

British Council Core Skills Training: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

This is an outline evaluation plan for monitoring and evaluating the British Council Core Skills Training. It is designed to capture key data in relation to the Theory of Change and Log Frame for the initiative.

Monitoring data

The course providers will collect data on course participants. For each core skills training package, data will be provided on participant numbers: total number of participants; number of unique individual participants (i.e. those who have completed one or more core skills training packages); number of unique schools; and number of schools which participate at a medium level (i.e. one leader/manager and at least one teacher participates in the introductory session, the leadership training and at least one other training package).

Evaluation data

The evaluation plan has five main elements, each of which is shown in Figure 1 below, together with the main focus of each data collection exercise.

Figure 1: Evaluation data collection points

1. Baseline (all participants)	• Core skills knowledge, understanding and skills before participation.
2. Course assignments* (sample of participants)	• Application of core skills learning in own context.
3. End of course (all participants)	• Core skills training satisfaction and learning at end of course.
4. Progress (sample of participants)	• Use of core skills in school; support from school leaders.
5. Longitudinal (sample of countries and schools)	• Participants' use of new knowledge and skills and student learning outcomes.

The plan is designed to capture data at five levels¹ namely: participants' reactions to the training; participants' learning; organisation support and challenge; participants' use of new knowledge and skills; and student learning outcomes. Each of the elements is outlined below.

*This is an optional element, depending on practicality and available resources

¹ As identified by Gusky (2000).

Baseline

The baseline is designed to establish what knowledge, understanding and skills participants have before the training. Ideally, this will be administered when participants first sign up for the course and before they receive the pre-course reading. The data collection method will be questionnaire survey (administered online) comprising mainly closed questions and with an administration time of around 20 minutes. It will be similar in form to the combi-tracker survey used for Connecting Classrooms, though the content will be tailored to the content of each training package. It will include the following elements:

- Knowledge and understanding of core skills (assessment/quiz)²
- Attitudes to and self-assessment of core skills confidence and abilities (five-point Likert scales)³
- Course expectations (e.g. most important outcome).

Course assignments (optional data collection)

The course assignments provide an opportunity to gather data on participants' use of their new knowledge and skills gained from the pre-reading and the first two days of the training. There is a debriefing session on the third day in which participants discuss their assignments. The trainers will therefore have access to the following information: the type of assignment, its content and the participants' self-evaluation of their learning from the assignment. This element would require the trainers to collect and record the information and would take time for BC staff to analyse. Given the time commitment involved, it is recommended that this element is confined to a sample of courses – for example, one course randomly selected for each training package in each participating country (or region).

End of course

The end of course measure is designed to establish what knowledge, understanding and skills participants have gained by the end of the training. Ideally, this will be administered at the end of the course (directly after the course has taken place). The data collection method will be questionnaire survey (administered online) comprising mainly closed questions and with an administration time of around 20 minutes. It will be similar in form to the combi-tracker, though the content will be tailored to the content of each training package. It will include the following elements:

- Knowledge and understanding of core skills (assessment/quiz)⁴
- Attitudes to and self-assessment of core skills confidence and abilities (five-point Likert scales)

² We are currently exploring the feasibility of assessing participants' knowledge and understanding for each of the training packages

³ Note that participants' self-assessment of their knowledge, experience and skills may be higher at baseline than at the end of the course. This can occur when participants overestimate their competence in new areas of learning. For this reason, it is important to interpret results of self-assessment in relation to measures of knowledge and understanding and course satisfaction.

⁴ We are currently exploring the feasibility of assessing participants' knowledge and understanding for each of the training packages

- Course satisfaction (e.g. rating of usefulness; quality of delivery; suggestions for improvement).

Progress survey

This data collection is designed to identify: organisation support for and challenge to adoption of core skills; participants' use of new knowledge and skills; and whether teachers who have used core skills anticipate any impact on students' outcomes.

The data collection method will be a survey administered via online survey and/or by telephone. Due to the resources involved, it is recommended that this is carried out on a sample of training courses and participants – for example, by obtaining a sample of 20 per cent of training participants on each training package in each country of operation. The telephone survey should take place following the completion of the training package - no sooner than one school term and no later than two school terms after the completion of the package.

The survey will collect key information on:

- The school's support for core skills pedagogy (e.g. advocacy, recognition, facilitation)
- Whether the participant has used their new knowledge and skills
- Any perceived impact on students' core skills
- Barriers and facilitators to adopting change
- Any further reflections on the training.

Longitudinal study⁵

The purpose of the longitudinal study is to collect data on the influence of the training on schools, teachers and their students. It will adopt a comparison group design, in order to establish whether the observed outcomes and impact can reasonably be attributed to the training, rather than being due to other influences (such as the characteristics of the school).

The design will be to select a small number of schools in each region from among those participating in the training in 2015 - early 2016 (focusing on schools committed to participating at a medium level). This is known as the 'treatment group'. Schools that are similar to schools in the treatment group (for example, in relation to phase, sector, size and location) but have not participated in the core skills training, would form the comparison group.

Treatment group schools will be visited twice (late 2016/early 2017 and late 2017/early 2018). Comparison schools would be visited on one occasion towards the end of the evaluation period (i.e. in late 2017/early 2018). In recognition of their involvement, schools participating in the comparison group could be offered a place on an alternative training course or on a later core skills training course in mid/late 2018.

The visits and reporting will be carried out by evaluation consultants. The data collection methods will be primarily qualitative: interviews with students, teachers, leaders and other key informants and observation of teaching (optional element). This will be supplemented by quantitative data collection on student outcomes (such as attendance rates, attainment and student destinations).

⁵ Please note that there is a separate document which sets out the longitudinal study in greater detail.

Reporting

Reporting will take place on a quarterly basis, with an annual report produced summarising data in relation to key indicators identified as part of the Theory of Change and associated log frame.

Reference

Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.