



Connecting Classrooms: Connecting Cultures

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Introduction

- The school partnerships and international online programmes prepare children to take their place in the 21st century. Through inclusion of an international focus, schools are able to offer pupils, a range of experiences that will enhance their learning and raise awareness of their national and international identity.

- Connecting Classrooms is a global online programme established and funded by the British Council around the world many years ago. Connecting Classrooms is responsive to its audience and to the different education systems around the world.

- The connecting Classrooms program has begun in Egypt since 2007. There are more than 30 private and governmental schools have been involved in international activities.
- It adopts group collaborative learning to achieve the programme goals.

It is based on two domains:

- The Group Collaborative Learning.
- Online Learning Community

- **The Group Collaborative Learning**
- It is a unit of students who maximize their learning products under some encouragement mechanism with the common learning goals, which includes all the relative activities in the process of collaborative learning (Huang, 2001).

A. Online Learning Community

- A. The Teaching Concept Innovation:
- The newly-emerged learning theory of Constructivism is mainly reflected in learning goals to realize the transformation from teacher's knowledge transmission to students' active construction.

C. The Network Cultural Educaiton: An Indispensable Part of Education

- According to Stoddard, culture is composed of three parts: artefacts, mentifacts and sociofacts (Stoddard, 1986).

- The fast development of ICT is changing the people's language styles, cognition, aesthetics, values, cultural identification, and identity distinction. The main feature of Internet culture is globalization (Palaiologou, 2007). From the perspective of social biology, culture is similar to language, for both of them have the creatural attributes (Laponce, 1993).

Objectives of the programme

- Provide students and teachers with a wider variety of experiences about national Curriculum.
- Develop links with schools in other countries.
- Raise awareness of environmental issues through joint projects.
- Promote communication through e-mails and writing letters.
- Give the teachers the opportunity to compare different teaching and learning methods.

- To achieve the previous aims ,the programme works on three domains
- 1- A professional development core which includes internationalizing the curriculum and deals with students as leaders,

- 2- A collaborative learning core which includes collaborative curriculum projects which probe language projects, community action projects, and arts projects,
- 3- A school awards core which includes international teacher awards, global citizen award, and international leader award.

- Connecting Classrooms equips students with a deeper understanding of:
- other countries and cultures
- their rights and responsibilities as global citizens
- the skills needed to work in a global economy and build a fairer, more sustainable world.

- Teachers also benefit from:
- gaining understanding of other countries' education systems
- being better equipped to teach about global issues
- improving their own teaching skills.

- The programme introduces Global citizenship courses as follows:
 - Online learning. Location will not be a barrier to development, with free online courses for teachers in global citizenship, ICT and English for international exchange.

- Face to Face learning. These courses complement the online courses and are a fantastic opportunity to meet and learn with fellow teachers in their areas.

- **Online learning Courses are:**
 - 1- International learning- get started- new to international work?
 - 2- Education for Global citizenship
 - 3- Inter-Cultural and global awareness.
 - 4- ICT in primary Education MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).

- **Objectives of the study**

This study aims at:

- investigating the effectiveness of online teacher training courses on teachers' performance.
- exploring teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards online teaching and blended learning.

- measuring the students' English language performance after participating in activities deals with global issues and the effectiveness of implementing some activities on students 'academic achievement.

Method

- **Sample**

–Thirty teachers (18 female and 12 male) from an experimental language school, Giza governorate, Egypt, will participate in the study. The school is participating in the Connection classroom program. Teachers are teaching different subjects at preparatory and secondary stage. They are teaching different grades.

–Three hundred students from preparatory and secondary stages. The students are the classes of the teachers who are participating in Connecting classroom programme.

Tools of the study

- The researcher will develop the following tools:
 - An observation form to investigate the effectiveness of online teacher training courses on teachers' performance.
 - A questionnaire to explore teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards online teaching and blended learning.
 - English Language Test to measure the students' English language performance after participating in activities about with global issues.

- Academic achievement test measures the effectiveness of implementing some activities on students 'academic achievement.
- After piloting, the observation form, questionnaire and academic achievement test will be administered as pre-post experiment tools.

- This conceptual change enables the students to enhance their learning, motivation and momentum, gradually developing their subjective awareness in learning.

B - Online Community:

Online Community refers to a new living space in which a group of people with similar interests and demands take advantage of the peculiarity of network to accomplish mutual communication and interaction, thereby forming the close and identified relationship(Gan, 2005)

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THANK YOU

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