

Teacher Training: Practising Active Learning

The Global Learning Crisis

Across the world, literacy rates have gone up, school enrolment rates have risen and dropout rates have fallen over the past decade. But, despite increased enrollments, an estimated 250 million children cannot read, write or count well, whether they have been into school or not. This "global learning crisis" costs developing countries billions of dollars a year in wasted education funding¹. There exists important data on enrolment, promotion and completion in education, but they tell little about what or how students are actually learning – information that is critical for understanding the state of education today, and what can be done to improve it.

Teachers: the key to improved learning

Teachers have the most powerful impact on the quality of student learning. On-going support for professional development, including both pre-and in-service training is essential for equipping teachers to promote student learning. Pre-service teacher training in education institutions is often overly theoretical and rarely practice based, so school based training (training on-the-job) is now seen as more effective in developed and developing countries alike. However, regardless of their initial training or lack of training, every teacher needs to engage in on-going professional development to meet the changing needs of learners. Teachers who are constantly learning and improving tend to support their students learning achievements most effectively, especially when provided with school based training.²



More children are in school than before, but what are they learning there?

Response of Edukans and University of Amsterdam

Edukans is a Dutch non-profit organization, concerned with improving the quality of education. Together with teacher educators from the University of Amsterdam, Edukans has developed a training method for teacher trainers and educational supervisors (under the name BEQUIP :Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme), currently implemented in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Teacher trainers and supervisors are trained to guide and support teachers on how to apply Active Teaching and Learning Methods in their daily classroom practice in order to enhance students' learning outcomes and to encourage critical thinking for lifelong learning.

¹ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14

² UNESCO 2013, The Global Learning Crisis

Active Teaching and Learning Methods

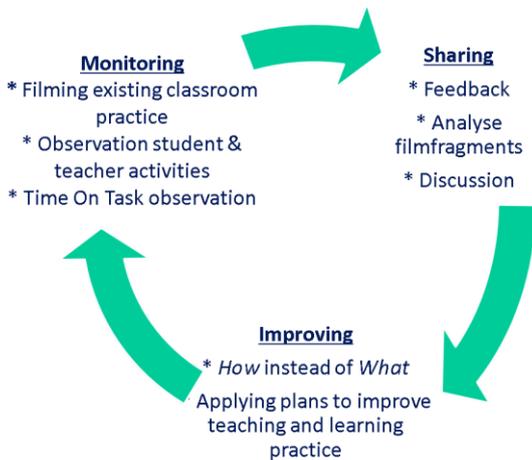
The starting point for changing the existing educational practice is the teachers' daily practice. By using different forms of capacity building, such as digital video recording, analyzing observation methods, development of education materials, and peer to peer support, the training method of Edukans and the University of Amsterdam supports teachers to move to a learner-centered approach.

The training addresses teaching and learning as two important aspects of the five elements defining a quality school: Learning Environment, Teaching, Learning, School Management and Community Participation. In combination, these five elements form the dimensions of Edukans' STAR school model, which places teaching and learning in a wider perspective.



Monitoring – Sharing – Improving

Educators of the University of Amsterdam developed a teacher training method under the name “Monitoring – Sharing – Improving”, forming the basis for all our training courses.



Monitoring

The first step of the approach is to monitor the existing situation in schools or training institutions in great detail. Classroom reality is filmed for this aim, focussing on the teaching- learning process, and observation instruments are used to measure teaching skills and student behaviour.

Sharing

The next step is sharing the observations with all those involved (e.g. teachers/ tutors, supervisors, school directors, government officials) by watching and discussing common practices filmed during lesson observations. Strengths and point for improvement in the teaching and learning process are identified.

Improving

The third step is improving the teaching- learning process. The teachers/tutors in the workshop choose two or three teaching activities they want to improve to support student learning. The training will be based on those chosen activities.

The cycle repeats itself every six months, starting with the monitoring of the intended improvements from the previous workshop. A full cycle project has a duration of 3 years, including 6 training courses and in between supervision by local partners. The method has proven to be successful in various countries, showing concrete results in a short period of time.

Each project needs a **national coordination organisation** responsible for monitoring and supervising the project, especially during the time in between the 6-monthly training sessions . The national office colleagues also act as co-trainers, working together with the international trainers to design, plan and conduct training sessions..

A cascade model

The training programme starts with training of tutors (also called instructors or teacher trainers) about how to apply Active Teaching and Learning Methods in their own teaching practice at college level. Thereafter, the tutors train their students (the pre-service teachers) and the in-service teachers on how to work with the same method. The continuous training programme cycle of reflection and improvement shows that the quality of work undertaken by the teacher has an immediate effect upon the learning of the student.



In-service teacher training by tutors

The impact of Teacher Training

Reliable information on learning and classroom practices can help drive improvements in learning, by providing insight into teacher performance, and the quality of student learning. In addition to the information drawn from test results, we focus on measuring classroom processes because this is where so much impact occurs.

We have designed an observation instrument to monitor and evaluate the development of our training programme. The observation matrix includes 16 observable indicators to measure quality education in the classrooms of Teacher Training Institutions and primary schools. Twice a year the education institutions are visited and the teachers/tutors observed. The results of these observation provide insight in the progress made and are used as training input. Another tool is the Time-on-Task method, measuring the amount of time a student actually spent on a learning task like: writing, reading aloud, discussing, asking questions. Examples of off-task behavior include walking around the class, disturbing peers, and daydreaming. Research concludes that engaged time is the most important influence on academic achievement³ (Greenwood, 2002).



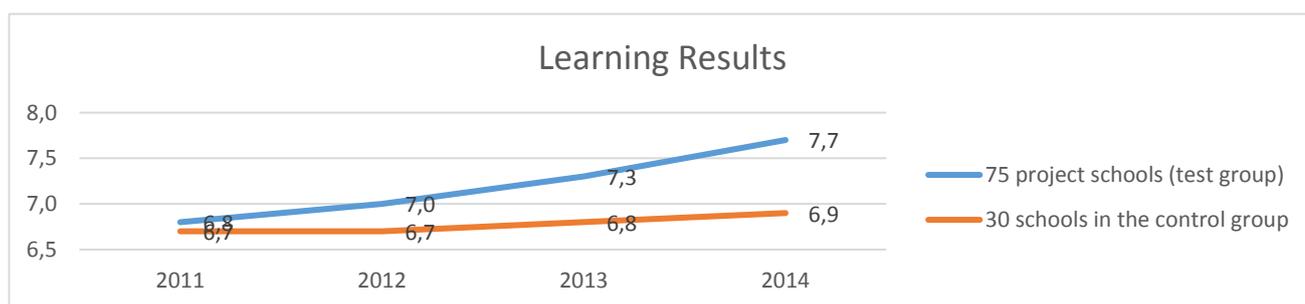
Students engaged in learning!



Teacher as a facilitator

Measuring the impact of teacher training is challenging, but we believe that the best indicator of a teacher's success is improved student performance, which we measure by comparing schools taking part in our training programme (test schools) to schools to which nothing is done (the control group).

Below are the results from our training programme in Ethiopia, including 75 project schools and 30 schools in the control group.



The learning results of the students attending one of the 75 schools included in the teacher training programme have improved significantly. On a scale of 1 to 10, the average learning results of the students increased from 6,8 in 2011 to 7,7 in 2014. On the other hand we see hardly any improvement at the 30 schools in the control group. These results clearly indicate that the Edukans/University of Amsterdam model, of which teacher training is the key element, is producing strong results.

³ Greenwood, C. Horton, B. & Utley, C. (2002) Academic engagement: Current perspectives on research and practice

Multiplying the impact: Train-the-Trainer Approach

For teacher trainers and project staff responsible for education projects in developing countries, Edukans/ UvA implements a Train-the-Trainer approach (under the name PREQUIP: Preparing for Education Quality improvement). This 1-week training course prepares participants to work as trainers in their own country. The training is based on the rationale that any effort to improve quality in education must place what is happening in the classroom centre-stage. To this aim video interaction, reflection techniques and student observation methods are applied.

The course provides the trainers with knowledge, skills, tools and practice to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at classroom level, and gives them the opportunity to develop a training component for their own education projects. The trainees learn about teaching methodology and learning process, as well as about working with different assessment tools.

Train-the-Trainer courses were implemented in the Netherlands (2012), Kenya (2013), Bangladesh (2014), Ethiopia, Bolivia, Malawi (2015) and Nicaragua (2016). People were not only trained on Active Teaching and Learning techniques, but also learned to design their own training, making use of our Interactive Training DVD, including 10 modules: : Lesson Plan, Concept Building, Learning Activities, Learning Styles, Questioning & Answering, Use of Textbooks, Worksheets, Group Work, Assessment and Time-on-Task.



Trainees designing a training program, using video material

Long Term Goal & Sustainability

Our long term goal is to create and disseminate effective teacher training programs, in countries requesting our support. Ministries of Education of different countries have already recognized our successful results, based on increased student learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness, and has invited our trained teacher college tutors to serve as trainers to other education institutions. Edukans intends to continue influencing education policies in developing countries, and to spread the teacher training model to more schools and to more countries.

Invest in Teacher Training

Teacher training produces a ripple effect that positively impacts students, families and communities. Edukans believes that teacher training is a sustainable solution to development. Providing quality education creates opportunities, opens the door to well-paying jobs and ultimately will contribute to healthier communities.

Cost of Teacher Training

Training type	Training details	Estimated Cost
1. Teacher Training	Intensive 3 year training and coaching programme, targeting tutors of Teacher Training Institutes, pre-service and in-service teachers and primary school students	100.000 – 120.000 Euro per country/per year
2. Train-the-Trainer	One-week course for maximum 20 participants , (NGO project staff, government officers, teacher trainers) implementing an education quality improvement project	30.000 - 35.000 Euro per training

For more information about our teacher training program, please contact Hendrien Maat, Senior Education Specialist Edukans, at h.maat@edukans.nl, or (+31)33-4606010