

REPORT ON SIYAKHULA WORKSHOPS, 11 SEPTEMBER 2008.

1. Radmaste presenters

Maria Lycoudi (Electricity) and Erica Steenberg (Chemistry).

2. Workshop venue

Equinisweni Secondary School. The presenters met Bheki Peterson and Andrew Barrett at Siyakhula Bridging School. ML and ES were accompanied to Equinisweni at the start of the workshops and back to the highway at the end. This is much appreciated.

3. Participants

2 educators from Equinisweni and 4 educators from Tsosoloso Ya Afrika School attended. 8 learners from Equinisweni also attended on request. Participants were divided into two groups (Equinisweni and Tsosoloso respectively) and attended physics (2 hours) and chemistry (2 hours). The workshops started at 12:00 and ended at 16:00. Groups swapped topics halfway through.

4. Equipment and chemicals

The presenters used Radmaste Basic Electricity and Magnetism Kits and Radmaste Basic Chemistry Kits. Chemicals used were included in the Grade 10 and Grade 11 SSE kits. The project made provision for 20 of each type of kit, 20 multimeters and 1 set each of Grade 10 and Grade 11 chemicals for each school. All equipment and chemicals were handed to Andrew Barrett at the end of the workshops and will be distributed at the discretion of Siyakhula.

5. General

5.1 Workshop venue

Two adjacent classrooms were available and both were suitable for the workshops. Running water in the classroom where chemistry was done was very helpful. The time was sufficient for the work planned.

5.2 Contents of the workshops.

Chemistry experiments included:

- a) The effect of sulfur dioxide on water sources (using the comboplate and propettes qualitatively);
- b) Investigating stoichiometry using the lead nitrate – sodium iodide reaction (using the comboplate and propettes quantitatively), and
- c) The reduction of copper oxide (producing hydrogen as reductant and using the combustion tube and microburner).

Notes on Physics content to be added by ML.

It was noticeable that the educators and learners from Equinisweni were not working as fast as the educators from Tsosoloso, and the Equinisweni group did not manage to do the last chemistry experiment.

It is a pity that it was so difficult to get input from the educators on their needs. It became apparent that the educators had just taught the sulfur dioxide pollution, and it is doubtful whether they will revisit the topic to do the experiment in their classes, as was envisaged during the conceptualization of the project.

5.3 Future workshops

It was noticeable that the educators experienced the workshops very positively. It might be considered to arrange the follow-up workshop (8 hours are available) by first arranging a meeting with the educators of the schools and the content specialists so that future experiments can be negotiated to ensure their relevance and to put plans in place for getting feedback from the schools. During such a meeting, educators could also give input on other types of support they could get from Siyakhula (e.g. IT training, access to computers, sessions to work collaboratively on lessons, tests, etc.).

Future workshops should be arranged at least 3 – 4 weeks in advance.

ES

15 September 2008.