



EDUKANS

approach to quality
basic education



Edukans approach to quality basic education

**Improving learning through our Basic Education
Quality Improvement Programme (BEQUIP)**

Colophon

This publication is made possible by our Edukans staff and partners in the South. We would like to thank all teachers, educators and partners who have worked with us in BEQUIP for their commitment to the programme. Thanks to them we have been able to build this track record.

Published by Edukans. August, 2019.

Editor: Mark Hoeksma

Lay-out: De Grafische Keuken

mark@edukans.nl

Amersfoort, August 2019

Berkenweg 11

3818 LA Amersfoort

www.edukans.org

Table of Contents

1. BACKGROUND	7
Quality education: a foundation for a better future	7
2. OUR APPROACH	9
Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme:	
Relevant, practical and learning-centred	9
How it works: Training of Trainers & Teacher Training	11
3. OUR RESULTS	18
Facts and Figures	18
Quality Impact	22
4. IMPROVING EDUCATION QUALITY	30
Theory and practice	30
References	33

1. BACKGROUND

Quality education: a foundation for a better future

Far too many children and adolescents in developing countries do not learn basic knowledge and skills in school. Worldwide, 617 million children and adolescents are not proficient in reading and mathematics. Most of these children do go to school, but do not reach minimal standards. This situation – described by UNESCO¹ as the “Global Learning Crisis” – leads to sustaining poverty from generation to generation. The crisis is greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa where 85 % are not learning the basics.

Weak instructional practices as a result of low quality pre- and in-service teacher training lie at the root of this crisis. Improving the competence of teachers is crucial as they are irreplaceable for children and adolescents. They function as role models, shape attitudes, demonstrate empathy, build confidence and make learning fun. In some cases teachers are the only accessible sources of basic knowledge.

At Edukans, we have been supporting the professional development of teachers through the Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme (BEQUIP) since 2008. Through BEQUIP trainings, teachers develop skills to teach in ways through which learners achieve higher results and have better prospects to progress to secondary or tertiary education. Moreover, teachers and learners become more motivated

1 UIS Fact Sheet No. 46 | September 2017



and self-confident. The practice of teaching and learning becomes more relevant through BEQUIP.

We have implemented BEQUIP in Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Lebanon, Rwanda, DRC and India. Up to 2019, more than 6.000 teachers and 350 teacher education specialists have been trained and over 300.000 children and adolescents have benefited. This number excludes teachers and students that have been reached through our modules in teacher training colleges for example in Ethiopia and Ghana.

In this brochure we present how we work in BEQUIP and what we have achieved together with our teachers, teacher educators and all other partners over the past 12 years.

2. OUR APPROACH

Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme: Relevant, practical and learning-centred

BEQUIP trainings have a strong practical focus. We developed the training approach in close cooperation with teacher education specialists of the University of Amsterdam. Unique features are the use of **classroom video for training** and **classroom observation instruments**. Through BEQUIP, teachers learn to become effective even under challenging conditions such as limited availability of textbooks and a high student to teacher ratio. It opens up a range of new strategies for teachers to choose from beyond teacher-led recitation, lecturing and repetition. Teachers learn to apply practical techniques to engage their students in a varied and meaningful way.



BEQUIP helps teachers to develop a 'learning centred' teaching style.

In this practice:

- *Teachers* formulate clear learning objectives for their lessons and design effective lessons with supporting learning materials (such as worksheets), keep track of learning through continuous assessment and adapt their instruction and guidance to the learning needs of different students.
- *Learners* are actively engaged in various learning activities. In this process, they are stimulated to think about what they are doing by solving problems, formulating questions and participating in discussions, working together, etc.

Active Learning and the importance of practical relevance and real world connections is emphasised². In BEQUIP teachers learn to carry out this pedagogy effectively without narrowing focus. Effective teachers do many things such as planning and preparation, setting instructional outcomes, establishing a culture of learning, stimulating dialogue of questioning and answering, giving feedback, communicating with colleagues and families, etc. These essential elements are incorporated in BEQUIP trainings.

2 Depending on specific accents, Active Learning is also referred to as child-centred pedagogy, Experiential Learning or Competency Based Education.

How it works: Training of Trainers & Teacher Training

In BEQUIP two trajectories are combined: a Training of Trainers (ToT) and a training for teachers in basic education. Master trainers from an international pool of trainers – from the Netherlands, Ethiopia, Malawi, Ghana, Uganda and Kenya - with years of experience in teaching and teacher education, prepare educators through a ToT to carry out in-service and pre-service teacher training. Depending on the context in a particular country, the educators participating in the ToT could be professional teacher educators, MoE inspectors, experienced teachers, head teachers or NGO staff.



BEQUIP ToT is maximally practical and hands-on. The participants learn how to use video and classroom observation to train professionals, how to provide effective feedback and how to design teacher training sessions on learning-centred pedagogy. Each ToT session (duration 4-5 days) prepares participants to deliver a training for in-service and pre-service teachers. In most cases, the ToT participants deliver this teacher training under supervision of the master trainers. The training sessions in the ToT are organised biannually in a 3-year trajectory.

BEQUIP trainings are designed following the principle that the starting point for improvement is the existing practice of teaching and learning in a teacher's classroom. This principle is elaborated in the sequence of training activities: classroom observation and filming, watching and discussing filmed lesson fragments and hands-on training on selected pedagogical elements.

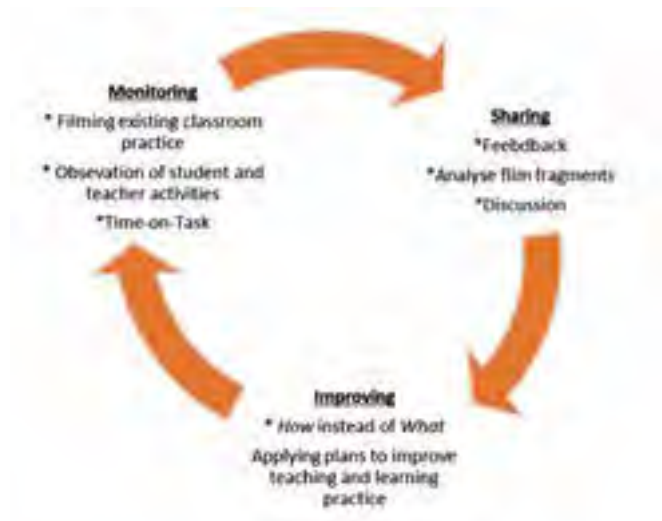
The sequence of activities in the teacher training is summarized in three activities: *Monitoring*, *Sharing*, *Improving*

Monitoring: School visits are arranged and teachers are observed as they carry out their work in the classroom. The teaching and learning process is filmed. Validated observation instruments are used to measure teaching skills and student behaviour. The observers look at learning and teaching activities.

A sample of observation points for monitoring

Learners	Teacher
What are they doing? Reading writing, discussing, problem solving, etc.?	Does (s)he work towards learning objectives?
How are they working? Individually, with peers and in groups?	Does (s)he offer a variety of learning activities
Are they engaged, e.g. asking and answering questions?	Does (s)he encourage learners to participate, e.g. to ask questions?
With what are they working, using textbooks, worksheets or locally available resources?	Does (s)he encourage learners to work together?
Do they look motivated, showing interest, working hard, having fun?	Does (s)he assess the understanding of individual learners?

Sharing After completing the school visits, the observations are shared in a training session with all those involved by watching and discussing good and common practices on video. Strengths and points for improvement are identified.



Improving The discussion is followed up by a two to three day hands-on training on skills that the group chooses to improve. The trainings are designed to master practical skills around theme such as 'concept building', 'lesson design', 'using text books' and 'designing worksheets'. Learning resources include an electronic course guide. The final stage of the training consists of action planning for the following 6 months (the timeframe up to the next training session).

Reflections of teachers in BEQUIP training

Tsige (Ethiopia)

"Looking at my video, I saw my students acting and doing things by themselves. I didn't have to pay attention if they would go to work or not. I expect that they will work more and learn more this way. I can see also that they enjoy."



Iman (Lebanon)

"I was so happy you selected my film to be shown at the workshop. Now I know my students are On-Task!"



"The training has equipped me with skills and knowledge on active teaching in learning and as an inspector of schools I think I now have the capacity to support teachers. This will really help to improve the quality of Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi."

Josephine Pitawo – Inspector for secondary schools in Malawi (pictured below working with her colleagues).

Reflections from BEQUIP in Lebanon



Teacher Fadia al Shihabi –

"I am very happy with the training I get from Edukans and the JCC trainers from Saïda. I learned about classroom management, about working in groups and preparing worksheets. I did not have any teaching experience before I started my job. But now I feel confident. Also my students are interested in my lessons. Like today. I was teaching about the anatomy of the heart and I did bring a real heart to the class. They were very much fascinated"

Teacher Shreen Freij

"Because I do not have a lot of teaching experience I was nervous at the beginning. But now, I really enjoy the training, and working in a team. I get a lot of new ideas. Not only about education, but also about how to become a trainer myself. Regarding the future, I feel more and more confident to supervise new teachers."



Electronic course guide

The electronic course guide 'Practising Active Learning' was developed as resource material for BEQUIP. It fleshes out the concept of Active Learning for teacher educators and teachers and provides them with a practical means to engage teachers in guided and independent practice with the content of Active Learning. It demonstrates concrete actual local practice of Active Learning in primary school classrooms in 10 modules. This guide is available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic.

10 modules of 'Practising Active Learning'



1. Lesson Planning	2. Use of textbooks
3. Concept Building	4. Worksheets
5. Teaching Strategies	6. Group Work
7. Learning Styles	8. Assessment
9. Questioning & Answering	10. Time-on-Task

The guide It is can be used in pre-service and in-service programmes. All topics consist of an introductory text, one or more video-clips and/or photographs with assignments, and possible extra information and assignments. All topics follow a step-by-step pattern which enables tutor and students to progress in a well-considered way.

The selection of topics is done on the basis of education effectiveness research. Skilful application of the techniques highlighted, has proved to enhance learning results of students.

3. OUR RESULTS

Facts and figures

Since 2008, BEQUIP training trajectories with an minimum of two years, have been carried out in 9 countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, DRC, India and Lebanon. Over 6.300 teachers and 350 teacher education specialists teachers have improved their professional skills.

Over 300.000 children and adolescents have benefited from the increased quality of their teachers.





Number of schools, teacher education institutes and teacher education professionals reached with BEQUIP.

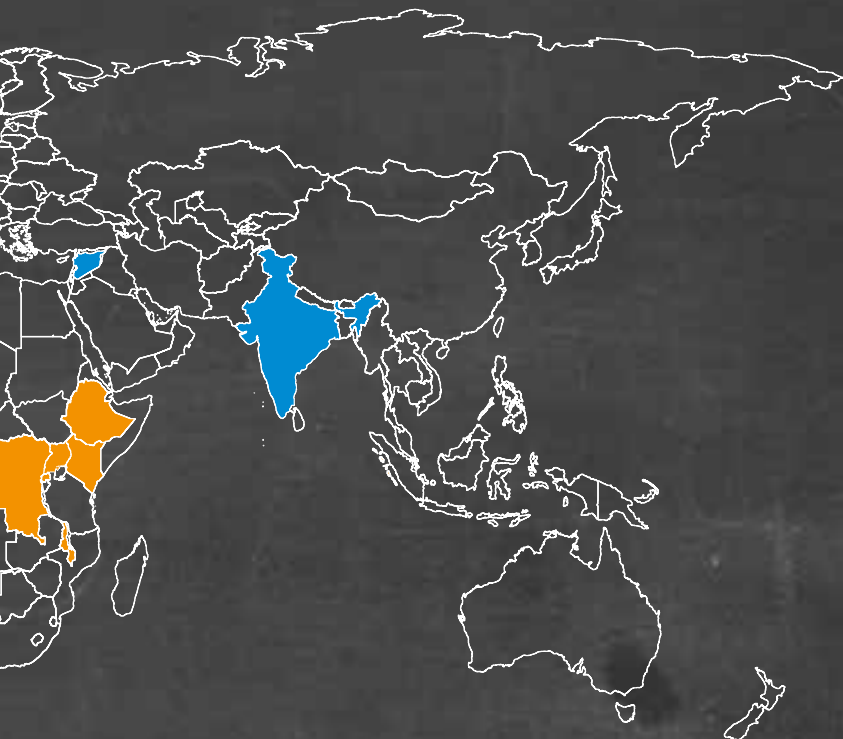
	Schools	TTCs	Teacher Educators	NGO staff	MoE / inspectors
ETHIOPIA	250	7	46	49	29
UGANDA	35	4	20	15	20
GHANA	22	3	14	6	10
RWANDA	16	3	15	6	24
KENYA	32	3	18	7	4
DRCONGO	63	4	16	4	13
MALAWI	34	5	30	5	16
LEBANON	21			6	
INDIA	46	1	6	7	6
Totals	519	30	165	105	122

Numbers reached through in



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ETHIOPIA	Teachers trained: 432			1931				
UGANDA		192			309			
GHANA						330		
RWANDA							267	
KENYA							225	
DR CONGO								64
MALAWI								
LEBANON								
INDIA								
TOTALS								

in-service BEQUIP since 2008



2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 >	BEQUIP projects	TOTAL Teachers trained	TOTAL Learners reached
	144			1000	4	3507	185.000
					2	501	21.407
					1	330	9.135
					1	267	17.125
		250			2	475	19.230
			192		2	256	25.841
223			250		2	473	48.379
	116		96		2	212	4.220
			300		1	300	3.000
					16	6321	333.337

Quality Impact

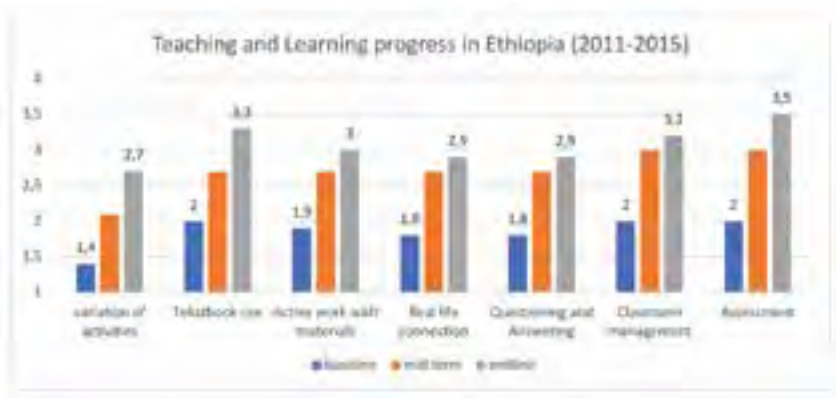
What difference do we make through BEQUIP? On the basis of a number of evaluation studies we have learned that BEQUIP leads to improvements in: Teaching skills, Student performance, Motivation and Creating impact at scale. Below this is illustrated with project results from Ethiopia (BEQUIP Connect4Change project 2011-2015), Ghana (BEQUIP 2013-2016) and Malawi (BEQUIP 2015-2018).



Improving teaching skills

In BEQUIP, progress in teaching quality is systematically measured through observation of indicators for teaching and learning. In all projects, teachers have improved their teaching practice significantly and often spectacularly. The figure below shows the progress on a number of indicators in the BEQUIP 'Connect4Change' project in **Ethiopia**. The scale is from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).

The stories are different from project to project and from teacher to teacher. In **Malawi**, teachers indicated that the training helped them to ask better questions, effectively assess learners, plan an inclusive lesson differentiating for learners with various needs and linking learning to real life experience.



"I have improved my lesson preparations I now use a variety of methods and activities which makes my class livelier and help learners understand fast"

STD 3 Teacher, Mabiri Primary school.

Many teachers who were trained through BEQUIP made valuable contributions to quality of teaching and learning at schools by training their colleagues.

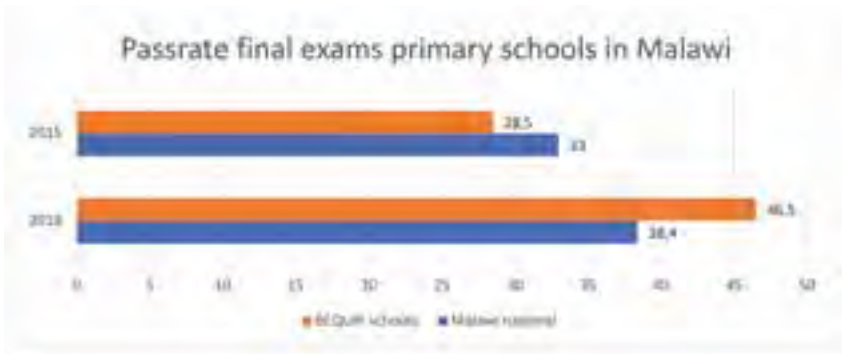


At Mankuma Primary School in **Ghana**, lower grade teacher Sulemana Shukura was selected Teacher of the Year of the Northern district. Already during the project Mrs. Sulema was active in training teachers in other schools and has provided demonstration lessons.



Improving student performance

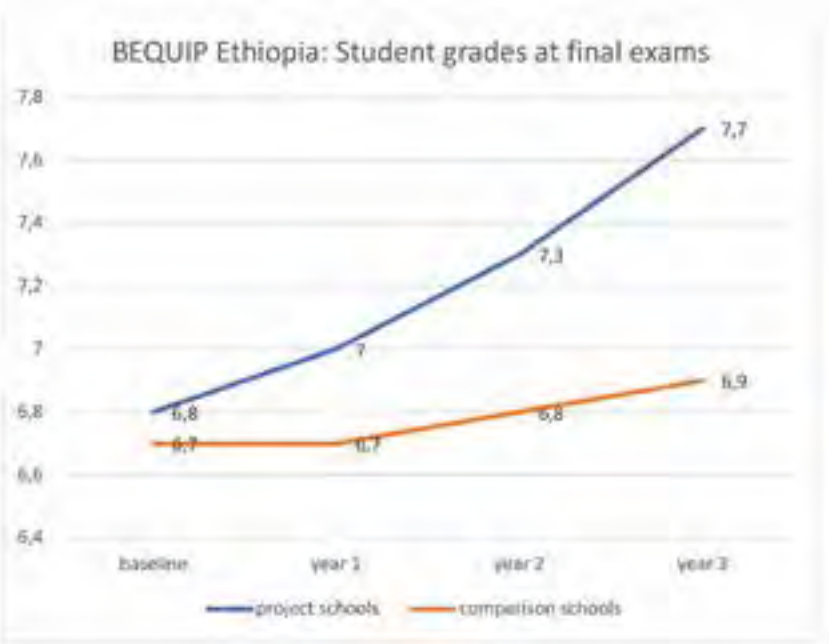
In **Malawi**, PLSCE (Primary School Examination) results have increased significantly in the participating schools. The schools were lowest performers compared to national averages. By 2018 the pass rates are exceeding the national average. The increasing pass rates are illustrated in the graph below.



Transition to secondary school also improved. The transition rates of the participating schools were among the lowest in the country and are now above average and more learners than before are selected for higher quality secondary schools (national schools as opposed to community day secondary schools).

75 % of the schools participating in BEQUIP **Ghana**, also achieved a significant increase of completion rates and transition to Senior High school.

In **Ethiopia** the average final examination scores of 75 schools participating in BEQUIP 2 'Connect4Change' rose significantly compared to a group of similar schools that did not participate in the project (control group). On a scale of 1 to 10, the average learning results of the students increased from 6,8 in year 1 to 7,7 in year 4, whereas students in the comparison group schools remained on the same level.



Improving motivation and self-confidence

This is an extremely valuable outcome of BEQUIP trainings. The following quotes from **Malawi** illustrate this.

"I have learnt new strategies on how to find education materials. At college I learnt a little about education materials but BEQUIP was so detailed. Now I know that they are a lot of educational materials that can be sourced either by the teacher or learners. Above all through BEQUIP I have learnt that Active teaching and learning methods does not only motivate the learners but also makes learners understand and remember what they learn in school."

Grace, Mbawa teacher, standard 3³

"BEQUIP has helped me improve how I handle learners and present lessons to learners so that they are motivated to learn. All learners are now involved in learning by understanding their learning styles and using concept building and real life situations in teaching"

STD 5 Teacher, Thoza Primary school.

As a result of improved practices of teaching and learning, learners are more motivated to go to school. The lessons become more relevant for everyday life. In Northern Ghana for example, students in the schools and colleges have always struggled with the gap between theory and practice. The quotes below illustrate how teachers have triggered their motivation .

3 Grace joined BEQUIP just after leaving college. Now she has now enrolled for a degree program in education and she is doing very well.

"We like the way our Home Economics Madam is teaching us because she always brings cooking utensils and ingredients to do practical work. Sometimes she puts us in groups to talk about the use of cooking utensils. I always remember what I learnt in Home Economics."

"There is more peer learning and I can understand things better that way"

"Shy people get more active and less shy, this teaching brings down my shyness",
(from 3 students)



Creating Large Scale impact.

In **Malawi** Primary Teaching College (PTC) tutors have improved the quality of teacher training at the colleges. One of the tutor participants - Madam Gertrude Jumbe – deputy principal of Blantyre PTC has been active in training PTC tutors in colleges. The Primary Education Advisors are equipped and motivated to support quality improvement in their districts.

"It will enhance my work as a primary education advisory. BEQUIP has enhanced my skills in supervising teachers especially on: how they ask questions? How they design and use teaching and learning resources and classroom management."

PEA Ephangweni zone.

In **Ghana** and in **Ethiopia** the electronic resource guide Edukans 'Practising Active Learning' was well appreciated by the teachers and presented as best practice for ICT in teacher training in the elearning Africa conference in Addis Ababa in 2015. This source has been used extensively in teacher trainings since. In general the college and the schools made good progress with applying ICT for learning. In Ethiopia, 49 tutors in 7 Teacher Training Centres (TTCs) are working with this material reaching large numbers of student teachers. Besides the tutors, 49 NGO staff and 29 MoE inspectors are involved in a next phase of BEQUIP in Ethiopia. Another 1.000 teachers will be supported to improve their teaching skills, allowing tens of thousands of learners to improve learning outcomes in a self-confident and inspired fashion.



4. IMPROVING EDUCATION QUALITY

Theory and practice

At Edukans we believe that quality education is the key to sustainable development. We are totally committed to do what we can to help achieve SDG 4: “inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Below we explain the background and rationale for our approach.

Changing classroom practices

Numerous pedagogical reform programmes since the 1990's designed to improve the quality of education have focused on moving from a teacher centred to a learner centred practice (see for example Dembele and Lefoka, 2007). Typical lecture-driven and teacher dominated practices are considered inappropriate to support learners to develop essential skills needed for the 21st century. Over the past decades however, the implementation of these reform practices has proved difficult. Research reveals the complexity of this process of change (Schweisfurth, 2011 and 2013). A teacher's perception on the concept of teaching and learning is rooted in a long personal history of learning. This will not change radically within the limited timeframe of a reform programme. Other challenges include low standards of material and human resources. Other obstacles stem from cultural assumptions embedded in learner centred pedagogy that conflict with local understandings

of authority structures and teacher-student relationships (Pontefract and Hardman, 2005).

Against this background, one cannot expect complete and rapid change at scale as a result of cascaded training models that are often applied. A better approach would be to connect with existing practices and perceptions, look for strong points that already present in the classrooms and help teachers to 'drift towards new practices' together. Therefore Edukans works towards realistic, feasible and practical change, taking one step at a time.

Learning Centred – Looking at what is happening in the classroom

In the design and pilot phase of the BEQUIP-approach from 2008-2010, important lessons were learned from professional development programmes with a central role for classroom observation (Hoeksma & Sieswerda, 2011). Through systematic classroom observation and discussion of the results together with teachers, teachers themselves learn what activities and arrangements help students to learn. After Margot O' Sullivan (2005), we call this a 'Learning centred approach'. We designed our training approach on this principle and refined this based on learnings over the years.

Active Learning & Structured Learning

In BEQUIP teachers learn to improve their practice by applying effective Active Learning (AL) methods. By engaging in all sorts of real-life activities, students learn to develop relevant skills for the future (jobs) and learn how to make a meaningful contribution to society. They carry out a variety of active learning behaviour and develop higher levels of thinking and reasoning. Students work and learn together and in dialogue with their teacher. Next to AL, BEQUIP also incorporates elements of Structured Learning (SL) such as lesson planning, introduction of learning objectives, linking new lessons with previous

lessons and use of formative assessment techniques. SL-elements provide concrete tools to lead and assess classroom learning. Through SL teachers learn to flexibly adapt activities according to the different needs of students. The AL and SL elements adopted in BEQUIP are correlated with successful learning outcomes (Hattie, 2008; Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2011).

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