Haiti Pilot: Teaching and Learning in Remote and Hybrid Learning Environments

Executive Summary: EDC's Report on First Year Implementation and Results

EDC Education Development Center

The Challenge

There are numerous challenges facing the Haitian education system, including low enrollment, poor literacy rates, and a shortage of trained teachers. While the right to education is enshrined in Haiti's constitution and highly valued by Haitians, schools still reflect Haiti's colonial past. Traditional, lecture-based instruction, lessons delivered in French rather than students' native Creole, and a deficit-based rather than culturally affirming curriculum are all the norm. Moreover, faced with numerous disruptions due to COVID-19, natural disasters, and ongoing political unrest, the majority of Haitians lack devices and internet access that would allow them to transition to remote or hybrid learning.

The Solution

In response to these multifaceted challenges, a consortium of partners, including Anseye Pou Ayiti (APA), Blue Butterfly, Digital Promise, Model School Network, and Summits Education, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the McNulty Foundation, introduced a pilot project centered on blended learning: the combination of digital and face-to-face instruction. Education Development Center (EDC) produced a report to evaluate the first year of pilot implementation, which points to promising results, lessons learned, and recommendations for future growth.

The pilot interventions, which focus on experimental science classes for grades 1 and 2 within 12 primary schools in the rural areas of Mirebalais and Gonaives, aim to achieve three interrelated objectives:

1

Improving Haitian teachers' capabilities to use technology to deliver quality instruction

2

Increasing the availability of culturally relevant and standards-aligned digital content

3

Increasing sustainable access to broadband connectivity for schools and teachers

The pilot partners have pursued these objectives through a combination of professional development activities geared toward improving the knowledge and skills of both teachers and coaches in the use of technology for pedagogy; furnishing teachers with a tablet-based active science learning program in students' mother tongue of Haitian Creole; and needs analysis, installation, and troubleshooting of electricity and connectivity solutions.

The Results

EDC's analysis identified a range of positive results aligned to the three key program objectives:

Training of Coaches

The pilot hired and trained four instructional coaches and two coaching supervisors, all of whom affirmed or strongly affirmed that they felt equipped to apply the acquired knowledge.

Training of Teachers

The coaches and project staff led a series of professional learning workshops for the pilot teachers and school directors, after which the educators could explain the program, its approach, and its connection with the national curriculum; prepare and present lessons with efficiency, using different active-learning techniques and strategies from the program; and use the tablet and speaker effectively.

Coaching

All of the coaches effectively incorporated the use of a digital classroom observation tool into their regular supervisory and coaching routines, for the purposes of collecting data and supporting educators' improvement through hands-on modeling and targeted feedback.

Teaching Quality and Student Engagement

The data collected shows generally high quality of teaching among pilot teachers, as well as high student engagement: in 75% of the 197 observed lesson segments, all pupils were reported as engaged.

Teacher Feedback

Teachers reported that the training sessions helped them to become better teachers and classroom managers and to incorporate technology into their pedagogy. They also noted that students were enthusiastic about the digital materials and were learning better through their use, particularly as a result of the audio content. One teacher noted the value of having the content in Creole, as it allows children to learn in their own language.

Digital Content

The pilot successfully introduced the digital science content via tablets and speakers and also established a promising partnership with Learning Equality to use their open-source, offline-first Kolibri platform to build out additional content, which will include enhanced audio, video, and interactive quiz elements.

Connectivity

In collaboration with Cosima Technology and Basin Street Technologies, pilot partners installed satellite internet infrastructure and solar power at the pilot schools and developed an efficient system for troubleshooting issues. The pilot has also provided monthly internet service to the schools, with data from coaches' observations showing consistently "good internet connection."

"The use of this program has a very positive impact on both the student and the teacher. The student learns while having fun and learning takes place in an atmosphere of active participation. The teacher develops new teaching and learning strategies and techniques, with the aim of placing the learner at the center of his or her learning."

– *Cherlande Léon, Teacher, Model School Network*

The Recommendations

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected, EDC identified a number of recommendations for future improvements:

Video training materials:
To reinforce in-person training content, record a collection of demonstration videos that display a range of pedagogical strengths and gaps.

Visual materials:
Provide teachers with videos to project and posters to display to enhance the audio content.

Program access:
Provide teachers with access to the tablets outside of school hours, or provide them with program access via cellphone to enable them to spend more time preparing the lessons.

Speakers:
Provide a greater range of different low-cost speaker options as best-fit solutions for different classroom sizes, structures, and configurations.

WiFi extenders:
Install WiFi extenders at every school to ensure full coverage and prepare for future expansion to additional grades or classrooms.

Appropriate use of connectivity:
Develop a culture around appropriate use of the internet by bolstering training content and establishing shared expectations with schools.

Want to Dive Deeper?

Learn more about this work to bring blended learning to primary schools in rural areas.

LEARN MORE >

Sign up for the pilot's newsletter (select the "Haiti Blended Learning Pilot" checkbox).

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Reach out to global@digitalpromise.org if you would like to support this work.

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