



International
Council on Education for Teaching
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2010-2012 UNESCO Participation Grant Report

“Classroom connections: addressing needs and increasing research capacity”

Executive Summary

The emphases of the “Classroom connections: addressing needs and increasing research capacity” are:

1. reinforce the need for further efforts to promote gender equity
2. increase the sustainability of the program by creating an efficient and economical way to increase the supply of Classroom Connections training
3. increase the capacity of pre-service teachers to be trained as teacher researchers capable of conducting research in their classroom that provides evidence that will inform their future classroom practices.

The project was funded for only half of the requested funds the project team. This resulted in a reduction of project scope from the original two countries (Mozambique and Swaziland) to one country. This reduction in scope allowed created allowed some of the funds to achieve additional project outcome not included in the original budget. Half of the project budget was reallocated to the training of counsellors. This group was included based on the success of the integration of the local peer education strategy of ‘Super Buddies’ and Classroom Connections. This phase of the project achieved all of the planned deliverables: (workshop delivered: 14 participants; list of participants provided and a report produced. A copy of the report is included as a separate attachment. The Guidance Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa assumed responsibility for the financial governance of this project while the UNESCO National Commission assumed responsibility for local logistics.

The second phase of the project involved the Classroom Connections and Research Capacity Workshop attended by 14 participants from local teacher education colleges William Pitcher College, Nazarene College, or Ngwane Teacher College. As with Phase One all deliverables were exceeded in terms of the number of participants and achieved in terms of the completion of evaluation activities. In the case of research capacity building the project reach was approximately 450 students and 32 staff at Nazarene College and 300 students and 50 staff at William Pitcher College.

Additional funding provided by BREDA facilitated the achievement of additional project outcomes. These funds have resourced the capturing of the training activities, the establishment of a Classroom Connections Moodle site and created the potential for online training of UNESCO Master trainers.

Original Proposal (Revised Budget - \$16,000)

The revised project involves delivering a series of Classroom Connections workshops and research education programs in Swaziland. The Classroom Connections workshops will continue to address both the Basic Education in Africa Program (BEAP) initiative and the Universal Primary Education goal by introducing teachers to inclusive classroom strategies for increasing the proportion of pupils who commence and complete a basic education. Emphasising the girl child in workshop activities is promoting Gender Equity by increasing the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Figures indicate Swaziland is off track with achieving this goal by 2015. Introducing research education represents a key innovation for the 2009 -2010. This innovation is responding to a global Higher Education agenda (UNESCO, 2009) calling for developing knowledge capabilities in research in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Phase 1: Classroom Connections - Training Counsellor/Peer Educators (\$8000)

Phase one of the project involved 16 participants in a Classroom Connections workshop delivered in Swaziland between May 20-22. The group represented a balance of male and female participants from the Ministry, teacher training colleges and local Universities. Ministry officials are included in the 2009 program to facilitate government support for the program. Counsellor educators were included in this phase of the training as Swaziland has used the peer education strategy of 'Super Buddies' to introduce Classroom Connections throughout the country. The inclusion of universities and teacher colleges represents an innovation for 2010 to promote the sustainable supply of Counsellor and Peer Educators. The formal involvement of the UNESCO Natcom office in 2010 is a response to feedback from the 2009 Participation grant.

Phase 1 Outcomes

- Workshop Delivered for 14 participants
- List of participants recorded and provided
- Evaluation report completed

A full report has been sent as an additional attachment to this report.

Phase 2: Classroom Connections – Teacher Education and Research Capacity Training (\$8000)

Revised Project Description in Response to the Revised Budget

Phase two of the project will involve 8 participants in a Classroom Connections workshop to be delivered in Swaziland (August 30- September 1) and a group of up to 15 pre-service teachers and their lecturers who will participate in the research workshop September 2-3). ICET Board members James O'Meara (Classroom Connections) and Ivan Reid (Research Capacity) will facilitate these sessions. The groups will represent a balance of male and female participants a local teacher training colleges The Association of African Universities approached the University of Swaziland to serve as a host however they were not in a position to do so. Currently Ms Hazel B. Zungu Secretary-General Swaziland National Commission for UNESCO is contacting William Pitcher College, Nazarene College, or Ngwane Teacher College to finalise the venue. As with Phase One, the inclusion of teacher colleges represents an innovation for 2010 to promote the sustainable supply of Classroom Connections teachers who have the capacity to conduct research in their classroom. The formal involvement of the UNESCO Natcom office in 2010 is a response to feedback from the 2009 grant.

UNESCO BREDa (UNESCO's Office in Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education) has provided additional funds to their knowledge management staff to attend and capture the Classroom Connections training. The capturing of the training is part of a sustainability initiative to optimise the impact of investments they make in training programs. National Louis University will provide participants from both workshops with stationary

Projected Phase 2 Deliverables

1. delivery of a 3 day Classroom Connections training for up to 8 teacher educators from the four participating institutions
2. delivery of a 1 day Research capacity development workshop for up 8 teacher educators from the four participating institutions
3. completion of an evaluation of the implementation efforts of the trained teacher educators at their respective institutions

Likely Additional Deliverables for Phase 2

1. capturing of a 3 day Classroom Connections training
2. disseminating of a 3 day Classroom Connections training in a variety of languages across Africa via a secure BREDa online learning environment

Progress against Phase 2 Deliverables

1. delivery of a 3 day Classroom Connections training for up to 8 teacher educators from the four participating institutions

Classroom Connection training was delivered at the Global Village Hotel in Manzini. The project team exceeded the expectation on this deliverable. The three day workshop occurred between August 29 – August 31. The participants represented three of the four institutions originally identified in the proposal (William Pitcher College, Nazarene College and Ngwane Teacher College). The University of Swaziland was unable to attend due to financial issues at their institution. Each of the three colleges provided 4 representatives (12 in total). The workshop also attracted self-funded participants from Botswana (2) and the Australian Government (1).

2. delivery of a 1 day Research capacity development workshop for up 8 teacher educators from the four participating institutions

The project team exceeded the expectations of this deliverable. All three groups participated in a one hour lecture on the researchers tool kit delivered by Professor Ivan Reid. The key messages within this presentation included the acknowledgement that we are all researchers and that research is something we do naturally so it should not be feared. This capacity-building activity was completed during the afternoon of the final day of the Classroom Connections workshop to allow the team from Ngwane Teacher College to travel the 100 KM back to their college. The additional accommodation costs associated with their participation reduced their participation in this part of the project. A benefit of conducting this session on Wednesday was that the session was recorded and will be disseminated across Africa via the UNESCO distance learning website. The use of this technology has greatly increase the project reach of this research capacity building activity.

On Thursday Professor Reid travelled to Nazarene College to meet with their existing research teams to deliver a further research capacity building session for 32 staff. He also presented a seminar to the 430 students attending the College

On Friday Professor Reid travelled to William Pitcher College to meet with their existing research teams to deliver a further research capacity building session. As the College had no formal research program at this time his efforts were more directed at stimulating research in the college during a seminar with the 50 staff. As with Nazarene College Professor Reid made a presentation to students (300) to promote the idea of conducting research as part of their studies at the College.

3. completion of an evaluation of the implementation efforts of the trained teacher educators at their respective institutions.

The project team has met aspects of this deliverable and has laid the foundation for the remaining aspect of the deliverable. Participants completed three evaluation activities during the workshop. The pre-learning evaluation to assessed the level of understanding at the commencement of the workshop by asking participants to provide

their perceptions about their capacity to demonstrate the outcomes linked to the Classroom Connection Workshop. The post-learning evaluation allowed the participants to re-assess their perceptions as well as provided the facilitator with some feedback on the value added to the participants (i.e. learning) that occurred as a result of their participation in the workshop. The results of these survey are presented in the following table which represent the average response on the participants (n=15, response rate 100%). The responses indicate there was some learning in all of the outcomes. The five highest levels of learning appeared to be in the areas of involving children in decision making (13.33%), involving children in problem solving (12.92%), involving children in setting group rules (11.79%), helping children identify goals (9.54%) and monitoring the group/individual social skills while they work in teams (9.54%)

		Pre/5	Post/5	Diff
1	select mixed groups	3.23	3.60	7.38
2	select an appropriate problem that the teams will need to process	3.08	3.13	1.13
3	select a cooperative learning strategy to promote learner engagement	3.38	3.40	0.31
4	design a rubric/criteria that will assess the desired social outcome	2.92	3.27	6.87
5	monitor the group/individual social skills while they work in teams	2.92	3.40	9.54
6	serve as a facilitator during the learning experience	3.62	3.87	5.03
7	promote caring and respectful relationships among children and staff	3.23	3.53	6.05
8	help children to identify and pursue their own interests and goals	2.92	3.40	9.54
9	involve children in decision making	3.00	3.67	13.33
10	involve children in problem solving	3.15	3.80	12.92
11	involve children in setting group rules	3.08	3.67	11.79
12	acknowledge achievements and success.	3.54	3.73	3.90
13	offer support and constructive feedback.	3.31	3.47	3.18

The participants also completed reaction survey to provide feedback on their feeling toward different components of the program including the content, venue, facilitators and the expectations of the participants. The results of the survey are included in the table on the following page.

		Score	%
1	I liked and enjoyed the activities I participated in over the last three days	3.87	96.67
2	The training program was relevant to the needs of my learners	3.67	91.67
3	Spending three days at this training program was good use of my time	3.73	93.33
4	I liked the venue where the training was conducted	3.27	81.67
5	I liked the style of the facilitator delivering the workshop	3.87	96.67
6	The length of training was appropriate for what was covered	3.33	83.33
7	I was satisfied with the level of participation that was required of me	3.40	85.00
8	I found the activities the level of effort required from me to be reasonable	3.20	80.00
9	I felt comfortable while participating in the activities	3.47	86.67
10	The activities included in the program were very practical	3.60	90.00
11	There is a high potential for applying what I have learnt into my class.	3.27	81.67

The results reflect similar high levels of satisfaction reported in previous workshops. The participants considered the program enjoyable (96.67%), relevant (91.67%), and good used of their time (93.33%). The liked the style of the facilitator (96.67%), considered the activities very practical (90%) and believed there was a high potential for applying what they learnt in their class. The group reported feeling comfortable while participating in the activities (86.67%). This is an important result given the emphasis the workshop places on safe learning environments. Participants also reported satisfaction with the venue (81.67%) , the length of training (83.33%), and the level of participation required from them (85%)

Progress Against Additional Deliverables for Phase 2

3. capturing of a 3 day Classroom Connections training

The project team has met all aspects of this additional deliverable. UNESCO Africa (BREDA) funded the travel and participation of Akema Sarr-James from the Open Distance Learning and Knowledge Management section. As a result of her attendance all 28 activities of the workshop have been captured on video.

4. disseminating of a 3 day Classroom Connections training in a variety of languages across Africa via a secure BREDA online learning environment

The project team are likely to meet all aspects of this additional deliverable. Akema Sarr-James will return to Senegal and edit the videos and upload them onto a dedicated MOODLE website hosted on the UNESCO server. The Classroom Connections open distance learning module will allow UNESCO Master Trainers and Teacher Educators from across Africa access the training activities. Discussions have commenced for a series of facilitated online sessions occurring at least once a year. In order for this to occur some development of assessment tasks needs to occur.