Work Package 4 – Quality Assurance

Testing the Train-the-Trainer Program Report

July 2021

Objectives of the Testing of the Train-the-Trainer program

As part of W2–Quality Assurance, a testing of the Train-the-Trainer (TTT) program has to be conducted. The aim of the testing is to evaluate the TTT program including its implementation. Results serve the adaptation and further development of this program and help develop a solid framework for future multipliers. This also includes the revision of tasks and materials that have to match the national context of the CONTESSA target country.

Against this background, this report provides an overview of the results of the internal testing at Dresden University of Technology (TUD) conducted in June 2021 and the evaluation (survey) run directly after the implementation of the TTT-workshops in July/August 2021.

Data collection

TUD organized the Testing of the TTT-program in two steps. Step one was realized by internal testing at TUD. Data was collected with students from two different Master of Arts programs in which the responsible project partner and her team are involved. Data collection was realized by means of a questionnaire. Items were reduced to those that did not require the live implementation of the workshops, which was a total of 24 items. Each item in the eight indicator groups represented a question, including a free comment section. The questionnaire covered topics that focused mainly on the overall logic of the course including its structure and navigation as well as on the course materials and the audio-visual design.

In step two, TUD developed a comprehensive questionnaire that also included the in-process items that related mainly to collaborative learning scenarios during the workshops. The questionnaire was to be completed by the workshop participants after the instruction had finished. 13 indicator groups and a total of 67 items were used. A five-step scale indicated the degree of agreement (between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree"). A comments section in each indicator group ensured the option to add individual responses and remarks. The questionnaire was developed by TUD; it also included items that were compiled by the project partners. The survey consisted of a general section and module-specific section.

The final version of the questionnaire covered the following issues in the general section:

1. Course objectives
2. Content (e. g. concepts, course structure, case studies, terminology)
3. Reflective Journal (e. g. purpose, application)
4. Learning and Support (e. g. tasks and exercises, application of tools, live-support)
5. Visual and Audio Design (e. g. quality of sound, video-conferencing, layout of materials)
6. Accessibility and Navigation
7. Interactivity and Collaborative Learning (e. g. roles, group work, rules of interaction)
8. Motivation (e. g. varied learning activities, attractiveness of the course)

   Additional comments

The module-specific section was structured in accordance with the four Train-the-Trainer modules

(see below). Concrete issues focused on logic, practical relevance, module-specific tasks and concepts.

1. Module: CONTESSA Tutorials
2. Module: Professional Development
3. Module: Mentoring
4. Module: Cross-National Perspectives

Results

With a total of 52 respondents [n=5 for internal testing at TUD and n=47 (number of completed surveys n=30, incomplete n=17) for testing during first workshop implementation], the survey provides valuable information on the TTT-program including its implementation. Results are presented along the before-mentioned categories, including both the general section and the module-specific section. Respondents from the internal testing at TUD mainly commented on the workshops, which makes it a qualitative analysis rather than a quantitative one. The results of the testing of the first implementation of the workshops (step two) then followed a quantitative analysis. The presentation of results relates to data from step one and step two.

Course Objectives

Data suggests that the overall objectives of the CONTESSA program including the TTT-program were clear to the majority of respondents. Only 4 % stated that they had problems with understanding the purpose of the program. The introduction video and graphics were referred to as being helpful.

Furthermore, participants appreciated the learner-centered workshop objectives and considered them suited for triggering critical self-reflection.

Content

All respondents agreed that the course had a clear and comprehensible structure. Participants appreciated the relevance of the content and that up-to-date information was provided in the individual TTT-modules. Concepts and terminology were clear to most of them. Although literature and references provided were considered helpful, participants stated that – with some topics – more (available) sources would have been helpful to better understand the theoretical background as, for instance, in mentoring. Some participants suggested that some explanations needed to be elaborated on, for they are too short (e. g. career pathways). It was also recommended that a table of abbreviations be used.

97 % stated that the language in the course was appropriate for the target group. Workshop participants pointed out that advanced knowledge of English was necessary to deal with the course contents. Some criticized that the sentence structure in the materials had not always been easy to comprehend and suggested using more simple language.

In general, materials such as in text, audio or video format are comprehensible und useful. Most welcomed the idea of working with case studies, which were, according to the respondents, authentic. Around 97 % considered them useful for starting group discussions and trigger interaction between the workshop participants. In the free comment section, some participants

criticized the busy workshop schedule. They recommended full workshop days to cover all relevant topics.

Reflective Journal

Almost all of the respondents agreed that the reflective journal is a useful tool workshop and suited for triggering critical self-reflection. Data confirms that the purpose and application of the reflective journal was clear to nearly everyone. To only 4 % (n=1) this tool did not make sense. Most of the participants appreciated the idea of thinking about their personal teaching philosophy though some stated that filling in the journal has required more time than expected. It was also argued that stating one´s own teaching philosophy cannot be accomplished in a few sentences. For this reason, more guiding questions should be developed as well as some questions in the journal should be specified.

Learning and Support

All respondents agreed that the course offers a variety of learning activities. Assignments and tasks were clear to the participants, but they would need clarification in the classroom, especially for the practice exercises. In some cases, translation of assignments into the native language was crucial.

Furthermore, respondents suggested that the course should only focus on activities that let participants interact with each other and provide them with more opportunities for reflection. Some respondents requested more practical examples and hands-on activities as well as more time to complete the activities and to discuss the results of group work.

The majority (90%) considered the workshop´s teaching methodology in accordance with the workshop format. The assistance provided by the workshop instructors was rated good and very good in most cases (97 %). According to 100 % of the participants, workshop instructors responded immediately when help was requested.

Tools offered in this course such as for note taking or other resources were rated good to very good. Tools are suited to have the learners interact with one another, as 90% of the respondents confirmed. Only one person disagreed.

Visual and Audio Design

Most workshop participants rated the visual design of the course including the embedded graphics as good. Some suggestions for raising the course´s attractiveness were given like, for example using different text colors, adding more pictures and adapting tables to make them visually more pleasing. Documents that were open for download were considered well structured though some typos needed to be corrected. Video examples and quality of sound was rated good, except for some recordings (not stated which one).

Accessibility and Navigation

The majority of workshop participants did not experience any problems with accessibility or navigation. Nor did they report any hyperlink or programming errors. Data from the free comment section, however, suggests that navigation needs to be improved for future workshops. Participating in the course via smart device is possible, but not very convenient according to the respondents. Embedded audio and video files were accessible without difficulties. Some participants had problems with logging in on the Learning Management System OPAL though they had registered prior to the course. Those who were familiar with OPAL found it easy to navigate

through the course.

As far as video-conferencing was concerned, the majority of the participants did not experience any problems. 10 % stated that they had problems at times to maintain a stable internet connection. Two respondents indicated that quality of conferencing was not sufficient for achieving cooperative tasks.

Interactivity and Collaborative Learning

The course is well designed to support collaborative learning scenarios, and so are the materials, such as the case studies. According to the participants, there was plenty of opportunity to get into verbal exchange with the group. However, comments in survey indicate that face-to-face interaction is needed to ensure the effectiveness of critical reflection and collaborative learning. Furthermore, respondents pointed out that working on the case studies and discussing them in groups requires a large amount of time, which should be taken into consideration for future workshops. Data also suggests that more guidance through the tasks be necessary; a major share of the participants managed group work successfully though. Some had difficulties in interacting with the group due to connectivity issues. Other respondents stated that there was too much group work, and therefore more activities in individual work should be added to the program.

Motivation

Data shows that most participants find the course enjoyable and interesting as even 97 % of them agreed or strongly agreed. Respondents also agreed that the virtual classroom was important for keeping up motivation. All participants stated that they wanted to know more about the TTT-program.

Module: CONTESSA Tutorials

Qualitative and quantitative data confirms that the objectives of the CONTESSA program was clear to nearly all participants. This also relates to the structure of the five online modules although time was considered too little to have the modules explored individually by the participants. For some respondents, language barriers made it impossible to comprehend the modules in the given amount of time. Some responses may suggest that the difference between the modules of the TTT-program and the CONTESSA modules was not clear to everyone.

Module: Professional Development

The practical relevance regarding the module Professional Development was acknowledged by all of the respondents. In general, input provided in this session was considered sufficient to cover the overall topic of this module. Tasks and exercises were useful for triggering critical self-reflection as most respondents agreed. The major share of the workshop participants appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their own professional development as well as to discuss their individual strategies with the group. However, about 17 % of the respondents were indifferent whether there was enough opportunity to enable sufficient self-reflection.

Module: Mentoring

Dealing with mentoring in teacher training was considered an important topic. Most workshop participants (83 %) confirmed the practical relevance of this topic. Only 11 % were indifferent, no one disagreed. Data suggests that mentoring in the context of teacher education was clear to most respondents. Some asked for more basic texts in order to receive a better understanding of mentoring in this particular context. The opportunity to reflect on different mentoring practices

was given, according to the participants. Only 4 % (n=1) somewhat disagreed and 14 % neither agreed nor disagreed. Some participants indicated that they did not have enough time for discussing the given case studies with their peers.

Module: Cross-National Perspectives

Data suggests that the practical relevance of this module was given. One person somewhat disagreed and four persons neither agreed nor disagreed. Generally speaking, more guidance through the module was requested as some participants did not feel sure to make it through this module on their own. For instance, about 14 % of the participants did not manage to receive an overview of the primary education system in each CONTESSA partner country and 11 % had difficulties following the audio-commented presentations. Material provided on the Sustainable Development Goals and the child-friendly approach was considered helpful according to most respondents. Discussing topics such as the child-friendly approach should be done in a live-format as some participants disagreed with the online set-up of this module.

Outlook

Results indicate that the TTT-program is received well in the partner countries. Minor modifications might be necessary as well as there are some issues that future workshop instructors need to take into consideration.

- Data confirms that conducting the workshops face-to-face in the partner countries is necessary to provide better guidance for all participants and to enable authentic collaborative learning scenarios.

- Full workshop days are needed to cover all relevant topics. Moreover, participants need to be given more time to engage with the case studies and complete collaborative tasks.

- Translation into native language of the particular country (Khmer, Tamil, and Sinhala) is highly recommended as it is crucial for some participants.

- The visual design of the course can be improved by adding, for example, more illustrations and graphics. Working with different text colors might also help increase the course´s attractiveness. Quality of audio recordings should be checked again.

- The module Cross-National Perspectives should at least be partially conducted in a live-format.

- A glossary and list of abbreviations might be helpful.