mathematics operations (if the demonstration class is in math).

STEP 7: Observe the teacher teach his/her class.

STEP 8: Based on the discussion and observation, finalize plans for the demonstration lesson.

Teachers, head teacher, and circuit supervisor... are trained as a team, not as individuals, so that there is always a critical mass at a school to provide mutual support and to work for change.

Master teachers must be flexible enough to change their teaching plans, even during the demonstration, to accommodate the realities of the classroom. They must be prepared to substitute alternative activities if, for example, students are not as proficient in English as the teacher claimed. Master teachers are also instructed not to introduce into a 30-minute demonstration too many new ideas, instructional materials, or teaching methods. The key is to demonstrate only a few good teaching methods and the core points of the subject matter. The next ILP team—and the newly retrained head teacher and circuit supervisor—will continue the work.

In the plenary session for teachers, master teachers, and trainers that immediately follows the demonstration class, master teachers begin with the same self-evaluation they require of the teachers: They mention three or four things they did very well during the lesson and three or four things they would improve on the next time. They encourage teachers to comment on what they observed, beginning with positive comments and following with things the master teachers could improve on. They ask teachers to identify teaching methods and instructional materials they saw in use. If the teachers omit any or are unable to identify those used, the master teachers tell them. They answer questions teachers have about the lesson.

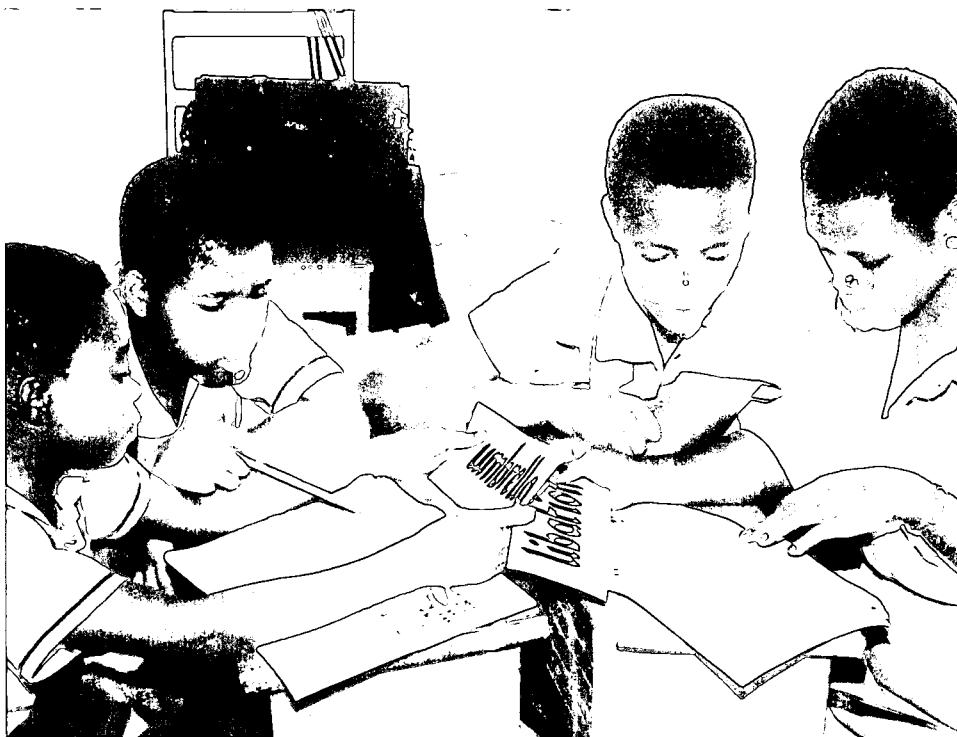
Reinforcement and Follow-Up Activities

Teachers are not left to fend for themselves between visits from master teachers. ILP has in place a structure that supports the teachers continuously and, at the same time, prepares others within the educational system to assume full responsibility for project activities. Teachers, head teacher, and circuit supervisor, for example, are trained as a team, not as individuals, so that there is always a critical mass at a school to provide mutual support and to work for change.

Prior to the school-based training, the head teacher and circuit supervisor join other education management personnel in a six-day ILP-sponsored residential workshop that strengthens their management skills and begins to prepare them to take over project activities. Circuit supervisors also attend ILP nonresidential management training workshops that, among other things, improve their ability to appraise the performance of head teachers.

Soon after school-based training has begun, teachers, head teacher, and circuit supervisor attend a nine-day residential workshop that reinforces the teaching-learning practices demonstrated by the master teachers and introduces new skills in pedagogy and preparation of teaching-learning aids. This workshop training strengthens in particular the ability of the head teacher and circuit supervisor—

A variety of activities within and outside the classroom combine to support improved classroom practices and to sustain the momentum and teacher morale between visits from master teachers.



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the school's key instructional and management leaders—to understand, coach, and mentor teachers in follow-up interactions. At least twice a year, head teachers must assess the needs of their staff and design, present, and evaluate a school-based training activity. The residential workshop helps them to begin planning the training. The workshop likewise assists circuit supervi-

sors, who at least twice a year must assess the needs of school staff in their circuits/districts and determine the content and design of a training activity.

In short, a variety of activities within and outside the classroom combine to support improved classroom practices and to sustain the momentum and teacher morale between visits from master teachers.

Sample Demonstration Lessons

All teachers in a partnership school, not just the teacher of the class being taught, attend demonstration lessons that highlight a variety of methodologies, depending on the style of the master teacher and the classroom reality. The following examples feature different but effective approaches that ILP master teachers have used.

- #1 A master teacher, probably a stranger to the children, in a P6 English class of about 23 pupils spread out at six table-desks around the room decides that the pupils are shy and uncommunicative and need warming up before a lesson begins. After an exchange of lively *good mornings*, the master teacher asks questions about football and requests that two girls demonstrate a jumping game for the class. He draws out a shy student by asking him to demonstrate how he plays the drums by beating out the rhythm on his desk. Although the introduction takes nearly ten minutes of class time, it succeeds in making the children more receptive to learning than they would be otherwise. At that point, the master teacher introduces the lesson of the day—festivals. Even then he does not launch immediately into the textbook readings on the subject. He first mentions certain words and concepts the children will encounter in their texts—some of which they had demonstrated knowledge of during the introduction—writes the words on the blackboard, and asks the pupils to pronounce them. The pupils read silently for ten minutes, in some instances helping each other to understand difficult passages, as the teacher moves around the room, sometimes just observing the children, sometimes speaking to them. When the ten minutes are up, the master teacher asks questions about the reading. Observing an unresponsive child, he encourages her with a simple, “I know you can do this.” Although some children raise their hands quickly each time a question is asked, the teacher waits before calling on anyone, to give the others a chance. He calls on girls as often as he calls on boys to answer. The class is told to applaud when a child answers correctly.
- #2 A master teacher in a P1 mathematics class of 41, seeing no need for a warm-up, begins by asking the children to look at her and hold up their pencils, to make sure she has their attention. Her smile and easy manner make them comfortable immediately. She combines a variety of approaches to introduce the concept of subtraction: blocks on her desk that can be rearranged as children subtract certain quantities; squares on the blackboard to be filled in with the correct number; bottle tops in a pile on each child’s table to be counted. The children are seated in groups of four at small tables. The teacher begins by posing questions to the whole class. As the lesson progresses, some children join the teacher at her desk, counting the blocks. Others manipulate their bottle tops and then work in their exercise books, sometimes talking among themselves about the lesson. When the group at the teacher’s desk has finished counting, the teacher moves around the room to work with individual groups and review workbook exercises. She leans toward a seated child as she addresses him, touching him lightly on the shoulder. The reassuring pat encourages the shy child to respond.

Community Empowerment

Substantive parent involvement in schools has a positive impact on teachers, students, and, usually, the educational system in general.

It is one thing, however, to tell parents that they must be involved in their children's education because parent involvement is a proven factor in academic achievement. It is another thing to help them become active, especially when such involvement has not been part of their experience: they may never have been asked to participate, they may be intimidated by school authorities, and so forth.

Ghana is changing that picture and enabling parents and other community members to improve the quality of teaching and learning directly. Through preparation and then implementation of a community-school improvement plan, the community assumes responsibility for certain actions and eventually reaches the stage where it feels empowered to influence what occurs at the school, especially inside the classroom. This process gives the community a sense of control and ownership and is therefore likely

to be sustained in the long term. The fact that the plan is dynamic further increases the likelihood of a sustained process: the plan is open to review and reassessment over time and, as the community and school gain experience with implementation, they draw lessons and make adjustments that can produce more effective outcomes.

Community-School Improvement Plan

Community members do not work alone. Together with traditional leaders, teachers, members of the school management committee, district education officials, and other local leaders, they engage in a structured process, facilitated by ILP staff,² that mobilizes them to action to improve learning.

²The Community School Alliances project, another component of QUIPS, also facilitates community-school improvement planning and implementation.







Four steps comprise the community-school improvement planning and implementation:

STEP 1: FORMULATE A VISION STATEMENT.

A vision statement reflects consensus on what the school is to become—that is, it articulates expectations of the broader community for an effective school in which students achieve at desired levels. A good vision statement is realistically optimistic: it focuses on a better future while recognizing real-world constraints, and it sets measurable targets that can be attained in one to two years.

The act of creating a vision statement is as important as the statement itself, since the process results in an energized and enthusiastic group, unified by common values and a commitment to a common purpose, whose members must work together to achieve the vision.

STEP 2: FRAME A MATRIX FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.

A six-column matrix provides a framework for action that grows out of the vision statement: (1) components and targets, (2) actions to be taken, (3) who is responsible, (4) resources needed, (5) timeframe, and (6) who will monitor.

Column 1 — Components and targets

A focus on a combination of four complementary and mutually reinforcing components is necessary for sustained impact on improvement in learning: (1) teaching and learning, (2) school management, (3) school facilities, and (4) community-school relationships and support. Although targets under each component vary among communities, the following are likely to be identified:

Teaching and learning:

Adequate numbers of English, math, Ghanaian language and culture textbooks, teacher handbooks; availability of teaching and learning aids/materials for use by teachers; use of different types of student assessment procedures; use of a variety of pedagogical techniques or teaching methods; assignment of written homework and in-class exercises; attendance at in-service courses by teachers to improve their professional skills and competence; teacher preparation of detailed lesson plans based on the curriculum/syllabus for each classroom session.

School management:

Punctuality and regular attendance by teachers and pupils; effective supervision of staff by head teacher; effective classroom organization—i.e., arrangement of classroom furniture, combination of whole-class teaching, small-group teaching, individual work; effective use of school timetable, instructional time, contact hours; regularly scheduled oversight by PTA and school management committee officers for effective school functioning; regular contacts with the district education office by the head teacher for supply of textbooks and other educational materials; head teacher observation and supervision of teachers' teaching in the classroom; grading of teachers' lesson plans by the head teacher; head teacher supervision and support to teachers in the preparation of teaching and learning aids and monitoring their effective use; regular school staff meetings to share classroom instructional experience and deal with particular instructional issues; detailed, transparent record keeping of all fees collected for school activities.

School facilities:

Safe classrooms, office, and store; library box for each class; desks for students and teachers; toilet facilities for both boys and girls; drinking water for pupils; a neat and attractive school compound; playing field for physical education and games, and to organize assemblies.

(See discussion of school infrastructure activities on page 33.)

Community-school relationships and support:

Regular visits by parents and community leaders to school; provision for welfare of teachers; parental supervision of children's homework and after-school studying; improved fellowship between parents and teachers; improved attendance at school management committee/PTA meetings; improved attendance for communal labor activities.

Column 2 — Actions to be taken

Concrete actions to reach the targets identified in column 1 should be achievable within six to 12 months and capable of being measured. If, for example, the target under the teaching and learning component is *adequate English textbooks*, corresponding actions might be:

- Head teacher will request textbooks in English from district education office.
- If texts are not available, head teacher will inform the chairman of the school management committee who will ask parents to take up a collection to buy books listed by head teacher.

If, under the same component, the target is *assignment of homework and in-class exercises*, the corresponding action might be:

- Teachers will assign a minimum of three homework assignments and five in-class exercises in English and math per week.

Column 3 — Who is responsible

This column specifies who is responsible for taking a particular action: head teacher, circuit supervisor, PTA chair, school management committee chairman, and so forth. When more than one person is responsible, a lead person who takes overall responsibility, with help from others, should be identified.

Column 4 — Resources needed

Resources may include money (a special levy or part of regular school fees) or materials, such as sand or stone, communal labor, or time. Money and materials are often less important than the time and involvement of people who will make things happen.

Column 5 — Timeframe

This column indicates when an action begins and ends. Actions requiring more than a year usually should be reconsidered or broken down into smaller steps that require less time so that progress can be tracked.

Column 6 — Who will monitor

One or more people will monitor implementation of actions (column 2) and determine their adequacy. Monitors should be prepared to report regularly to a designated authority—the school management committee, for example—on progress being made. Appropriate monitoring ensures that the improvement plan reflects reality and is revised whenever necessary.

STEP 3: SHARE COMMUNITY-SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN WITH DISTRICT OFFICIALS.

Receiving concurrence from district education officials is essential for two reasons: (1) to keep them informed of the community's thinking about education needs and priorities, and (2) to set the stage for the district to provide the external support (both financial and human resources) necessary to make the plan successful.

STEP 4: IMPLEMENT THE PLAN AND MONITOR ITS PROGRESS.

Implementation and monitoring entail a partnership of teachers, parents, community leaders, students, and district officials. They ensure that transparent mechanisms are in place to document issues, problems, progress, lessons learned, and results.

Community School Improvement Plan

VISION STATEMENT _____

Components and Targets	Action To Be Taken	Who Is Responsible	Resources Needed	Time-frame	Who Monitors
Teaching and Learning					
School Management					
School Facilities					
Community-School Relationships and Support					

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School Infrastructure

Through the ILP program, Ghana is also empowering communities financially. Each district is eligible for \$30,000 to allocate among its three partnership school communities to improve an existing school or build additional classrooms. The choice is left up to the community. The large majority have elected to build a three-classroom structure to replace weak structures and/or to accommodate expanding enrollments. In most communities in which infrastructure projects were well underway at the beginning of 2000, parents showed a new commitment to their schools and, in some communities, increased their resource contributions beyond those originally agreed to. Some communities added library rooms, built latrines, and improved the physical environ-

ment of the schools by planting trees and flowers. Such activities brought parents and other community members to the school grounds more regularly than in the past.

In almost every district, the local district assembly also contributes funds and/or material support to the infrastructure projects. The district assembly Works Supervisor provides technical support to each project, and the Senior District Finance Officer helps to maintain the financial records for the infrastructure bank account established by each community. Hence the infrastructure project not only mobilizes community resources and commitments, but also helps to strengthen district and community cooperation, which is part of the government's larger decentralization strategy.

Allowing a community to select the school infrastructure project, requiring



Communities have begun to understand what is happening in the schools and to support the teachers. In effect, USAID said to communities in Ghana, ‘If you build a commitment to improving basic education in your community, we will be with you, helping to make it happen,’ and partnership communities took up the challenge.

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a contribution of its resources such as time, labor, or materials, and providing it with funds to make the project a reality are three measures necessary to establish “ownership” of community schools and, hence, local support for basic education. The agreement is a give-and-take one, akin to the learning agreement, or contract, that teachers sign: it obligates the community to carry out certain actions on a set schedule, but puts the community in charge and promises it something in return. The circular reasoning of sorts—resources are available for those who do their part; community members do their part because resources are available—has resulted in new classrooms to ease the strain on existing ones. More than that, communities have begun to understand what is happen-

ing in the schools and to support the teachers. In effect, USAID said to communities in Ghana, “If you build a commitment to improving basic education in your community, we will be with you, helping to make it happen,” and partnership communities took up the challenge.

At the same time, community members begin to realize that their real empowerment comes from within, from the change in their own behavior toward their schools and teachers. The ILP project reinforces the new behavior through a process by which the community prioritizes its education needs and, as it does so, devises ways to maintain and refurbish schools without depending so much on external support from local government or other donors.

The following 12 steps guide partnership communities in achieving their infrastructure goals:

1. Community selects project and submits proposal to District Assembly and District Education Office.
2. District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) and District Assembly review and approve project.
3. ILP project director receives recommendation from District Assembly, reviews project proposal, and, if in concurrence, approves ILP funding.
4. ILP releases the initial tranche of funds to bank account cosigned by member of School Management Committee and District Assembly/DEOC representative.
5. School Management Committee takes responsibility for project implementation.
6. Competitive bids are solicited for procurement of materials.
7. Qualified architects/engineers, funded by the ILP project, inspect the plans and construction of new buildings or structural improvements to existing buildings for technical soundness.
8. Community contributes labor, materials, and other resources—for example, sand or gravel—to the project.
9. ILP technical advisor provides technical input and oversight during implementation.
10. School Management Committee keeps records on purchase and use of construction materials open for review at any time by USAID, ILP staff, District Assembly, and others. The District Assembly Finance Officer maintains open books on all financial transactions in the infrastructure account.
11. ILP releases additional tranches of funds, up to the total amount approved for each project, as necessary and after technical review of progress by ILP technical advisor.
12. ILP technical advisor certifies that the project has been completed.

The Government of Ghana's financial audit, at the end of 1999, of the 18 school infrastructure projects, all of which were either completed or more than 95 percent completed, revealed that the records and finances were in order, apart from some minor record-keeping gaps.

Summary: ILP Strategies and Strengths

Certain strategies used successfully by the ILP program are among those cited by teacher education experts as effective for improving teacher performance and children's learning in developing countries. (See, for example, Craig, Kraft, and du Plessis, *Teacher Development: Making an Impact*, USAID/AED and The World Bank, November 1998.) Others, particularly strategies related to community participation in education, have been proven effective time and again in both the industrialized and developing world. Direct experience with such programs attests to the effectiveness of the approaches.

The following strategies that underlie the master teaching and community empowerment components of ILP, and certain of the philosophies on which appreciative inquiry is based, contribute significantly to the strengths of the project and its potential for substantially increasing learning gains.

Master teaching

Highly experienced corps of teacher trainers knowledgeable about subject matter and primary school teaching methodologies

The skills, knowledge, and attitudes of the ILP master teachers include subject matter expertise; ability to plan and present demonstration lessons with accompanying teaching and learning aids; ability to work collegially with teachers who sometimes,

or often, have much less experience, subject matter knowledge, facility using English, and confidence in teaching; patience to sit with teachers as they plan lessons and create instructional materials; ability to give balanced and constructive feedback to teachers on their teaching; and the stamina to work long hours in all kinds of situations.

Collegiality is an essential element of the program. Master teachers are taught that the way in which they work with school teams is as important as the content of their work. Because of the collegial spirit, teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors come to trust master teachers and are honest with them about their professional needs.

Master teachers continue to learn and reflect on their own practice as master teachers, examine their own growth, and are open to new ideas.



Money

toothpaste

\$2500.00

Refresh

\$800.00

ink

\$1500.00

\$1600.00



School-based teacher education

This type of in-service work is effective because it occurs in the midst of the realities of each school and community. By working side-by-side with teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors, master teachers gain an appreciation of the conditions under which staff work. The methodologies introduced, therefore, are practical and immediate—that is, they address real constraints to good teaching in that school. Teachers receive instant feedback on their teaching and answers to their questions.

In general, ILP training staff have found that teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors need to improve:

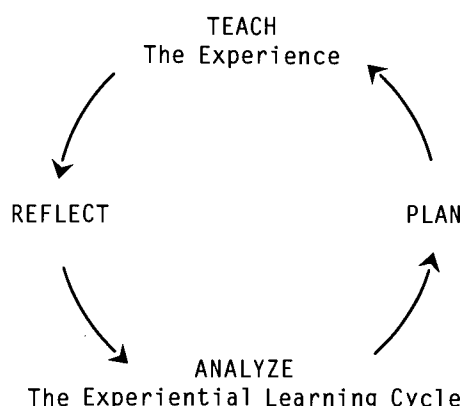
- lesson plans and ability to transfer from lesson plans to practice;
- preparation and use of instructional materials;
- variety of teaching methods and practice of child-centered teaching;
- questioning techniques;
- classroom management skills and ability to group children for learning.
- promotion of positive behavior by teachers toward children;
- preparation and maintenance of an equitable learning environment for all children;
- certain content areas in mathematics and English; and
- knowledge and application of basic learning theories, especially those regarding the ways in which children learn.

Practice-oriented learning accompanied by sufficient theory to elucidate and justify the chosen teaching practices

During a typical two-day visit, master teachers may spend much of the first day in group sessions on theory and then conduct a demonstration lesson that applies the theoretical principles discussed in the group session. The group meets again to discuss their observation of theories applied, what they noticed, what they missed. For a continuous assessment intervention, for example, the first day elucidates the variety of assessment tools a teacher can use. For teachers who up to now have used only written examinations to assess student achievement, discovering that observing pupils and asking them oral questions are also assessment tools can be an eye opener. Day 2 activities occur primarily in the classroom, where the emphasis is entirely on classroom teaching behaviors. Teachers learn to observe which children raise their hands often and which do not raise their hands at all. They note which students respond positively when they are praised for a correct answer. They see the effect of a teacher's touching a child on the shoulder as she speaks to him and draws him out. They observe how children help each other in groups and learn from their peers.

ILP teacher education activities are hands on. Teachers observe effective teaching methodologies demonstrated in the classroom, analyze them, practice them the same day, and receive immediate feedback from master teachers.

Figure 3: Learning from Experience



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Teachers as active learners

ILP teacher education activities are hands on. Teachers observe effective teaching methodologies demonstrated in the classroom, analyze them, practice them the same day, and receive immediate feedback from master teachers. A signed teaching agreement commits the teachers to practicing certain methods and using instructional materials between visits by the master teachers.

Experiential learning and self-study as integral elements of the program

From the first school-based intervention to the last, teachers are taught how to learn from their classroom experiences. Immediately after a classroom observation, teachers critique their own lessons before master teachers offer observation. In the spirit of appreciative inquiry, the teachers' and master teachers' critiques begin with positive comments about the lesson.

A simple chart (Figure 3), introduced in the first workshop, shows graphically the process of learning from experience and suggests the mnemonic, TRAP, by which teachers can remember the elements entailed in "trapping" good pedagogical practices.

Master teachers offer advice about the cycle's components and pose questions to encourage teachers to engage in a conscious process of thinking about their teaching. The advice goes like this:

Just because we have an experience doesn't mean we learned anything. As teachers, just because we prepare a lesson and TEACH does not necessarily mean that we are learning more about how we perform as teachers. You give yourselves a better opportunity to learn if you take the time to consciously REFLECT on and ANALYZE what happened while you were teaching. How did you feel about the different activities? How did the children either respond or not respond to different parts of your lesson? Which of the teaching-learning materials were useful in helping the children meet the learning objectives? Once you have taken the time to reflect on your teaching, you can then consciously PLAN what practices you would like to continue and what practices you would like to change the next time you teach.

Experiential learning relates also to student experiences. ILP emphasizes pupil-focused instruction—that is, instruction by a teacher acting as facilitator for learning activities rather than as a dispenser of knowledge to passive students. The teacher organizes learning experiences in which students actively participate.

Modeling of good classroom practices—e.g., individualized, small-group, and large-group instruction—through demonstration lessons

The sample demonstration lessons in the preceding section illustrate such classroom practices.

Team approach to school staff (teachers, head teacher, and circuit supervisor)—team planning, teaching, creating instructional

materials, peer review of lesson plans—to create a critical mass at the school working for change

The workshops, including presentations of theory and demonstration lessons, and community meetings are not intended only for teachers. Head teachers and circuit supervisors also participate, since they are instructional leaders who help to ensure that effective teaching takes place. They, too, sign agreements similar to those signed by teachers, committing themselves to practicing new approaches and sharing information with colleagues. Team leaders conduct special meetings with just the head teacher and circuit supervisor to discuss and offer suggestions about instructional leadership and management issues about the school during these two-day, school-based workshops.



The idea of a team working together toward shared goals is enforced. So is collegiality: master teachers, teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors not only treat each other with respect and as valued contributors, they also treat community members the same way. Sharing of information, from baseline data results to successes and challenges in the schools, is the norm.

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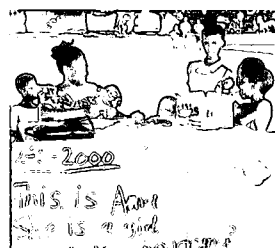
Community empowerment

Initial empowerment of community through community-school improvement planning and financial support for infrastructure improvement

In Ghana's recently decentralized educational system in which dialogue among all constituencies is still not universal, involving community members in decisions about school quality and empowering them financially to undertake projects is an effective way to engage them in support for basic education.

Two-way accountability: community discusses progress and issues in community meetings; community reports back on infrastructure progress; team reports to community on progress made in the schools

The idea of a team working together toward shared goals is enforced. So is collegiality: master teachers, teachers, head teachers, and circuit supervisors not only treat each other with respect and as valued contributors, they also treat community members the same way. Sharing of information, from baseline data results to successes and challenges in the schools, is the norm.



Appreciative inquiry

Respect for teachers as professionals with valuable experience and knowledge; pupils valued as human beings deserving of kindness and courtesy; adherence to the belief that children learn when they are praised and loved

Teachers are appreciated for their accomplishments before the ILP project and during it. Children are encouraged to participate actively in class by kind words or touches from teachers. Teachers give positive, constructive feedback to pupils to encourage learning. Pupils applaud each other when they answer correctly. Display of pupils' work on classroom walls signals the value placed on their contributions.

Acknowledgment of girls as important contributors in the classroom

Master teachers demonstrate, through theoretical discussion and practice, how to maintain an equitable learning environment. In demonstration classes they call on girls as often as boys and avoid enforcing gender stereotypes. Teachers are encouraged to make teaching and learning materials that depict boys and girls and men and women in nonstereotypical roles. Master teachers raise the consciousness of the teachers themselves in terms of how male and female teachers and head teachers and

circuit supervisors treat each other and how they present themselves to their pupils.

Acknowledgment of community members for their contributions

Community meetings offer opportunities for the ILP team to praise and thank parents and other community members publicly for donating their labor, time, and other resources for infrastructure projects and to elicit their views on the education of their children. These meetings are also a chance to check in with the community on its progress on the community-school improvement plans, an important part of the transformation process at the school. The check-in is part of the "design" and "deliver" stages of appreciative inquiry.

Encouragement of a supportive environment for sustained change

The training ILP provides in personnel management and organizational development for circuit supervisors and other education officials, in the context of appreciative inquiry, ensures that a structure for mutual reinforcement is in place to support ILP objectives once USAID involvement ends.

Teachers are appreciated for their accomplishments....Teachers give positive, constructive feedback to pupils to encourage learning.... Display of pupils' work on classroom walls signals the value placed on their contributions.



Prospects for Sustainability

The ILP project is having an impact beyond the partnership schools. In the northern regions of Ghana, ILP technical advisors and master teachers have trained Catholic Relief Services staff to introduce ILP interventions into 72 schools in the 24 districts in which CRS works, thus supporting the smooth expansion of a common pedagogical strategy.

The overall success of ILP work has led some district directors to request assistance in spreading the master teacher training to additional schools. ILP, therefore, has invited head teachers from nonpartnership schools to participate in district management workshops; in some instances, at the request of district directors of education, training has been open to additional circuit supervisors and other district officers. In other efforts to spread effective interventions as quickly as possible, ILP staff are implementing a series of training-of-trainers programs to enable regional and district education staff to carry the training to even more schools.

ILP staff have created complete trainer's manuals—"how-to" guides for each school-based intervention—in great detail with accompanying illustrations that document teaching-learning procedures for Ghanaian teachers and head teachers to replicate. The ILP project team is also preparing additional methodological tools for teaching English and mathematics

concepts in ways so that children can grasp them easily.

Furthermore, a sustainability plan being put into effect ensures that extension of project interventions beyond the present parameters will become a reality. Head teachers, circuit supervisors, and district personnel are developing an action plan to continue in-service training more broadly throughout the districts after the project ends. A highly participatory workshop to devise a methodology for spreading ILP work will engage a wide range of participants: other donors in Ghana—UNICEF and the Department for International Development (DFID), the British donor agency, for example—Ghana's district and regional education officials, teacher training college faculty, teachers and head teachers, PTA and school management committee members, and traditional and religious leaders. Since the ILP approach to master teaching and community participation in education can easily stand by itself or enhance other donor or government







Since the ILP approach to master teaching and community participation in education can easily stand by itself or enhance other donor or government programs, the opportunities are great for introducing it more widely throughout Ghana and thus sustaining it.

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The workshop is designed to have specific outcomes to ensure that ILP interventions are sustained in partnership schools and spread more widely to others: A point person will be designated to coordinate in-service work in partnership schools and spread it to nonpartnership schools. He or she will ensure that communication is maintained between the district and ILP project staff and between and among schools implementing ILP innovations. Districts will prepare plans of action for ongoing in-service training for all circuit supervisors, head teachers, and teachers. The plans will include feedback systems to ensure communication of good

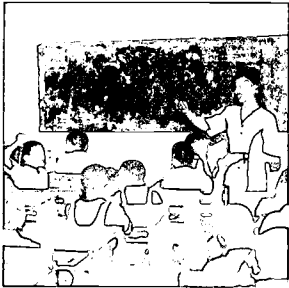
practices among schools, districts, the Ministry of Education/GES, teacher training colleges, universities, donors, and others. Partnership schools will provide examples of ways to spread ideas about in-service work. Each partnership school will review and revise its community-school improvement plan.

The project is also having a trickle-down effect that, while difficult to measure, is very real, according to anecdotal reports. Circuit supervisors and head teachers for partnership schools commit themselves in writing to sharing information about new teaching and supervisory methodologies with nonpartnership colleagues throughout the country. One enthusiastic circuit supervisor captured the thoughts of many educators who are benefiting from ILP

interventions: “I never knew what to look for in a classroom,” he commented in a meeting with a head teacher. “Now I do. At weekly meetings, I tell other district supervisors what I have learned from ILP. They are always anxious to hear what I have to say.”

In combination, ILP components are helping schools and communities to acquire tools and a commitment to begin a change process that will improve the quality of teaching and learning at each school. At the same time, ILP enables educators and community members to build the self-confidence and sense of ownership and

responsibility necessary to take charge of the change process and continue it beyond the life of ILP support. The project promotes not dependency but self-reliance, hope, and knowledge that those within the community and school can face their own challenges and build their own capacity to improve their schools. ILP links communities—head teachers, teachers, circuit supervisors, members of school management committees and PTAs, and institutions, resource people, and others—to each other in a way that weaves a web of resources and support from within a school to other schools and to communities across the country.



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