



The Quality Link

Fall 1993

The Newsletter of the Improving Educational Quality Project

Number 1

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

23-24 September 1993

Washington, DC

IEQ will host the First International Exchange on Educational Quality on 23-24 September 1993. The Exchange will: introduce policy-makers and practitioners from the IEQ countries and the U.S.; facilitate opportunities for all participants to identify areas of common interest, share experiences, learn how each other's work fits into an international context; and specify ways in which a dialogue may continue. The format of the Exchange will foster reciprocity, so that all participants may listen to and learn from one another. Participants in the Exchange will include: national policy-makers; researchers from universities and private institutions; members of evaluation units within Ministries; leaders of host country research teams; and development agency representatives.

Our speakers will include: Dr. Michael Cohen, Advisor to the Secretary, The Goals 2000: Educate America Act; Dr. Sharon Robinson, Director of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement; Dr. Beryl Levinger, an advocate of the "New School" movement and Director of Basic Education at the Education Development Center; and representatives from each IEQ country. On behalf of IEQ, the National Center on Adult Literacy and the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development held primary responsibility for organizing this Exchange.

IEQ Mission

The Improving Educational Quality Project aims to identify practical ways to improve learning outcomes through a better understanding of how learning takes place in schools and classrooms. IEQ forms partnerships with a host country institution to design and implement classroom studies that generate information about "the workplace of learning." This practical information will be disseminated to educators for use in planning programs, improving pupil performance, and allocating scarce resources. Feedback loops will be strengthened through workshops and conferences and testing of classroom innovations. IEQ is a five-year interdisciplinary approach currently working in Ghana, Mali, Guatemala, and South Africa.

IEQ Funding Agency & Partners

The IEQ Project is funded by the Office of Education, Research, and Development Bureau, U.S. Agency for International Development. IEQ is conducted by the Institute for International Research (IIR), in collaboration with Juárez and Associates, Inc., the Institute for International Studies in Education at the University of Pittsburgh, the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (FWL), and the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania (NCAL).

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Letter from the Editors

Welcome to *The Quality Link*! The purpose of this newsletter is to foster linkages between educators and researchers in the IEQ collaborating countries and other countries, communities, and organizations. Each edition will update readers about IEQ Project activities and present information of interest to those involved in improving educational quality worldwide.

We hope you find the newsletter informative and stimulating. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions regarding the format and contents. Please contact us at the address below.

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IEQ in Ghana

Ghana is located along the South Atlantic Ocean in West Africa. Its population of about 15.0 million is growing at an annual rate of 3.2 percent. Almost 70 percent of Ghanaians live in rural areas; in the northern region, the percentage climbs to 85 percent. There are over 100 different ethnic groups, most with their own language and culture. Although no single native national language exists, English serves as Ghana's official language.

The Education Act of 1961 provided free and compulsory education to primary school-age children, and during the 1960's, Ghana earned the reputation for having one of Africa's most advanced education systems in terms of enrollment and literacy. However, enrollment rates declined during subsequent years, and large numbers of trained teachers left the profession to work abroad.

Currently, approximately 30 percent of eligible school-age children are not enrolled, and educational resources are inequitably distributed in favor of the southern half of the country. Also, enrollment and retention rates for girls are lower than those for boys. Jerry Rawlings won Ghana's presidential elections in November 1992, and hopes are high that the establishment of democracy will bring stability and economic development to Ghana.

IEQ Collaboration

The IEQ effort to improve educational quality in Ghana stems from a USAID/Government of Ghana program entitled the Primary Education Program (PREP), which was launched in July 1991. The major activities under PREP include: the development of criterion-referenced testing for primary school leavers (P6) in English and Math; a comprehensive in-service training program; and the distribution of instructional materials. PREP is implemented within the Ministry of Education through the Project Management Unit.

The University of Cape Coast and the CRIQPEG Team

IEQ's institutional partner in Ghana is the Faculty of Education at the University of Cape Coast. The partnership has resulted in the creation of the Centre for Research on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG). The seven senior CRIQPEG team leaders represent several departments within the Faculty of Education. They have diverse fields of expertise, including math and science education, special education, educational administration, and educational measurement and evaluation. Faculty colleagues and graduate students have joined CRIQPEG as team members to participate in the field work and report preparation.

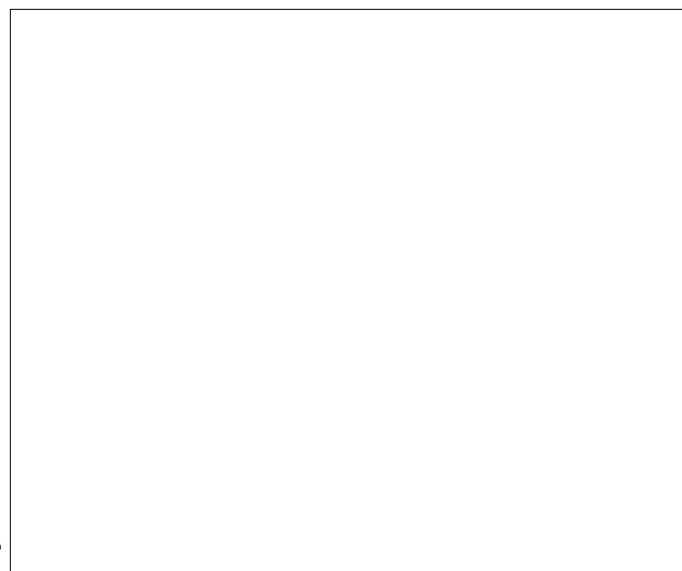
IEQ Research

IEQ research consists of three phases: Phase I examined the availability, source, and use of materials in six schools in the Central Region. Phase II focuses on the use of materials and oral and written language proficiency across the curriculum. Contextual dimensions will be examined, and the feedback into the education system will be formalized. Phase III focuses on school and classroom changes and strengthens the feedback loop at the regional, school and classroom levels.

Phase I: The Central Region Study

The Phase I research took place between February and March, 1993 and focused on 18 classrooms (P1-P6) in six primary schools in the Central Region. It included over 216 hours of classroom observation and a number of interviews with teachers, pupils, parents, and community and school leaders. The overall purpose of Phase I was to: gain a clearer understanding of the primary school environment (e.g. availability and use of instructional materials, teacher-pupil discourse); increase team members' exposure to primary schools; gain familiarity with qualitative methods; and generate findings that would guide future research.

The team gained valuable insight into the instructional process, how teachers use their time, the characteristics of curriculum, teacher adherence to the timetable, and the availability and use of instructional materials. A summary of the Phase I research findings will be provided in the next issue.



Abigail Harris

The Ghanaian Research Team at the IEQ-sponsored seminar on the analysis and presentation of qualitative research.

Guatemala, the Latin American participant country in the IEQ Project, is located to the south and west of Mexico. The majority of its rural population (73%) is made up of individuals who identify themselves as indigenous Mayans and speak one of the 22 Mayan languages of the country. These groups tend to be subsistence or migratory farm workers, who due to their precarious economic conditions and relative isolation contribute to the low literacy rate (52%) of the country as a whole.

Guatemala is currently emerging from an attempted coup d'état by Jorge Serrano, who was elected president in 1990. Popular response against this move, combined with economic sanctions on the part of the U.S. and the European Community, led to his resignation within a three week period. Ramiro de Leon Carpio, the former human rights ombudsman, was elected president by the Congress and has announced a 180-day plan that includes educational initiatives for disfranchised segments of the Guatemalan populace.

Educational Status

Guatemala's relative isolation, ongoing conflict, and multiple languages and cultures have led to disparities in educational attainment by ethnicity, region, and gender. Seventy-nine percent of urban children were enrolled in 1992 whereas only 53% of rural children were in school. Dropout and repetition are high among the children who do attend school, resulting in an average of 10 years of schooling to produce a sixth grade graduate.

IEQ Collaboration

In Guatemala, a new series of reform efforts is currently being funded through a grant by USAID under the Basic Education Strengthening (BEST) Project. IEQ is assisting in the study of the multigrade school methodologies presently being developed as part of the reform effort. These methodologies are adapting the "escuela nueva" model of Colombia to the needs of Guatemala through pilot programs in both indigenous and non-indigenous regions. The program, called "nueva escuela unitaria" (NEU), will eventually be expanded to all of the more than 3000 one-room schools in Guatemala. Key elements of the NEU program include cooperative learning, individualized instruction, instructional and ancillary materials, and participation in student government. It is hoped that the methodology will have wider applications in assisting all Guatemalan teachers to work with the common situation of multiple grades in a single classroom.

The Host Country Research Team (HCRT)

IEQ is currently working with the regional offices involved in the pilot study of the new unitary school program. The Host Country Research Team (HCRT) for Guatemala consists of a Research Coordinator and a Regional Research Supervisor for each of the regions implementing the pilot program, as well as support personnel. In addition, a field staff of 5 researchers has been recruited in each region. The HCRT, working with the project technical team, is responsible for the design, implementation, supervision, and coordination of the research.

Research Design

A multi-method approach including pre-post testing of a sample of

NEU students and comparison students on selected cognitive development and self-esteem measures was developed, combined with in-depth observation of a subsample of children. Ethnographic data collection with teachers and community members complements the data collection with children.

A series of research questions has been developed which focuses on the implementation of the NEU program at the classroom and community level and the relationship of different program components to the cognitive and socio-emotional development of children participating in the program. Thus, the four components of the NEU program--teachers, students, community, administration--form the basis for the research questions. The emphasis of the research questions is to assist the program managers to calibrate the implementation of the program in the pilot schools and to determine those elements of the program that are critical to student achievement.

Next Steps

Following data reduction and analysis of the first set of classroom observations, the HCRT will present a report to the regional developers of the NEU program that will include recommendations for the proposed expansion of the program. For the next phase of research, the NEU developers are eager to have IEQ look at third and fourth graders in the pilot classrooms. The study design will vary based on questions particular to those grades. The HCRT also looks forward to observing the teacher seminars and weekly teacher circles organized by the developers to discuss school activities. The third phase of IEQ research will provide an opportunity to look at the expansion of the NEU program and what it means in terms of quality in the classroom.

IEQ in Mali

The Republic of Mali is a land-locked country located in the Sahel region of West Africa. About 80 percent of its 8.7 million population is rural, and adult illiteracy is high. Mali became independent in 1960 and adopted a democratic system of government in January 1992. The new government is committed to promoting basic education through increased enrollment, improved primary retention rates, and girls' access to education.

The Malian education system is characterized by poor quality, low productivity, high inefficiency, and low enrollment rates. Access to school is denied a large percentage of the population. In 1990, only 24% of eligible primary school-age children were enrolled; for girls, the percentage was only 17%. The disparity in male/female enrollment is much greater in rural as opposed to urban areas.

French is Mali's official language, and there are approximately ten national languages. In the majority of Malian schools, the French language is taught exclusively from the beginning of the first grade.

Educational Reform

Educational reform in Mali is currently being assisted by USAID's Basic Education Expansion Project (BEEP). This project focuses on improving educational quality and access at the primary school level. USAID is investing in instructional materials, and plans have been made for strengthening efforts to decentralize the provision of educational and evaluation services.

IEQ Collaboration

IEQ's initial focus is directed towards gaining a better understanding of the reasons for low levels of achievement in reading and language attained during the early

grades of primary school. IEQ will devise an assessment model for reading and language skills that will seek to relate learning outcomes to classroom practice and to student, teacher, and school characteristics.

IEQ is working with two Malian institutions: the Institut Pédagogique National (IPN) and the Institut Supérieur de Formation et Recherche Appliquée (ISFRA). As a first step in the IEQ collaboration in Mali, two short-term studies are now being conducted. The results of these studies will be discussed with policy-makers and educators with a view toward identifying interventions that might be mounted as part of the current primary school education reform. They will also inform the design of the larger effort to develop a national assessment model.

The IPN Study: Classroom Observation

The first study, conducted by IPN, examined classroom practices with respect to reading and language learning in grades one and two. The goal of this study was to obtain a description of what actually takes place in the classroom during the periods of the school day when language and reading are taught. This information was supplemented by information obtained from interviews with school directors, teachers, students, and parents. The study involved a sample of six schools (grades one and two), each of which was visited for five days.

The study provides a starting point for identifying home, school, and classroom-related variables likely to be implicated in student achievement. The exercise was undertaken in order to provide practice in conducting qualitative research, to obtain information necessary for planning more in-depth inquiry, and to illuminate training, logistical, and collaborative needs for conducting future research in Mali.

The ISFRA Study: Characteristics of Primary School Children

The second study, which will be undertaken by ISFRA, looks at the characteristics a child brings to primary school, such as basic health and nutritional condition, motor skills, social skills, and cognitive skills. The study will examine both the international literature and relevant Malian experience in order to identify a practical list of measures that might provide important information on children's abilities to learn to read and write in school. This study will lead to a narrative description of characteristics of students in the classrooms sampled and a list of issues relevant to student performance in reading and language that need to be incorporated in the proposed assessment model and addressed in future studies.

Next Step: In-Depth Study

The initial studies by IPN and ISFRA are meant to provide information and experience as a foundation for conducting a more in-depth study of the relationship of student, teacher, and school characteristics and classroom practice to student achievement in reading and language. The planning of this study began in mid-September.

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Two major knowledge building outcomes of the IEQ Project will include 1) documented experiences of at least three successful classroom-level innovations in developing countries, and 2) documentation of the process used to develop, introduce, guide, and evaluate these innovations.

Rationale

IEQ examines knowledge building at two levels. First, knowledge building in a broad sense is viewed as the new knowledge acquired in all aspects of the project, through information exchange and management as well as research, and is the responsibility of all persons involved in the project. To initiate and carry out any planned project of improving educational quality usually means that those involved must obtain new information, acquire and apply new insights. Further, in order to assess progress and provide a rational basis for adaptations in the direction of the ongoing project, those directly involved in, or studying, the innovation generate new knowledge. At one level, knowledge building and knowledge utilization thus are integral to, and cannot be separated from, achieving the central goals of planned change.

Knowledge building also includes an attempt to examine comprehensively the core country project experiences, seek cross-country comparisons and contrasts, and, as appropriate, analyze research findings within a context of the relevant international research. Only within such wider contexts is there the possibility of understanding more thoroughly the country experiences, contributing to the international knowledge base on improving educational quality, suggesting new implications for policy and practice, and identifying priorities for continued research.

Don Adams

Publications

The following publications are available now from the Improving Educational Quality Project headquarters:

Defining Educational Quality

IEQ Publication #1: Biennial Report
Don Adams, University of Pittsburgh
January 1993

This paper draws distinctions between quality and some of the other related educational concepts used to characterize and assess educational systems, organizations and programs, identifies multiple meanings of educational quality, and begins to operationalize the term "quality" for purposes of easier communication, planning and evaluation of educational change.

Ghanaian Research Reports: Phase I Study

IEQ Occasional Paper #1
University of Cape Coast
June 1993

This paper documents the classroom observation findings from the Phase 1 study of schools in Ghana's Central Region. The paper consists of an executive summary and an in-depth summary of each of the six schools included in the study. The study looks at the availability, source, and utilization of instructional materials in Ghanaian classrooms.

Guide to Information Sources

IEQ Technical Report #1
Leo Klopfer, University of Pittsburgh

The Guide is designed to provide a list of sources for international colleagues who do not have easy access to information about existing educational research and practice. The Guide combines data from several research domains such as cognitive science and school effectiveness with descriptions of school-based projects in subjects such as language arts or mathematics.

Please contact **Ina Laemmerzahl** for copies of these or other papers at the following address: Institute for International Research, 1815 North Fort Myer, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22209 USA.

IEQ COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS:

Institute for International Research, Prime Contractor

The Institute for International Research (IIR) is the prime contractor for the Improving Educational Quality Project. IIR, founded in 1976, is a private research and development organization specializing in education, human resource development, and development communication. IIR's headquarters are located in Washington, DC, and it has worked in over 70 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

IIR is known most widely for its systematic and empirically-based work on the development of national education systems, and it has pioneered the development of Low Cost Learning Systems in developing nations. IIR's programs have also focussed on the uses of technology in education, policy research, the design of educational management information systems, and the organizational improvement of ministries of education. In these programs, IIR coordinates

work on the various factors that affect educational quality, including curriculum development, materials design, testing, teacher training, school and classroom management, financing, and community participation.

In addition to the Improving Educational Quality Project, IIR is currently working on the following:

- In Swaziland, IIR is carrying out the *Educational Policy Management and Training* project, a comprehensive project to develop a continuous assessment program, improve instructional methods and materials, design and implement teacher training, develop counseling capacity, and develop a viable management information system.
- Under the *Learning Technologies for Basic Education* project, IIR collaborates with the Educational Development Center and the Academy for Educational Development to conduct international research on the use of technologies in conjunction with interactive radio instruction.
- In collaboration with The American University, IIR administers the *De-*

velopment Studies Program, an intensive graduate-level course for USAID professionals on the latest theoretical and empirical work in development. IIR also provides environmental training to USAID personnel under the *A.I.D. Staff Strengthening through Environmental Training* project and the *Environmental and Natural Resources Policy and Training* project.

- IIR maintains the *Center for Development Communications*, an extensive library of materials on development communications consisting of some 15,000 holdings, and conducts an interactive information service for projects and programs throughout the world. With the assistance of Creative Associates, IIR also produces a quarterly bulletin on development communications under this contract.

Other collaborating institutions will be featured in forthcoming issues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 1993

Guatemala:

- ❖ Post-Test of Academic Performance and Socio-Emotional Development

Mali:

- ❖ Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA) Conference

U.S.:

- ❖ IEQ Retreat to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia
- ❖ Research-Specific Workshops for Visitors from Ghana and Mali
- ❖ First International Exchange on Educational Quality

OCTOBER 1993

Ghana:

- ❖ The Second Annual Conference on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana
- ❖ The Fourth Professional Development Seminar for CRIQPEG

Guatemala:

- ❖ Post-Test of Academic Performance and Socio-Emotional Development

NOVEMBER 1993

Guatemala:

- ❖ Data Analysis and Preparation of Research Reports

Mali:

- ❖ Preparation of Study Reports (IPN & ISFRA)

DECEMBER 1993

Guatemala:

- ❖ Data Analysis and Preparation of Research Reports

Mali:

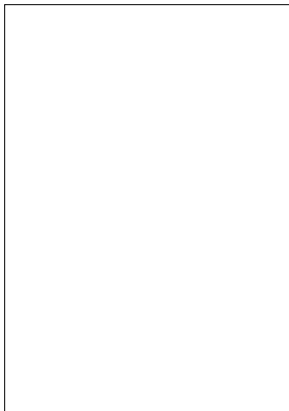
- ❖ Conference on the Results of the Studies on Teaching of Language and Child Quality

PROFILES OF IEQ RESEARCH COORDINATORS

MALI, Institut Pédagogique National: **ABDOUL DRAMANE COULIBALY**

My interest in education began a long time ago. When I was of school age (between 6-7 years), I had many older cousins who would share their school experiences with me. However, my interest in education was more a desire to benefit from instruction than a desire to be part of the educational profession.

From 1959-1960, this desire for instruction took a turn because the teacher at the time was also filling a political position and was almost always absent from school. He put



me in charge of his daily duties each time he was absent. As expected, I followed his daily teacher preparation book and schedule in order to ensure that the proper courses were taught for that day. However, I still wanted to be a doctor, pilot or bridge engineer, and in my point of view, these could be easily achieved.

I was greatly disappointed in 1964 when the success of my Diploma of General Studies steered me toward the Normal Secondary School of Katibougou to become a teacher of Second Cycle. I had no difficulty in English so I didn't hesitate to choose to go into languages. Language students were required to return to Bamako; in fact, there were a lot of mosquitos in Katibougou and I enjoyed life in Bamako.

When the Director of our division at IPN asked me to work with IEQ, I was already coordinating the activities of two research teams; the

activities of the first team consisted of investigating the relationships which existed between linguistic performance and the mastery of mathematical language, while the activities of the second team were to carry out a survey of the curriculum plan of the first cycle, and the double sessions and multigrade classrooms.

IEQ is still very new in Mali and yet has already given me the chance to enjoy meeting and working with the IEQ staff and consultants. These contacts have permitted me to enlarge and consolidate my network which is a fundamental factor in the affirmation and promotion of a researcher. Nevertheless, the experience, which is to me the most important in the IEQ methodological plan, is qualitative classroom observation because it provides a clear voice in integrating the practical into the classroom and the entire school.

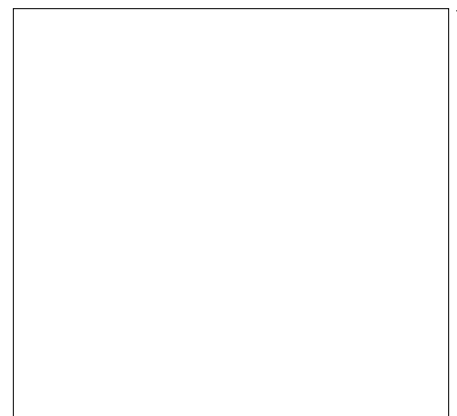
GUATEMALA: **YETILU IUNGE de BAESSA**

I got interested in the field of education about 13 years ago, when I started working on a research project to study child development and its impact on school achievement. This experience made me realize how badly the system was functioning and how serious the educational problem was among the lower class in Guatemala.

Before working for IEQ, I was studying at the University of Texas at Austin, where I completed a

Ph.D. in Educational Psychology in the area of learning, cognition, and instruction. After I took the oral examination in August 1992, I came back to Guatemala and worked for the University del Valle for three months in order to close the longitudinal research project I had started in 1980.

My most interesting IEQ experience is seeing the difference between the beginning of the year and now in terms of girls' participation



in school governments in one of the regions where we are doing observations. I am looking forward to seeing the same thing happen in the Indian region.

PROFILES OF IEQ RESEARCH COORDINATORS (cont.)

GHANA:

JOSEPH MBAWINE YAKUBU

I became interested in education by chance!

After my school Certificate Examinations in 1961, I got a telegram from the Principal at the Winneba Training College, asking me to proceed immediately to start my teacher training programme. There were only three such post-secondary training colleges in the country. Without hesitation, I rushed to Winneba and started the programme.

A week after my arrival, I received a telegram from my Headmaster asking me to start my sixth form science programme. I was confused. The Headmaster, thinking that it was the Principal who did not want to release me, wrote persistently to him asking him to release me. One day the Principal called me and asked "Now young man, are you going to the Sixth Form or remaining here with us?" I considered the atmosphere of the college which was mature and friendly and then said, "Sir, I am going to stay here." That is how I became interested in education. Education has been my first love and has always been for the past thirty years.

I had the good fortune of doing my M. Ed. studies at the Centre for Science Education Chelsea College, University of London, 1978-80. This was a leading centre for studies in Science Education in Britain, and I was exposed to the various research techniques and became interested in the Case study Methodology.

I have used my classroom experiences as vivid illustrations in my teaching. IEQ has enriched these and has added credibility to my teaching. My M.Ed. students are showing interest in my primary school research, and all of them are members of CRIQPEG. IEQ has also supported and created an up-to-date knowledge base for research through

the literature provided. Some of the latest journals in our Education Faculty Library date as far back as mid-1970s! Post-graduate students have been informed about the presence of the CRIQPEG Library and they do come to borrow books or make references.

The IEQ is making a positive impact on educational professionalism at the University of Cape Coast by strengthening the knowledge and research bases in the Faculty.



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