



MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Measuring the Effectiveness of Professional Development lies in arranging and assessing teacher training needs based on knowledge, skills and content. Questions designed at Jeddah Community College (JCC) analyzed and interpreted these three fundamental objectives in relation to a Business Development Unit and how this offers the way forward for faculty members as well as institutes.

Key Words: Business development unit, training, evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

There is a rich and continuous debate between professional development sought by teachers and by institutes such as community colleges (CCs). On the one hand teachers constantly want feedback on their ability to teach well, CCs on the other, appraise teachers in order to evaluate many factors which require time and effort on the part of all stakeholders with a criticality that may be questionable at times. This has been the subject of many researchers who ask questions related to the type of factors that are evaluated (R.M. Cervero 2010, Slowey 2010), in order to reduce or eliminate such encounters.

Teachers are recruited with the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake their roles. Therefore any development they acquire is either of practical or theoretical value not as a result of an initial insufficiency in their ability to perform. The changes that CCs go through demands an increase in meeting objectives set out by governmental agencies as well as meeting targets in highly competitive markets for students that are attractive to private sector interest. These two factors combine into what achieves quality education for CCs. In reference to the government sector, advisory bodies are also involved in making sure that college programs have representative from respective disciplines at university level as well as labor, human resource and chamber of commerce at the governmental level. Then there are commercial and industrial stakeholders that have interest in the quality of education offered within CCs. Therefore teachers are constantly in the front line when quality education is to be achieved.

Quality education is what curriculum demands and institutions ambitiously seek. Quality can only be achieved when outcomes such as those outlined above are met. Teachers therefore teach learners based on the predetermined outcome learners have and the level of its attainment is quality control. Outcome can be a written statement (Adam 2004) or the acquisition of knowledge, skill ((UMIST) 2001,) or as UNICEF defines it the knowledge, skills and attitudes learners have which are linked to the community at large in terms of learner behavior after completing their education (Jeanette Colby, Miske Witt and Associates June 2000).

The vast arrays of literature on such specificities mentioned provide the basic background for this study. The question of how teachers with specific backgrounds develop in order to meet the changing demands for CCs in Saudi Arabia in particular and what indicators that suggest such development has been useful for both teachers as well as CCs are studied in this paper.



Context

The launching of the Prime Minister Initiative (PMI) as well as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Initiative (TVET) opened a series of student-teacher-administrative opportunities through the British Council, between Greenwich Community College (GCC) and Jeddah Community College (JCC) in 2008, see (T. B. Council, About PMI2 2011, T. B. Council, A Review and Taxonomy: International College Partnership Models 2011, College 2008). The result of these initiatives brought about partnerships between UK colleges such as GCC, City College Brighton & Hove with Jeddah Community College (B. Council 2009).

JCC is a relatively new college. It was established in 2003 and it is part of King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) also based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. JCC offers students an associate degree that is awarded from KAU upon completing a three course of study. All students enrolled are secondary school certificate holders or young adults with emphasis to the latter.

The College

The medium of teaching and learning being English at JCC means that there are intensive English language programs for students that do not meet the required level of English before joining their respective programs. There are a total of 41 teachers all with an average of 11.1 ($SD=6.9$) years teaching experience. There are 12 English language teachers with an average number of 3.4 ($SD 1.5$) years teaching experience at JCC. They all teach 20 hours of English a week. All of the teachers have a master's degree and 6 of them are educated to Ph.D. level. Four teachers are from India, three from Egypt, two from Pakistan, two from the United Kingdom, one each from the United States, and South Africa. The administrators made two formal requests from all teachers and language teachers in particular:

1. Increase the level of general English proficiency;
2. Increase the number of students enrolled at the college;

English Language Level

It is easy for teachers to refer to the collection of information regarding student needs, examinations, and teaching-materials and teaching methods in order to positively impact the program. KAU also offers programs for teacher development in order for teachers to continuously improve departmental programs through improving themselves, their students, the materials, and testing. Also in June 2009, the British Council visited JCC and evaluated its English language department, administrators as well as students.

Initially most of the teachers reprobated the idea of being evaluated due to their indented notion of the British Council. This was brought about due the BC offering a written test as part of its evaluation of the teachers. The idea behind it was to identify what teachers knew about the language they were teaching in order for training priorities to be identified. Most teachers were under the impression that since they already have a masters or Ph.D. in English including their number of years teaching experience, 8 out of 13 English teachers completed the two-hour written test.

The observation included teacher competency with emphasis on classroom management, subject knowledge, learner understanding and the use of technology in the classroom. All 13 teachers agreed to be observed in the classroom and the whole process was a thirty-minute observation of each class.

Enrollment

The administrators wanted the program to reach a wider community. The achievement of being accredited by the Council of Education in America was not met with lightly. This provided the administration with a positive attitude towards the teachers and the program offered at JCC. Teachers were therefore part of the campaign of re-launching the newly accredited JCC to the English speaking community. It was a task that required teachers to visit international schools as well as local businesses in order to promote the college.

There was neither the structure nor facility of undertaking such a task because the teachers could not see a vertical or horizontal design in the hierarchical element of the college (Gunder Myran 2003). The task required teachers from different departments to work together, communicate and share ideas together, as well as pool



all that information into a centralized unit where their efforts can be monitored, evaluated and disseminated to the correct entity.

It was during this time that the partnerships between the UK colleges included visits from Greenwich Community College as well as Brighton and Hove College staff to JCC. They held seminars, workshops and identified areas that teachers would like to develop. The subject of enrolment was a frequent one.

On this basis 8 teachers attended a teacher training session at Greenwich Community College. Those who attended the session took active parts in lecture sessions, workshops and classroom observations. The UK trainers identified areas such as:

- teacher roles,
- local learning needs,
- learning theories,
- lesson planning,
- learning styles,
- motivation,
- language development,
- quality framework,
- Lesson observation,
- assessment,
- support and supervision,
- continuous self-improvement,
- business unit.

The visit to the United Kingdom, the fourteen-week training session, as well as the whole experience of visiting a new country, sight-seeing, and visiting different parts of Oxford and Cambridge was met positively by the entire teachers. One of the teachers was particularly more interested in collecting as much hard copies for each session as possible. For another it was the last training day that he could identify with professionally. The Business Unit at Greenwich Community College had transformed the college. This idea was developed and introduced to JCC which had a resounding effect in launching its own Business Development Unit (BDU).

Business Development Unit (BDU)

The BDU was set up with its own hierarchy. There were teachers reporting to the BDU coordinator who in turn reported to the dean. The BDU was designed to increase student enrolment and it achieved this by doing three activities:

1. Parallel programs
2. Community services
3. Graduate recruitment

Parallel programs

This was set up to attract local businesses to the programs offered to young adults during the day. In the evening, working students can take courses that lead to a higher certificate than the one they have. Teachers also designed and prepared courses that local businesses can benefit from. This provided a distinct advantage of teachers preparing courses that they know students need and they were paid courses.

Community services

This was set up to market the college as a whole to the community and maintain a local presence by providing seminars, workshops, inviting guest speakers to speak with students, and allow the community to know that the college was part of the main KAU, but offered courses that can reach all students. This meant that while it was difficult for students to study pharmacy at the main campus, they can take an associate degree that can lead to a degree at the main campus with a minimum requirement of a high school diploma as the requirement. Some of the students enrolled on the courses were attracted through the community service activities set up at local shops, malls and social activities.

Graduate recruitment

The students in the final year completed the program by doing a final year job-placement at any company of their choosing. Once they graduated the college was partly responsible for making sure students were employed through any of the various numbers of agencies that were on the advisory committee of the college, public and private. This aspect of the BDU ensured that responsibilities and roles were clear amongst the teachers and the correct person was speaking on behalf of the college, students and providing feedback regarding relevant issues to the administration (dean).

Data Collection

The data collected was based on the BC report as well as the survey made regarding teachers knowledge, attitude skills regarding the business unit.

The data collected by the BC regarding the three areas mentioned identified classroom management, subject knowledge, understanding learners and using technology in the classroom. As mentioned earlier each observation lasted thirty minutes. The teachers were observed in order to check that they;

- Facilitated interaction in the classroom that was appropriate to the activity and promoted effective learning
- Demonstrated ability to analyze and describe language systems (lexis, discourse, grammar and phonology) and language use (through spoken and written text)
- Involved all learners and meet the needs of weak as well as strong students
- Learning technologies were used appropriately, and contributed clearly to learning goals for the lesson.

As for the BDU it was set up to increase the number of student enrollment. In order to achieve this, the teachers had to be trained and an office opened that catered for the BDU. This was possible as a result of the training the teachers received from GCC. Upon returning they also trained their colleagues and a questionnaire was distributed which 26 teachers responded. Most JCC teachers clearly identified that they are aware of what the college activities are.

The questions were based on analyzing and interpreting three fundamental objectives. Firstly, assessing what aspects of the BDU, teachers could clearly identify from a given list. Secondly, measuring the level of involvement teachers had with their identified aspect of the BDU. Finally, recognizing how their needs fit a training model so that their previous experiences and current job roles could be productively utilized.

The reasons for these three objectives were two-fold. One was to arrange their awareness of the BDU's activities and what level of involvement they had with it in a statistical form, and the other was to assess where their training needs in terms of knowledge, skills and content lay.

The last information required was asking for teacher attributes, knowledge and skills in relation to what they wanted to develop in themselves through the BDU. Teachers relationship to their students, how they wanted to increase student motivation, improve communication and develop students personality in order for them to have a better option of selecting favorable courses are connected to teachers attributes. Therefore when asking teachers what aspect of training they felt they needed, the attribute would be those answers related to student recruitment and assessment.

The content knowledge included questions that will highlight teachers need for training in areas such as teaching, assessment, content, numeracy and general health or wellbeing. The last question was related to the teacher skills and what they wanted to improve regarding curriculum activities such as planning, observations, acceptance of feedback and working in teams. The questions regarding the content and skills asked teachers to indicate what they would be interested in regarding numeracy skills, health, technology in the classroom and working in teams. Table 1 below shows the list of attributes, content, and skills that were broken into sub units to allow questions to be used in order to identify teachers need in for developing themselves.

Table 1: Knowledge, Attributes & Skills (TDA 2008)

Attributes	Content knowledge	Skills
Relationship to learners – to improve: motivation in class, Communication in and out of class, Personal development – (so they know what they want to do in the future career wise)	Teacher education and student learning Assessment and testing or monitoring learning Content subject and curriculum Numeracy and literacy Health and well-being	Working in teams Planning (time, projects) Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback (observations and how to observe and more importantly give and (accept) feedback

RESULTS

It is apparent that the area of concern for everyone at JCC was highlighted by the thirty-minute observations. Though the number of teachers that demonstrated competency in the observed areas was between 4 and 11, it is evident that the rest of the teachers need help in understanding how to get all students involved with the lesson.

Teachers demonstrated that their knowledge of the subject was evident; they did not pay much attention to their students' pronunciation or gave them enough practice in speaking. It also means that between 1 and 8 teacher demonstrated competencies in all the areas.

Analyzing the feedback from the BC after their observations revealed that they were received in a positive manner because all teachers observed received their results within thirty minutes of the observation. The author demonstrated competence in all the areas observed including a commendation to the college administrators.

Table 1 below shows the sample of teachers from the college who were observed and how many demonstrated competence including a general comment.

Table 2: Teacher Competency

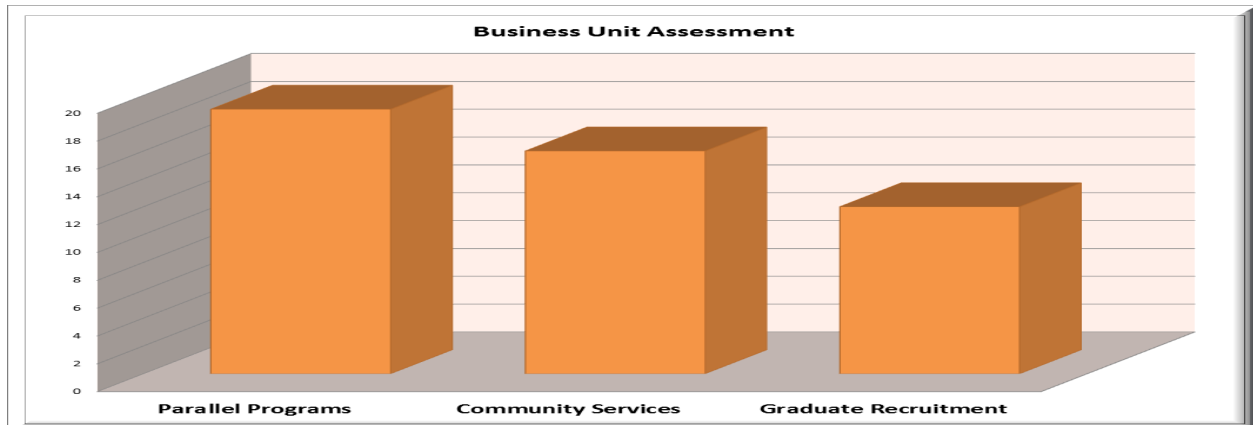
Teacher competency	Number demonstrating Competency	Comments
Classroom management: Facilitates interaction in the classroom that is appropriate to the activity and promotes effective learning	6	Many of the lessons had little or no interaction, so students were not sufficiently engaged
Subject knowledge Demonstrates ability to analyse and describe language systems (lexis, discourse, grammar and phonology) and language use (through spoken and written text)	11	Very accurate grammar analysis demonstrated, and some good vocabulary teaching, but little attention to pronunciation and very little student spoken practice encouraged

Understanding your learners Involves all learners, meeting needs of weak as well as strong students	4	In most classes there were a number of students who remained uninvolved, with no indication as to whether they were following or learning anything at all
Learning technologies Learning technologies are used appropriately, and contribute clearly to learning goals for the lesson	8	Classroom technology was used extremely well by teachers, though aims of lesson and reasons for the material were not always clear

The BDU was set up in order to undertake three activities. These activities were checked through the responses from the questionnaire.

More than 50% of teachers identified those activities of the BDU to be the Parallel Programs and Community Services. Only 46% of teachers indicated that Graduate Recruitment was also part of it. Table 2 shows how teachers identified BDU activities with the college.

Table 3: BDU Awareness



Based on what the teachers identified above, their level of involvement with the BDU was also ascertained. It is interesting to note that while 3.85 and 7.69 percent of teachers rated their understanding as poor and needs improvement respectively, about 27 and 35 percent of them rated their involvement as adequate and good respectively. It is impressive that 23 percent of them rated their involvement as outstanding which means they were associating teaching students in the evening with the BDU since those students belonged to a program set up through the BDU.

Table 4: Understanding and Association with BDU

The Knowledge	Percent
Outstanding	23.08%
Good	34.62%
Adequate	26.92%
Needs improvement	7.69%
Poor	3.85%
Not available	0.00%

The question of how much involved teachers were based on two questions. The first was whether teachers were involved with the BDU at all and the second being which aspect of the BDU they were involved in. The majority of teachers were involved with the BDU. Table 4 indicates that Only 30.77 percent of teachers were not involved with the BDU which meant that they either taught morning programs only (*which is not possible as there are many students that require all teaches at the college to teach*) or they represented the 7.69 and 3.85 percent of teachers whose knowledge of the BDU needed improvement or was poor.

Table 5: BDU Involvement

Involvement	Percent
Yes	57.69%
No	30.77%

The second part of the question identified what aspect of the BDU they were involved in.

Table 6 Teacher Involvement

BDU involvement	Percent
Parallel Programs	57.69%
Community Services	15.38%
Graduate Recruitment	3.85%

Table 5 above shows that teachers were not only involved with the BDU's Parallel Programs and Community Services, but that they were also willing to point out their involvement through analyzing what they did with their time outside of teaching. Almost 60 percent of teachers indicated that they were involved with the parallel program which involved teaching in the evenings.

In the question asked in Table 2, 50 percent of teachers listed the parallel Program as an aspect of the BDU, even though 40 percent of them highlighted the Graduate Recruitment as part of it. However what the questionnaire revealed was that only 1 percent of them are actually involved with it.

1. Training

- This question is based on the rationale illustrated in Table 6 which is based on two assumptions:
 1. Teachers will match their involvement with the BDU activities to their training;
 2. Teachers will base their training needs according to.
 - Attributes,
 - Content Knowledge,
 - Skills.

The chart below is based on the question related to training needs. From the teacher's responses, we can see that the trend for training lies more towards content knowledge and skills than attributes with 57 and 53 percent of them indicating this respectively. An indication of 5 percent needing training for student health should not be construed as low or only for the few. Rather it is an indication that teachers who selected that are also willing to be involved with training that includes those who selected questions related to Content Knowledge.

Table 8: Training Needs

Training Needs	Percent
Student recruitment	23.08%
Student Assessment	57.69%
Improve Student Numeracy	30.77%
Student Health	0.00%
Time Management	34.62%
Working in Teams	38.46%
Technology in Class	53.85%

DISCUSSION

The reason why this study was carried out was to inform on how teachers develop themselves in an environment that demands more than they can offer, and to provide teachers with indicators of the type of opportunities available for teacher development even when they have acquired higher educational certification in their fields as well as practical experiences. In order to achieve these teachers were observed by the BC and their needs were analyzed and then developed in the UK.

It is unlikely that all development programs will involve teachers travelling to the UK, however, in the event that teachers are going to be developed by their institutes, it is better for the administrators to find out the type of training teachers require so that they do not resist the idea of development.

In spite of the training sessions being short and not having a certification such that teachers can identify with in their profession, the visit to the UK exposed the teachers to how development can achieve positive results. The BC visit as well as the seminars and subsequent UK training session proved to be effective. What can be extremely valuable is having a connection between the teachers return from the UK and another BC visit in order to provide training through the BC.

In this way the UK visit will change the image of teacher development for teachers that feel no need to be trained with practical teaching skills so they can appreciate the difference between practical credentials and theoretical qualification. For instance, teachers learning about how to maximize student engagement in the learning process or student talking time in class or classroom interaction patterns are practical skills which teachers from all indication of the BC observation as well as their interest in content knowledge are practical skills which can benefit students as well teachers.

The BDU achieved its objectives of increasing the number of students enrolled at the college most especially amongst the English speaking community. Every semester since 2010, 70 new students enroll for different programs at the college through the activities of the BDU. Also, establishing a BDU can be the way forward for teachers mainly because they do not have enough time to perform many tasks during their working hours.

WJEIS's Note: This article was presented at International Conference on New Trends in Education and Their Implications - ICONTE, 26-28 April, 2012, Antalya-Turkey and was selected for publication for Volume 2 Number 3 of WJEIS 2012 by WJEIS Scientific Committee.



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Appendix 1

Business Development Unit Questionnaire College Activities

1. Which of the following college activities are you aware of? (Tick all relevant)

- Parallel Programs Community Services Graduate Recruitment

2. How would you rate your knowledge of those areas you selected?

- Outstanding Good Adequate Needs improvement Poor N/A

College Involvement

3. Are you involved in any of the activities above?

- Yes No

4. If yes, which one? (Tick all relevant)

- Parallel Programs Community Services Graduate Recruitment

Training Needs

5. Which of the following would you be interested in?

- Student recruitment
 Student assessment
 Improving student numeracy skills
 Student's Health
 Time management
 Working in teams
 Technology in the classroom

Additional Feedback

6. Please list any areas in which our service could be improved.
