AIMSSEC DO-IT-YOURSELF WORKSHOPS : TEACHERS AS LEARNERS WITH OTHER TEACHERS

Toni Beardon

African Institute for Mathematical Sciences School Enrichment Centre

TARGET AUDIENCE: teachers and teacher trainers from all phases.

DURATION: 2 hours

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 60 or more provided that the room is furnished so that participants can sit around big tables and conveniently work in groups of 6 to 8 together.

MOTIVATION FOR THE WORKSHOP

In this workshop, intermediate, senior and FET teachers and teacher educators will be able to try out the AIMSSEC Workshop Guides that are designed for teachers to run self-help workshops in which they learn together about how to introduce enquiry based learning in their classrooms. Participants will work in groups to do the practical teacher workshop activities and discuss the teaching strategies and suggested activities for learners. They will report on this experience to the whole group so that everyone gets a broader view of the range of learning experiences involved. AIMSSEC courses extend educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities in South Africa, especially for teachers from rural areas. AIMSSEC supports lifelong learning through the AIMING HIGH Teacher Network. The AIMING HIGHER Workshop Guides, written by the AIMSSEC International Team, provide curriculum related learning activities for all ages across the curriculum. In over 1000 of these workshops across the country teachers have engaged in active learning activities, discussed teaching strategies and shared ideas without needing the help of a workshop leader.

The proposed workshop will give participants the opportunity to try out the AIMING HIGHER Workshop Guides written by the AIMSSEC Team to enable teachers to run their own workshops.

The AIMING HIGHER workshops are very different from other workshops because nobody assumes the role of the trainer with superior knowledge. Instead these workshops are *a shared learning experience***.** The purpose is for all the participants **to** *learn together with other teachers and to learn from each other*, and not for anyone to be the instructor. In a spirit of enquiry everyone recognizes that they can gain a deeper understanding of mathematics and, by sharing ideas about teaching strategies and sharing resources, they can improve their teaching to meet the requirements of the modern age.

AIMSSEC is the Schools Enrichment Centre of AIMS (African Institute for Mathematical Sciences) and was established in 2003 following consultation and a

Beardon, T. (2013). AIMSSEC do-it-yourself workshops. Teachers as learners with other teachers. In Z. Davis & S. Jaffer (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 19th Annual Congress of the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa*, Vol. 2. (pp. 8 – 9). Cape Town: AMESA.

feasibility study to discover how AIMS could usefully contribute to the teaching and learning of mathematics in South Africa. Then and now, the most pressing need was, and still is, professional development for mathematics teachers, especially teachers from rural areas, in which teachers gain subject knowledge and understanding as well as developing their teaching skills.

AIMSSEC strives to empower teachers to give learners the educational opportunities that should be their birthright. Courses alone are not sufficient. Only dedication, sustained efforts and commitment to lifelong learning by teachers, subject advisers and field trainers will improve South Africa's record for teaching and learning mathematics from a ranking of 143rd of 144 (Global Competitiveness Report, Work Economic Forum 2011/2012) to above the international average and ultimately maybe to 1st of 144.

AIMSSEC seeks to empower teachers so that they can, in turn, train other teachers. Many AIMSSEC graduates now act as teaching assistants and local co-ordinators in their home areas. In 2013 AIMSSEC is celebrating a decade of growth and success in mathematics education in South Africa. In its short history it has produced 1028 graduates on the Mathematical Thinking 3-month course and 110 graduates of the AIMSSEC 27-month Mathematics Subject Leader Training programme, offered in partnership with the universities of Stellenbosch and Fort Hare. An experienced AIMSSEC international team of 55 lecturers come regularly to South Africa to support the local team and to teach on AIMSSEC courses without any pay. This provides a combination of local knowledge and expertise with a wide international experience of teaching and learning mathematics and of teacher training and research.

In 2012 AIMSSEC won the prestigious UNESCO-HAMDAN prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers in marginalized and disadvantaged communities in developing countries.

The material used in the workshop will be selected according to the number of participants and to the phases they work in. Different phase-groups will work with different material and, if there are a large number of participants, alternative material may be used.