

SHARING KNOWLEDGE ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF WATER FOR FOOD PRODUCTION



TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS AND EDUCATION PRACTICES:
PLANNING TO EDUCATE, TRAIN AND LEARN DIFFERENTLY FOR ENHANCED RWH&C





TRANSFORMING A CURRICULUM



Curriculum transformation can be explained as changing a course, set of courses or the way we carry out activities or conduct learning to reflect new ways of understanding learning and doing things and seeing the world.

Curricula can be transformed through courses being changed, information added or removed, as well as new learning activities or practices being introduced.

Transforming a curriculum (or training programme) enables educators (or farmers) to try new practices and explore new ideas in response to the emergence of new issues, new perspectives and new discoveries.



HOW DO WE TEACH AND LEARN ABOUT RWH&C DIFFERENTLY



Curriculum transformation does not only include the changing of content within the course but also includes changing the way the content is taught and practiced.

- Change intervention : An intervention that tries to achieve a specific object or outcome.
 - Example: With the objective of creating more awareness of Rainwater Harvesting practices amongst the farmers a change intervention could be initiating a discussion on a number of rainwater harvesting practices.
- Formative intervention : An intervention that focuses on creating new concepts through doing the activity.
 - Example: An example of a formative intervention might be a group discussion or brainstorming workshop where the participants identify the issues and come up with possible solutions and new ways of doing things.

It is important to teach content, but it is also vital to introduce different activities and different techniques to make the teaching and learning more effective and interesting.



LEARNING BY SEEING AND DOING



The Amanzi for Food project has facilitated the Training of Trainers (ToT) course, in all of its implementation sites. An important component of this course, as you have already found out, is the development of the demonstration sites to enable people to experience RWH&C practices in person.

Learning by seeing activities and experiencing practices in action helps people understand the concepts and remember the practices, and inspires them to try the activities themselves.

Example:
During the ToT at the University of Fort Cox, the course attendees viewed approximately 6 RWH&C practices (2 at each course session). These activities included building a trench bed and establishing a rooftop rainwater harvesting system. For the former, the participants were actively involved in preparing the hole for the trench bed, filling the hole with several layers of compost, mulch and sand as well as watering and planting the trench bed.



LEARNING ABOUT AND TEACHING WHAT IS RELEVANT

Another way to introduce different activities and transformative content is to include content and practices that are relevant to the local community and the local context. During a recent drought and associated water shortages, the lack of water for farming became a major area of concern. In the Amanzi for Food TOT's courses and on the learning network Whatsapp groups, discussions around water and water saving techniques were encouraged. The challenges of climate change also emerged as an important item for discussion. Members of the learning networks were encouraged to develop solutions collaboratively to address these issues.



USING TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORMS FOR LEARNING



WhatsApp Group:

Another way of introducing transformative activities into a curriculum is to use different platforms to encourage learning. Using WhatsApp groups to engage in discussion and to share videos and photographs of different farming practices and water saving techniques is one way of encouraging innovation and transformation of curriculum.

The Amanzi for Food project has encouraged the use of WhatsApp groups in their learning networks. The Imvotho Bubomi Learning network has a particularly active Whatsapp group which has approximately 90 members who regularly exchange text messages, pictures, weblinks, videos etc.. Other platforms such as a Facebook page and a website are also used to share ideas and experiences.

This online course itself is another example of using a technological platform for learning.



CHANGING CURRICULA TOGETHER



The Amanzi for Food team has been involved in a number of curriculum change workshops. At these workshops stakeholders come together to collectively develop new educational curricula introducing new activities, new content and new ways of assessing.

Not only can we change formal educational processes, such as university or college curricula, but we can also transform informal learning and knowledge sharing processes, such as between extension services or NGOs and farmers, and between farmers themselves. We can change the way we share information, the farming practices that we use and promote, and the way we collaboratively farm, work, and learn together.

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THANK YOU!

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