Participants

Husam Qasrawi

Hijje Hakam

Jackie Simmons

Ellen Meier

Howard Budin

Frank Moretti

Judith Cramer

Lou Cristillo

1. Welcome
   1. Partnership between TC and Palestine Technical Institute.
   2. Overview
      1. We will review what information we want to gather and share.
      2. We will try to develop an action plan – what sort of activities do we want to engage in here and as a springboard for activities that will continue in Palestine. There will be revisions from the original proposal as we consider changes in content.
      3. We will consider needs that we expressed at the visit last November and hope to see these needs as opportunities, rather than problems.
2. Introduction and Ice-Breaker
   1. Participants asked to share their name, affiliation, background and a computer application or piece of software they would choose to be (if they had to).
   2. Howie Budin
      1. Co-direct Center for Technology and School Change
      2. Adjunct Professor of Education
      3. Teach courses on technology and schools of education
      4. Application: Voice Thread – a program that allows interactive dialogue tracking
   3. Judith Cramer
      1. Education Technology Specialist
      2. Works with faculty one-on-one to develop the integration of technology in the curriculum
      3. Application: Comic Life – a digital application to create comics & graphic novels
   4. Jackie Simmons
      1. Lecturer in Curriculum Teaching
      2. Teaches courses in designing curriculum & instruction; professional certification program
      3. Application: Schazam – tells you the name of the song, who sings it, and where you can buy it
   5. Ellen Meier
      1. Associate Professor of Practice
      2. Primarily interested in policy and leadership issues in technology. Studies how we move technology into schools.
      3. Application: Garage Band – allows for creativity
   6. Hijje Hakam
      1. Chemistry and Education, specialist in curriculum
      2. Hope is to see technology in the schools
      3. Research to teach science in 10th grade by technology and traditional ways – to blend them together.
      4. Application: Autocab – a program for technical programs, flash player
   7. Husam Qasrawi
      1. Palestine Technical University
      2. Background in engineering. Works on planning and development of quality of teaching; Trying to improve pre-service and in-service education for teachers; Works with Ministry of Education and previously at vocational schools as teacher and headmaster. Curriculum development for industrial education.
      3. Helped write new Palestinian curriculum
      4. Application: Hoping to adopt software to their needs
   8. Frank Moretti
      1. Teaches social and communications theory
      2. Direct the Center for New Media Teaching and Learning – help set up course websites
      3. Application: Norton Anti-virus
   9. Lou Cristillo
      1. Department of International and Transcultural Studies
      2. Anthropologist. Teaches on education and culture, religion, development. Has taught all levels, k-12. Program development in Morocco.
      3. Application: GPS application – “to find ones direction”
3. Framing the day: Information; Decisions; Action plan
   1. Internet Resource (Lou)
      1. International Technology and Engineering Educators Association www.iteea.org
      2. This site is a clearinghouse of information for people who teach education technology
      3. The website has resources (i.e. Where to get a degree). You can go to university websites and see the course breakdowns of their programs. This would be useful for possible models and to see what courses they are including as electives, etc.
   2. International standards
      1. Palestine has its own standards. New programs must go through procedures to show they meet these standards. First a program must meet requirements for credit-hours in specific fields and then go through accreditation of quality assurance. A program must send a proposal to the Quality Assurance Association and get a decision on accreditation.
         1. Must also list faculty who will teach in the program and include the plan itself as well as opportunities and outcomes that are expected.
         2. Must provide evidence of the program fits into the National strategy.
      2. It would be useful to see how US programs handle standards and what the programs include. Palestinian partner institutions are now updating their plan to get it accepted.
      3. ITEEA has standards that might be useful to look at as a guide or to cite as support for the proposal.
      4. Also have k-12 technology standards through International Society for Technology Education (for technology use in schools).
      5. The World Bank funding for enhancing the quality of teacher education is part of a national strategy (3 year plan of Ministry of Education). The Ministry is hoping to make up for the fact that most teachers in public schools have not been certified. There have been problems in the past due to not having a comprehensive set of standards across teachers. The Ministry is trying to standardize the certification of teachers (universal level of certification). The World Bank project is part of larger national agenda to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom. Palestine needs to standardize and improve the quality of teacher education, which is where the universities come in.
      6. In Palestine, teachers might not have been graduates from an education college/program. They may have learned subject matter and then went directly to teaching without being qualified for teaching. The Ministry has decide all teachers must have a diploma of teaching because it was found that there are many weaknesses in classrooms and the outcomes of students are not satisfying (not doing well on TIMMS).
4. Overview of First Study Tour
   1. Core seminar (Jackie; Howie)
      1. In order to get to the place where it makes sense to teach discrete skills, you want to start with a discussion of our approach. The seminar will focus on both a conceptual conversation about curriculum but also how you want professors to think about how they’re crafting these classes and how they’re thinking about approaches to teaching & learning. We will be discussing how you engage with knowledge differently; how you encourage students to ask questions about knowledge rather than just listening and taking notes. The approach will model this type of curriculum design and within that, you will learn practical software that can be used in this type of process (wiki’s, concept maps, social bookmarking, etc). We will model it together and then later add on it to as the Institutions talk specifically about their own objectives and goals; organizing principals (concept, scope, and sequence); selecting assessments, and finally the whole array of learning approaches. All along the way, we’re hoping to integrate technology into the discussion of curriculum design.
      2. The hope at the end is that the Institutions have a model for a BA they are doing that is tweaked with technological aspects. It would be good to look at how lectures and materials are designed for teaching – practical components. Then PTUK can look at how these things can be adapted to their specific needs.
      3. There are examples or programs online now that could be useful in the development of curriculum planning. There are also simulations that can be used with students.
      4. Ultimately we hope that other universities in Palestine can also look to these three Institutions for best practices and ideas even in other disciplines (multiplier effect).
   2. Curriculum workshops
      1. These workshops will look specifically at the various courses (education, educational technology, science and technology).
      2. They will also look at what new courses might be relevant.
      3. We plan to have a site to gather information on the partnership (including meeting notes) so that even those who cannot attend can follow the progress of the study tour.
   3. Strategic planning workshops
   4. Site visits
      1. Visit Center of Technology and School Change that offers professional development for teachers
      2. School of Engineering
      3. Frank’s Center for New Media Teaching & Learning
      4. Possible visit to computer-game focused school (Judith)
      5. Cooper Union LEEDS building (Judith)
5. Education in Palestine (Husam; Hakam)
   1. Basic, Secondary, Tertiary
      1. Basic 1-10
         1. Grades 5-10, there is a subject called Technology Education. Each year, there is a spiraling curriculum, including the below four categories. The courses focus on skills and how technology can be used within these fields (3-d models, basic computing, how to use tools, etc). Courses look at how technology relates to society. Teachers now focus on theory without any practice.
            1. Electricity and Engineering
            2. Technical Drawing
            3. Computer Skills
            4. Environmental Issues
      2. Secondary 11-12
         1. Only focuses on IT issues. Very different than basic level. (This project only focuses on 5-10.)
         2. Teachers said this is an issue. The curriculum in Technology Education includes some basic computing and skills. Many 5-10 level teachers would like to have the training to teach IT in 11-12 but it is its own subject and curriculum. Teachers at 11-12 level are equipped with professional training and certification in specific fields. The 5-10 level teachers get a basic diploma in education that is considered less qualified than professional degrees so if a basic level teacher doesn’t get a job upon graduation, they are disadvantaged in the general job market. Teachers at 11-12 are only certified in IT (not in teaching).
   2. Technology Education, grades 5-10
      1. Frank: what are teachers being taught when they train to teach 5-10 level?
         1. Husam can provide this curriculum. There will be additional workshops on the three types of courses teachers take.
            1. Jackie and Howie’s Core Seminar will be looking directly at the issue of bringing these issues of teaching and learning together.
         2. Students must get credit hours for education, engineering, technical drawing, IT, and environment. Students have to have subject skills. The 30 education credit-hours are in: education, pedagogy, communication skills, educational psychology, classroom management, teaching and training, community service, assessment, etc.
         3. Teachers mainly take classes on the subjects themselves without relating it to teaching.
   3. Pre-service teacher education in Technology Education (PTUK, PTC, An-Najah)
   4. In-service training
      1. Very rarely do teachers get training in technical models or teaching techniques. Lou has a national study on teacher training in Palestine.
      2. Subject matter tends to be more conceptual. Teachers do want more hands-on training and curriculum. They have it in wood/metal but the technical equipment they need for much of these topics, the schools do not have. Most schools do not have access to internet (excepting administration). Students may have access at home or at a café, but teachers and students do not have access to internet at school. The infrastructure for technology education is often missing in many of the public schools. This is a challenge for teachers of these subjects to keep students motivated and interested. Teachers said students are most excited when they get to do hands-on work but for the most part, teachers are limited by the lack of equipment at their schools.
         1. This is an issue beyond the capacity of this project to do anything about. Although we may be able to make recommendations. There will be establishing media centers – three centers at the three universities. It may be possible to have micro-teaching lab or an education resource center and some equipment for video conferencing.
         2. Look at Brooklyn Tech high school to see an example of a technical school doing this kind of work. Ellen will reach out to arrange a visit.
6. Goals of the QIF Project (Husam; Hakam)
   1. Palestinian partner institutions
   2. TC partnership
7. Needs Assessment (see handout)
   1. Curriculum and Courses
      1. Perceptions from Faculty: courses are fairly well integrated and consistent with the objectives of the BA in technology education. Most courses, they felt, included some practical experience and fieldwork. Teachers go to schools and try to apply practice teaching.
      2. A questionnaire is being prepared for students and in-service teachers that will be finalized in the next 2-3 weeks in order to get further feedback.
      3. Most courses were said to include practical training but Husam does not feel it fulfills the need, it is insufficient.
      4. Courses are not felt to be relevant to the job market. Husam explains the students don’t want to only work as teachers. It would be better to gain experience in other things so they could compete for non-education jobs, if needed. The program focuses on education, not engineering so they can’t compete with engineers in the different fields. Maybe we can find ways to give them better experience to integrate what they are learning, or to have a concentration in their diploma so that it might have more weight when they’re on the job market.
      5. Faculty felt they needed greater capacity to use education technology in their teaching and to have courses on how to use education technology. The teachers need more experience. They have basic tools but they don’t use it in the best way – they only use basic applications but not the real technology they are aiming for (nothing very innovative). Generally only use an LCD projector and a powerpoint but students are using more extensive technology at home and expect teachers to be using more in the classroom.
         1. This is compounded because even if teachers have the knowledge, they do not have the infrastructure in the classroom.
         2. Some students want to use technology after school hours to communicate with teachers but teachers need the skills in order to do this. If teachers have the skills, they will be better equipped to advocate for greater infrastructure and for the use of technology in schools and after-school programs.
         3. There is some budget for updating infrastructure but it makes no sense to spend the money if teachers do not have the skills to use the technology. About 75% of households have access to computers (not certain about internet access – though there are cyber cafes). It differs across areas (in some areas access may only be 25%).
      6. There is consensus that some courses are totally irrelevant to what teachers are teaching in the school (food processing, waste management, etc) – they are not expected to teach these things in the schools.
         1. Further explanation on this point: The focus on some subjects is more than what is needed. It may be better to reduce the number of these courses and add more focus on IT or engineering. Students would prefer to reduce the number of topics on environment aspects and shift it to more time on computing and IT. They think this will give them better opportunities in the job market. They are not satisfied that they are only going to be teachers in schools.
            1. This is a big issue. Are we preparing teachers to teach? Are we preparing technology experts? Or both? This program was designed for teachers. But they are working under the constraints of the Ministry of Education because this is mandated curriculum so they have to prepare teachers to teach these subjects.
            2. At TC, we assume our teachers have a content specialty and we prepare them to teach. The focus is not to teach them the content but to teach them to teach.
            3. It may be useful to make a case for why these specific content skills are necessary within this context of education.
            4. We need to make sure the teachers will have jobs. Previously, as teachers became trained, they had no jobs because specialists had been hired to fill the gap after the initial technology education policy was passed. We need to trust that the Ministry will fix this. Ministry of Education has made a commitment that teachers will have jobs when they graduate and it is improving.
   2. Instruction Methods
      1. All groups (faculty, pre-service students, and in-service teachers) want greater capacity to develop students’ critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills, more integration of technology skills in the classroom, more training to use technology so they’re comfortable with it when available, opportunities to work more independently and more collaboratively.
      2. In-service teachers felt when they’re students are allowed to do projects, there is tremendous enthusiasm. Teachers feel their training to develop projects like this is limited and want more preparation for designing lesson plans that include projects and problem solving techniques.
      3. They felt there needed to be more professional development opportunities to build skills and content knowledge. They are limited by the lack of infrastructure – particularly by not having access to the internet.
         1. It might be good to look at how to train teachers so they can adapt their curriculum to particular circumstances (ie. a lesson plan should be designed so it can work with one computer, multiple, or a whole lab). As well as how the internet can be used to extend lessons.
         2. Fieldtrips are also used to teach about resources and specific content areas. Should look at what opportunities the community presents, as well (rather than focusing on the limits of the school infrastructure). Teach tactics.
   3. Total BA Programs
      1. Generally faculty felt that the intended learner outcomes are fairly consistent with the courses that are offered. But they feel their capacity to teach as well as they could is limited by a lack of hardware and equipment.
      2. The faculty themselves have little opportunity to do research. They are often teaching 4 to 6 courses a semester and that leaves little time to see family or sleep, let alone try to get a grant to do research and write. Your own content knowledge can become frozen because you can’t keep up with it. This needs to be brought to the attention of the administration to try to address. Technology, in particular, is always changing and innovating. Students are often bringing in the newest technology and innovations and part of this is because the teachers are simply overburdened and cannot keep up. The biggest challenge to professional development is whether teachers have time to change. And if they don’t, they will not be affective.
         1. Husam expresses interest in preparing research topics as this project goes forward for them to work with TC on future research. Can try partner faculty and students on both sides so that students might actually have done research or constructed a project by the end of their coursework. Perhaps we can have a Palestine conference in the field of education and technology, with keynote speakers from TC.
   4. There are classrooms at PTUK that have technology but teachers do not use it. This fact may be dependent on the “old way” of teaching – teachers are use to the traditional method of lecturing (teaching, more than learning). Teachers teach in the manner in which they were taught. In order to have teachers become more interactive, you have to show them how to do it. You have to be careful because if someone starts to do it and it doesn’t work, they will give up – so you have to have support structures. You also have to change the approach – even technology can be used to perpetuate the didactic approach. People have to be taught to use technology in good ways.
8. Discuss and revise curriculum of the study tours and capacity-building modules
   1. The original themes of the partnership were predicated on the idea of only doing education technology, which is not the case anymore. We need to brainstorm what the next two study tours will comprise (the content for fall and spring). We have strategy workshops during the study tour and will utilize them to determine the content of the remaining study tours prior to May 12th.
   2. Consider School of Engineering as a partner as they have more specific knowledge. Lou has reached out to City College School of Engineering who has a summer Institute with professional development for Teachers. He has not heard back from them but will follow up.
9. Discuss and determine new calendar dates for Implementation Plan
   1. Tabled

This first study tour is laying the foundation for capacity building on the ground in Palestine. Looking forward to an interesting, exciting learning experience for us all.

Hakam expressed an interest in gaining information on incorporating digital tools in the classroom as well as distance education. Would like brief examples of distance learning, use of facebook to connect with students, more blended learning (part technology, part face-to-face).

How it will all come together: Our approach to curriculum design is not separate from this project. The project will be the development of a curriculum for one of these courses. Through that project design, you’ll learn some of the software platforms, the technological tools, the methodology of teaching. When we’re looking at the individual courses, we have to have some criteria by which to judge whether that course is relevant or not. The relevancy will look at what the course contributes to achieving a goal or part of the mission of the program. If it’s relevant, we keep it. If it’s not in alignment we have to ask why its out of alignment, can we bring it in or get rid of it and bring in something that will fill a need of the institution. Everything we’ll be talking about has to fit and cohere with the goals and objectives, mission and vision of the program and the three institutions and the Ministry of Educations goals of enhancing the quality of teacher education.

We have to also put ourselves in the position of the student. It’s important to keep in the mind the learner, what are they getting out of all of this. It’s not just about our role as teachers. We get stuck on the lesson plan and forget what the students are doing. We have to look from all perspectives.

The goals of the program are capacity building and rebuilding the program itself. Maybe we’ll find that it needs updating in a big way. We can’t do textbooks for schools but we can give recommendations to the Ministry of Education of desirable changes.