

Children's Home Society and Family Services (CHSFS) – Ethiopia

Thinking Schools Teacher Learning and Professional Development Report

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1. Thinking Schools Professional Development Overview

The *Thinking Schools* professional development model is structured upon on three areas of learning: Community Building, Reflective Practice, and Systems Thinking. The ultimate goal is to create a sustainable *Thinking School* (see Appendix A) and cohesive collaborative school community.

The learning areas are:

Community Building

- Cooperative Learning models for the students and teachers
- Community exercises to build community for the educators and for classroom use
- Common ‘vocabulary’ of methods and strategies throughout the classrooms and schools
- Visual tools (visual cognitive language) to use for organizing thinking, assessing understanding, and communicating
- Research based strategies and methods

Reflective Practice

- Collegial Coaching: teachers coaching each other (coaching the coaches model)
- Regular Reflection: written, visual cognitive maps, sketches
- Use of video (‘post-game’ analysis)
- Low-tech media for self-reflection (e.g. writing, drawing)
- Socratic Method: active and focused use of the inquiry process (use of questioning)
- Intentionality – teachers establishing the habit of informed reflection on their teaching

Systems Thinking

- Processes that support the whole community (students, teachers, leadership, and parents)
- Implementation of methods that are consistent with students and classrooms
- Professional development on-site (as a exponent of a Thinking School)
- Collaborative technologies for communication and off-site professional development

See Appendix B for specific descriptive definitions of the professional development including Foundations for the *Thinking Schools Model*, Pedagogy, Strategies and Thinking Methods.



2. Professional Development Outcomes – 24-28 August 2009

Based on feedback during and after the five day professional development, the learning outcomes were achieved and surpassed (please refer to Appendix C Learning Objectives and Outcomes; and Appendix D SWOT Analysis). The reflections by participants throughout the week, and at the end of the five day training, revealed ‘belief systems change’ shifts in teachers and leaders encompassing:

- ∞ teaching (pedagogy)
- ∞ teaching with intentionality (systems thinking)
- ∞ collaboration amongst teachers
- ∞ understanding the impact of room environment
- ∞ participatory professional development
- ∞ strategies that embrace and enhance student prior knowledge
- ∞ tools and methods to involve large class sizes in the learning process
- ∞ participatory classrooms

The participants gained a deeper knowledge of learning strategies, tools, and methods to support an effective thinking and learning environment. From this experience there was high evidence of teachers moving from a top down understanding of the teacher to student relationship to a more effective and engaging method of learning in which the learning relationship is more level: the teacher as a facilitator of learning.

See Appendix C – Professional Development Summary: Strategies, Methods, and Elements for details.

3. Ethiopia’s Professional Development Landscape

According to UNESCO reports, Ethiopia historically has felt that work is more important than education, so they start at a very early age with little to no education. Social awareness that education is important is something that Ethiopia lacks but has improved gradually. A recent study in 2006 produced by American Institutes for Research under the EQUIP1 LWA (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH771.pdf) noted ‘Ethiopia has placed education at the center of its strategies for development and democratization, this indicates the need to move forward to strengthen analytical, conceptual, and meaningful learning which requires students to understand, mobilize, and communicate about knowledge in the creative and flexible ways that the 21st century demands.’ Conclusions and implications highlighted in the study included:

1. It is clear that the foundation has been established for quality through the extremely promising and positive perspectives and attitudes of teachers and principals as expressed in the interviews, observations, and the survey in this study. Teachers’ and principals’ expanded concepts of their roles as educators, their commitment to the whole child, and their recognition of the importance of a positive and supportive learning environment are all characteristics that build the foundation for excellent learning, characteristics without which excellent learning within the active learning paradigm is not possible. It is exactly this conjunction between positive attitudes about student learning and professional development that was identified in the student assessment as supporting better learning.
2. How cognitive and academic learning, within the active-learning paradigm, are understood and practiced, within pre-service and in-service programs, and throughout the whole system, clearly requires re-examination, clarification, and alignment. Until this is done, great improvements in student achievement are unlikely.

The goal of the Teacher Learning and Professional Development model is to bring research based 21st Century thinking practices that accelerate the quality of teaching practices to the front lines. Cell phones are an appropriate metaphor, and even a potential part of teacher training. Telephone

communications in developing countries have gone from minimal infrastructure to potentially the latest in mobile communications. In a recent *NY Times Magazine* Article it cited a growing number of economists who maintain that cellphones can restructure developing countries. In a similar manner, high quality foundational teaching practices instituted now can have a profound affect on how education is approached, how children are taught, and how the children teach the next generation.

The Thinking Schools Professional Development Model must be sustainable. Thinking practices that include high quality teacher training, minimal materials requirements, a trainer of trainer model, and collaborative methods to support greater understanding and success. A goal of the initial professional development training from 24-28 August 2009 was to provide hands-on sessions with visual tools (cognitive visual maps), inquiry, community building, systems thinking with the whole education community, the physical classroom environment, and making decisions with intentionality. To determine if such foundational change was possible, throughout the week training, at the end of the training, and after the training participating educators reflective inputs were monitored. There was a definite ‘belief systems change’ noted from the reflections. There is a major shift from teachers telling information to students to teachers facilitating learning.

4. How Thinking Schools Professional Development Addresses the Specific Issues

The Thinking Schools Professional Development Model incorporates components that support a foundational thinking approach that is cross discipline and cross grade level throughout the learning communities. This incorporates the whole learning community: students, teachers, support staff, leaders, parents and others in the community. This includes:

- ∞ visual tools to see our own thinking, communicate our thinking and assess each other’s thinking;
- ∞ community building practices for the classroom and whole learning community;
- ∞ methods of collaborative learning;
- ∞ use of inquiry to develop curious, insightful, and relevant learning practices;
- ∞ understanding how the room environment is developed and structured is an important element in learning outcomes whether it is a rural school with minimal ‘things’ and/or a school that has abundant ‘things’;
- ∞ creating habits of mind that influence current and future practitioners

The above practices support a both a belief systems shift, and understanding why and how such practices support the students as learners. Sessions that incorporate the above practices provide the participating practitioners an opportunity to first be part of ‘thinking’ community as a group of educators improving their practice. They are actually immersed in the ‘thinking practices’ that they will then transfer to their students which is essential if they are to internalize the purpose and potential outcomes — short range and long term. The above practices become as important for supporting all curricular initiatives in the learning community as much as life learning for the educators. The teachers ‘belief systems change’ is ultimately the model transferred to students throughout the learning community.

5. Specific Results Thinking Schools Professional Development Model is Moving Towards

The Thinking Schools Professional Development Model goals are creating a sustainable *Trainer of Trainers* model and educator network that is incorporated throughout all learning communities. If the Thinking Schools Model is to be feasible and sustainable, it is important to develop leadership and models of excellence within Ethiopia. To support accelerated growth with the

trainers and teachers involved with Thinking Schools, social community networks will be an integral element of the learning process among teachers and education leaders. Methods and available technologies will be important components of the ongoing Thinking Schools Professional Development. The timing coincides with a shift of how Ethiopia views education, approaches education, and has an opportunity to influence the future of education. Specifically the model is moving towards:

- ∞ a trainer of trainers model;
- ∞ providing life long thinking methods that are focused on the human thinking capacity;
- ∞ a network of educators sharing best practices;
- ∞ using collaborative technologies to build a social networking model;
- ∞ creating training methods and tools built on research and supportive of Ethiopian culture;
- ∞ equity with urban and rural schools (see the work of Nikolaj Grundtvig with the Folk Schools Movement in Denmark and the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire);
- ∞ providing support for teacher action research of their practices.

Specific details on the model outlined above are in Appendix G.

The CHSFS Ethiopia schools and staff, physical facilities and professional video crew are well positioned to create a thriving high quality model laboratory school. This model would initially include the CHSFS schools, and ultimately expand to other participating schools and regions including the state (public) schools. The latter, incorporating state schools, was noted as very feasible by the UNESCO Institute of Capacity Building (www.unesco-iicba.org) director Awol Endis who participated in the week long Thinking Schools professional development in August.

6. Recommended Next Steps

The week teacher training set a foundation for supporting and sustaining the learning community. As the principal Fekadu Negusie noted metaphorically, the building is excellent hardware and what we are doing this week is providing the software. Organizations I have worked with in governmental and not-for-profit realms have emphasized professional development in the 'start up' stages. This includes regularity with workshops developing foundational thinking tools that support the teaching and learning environment. I would recommend that the trainings initially occur every other month:

- ∞ November 2009
- ∞ January 2010
- ∞ March 2010
- ∞ May 2010

Potential Outcomes of Further Sessions as Teacher Trainers

The trainings would continue to refine, master and implement methods and techniques that support a collaborative Thinking School environment. The participants become a teaching community that could train other schools in Ethiopia – state (public) schools, private schools in Addis Ababa and rural 'countryside' regions. The sessions would take place in both Children's Home Academy in Addis Ababa, and at 'countryside' school locations providing reciprocal learning in a wide variety of conditions and locations. The facilities at Children's Home Academy provide a location that offers the potential for training many educators (conference center and amphitheater), creating a cadre of 'trainers of trainers', and the access to model methods and techniques with students.

Leadership Training

Implementing a leadership training component for all educators who are in leadership positions. Leadership is a key element of successful schools and organizations. The training would mirror the strategies and methods with the teacher training with the frame from the leadership perspective.

In addition to training the teachers, and from conversations with the head of Audio Visual (who attended Friday's session), Abraham and others, the 'thinking tools and methods' we used throughout the week equally applicable with an organization – including CHSFS Ethiopia.

Training Materials

The potential of creating training materials for teachers to take from the sessions was very clear. The videographer, still photographer, and sound engineers were all very professional in collaborating while filming and with the actual video and still images they filmed. The images could be distilled to very short video clips and still images, along with visual storyboards of how to do the techniques and methods they have learned. A short descriptive in English and Ahmaric could accompany the video and storyboard. Like professional athletes, they would then be able to review the video when needed to focus on the finer points of various strategies, methods and techniques. The ability of CHSFS Ethiopia to 'turn-around' print and video within the week with the adoption process, could be mirrored with teacher professional development. Please refer to Appendix E for more on Video Documentation for Reflection and Training Materials.

New Curriculum Development

Curriculum to build upon the foundation thinking tools and methods would be an essential component of the ongoing staff development. Like the mobile phone has accelerated communications from virtually no phone system to a cellular system that is closer to the 'state of the art', it is very possible to use the best possible teaching methods, strategies and techniques with the selected curriculum to catapult the program to a progressive educational model based research on teaching/learning and brain function. This would be based on research and materials needed to implement the curriculum in an effective and broad manner.

Action Research Grants

Action Research Grants could be awarded through the Thinking Foundation and other groups to support teachers understanding and implementing high quality practices. This would provide a way to document teaching and learning in the schools, for teachers to be reflective on their practice, and to create a body of examples of best practices.

Collaborative Technologies

Exploring and implementing collaborative technologies for regularly supporting educators:

- ∞ video conferencing using Skype via the Internet or similar means to provide ongoing support in between trainings/support onsite in Ethiopia
- ∞ email contact – approximately 2/3 of the participants had email
- ∞ use of mobile phones – all participants had a mobile phone

Appendix A

Thinking Schools Model

The Thinking School model uses methods, strategies, and techniques that incorporate the latest research to develop a learning environment that focus on participatory student and teacher learning. The model develops life skills for teachers and students supporting their growth as thinkers and learners. An important aspect of the presented tools is they can be used with minimal materials, and minimal materials that are easily accessible in all schools (countryside and city). An example is Thinking Maps (visual tools) which can be used as effectively with sand and sticks, stone and limestone, and/or paper and pencil. This is consistent with the use of questioning, community exercises, room, and collegial coaching. All methods, tools, and techniques introduced equally apply to the lives of the educators as learners, in addition to improving the student success as learners. See Appendix B for descriptions and descriptions of the specific foundations, pedagogy, and strategies and thinking methods used in the teacher learning and training.

The following is from the Thinking Foundation in respect to Thinking Schools:
The criteria for the evaluation and accreditation of *Thinking Schools* have been derived from a number of sources. They begin from a social-interactionist perspective which itself is grounded within socio-cultural theory (see Williams and Burden (1977) *Psychology for Language Teachers*, Cambridge University Press). This perspective proposes that all learning occurs as a result of the dynamic interaction between expert mediators, novice learners, learning tasks/activities and the contexts within which these processes take place. Within the sphere of education this generally translates into teachers, pupils/students, aspects of the curriculum, classrooms within schools and the whole school environment.

Thus, to understand whether a school is functioning as a “thinking school”, it is necessary to identify the level of commitment and expertise that teachers within the school are displaying in facilitating the thinking skills and strategies of the broad range of students by means of a wide range of thinking program and techniques. It is important to note the reactions of the students to this input in terms of their pleasure in learning, their sense of autonomy as independent learners and their reflective, caring behavior, as well as their improved academic learning outcomes. It is important also to record the whole school ethos and overall commitment to cognitive education as a central means of achieving these outcomes. As in many schools this may represent an aspect of innovative practice, further reference in drawing up these criteria has been made also to the vast literature on school improvement and systems change.



Appendix B

Definitions and Descriptions

Professional Development Foundations, Pedagogy, Strategies and Thinking Methods

Foundations

1. Peer Feedback

The Peer Feedback (Collegial Coaching) model focuses on teachers regularly observing each other to learn, understand, and improve their pedagogy (teaching methods). The observed lessons are approximately 15-30 minutes providing a focus on particular teaching methods and pedagogy. The model includes a briefing, lesson observation, and debriefing.

2. Demonstration Lessons

Facilitator led lessons with students for participating educators to watch the methods used in practice, and observe methods and pedagogy used during the professional development.

3. Whole School Collaboration

Successful professional development ultimately includes the whole school (learning community).

4. Common Language

Developing a foundation of ‘common language’ (shared vocabulary/definitions) with methods and strategies used within and between grade level, disciplines and administration.

5. Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education

All disciplines are involved with the strategies, methods and pedagogy part of the professional development to support the whole learning community.

Pedagogy

1. Reflective Writing and Sketching

The participants will actively reflect on the methods and strategies they are doing through participatory learning throughout the professional development. The methods used with the participating educators can be scaffolded for use with students in the classroom.

2. Community Exercises

Community building exercises are an important part of the professional development for developing participant community and for use in the participant’s classrooms.

3. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning methods are part of the participatory training with the participants, as well as learning cooperative learning methods for the classroom. This includes pairing methods, group cooperative learning methods, and implementation of cooperative learning environments within a classroom and throughout a school.

4. Classroom Environment

The physical structure to support an effective learning environment including room size, desk arrangement, positioning of the teacher in the room, location of chalkboard, lighting, etc.

Strategies and Thinking Methods

1. Cognitive Visual Language

Participants will learn used Thinking Maps, a visual cognitive language for learning within and across disciplines and age levels (pre-K through adult). The publisher - owner of the intellectual rights - has agreed to the training of Thinking Maps®, use of Thinking Maps® and Thinking Maps materials with Ethiopian educators and schools.. The research based cognitive visual maps are an effective Pre-K-12, college, and leadership tool. Information may be found at www.thinkingmaps.com. Additionally, extensive quantitative and qualitative research is online at www.thinkingfoundation.org. As a certified trainer of Thinking Maps, I have worked with their creator (David Hyerle) and publisher (Thinking Maps Inc.) to authorize CHSFS to use Thinking Maps in their teacher training throughout Ethiopia.

2. Questioning Methods

Questioning methods (inquiry) are an important part of professional development. This includes deeper learning of understanding and developing interpretive questioning, strategies of questioning (e.g. Powerful Questions), and methods of using inquiry for the staff and with the students.

3. Perspectives - Frame of Reference

An important element of understanding one another in building a thinking community includes understanding and respecting each other's perspective (frame of reference). This is accomplished through inquiry, community building, and Thinking Maps which focuses on cognition, language and culture that embrace understanding each other's perspective (frame of reference).

4. Vocabulary

A variety of recognized effective vocabulary building methods that have been implemented in the education field will be incorporated into the professional development strategies.

5. Writing

A variety of writing strategies and methods that expand from the thinking model that begins with organizing thinking including using visual cognitive maps (Thinking Maps). Writing strategies include patterns, writing from visual cognitive maps, thinking aloud, and other writing strategies.

6. Making Connections with Prior Knowledge

Making Connections with prior knowledge (Schema) explains how our previous experiences, knowledge, emotions, and understandings affect what and how we learn. By teaching students how to make connections (prior knowledge) to text they are able to better understand what they are reading and writing. Students comprehend better when they make different kinds of connections: Text-to-Self; Text-to-Text; Text-to-World.

Appendix C

Professional Development Summary: Strategies, Methods and Elements

Collaborative Learning was a key method throughout the week. This included Think-Pair-Share; working in small groups; modeling in a fishbowl setting; and many other collaborative learning techniques.

Community Building started each session with 20-30 minutes of community building exercises that were for the participants development as a community, and for the educators to use and develop the community in their classrooms and schools. After collaborating with the whole group to introduce a community exercise(s) and methods to build a collaborative team, we then practiced the methods in three smaller groups. A testament to their level of interest, focus on intentionality, understanding and collaboration was evident with their enthusiasm, and their interest in sharing personal community methods they had previously used. And how the participants embraced community and collaborative methods integrated throughout the sessions.

Demonstration Lessons with Students was conducted on Tue, Wed, and Thur. This provided participating teachers an opportunity to observe students using the same methods and techniques they had been learning. Additionally, this provided a platform to introduce the Collegial Coaching Model. A goal in the future is to have even more students representing a class (instead of twenty, forty students) to represent the countryside schools and state schools. This would encourage a deeper understanding of methods of collaborative learning to involve large classes. With school out of session, we were unable to find approximately forty students on short notice though Fekadu's staff diligently tried. We will definitely have next time larger groups of students which is representative of 'countryside' and state schools.

Environment and Food provided the participants with an thoughtful learning atmosphere throughout the week which supports a successful professional development.

Frame of Reference to understand each others perspective(s). We did a variety of strategies and methods focusing on sharing and understanding each other's perspectives. This includes creating a frame of reference for each person to learn about ourselves and each other, as well as how each visual Thinking Map can have a frame to understand different perspectives.

Inquiry (Socratic method) was a key element of the training – using methods to support an inquisitive classroom and encourage contributions from all students. The participants were introduced to and practiced Powerful Questions.

Intentionality – making choices with as a teacher was important throughout the whole training. One example of this includes a segment on classroom environment. All participants were gathered in a circle. We had approximately 24 chairs in the middle to represent student seating/desks. Some of the participants sat in the chairs to represent the students. The desks were positioned in one manner (e.g. rows) and the participants were provided a guiding question(s) of their observations on the structure using both statements and questions to consider the classroom structure before them. We then positioned the desks in another manner (e.g. half circle) and followed the same protocol. This was done in several more arrangements. The goal was having the teachers consider the structure and then make decisions based on their goals of the class – with intentionality.

Reflective Observations and Sharing by the participants were throughout each session as well as at the end of every workshop day. Facilitated reflective sessions provide peer to peer transfer of ideas between the participants and a deeper understanding of the participants for me the facilitator. This included a variety of methods and techniques that could also be used with students for deeper understanding and assessment of students.

Student's Prior Knowledge is important for understanding students, student contributions, and student involvement with the learning process. Thinking Maps, Frame of Reference, reflective practices, collaborative learning techniques and Inquiry are all important methods and techniques that embrace student's prior knowledge in the classroom.

Thinking Maps[®] (visual tools) were introduced and used throughout the week developing a deep understanding of using visual tools (Thinking Maps). The visual tools are visual cognitive maps which provide tools to put form to regular cognitive processes we all use as thinking people (e.g. cause and effect; compare and contrast; analogies; sequencing; classifying; whole part relationships; attributes; defining in context/brainstorming). As the principal Fekadu noted, 'I can use these maps to organize my life.' After the maps were practiced, it was modeled how organizing one's thinking with visual tools provides an excellent tool to produce more succinct and quality writing.

Appendix D

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

- ∞ strong leadership at Children's Home Academy and CHSFS
- ∞ professional staff at CHSFS Ethiopia of journalists, videographers, still photographers, video editors, and artists
- ∞ large scale facilities to hold large professional development sessions including the amphitheater and conference center at Children's Home Academy
- ∞ UNESCO interest in connecting the professional development with state schools
- ∞ free quality professional trainer

Weakness

- ∞ distance to regularly facilitate professional development

Opportunities

- ∞ use of collaborative technologies – e.g. video conferencing through the Internet for contact between in-person professional development
- ∞ connecting state schools, private schools, education agencies such as UNESCO and NGOs for leveraging the teacher training to apply for foundation grants with professional development
- ∞ using current proven research based methods and techniques
- ∞ creating a model that can be disseminated throughout Ethiopia and in similar educational environments
- ∞ develop and document innovative and creative ways of delivering foundational thinking skills, curriculum, and content to share with other schools nationally and internationally
- ∞ connecting innovative practices to government recommended curriculum and practices

Threats

- ∞ limited access by participant to transportation and (for rural participants) lodging

Appendix E

Video Documentation for Reflection and Training Materials

Video

Video taping was used throughout the whole five day professional development. It is a model for:

- ∞ peer feedback (collegial coaching) with reflection
- ∞ interviewing participants and students
- ∞ creating materials to reference on how to do the various strategies and methods learned during the professional development
- ∞ to reflect on these sessions for future direction
- ∞ as a means of sharing our professional development journey

Training materials for participants with the professional development to learn from will be developed in the several weeks after the training. In the future, training materials could easily be created during the professional development.

Documentation

Documentation, which is still in production, will include interviewing the participants, creating print and multi-media documents. A goal is to make legible the life of our educational process through careful observation, reflection and documentation of our experience together. The practice of daily reflection enables teachers to plan responsive curriculum that supports both group and individual development.

In addition to the documentation in production from the video and still images filmed, suggested future documentation includes panels, books, videotapes, storyboards of processes, and field notes to capture the essence of our professional development and pedagogical choices (teaching methods). Documentation is a tool for better understanding our pedagogy, our practice, and our understanding to support the best education experience for all children. Most importantly, documentation is a fundamental part of our dialogue with other teachers, children, and parents. Additionally, documentation is a ‘model’ and ‘broadcasting’ for other Ethiopian schools and educators on successful practices. Key people for the documentation include a journalist(s), videographer(s), illustrator(s), still photographer(s), and translators (when needed).



Appendix F

Key People and Participants

Participants included approximate sixty teachers and leaders from the three CHSFS Ethiopia schools, several invited schools, and UNESCO. The training sessions provided an excellent opportunity for networking and collaborating amongst various schools (state and private) and education agencies.

Awol Endis from **UNESCO** attended the entire week-long training. His interests included how the thinking tools and methods could be used in state schools.

Abraham Amanuel the **Director of CHSFS Ethiopia** came Monday and Friday. We met from mid Saturday morning through the afternoon for five hours discussing the teacher training and next steps.

Asanake Amanuel the **Director of Africa for CHSFS Ethiopia** came Wednesday afternoon to the teacher training. We met for dinner on Thursday evening to discuss the training and visions for future trainings.

Tefera, a journalist with a known TV talk show, is a friend of Ato Asanake, I met with on the evening of 27 August 2009.

Fekadu Negusie, the **Principal at Children’s Home Academy** which is part of Children’s Home Society and Family Services (CHSFS) Ethiopia coordinated the scheduling of the workshops and was an active participant throughout the week.

Eyob Getahun is the **Director of Audio Visual for CHSFS Ethiopia** which offers the potential of creating training materials from each of the workshops that can be used by participants for deeper understanding of methods and techniques, for use by new teachers, and other teachers in the field. There could be a connection here with UNESCO as well.

CHSFS Volunteers offer an opportunity to have onsite support to institute the various techniques and methods from the teacher training. Especially threading a ‘common language’ (e.g. visual tools) throughout the school classrooms and with the school leadership. They would be excellent to help develop the Collegial Coaching model. This model is for teachers improving their teaching (pedagogy – art of teaching) which should be done in small groups (minimum of three recommended) without the principal or other leadership present (their presence shifts the focus on improving teaching peer to peer to evaluation). For this to be effective, the volunteers must have a clear vision with their role(s) and how to implement the Collegial Coaching, and/or any other methods and techniques. **Erin Sweeney** and **Kalkidan Tamiru** are current volunteers who attended the training and learning sessions.

Several private schools participated in the whole week workshop. Their continued involvement becomes part of the model of CHSFS schools being model laboratory schools.

Jeff Wigren and **Alan Bachman** of **CHSFS** in Minneapolis were the liaisons for the teacher training and learning sessions.

Appendix G

Descriptions of Specific Results Thinking Schools Professional Development Model is Moving Towards

Trainer of Trainers Model

The Trainer of Trainers (TOT) model incorporates a combination of competency-based and mastery learning methods applied through a defined *trainer pathway*, in which a Trainer of Trainer is ultimately able not only to train peers, but to design and develop curricula for training programs. The Trainer of Trainer model creates a feasible pathway of developing a sustainable Thinking Schools model. The training employs competency-based learning, a learning-by-doing training approach that focuses more on successful performance of demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for quality pedagogy according to defined standards — than on simple acquisition of knowledge

Life Long Thinking Methods

The learning methods learned in school should be part of the student's tools for learning throughout life. Being a life long learner begins in school to enhance social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. The Thinking Schools Model embraces 'tools' that support thinking skills for life long learners in school, throughout school, and in life after school.

Network of Educators Sharing Best Practices

If the Thinking Schools Model is to be successful, the teachers participating with the professional development will benefit from creating a network of communication. This supports sharing models of excellence, solving problems, achieving goals, exchanging knowledge, and developing collaborations.

Collaborative Technologies to Build a Social Networking Model

The participants will implement 'technologies' that support communication and a social network amongst educators. At the August professional development with teachers from Addis Ababa and very rural communities, approximately one third had an email account (all from Addis Ababa) and ALL teachers had a mobile phone. With participating teachers, a network would be developed using tools already in place while exploring technologies presently emerging in Ethiopia. Partnerships with mobile phone and other technology concerns will be explored.

Supportive of Ethiopian culture

For the Thinking Schools Professional Development model to be feasible and sustainable, it must embrace the culture of Ethiopia as part of the thinking process.

Equity with Urban and Rural (Countryside) Schools

The work of Nikolaj Grundtvig with the Folk Schools Movement in Denmark and the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire are examples of bringing quality education to populations previously unable to access high quality learning and thinking methods. A focus with Thinking Schools is having educators and students facilitate thinking within their world and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

Teacher Action Research Microgrants

Teachers would be supported with microgrants to support their study and understanding of their teaching practices. The Action Research Microgrants will be modeled from the concept of Microcredit. The Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladeshi banker and economist who developed the concept of microcredit for entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans in emerging economies.

The Microgrants would be awarded to schools and educators within schools that are integrating Thinking Schools methods within their learning community. Individuals as well as teams and whole schools would submit proposals. Proposals should focus on how to use Thinking Schools methods and approaches for formative and/or summative assessment of students' thinking and/or content learning. Research investigating how to assess thinking in these areas would be supported with microgrants: cognitive skills development, dispositions of thinking, problem solving and content learning within and across disciplines, metacognition, and critical thinking.

The goal of the microgrants is to support sustainable models of excellence in teaching and facilitate a developing a body and network of quality teaching research from within Ethiopia. Initial support of microgrants would come from Thinking Foundation (www.thinkingfoundation.org).