

Hornby Educational Trust

Enhancing English Language Teachers Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through Classroom Reflective Practice (RP)

Tanzania

2022-2023 Alumni Project Report

William Mwinuka



Hornby Alumni Projects

Project Overview

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title | Enhancing English Language Teachers Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through classroom Reflective Practice (RP) |
| Country | Tanzania |
| Dates of project | 2022-2023 |

1. Background and rationale

What are the main issues in your English teaching and learning context? How did these issues influence your choice of project? Were there also other important contextual factors to consider?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for English language teachers in Tanzania is mostly top down where the Ministry of Education or other stakeholders prepare professional development activities for teachers. Mostly these activities are workshops, seminars and conferences which in many cases are conducted without needs analyses. While the Ministry of Education indicates that it is must for a teacher to attend at least two Professional Development (PD) a year, the Ministry itself does not provide opportunities for teachers' PD and when that happens it is normally through stakeholders like British Council, the U.S Embassy and TELTA (Tanzanian English Language Teachers Association).

It is with this regard that it is very common for a teacher who has taught for over ten years to have attended no PD event and therefore stuck in the same teaching techniques, not updated with the ever changing technology in teaching. This insufficiency in PD opportunities is caused by many factors, but the most profound has been lack of funds in the Ministry of Education.

This project is therefore designed to bring into action Reflective Practice, a bottom up approach which will help teachers conduct their own CPD by locally reflecting on their own daily classroom endeavours. While teachers are now relying on scarcely provided workshops organised by the ministry and private organisations, where more than a hundred teachers may be gathered to be fed with information from trainers who in most cases are not classroom teachers, this project will involve five English language teachers at Kisutu Girls Secondary School, the school where I teach, and is expected to run for almost a year.

During this time, these five teachers will be trained on Reflective Practice as a concept so that in starting the project implementation, they are aware of what they are doing, document what they do and think through solutions with fellow teachers in their school. In reality, these teachers practice some sort of reflection in their teaching for example a moment when they think about the times they give group works for discussion and the class becomes uncontrollable. They may have been doing it without knowing a name for it, or not rethinking of what to do next when something did not work well in their classroom. With the flexibility that the school has in allowing teachers to make their own decisions about appropriate classroom practices, added to them, will be awareness that their thinking can be the first step towards understanding of possible reasons for problems and therefore planning alternatives.

This project will therefore enable these five teachers to undertake their activities and think about their experiences, then learn from those experiences and later develop an action plan for what will be done next. This time these teachers will think about a classroom management strategy that works in their context not in the context of a trainer or just get to decide whether or not a homework is helpful to their learners. After a year of practice, these reflective practitioners are also expected to cascade this knowledge to teachers of other subjects at the school where they will be lead teachers in a school based Community of Practice. The school leadership is supportive of the project and therefore the head of school will also be part of the COP in which, at this stage, reflective practice will be a source of teachers' CPD at the school.

2. Project objectives

By the end of this project, teachers will:

- develop an understanding of what it means by classroom Reflective Practice and aspects around teachers' reflection of their teaching.
- improve and or develop on different aspects of their teaching. The reflections undertaken during the process can help them think about aspects that they can work on, and on what they are doing well.
- plan what they will do next after reflection of the teaching. This includes changing and improving their classroom teaching techniques.
- improve their emotional intelligence which will help them remain in control of their emotions for their own wellbeing and for positive learning outcomes of their learners.

Evaluation

1. Project objectives

To what extent do you feel your objectives were met? If they were not met, or only partially met, can you explain why?

Project objectives were met as expected.

Project objectives were met as expected.

Objective:

1. Develop an understanding of what it means by classroom Reflective Practice and aspects around teachers' reflection of their teaching. This objective was met because after the training, teachers had a better understanding of the concept as demonstrated in their responses in discussions during training, online reflections and in actual implementation of the project. Participants were also able to share the concept with other teachers at the school in a created COP.
2. Improve and or develop on different aspects of their teaching. The reflections undertaken during the process can help them think about aspects that they can work on, and on what they are doing well. This objective can be marked as the most successful aspect of the project. Teachers have demonstrated a greater improvement in their teaching as a result of reflecting their own classroom practices. It has been observed that teachers were able to document challenges, find solutions and use their reflections in changing their teaching approach. Teachers' lesson planning changed to one that is inclusive of different learning styles and includes multiple activities as a solution to when one finds it difficult. Teachers have demonstrated an ability to reflect on what, why and how they do things in their classroom which includes adapting as a result of this reflection.
3. Plan what they will do next after reflection of the teaching. This includes changing and improving their classroom teaching techniques. As shown in the previous objective, teachers demonstrated a highly reflective capability of their teaching making their English language classes more engaging and learner centred. By reflecting on their teaching, teachers were able to identify barriers to learning which their students face and create lessons which are more meaningful to their learners. Having a better way of teaching their learners as a result of reflection increased their effectiveness and confidence by allowing them to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses therefore address any gaps in their skills.
4. Improve their emotional intelligence which will help them remain in control of their emotions for their own wellbeing and for positive learning outcomes of their learners. This objective was developed based on the fact that when teachers develop emotional intelligence through reflective thinking, they become more aware and can better improve their relationships and make more informed decisions. While teachers reported some sort of relief after applying reflective practice, their work life is still challenged by other factors which were reported by teachers as permanent. These factors included their work loads, classroom conditions and administration – teacher relationship. It is therefore fair to say that teachers' PD can be highly effective if teachers are provided with enough time to learn, practice what they have learned, and have time to reflect on new strategies which will aid changes in their practice. In the other hand, while the objective was based on the improvement of teachers' emotional intelligence,

teachers admitted that RP increased their awareness of their students' emotions, which helped them recognise individual needs therefore develop better strategies to regulate lessons.



2. Project impact

What was the impact of your project on:

- a) you
- b) your Association(s) / Institution(s)?
- c) the people involved in your project?
- d) the wider community?

What evidence do you have to demonstrate this?

Professionally, this project developed my understanding of different perspectives, teachers' viewpoints on Reflective Practice and teachers' professional development in general. It also strengthened my relationship with teachers at the school and help establish relations with the Regional, District and Ward Education Officer which based on the context makes it easy for future PDs organisations at any level. For my institution, carrying out this project enhanced a sense of self awareness and improved professional growth to the teachers. It helped create a strong bond between English language teachers and content teachers after the formation of COP where English language teachers trained and shared ideas a with content teachers. This is evident looking at how teachers positively reacted to the COP and the knowledge practice in their lessons. It also brought to light some challenges teachers face as a result of school policies which the administration was reluctant to provide solutions to.

3. Sharing with a wider audience

Who did you share information about the project with? Why, when, and how did you do this?

What reactions did you get?

Do you have any further plans for sharing more widely?

This information was shared to a few other heads of school through Kisutu head of school in their AGM. The head of Kisutu reported sharing this information in the meeting as part of her report as to what has been going on in her school. Through WhatsApp groups, the project's information was shared with other English language teachers in Dar es Salaam through Regional English language teachers' group. This project was conducted at a public school therefore information was also shared to Regional, District and Ward Education Officers. Generally, the reaction from each of the groups mentioned above was positive. Majority did not know the name to it, but admitted to have practiced at some point in their teaching. Given opportunity, more information about the project will be shared to more ELT practitioners globally.

4. Overall reflections

As a result of planning, implementing, and disseminating the project, what did you learn about:

Overall reflection

- a) organising / managing a project?
- b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

Would you do anything differently next time?

Would you like to suggest anything to another alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

Overall reflection

- a) organising / managing a project?

I have organised and managed teacher professional development projects before, but this project added to my experiences as it was my first time engaging teachers in a Reflective Practice training and later implementation of the same in their teaching. This project has added to my experiences, especially understanding how much teachers needed/need information and practice about some of the things they are practicing without knowing a name for it. Their needs however needed more than the budget could cater for, therefore providing some limitations on what could be done in the process.

- b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

This project was carried out in a school where teachers' timetables are tight and have large classes. While some teachers willingly wanted to apply some newly adopted techniques; class sizes hindered them to reach their goals and the school quality assurance committee thought that was a waste of time and will delay teachers into meeting exams goals.

Would you do anything differently next time?

I think the model I used was quite good. However, some external factors (which at any point in time were out of my control) that provided some challenges.

I would like for other alumni to undertake a similar project with a bit of a difference. With all that they can bring in in their planning, I would suggest they provide more education to school administration on how the project is conducted and what teachers are expected to engage in.

Would you do anything differently next time?

Would you like to suggest anything to another alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

5. Next steps

How do you plan to continue and / or build on what has been achieved through this project? Why? How might you begin?

There is a community of practice that was built as a result of this project. Teachers still discuss their encounters through a WhatsApp group created for this purpose. The plan is to keep this working and have some reflective meetings in the future where teachers will report and share more on their RP experiences. Given funds, this project is worth spreading to other schools so that many more teachers can utilise their reflection of teaching to improve their teaching and therefore make learning easy and enjoyable for their students.





A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

Permissions

This report is primarily for the Hornby Trustees and British Council internal review and records. However, we do want to promote your hard work and would like to share what you have done with other Hornby awardees and publicly via the Internet.

- √. Can you please tick here if you give your permission to share your report?
- √ .Please tick here if you would like your project to be considered for presentation at the 2025 IATEFL conference (the Hornby Trust will select from reports submitted and will support one team member from each of these projects to attend the conference).

Please indicate who would give the presentation if selected:

William Mwinuka (Name of presenter)

Name

William Mwinuka

Date

16/04/2024

Appendices

Appendix 1: Expenditure

Were there any **significant differences** from your planned budget? By significant we mean you spent far more than planned, or you were given a donation from a partner that was not expected, for example.

Note any costs below that exceeded the original budget by £200 (below this amount does not need including). Please also tell us what caused these changes in the *Reflection* section below the two tables.

a. local funding

| Description | Breakdown | Total cost | Final cost |
|----------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| | | | |
| Totals: | | | |

b. Hornby funding

| Description | Breakdown | Total cost | Final cost |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | (in £) | (in £) | |
| Stationery | $5.89 \times 8(\text{writing pads}) = 47.12$ $6.24 \times 1(\text{box of pen}) = 6.24$ $5.11 \times 1(\text{box of pencils}) = 5.11$ $10.67 \times 1(\text{box of colours}) = 10.67$ $14 \times 1(\text{box of markers}) = 14$ $15.18 \times 2(\text{ream papers}) = 30.36$ $5.99 \times 8(\text{planners}) = 47.92$ $4.10 \times 10(\text{cubes of colour sticky notes}) = 41$ | 202.42 | |
| Meals for training days | $5 \times 10(\text{people}) \times 2(\text{days}) = 100(\text{Tea and Snacks})$ | 340 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| (Tea and snacks, lunch and soft drinks) | $10 \times 10(\text{people}) \times 2(\text{days}) = 200(\text{Lunch})$ $2 \times 10 (\text{people}) \times 2 (\text{days}) = 40(\text{Drinks})$ | | |
| Support teachers with data (3GB of data monthly) | $5 \times 10 (\text{months}) \times 8(\text{people})$ | 400 | |
| Teachers and trainers fare during training (Buses to and from the venue) | $5 \times 10(\text{participants}) \times 2(\text{days}) = 100$ | 100 | |
| Trainers fare and meals during support visits (Bus to and from the school) | $30 \times 3(\text{trainers}) \times 4(\text{visits})$ | 360 | |
| Miscellaneous | 80 | 80 | |
| Totals: | | 1482.42 | |

Reflections:

Please share your thoughts here:

No significant changes happened to the budget except for some minor changes in the expenditure within the budget. No additional funds (donations) were obtained.

Appendix 2: Planned activity

Review your planned activity below and then reflect on any changes that were needed and explain why these were necessary.

| Dates | Description of activities | Duration |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Feb 13 - 17 | Preparation for Training | 5 Days |
| Feb 27 - 28 | <p>Teacher Training. Teachers will be trained on the topics such as the introduction to Reflective Practice, Critical Thinking, Self -Assessment, Classroom management, English language teaching tips and, Lesson Assessment and Evaluation. There will also be mini lessons where teachers will do some mock Reflective Practice.</p> <p>Teachers will be supplied with necessary materials including print outs and supplies they will need for the training and later in the implementation process.</p> | 2 Days |
| March 6 – April 7 | <p>Implementation and first reflection meeting (Feedback and way forward)</p> <p>1. In implementation, teachers are expected to teach and then do a self - assessment of their teaching so that they are able to consider new ways of teaching where their previously used ways did not work as expected, and then consider new ways to fix the previous problem. Teachers will then have to put newly thought ways into practice and eventually repeat the process.</p> <p>2. In reflection meeting, teachers will report their observations and share details of their first month including success and challenges. Then, teachers and trainers will work together to provide ideas for more improvement. Trainers will guide teachers through useful classroom techniques in addition to what they shared to teachers during the training.</p> | 1 Month |
| April 10 – May 31 | <p>Implementation and second reflection meeting (Feedback and way forward)</p> <p>1. Will be carried as the previous month but this time, teachers will include suggestions provided in the previous reflection.</p> <p>2. Teachers and trainers to further reflect the two months into the project and do the reflection as previous month.</p> | 1 Month |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| June 8 | Follow up meeting with teachers. Teachers will share their journey and trainers provide support. | 1 Day |
| July 17 – August 18 | Implementation and third reflection meeting. Reflective Practice implementation to continue and teachers to report on the implementation of the June 8 meeting | 1 Month |
| August 31 | Focus group meeting. Providing updates and discussion on establishing a school based community of practice. | 1 Day |
| Sept 4 – Oct 31 | Implementation and fourth reflection meeting | 1 Month |
| Nov 10 - 11 | Focus group meeting. Teachers and trainers will discuss their journey and establish a school based COP. They will also distribute roles in running the COP for sustainability. Trainers will work with English language teachers in training the rest of the teachers and later let English language teachers lead the COP. | 2 Days |

Reflections:

Please share your thoughts here:

There was a bit of a delay in the start of the project, but after the funds were obtained the duration for each category remained almost the same. Very minor changes due to teachers' timetables and exams around school.