

6. THE SWAZILAND IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT 1973-1978

Background	A UNESCO-aided up-grading programme for over 500 untrained teachers in Botswana was conducted in the period 1968-1972. This project, consisting of a series of residential courses together with correspondence study and the use of radio (on similar lines to the Uganda programme) attracted a good deal of attention in neighbouring countries. In 1971 a group of senior education officials from Swaziland visited the Botswana project, located at the Francistown College, made a study of the work being done, and, as a result, a similar project came into existence in Swaziland in 1972, on the campus of a teachers' college. Several months were occupied in recruiting staff and materials, planning courses and writing the first years' correspondence assignments. The first group of students took up residence in July 1973.
Aims	These were to up-grade to full Primary School Teachers' Certificate level some 600 serving teachers who were either untrained or held only the Elementary Vernacular Certificate. These represented about one third of the total primary school teaching force. The full programme was to be phased over a 5 year period (see figure 2).
Needs and priorities	Priority was given to this up-grading project in order to raise the general academic and professional level of the least qualified third of the teaching force. At the same time, it provided a more practical, child-centred approach to the education of the younger children for whom these teachers were mainly responsible.

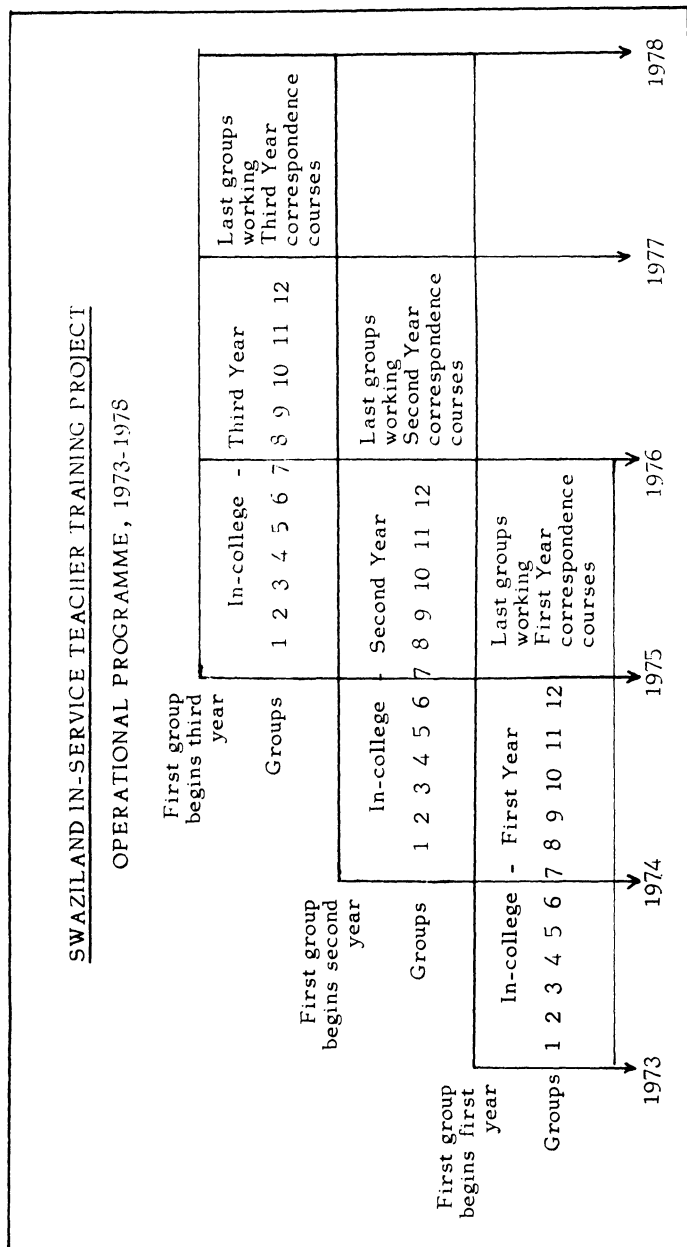


Figure 1

WILLIAM PITCHER TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE - MANZINI

PROGRAMME OF STUDIES FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING COURSE, 1973-1978

Three Years' Study by Correspondence Courses in
Education, Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies

Supporting Activities

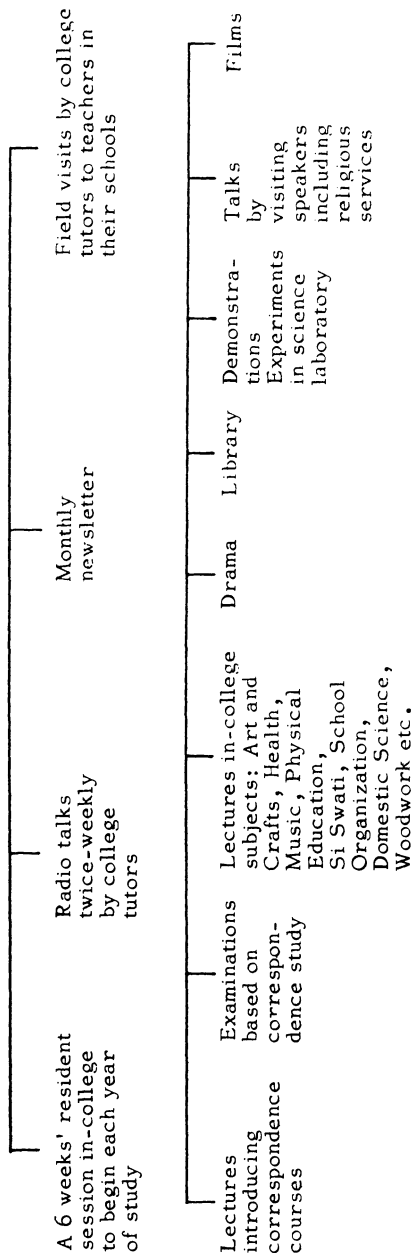


Figure 2

Whilst curriculum change was not envisaged as a function of the project, change did result from the involvement of in-service staff with teachers and their schools.

Resources	The agencies involved were the Ministry of Education; UNESCO (some staff members); UNICEF (correspondence unit equipment and materials; transport); and the British Ministry of Overseas Development (some staff and buildings). The staff required included: Project Manager; Head of Correspondence Unit; ten tutors; clerical staff. At present (1974) there is only one Swazi national on the teaching staff. The Correspondence Unit works under considerable pressure and employs eight typing and ancillary staff. Part-time assignment markers are also employed.
Participants	These were the 600 serving teachers either without training or with only vernacular training.
Content of the course	The curriculum is in two parts: five 'core subjects' - education, English, mathematics, science & social studies; and a number of 'supplementary' subjects - teaching aids, Si Swati, music, home economics and physical education. About four-fifths of the time in the in-college course is spent on the core subjects, which are followed up by correspondence. The supplementary subjects are not included in the correspondence studies. (see figure 2)
Modes and methods of training	The syllabus in each subject is devised by the tutorial staff and takes into account both the academic and the professional needs of the teachers. The programme of studies lasts for 3 years, each year being introduced by a residential 6 week session at the College during which the teachers (50 in any one group) are introduced to the course, including the correspondence

studies, and engage in discussions, demonstrations, laboratory and library work. In the second and third residential sessions, the previous year's work is examined and the correspondence work for the following year is introduced. Course members each complete a total of 40 assignments during the year which are returned to the College, marked and graded, and returned to the teachers.

There is considerable emphasis on practical activities during the course and their application is studied by regular visits to the local primary school which is used for demonstration and practice purposes.

The following summary of the Science Syllabus for the second year of the course provides a useful illustration of the kind of work being done:

"1. In-College Course

The acquisition of the necessary skills, techniques and organizational ability must be a major part of the In-College work. The emphasis in the second year In-College course is on the selection, interpretation and use of simple science activities for classroom application. The teachers have been introduced to selections of suitable activities in various topics, e.g. water, animals, plants in the first year, and they have been encouraged to attempt these with their classes. A large part of the second year six week course is given to:

- (a) planning ordered series of activities on a yearly or termly basis.
- (b) gleaning the materials for these activities from the already prepared activity sheets and assignments and from others to be written this year.
- (c) preparing and using materials and equipment to go with these class activities.

(d) learning to organize the classroom to best advantage when handling such science activities with children.

At least a session will be given to the proper use of simple carpentry tools. Such skills are very necessary, given the situation in most schools at present. We have found that the teachers, both men and women, tackle tasks involving the use of tools with enthusiasm.

Attention will also be given to the contents of the second year assignments, where difficulties might be anticipated.

"2. The Work in the Practising School

Throughout the year, the teachers in the school will be given plans of work in various topics, along the lines mentioned in the In-College Section above. They will be helped with the organization of the activities, and the preparation of materials for use with the children, so that our students can see the science activity programme in action on their weekly visits to the school.

"3. Assignment Titles

Assignment 9	Magnetism
Assignment 10	More about Plants
Assignment 11	Machines
Assignment 12	More about Animals
Assignment 13	Electricity
Assignment 14	Human Body II
Assignment 15	Earth's place in the Universe
Assignment 16	Travel above the Earth

School visits

During the science staff visits to our

teachers in the schools, special attention will be given to second year teachers who should be putting into practice, activity programmes planned on a term basis.

The organization of the classroom, involving placing of interest tables, storing of materials and equipment, planning rotating group activities for the class and integrating across traditional subject boundaries, are important areas with which the teachers will be given assistance. Lists of locally available materials have been issued to all teachers and schools and the staff will try to ensure that the headmasters supply the teachers with these.

"5. Radio and Newsletter

Up to the present time, ideas for the broadcasts and newsletter articles stem from points which arise during the course of the work. For example, articles presented for the Newsletter's previous issues have been:

- (a) Activity Science in the Primary School.
- (b) Primary School "Activity" Materials.
- (c) The Discovery table.

and radio broadcast titles transmitted in term 1 1974 are:

- (a) The Activity Approach to Science.
- (b) Using our Senses.

In future issues and programmes, ideas for class activities, limits on how to tackle certain topics with children, making and finding materials and equipment, and such practical issues will be

dealt with. It is important to maintain the relevance of such items by preparing them when they are needed."

Follow-up and
evaluation

The follow-up element in the project is given considerable priority, as already indicated in previous paragraphs.

It is considered essential that the in-college courses of six weeks each, and the assignment work done by teachers in addition to their normal term-time teaching duties, should be supported by a variety of personal contacts. These include the twice-weekly radio broadcasts; the regular project newsletters; personal correspondence between tutors and teachers and, most important, the advisory visits by tutors to teachers in their own schools. As a recent project report puts it: "Practical help for and encouragement of the student in his, or her, own environment is the most successful way to ensure that real progress is made. The impact upon the schools and communities has been remarkable." During the first year of the project, tutors were able to spend an average of two days each week on such advisory visits. As the teaching load on in-college courses increases in the second and subsequent years, it is likely that this will be no more than one day per week - and this, of course, with a growing number of teachers in the project.

No strictly objective means of evaluating the project are envisaged as yet. More importantly, it is considered that a process of on-going evaluation through regular visits to schools, the checking of teachers' correspondence work and their work on the in-college courses will provide the means whereby progress can be assessed and any necessary modifications to the project programme can be made.

Special
features

Most of these have already been referred to, or implied, but it may be useful to stress the following:

- (a) the extent of the pre-course planning and assignment writing, with most of the staff available several months ahead of the first course.
- (b) the location, with additional buildings, on a College campus with consequent mutual benefits-and problems.
- (c) the complexity of organization of the correspondence unit and the need for good supporting staff.
- (d) arising from the opportunity for the staff to meet and plan together beforehand, there developed a "team" effort amongst all staff pursuing a commonly agreed objective.
- (e) the very practical nature of the in-college course, including the extensive use of a local school for demonstration and practice.
- (f) the extent and thoroughness of the "follow-up" activities leading naturally to classroom trial of limited curriculum innovations.