



TeachOut Quarterly Report

Term 4 2009

16 September – 30 November



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1 Director’s Overview

This last quarter was a difficult quarter for the TeachOut committee. Sessions at two of our schools were often disrupted due to communication difficulties with the schools, as well as diminishing learner attendance. Despite this, the new committee managed to find its feet and ensure as many successful sessions as possible.

The term began with Ubunye holding a comprehensive committee training weekend for all the Ubunye project committees. This was a two-day event that covered team-building, portfolio specific training, portfolio and project planning, and reflective discussions. There were also some breaks built into the weekend to allow committees to socialise and get to know one another. Everyone was very positive about the weekend, with committees having bonded nicely, and individuals feeling confident and positive about their portfolios and the year ahead.

In terms of operations, the final quarter for the year was a bit disjointed since school holidays and university holidays did not overlap, as they had in the first semester. This disrupted the continuity of sessions, contributing to some of the problems. Nevertheless, during the three weeks of operations TeachOut managed to hold 18 successful tutorials at the schools.

Evaluations were carried out on learners and volunteers. Learners had little negative feedback, but reiterated their desire for food at sessions, something we are looking into for 2010. The evaluations also pointed at a need to improve the quality of the worksheets, and the committee has already begun this over the current university vacation. Aside from those areas for improvement, volunteers were overwhelmingly positive towards the committee and the operations for the quarter. The majority of learners also felt that were doing a good job, going so far as to ask for more sessions per week.

With the new committee well bonded, full of ideas, and committed to the year ahead, I am confident that TeachOut will be able to expand and have a great year in 2010.

2 Logistics

2009: *Aslam Parker and Robyn Thomas*

2010: *Monica Ndlovu and Nonelela Pupuma*

Term four started on 7 October 2009. Sessions were organised for this week at Sophumelela Secondary School, Zisukhanyo Senior Secondary School, Christel House and Yabonga.

All-in-all, there were eleven sessions planned for the schools, of which six went off well. The five cancellations were the result of communication problems between teachers and learners. Of the six sessions that occurred, five showed diminished learner attendance, and the sixth was problematic because of miscommunication about school closing times.

Next year, we aim to provide teachers with a detailed calendar of exact dates and subjects for each session. We will follow this up with a weekly confirmation for the following week. It is important to note that this last term of this year was particularly fraught with problems because the contact teachers at our schools were extremely busy with dealing with problems associated with the Matric Exams. For example, on a few occasions we had difficulties in contacting teachers at Zisukhanyo, a school that has been extremely reliable throughout the year. It is unlikely that these issues will be experienced at the start of 2010. That said, the TeachOut Logistics Coordinators will continue to do everything in their power to ensure sessions continue running smoothly. Letters expressing our gratitude to the teachers at the two schools were sent out in November, to thank them for their continued support of and dedication to TeachOut's efforts.

Due to the Grade 12 learners at Christel House finishing their mock exams and going on leave to prepare for their finals, the English session at Christel House was changed to Grade 11s. However, due to scheduling difficulties, only one session was able to take place.

Functional English at Yabonga was extremely successful this year. At one of the sessions, learners were fairly quiet to begin with, and slowly began to open up towards the end of the year. This made it fairly difficult for the tutors at the start. However, we expect this to have been caused by the fact that the learners at this session were from Grade 7 and too young to begin with Functional English. The second Yabonga session had nothing but positive feedback, with the learners putting on a show for the volunteers at the last session.

The following tables summarise the activities of this quarter and put them in perspective with that of the entire year.

	Zisukhanyo	Sophumelela	Yabonga	Christel House	Total
Mathematics	1/2	2/6	-	3/3	6/11
Physical Science	3/5	-	-	-	3/5
English	-	-	-	1/1	1/1
Functional English	-	2/3	6/6	-	8/9
				Total	18/26

Table 1: Summary of successful sessions out of planned tutorials for the term

	Quarter				Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	
Successful Sessions	59	41	29	18	147
Sessions organized	63	46	32	26	167
Percentage	94%	89%	91%	69%	88%

Table 2: Comparison of session success rates this year

The reduced number of successful sessions this term is a result of communication problems the logistics coordinators had with teachers, because of the proximity of Matric exams. In 2010, we will consider scaling back our sessions towards the end of the year in order to avoid these problems.

3 Human Resources

2009: Matthew Sharp

2010: Shabeena Musa

The HR Portfolio went very smoothly in the fourth term. The position of HR coordinator changed hands, from Matthew Sharp to Shabeena Musa, who will be in this position for 2010. Sessions forms were used to record attendance of learners and volunteers as well as a means to gain feedback of the session's success. We held 9 weeks of sessions this term which continued until the start of the university's study week and were fairly well attended. There was effective communication with the volunteers via bulk sms and email (info@teachout.co.za). There were however a few sessions that had to be cancelled with very short notice and this will be minimized next year via more effective communication with logistics co-coordinators

4 Academics Report

2009: Nicole Jonklass

2010: Bianca Böhmer

With a reduced number of sessions, the Academics Portfolio remained free of any serious problems during the fourth term. Volunteers continued to use TeachOut's workbooks and no queries or complaints were received from them regarding the worksheet material or tutoring sessions. Teachers were again contacted on a weekly basis to find out which topics the volunteers should cover with learners during sessions. This task was taken up by the newly appointed Academic Coordinator for 2009/2010 upon the start of her tenure.

Various meetings held throughout the fourth term yielded ideas for improving upon the tutoring service TeachOut provides learners. We hope that the UCT Schools Development Unit will be able to assist TeachOut with evaluating the quality of our worksheet material and by providing additional training to volunteers. TeachOut also has plans to implement tutoring sessions for grade 10 Maths Literacy in 2010, although this is conditional upon further discussions with teachers. Furthermore, major improvements will be made to our existing Mathematics and Physical Science curriculum, as the relevant subject coordinators will work to improve the quality and quantity of worksheets for these subjects.

5 Finances

2009, 2010: Richard Wilkinson

This report is based on the cash system of accounting. Therefore, all incomes and expenses are recorded when they are paid and received from TeachOut's bank account.

As such, please note that a great deal of other activity may have occurred during the period but will only be physically paid later.

Subsequently, TeachOut does not have any standing liabilities. Assets simply include the bank account which is detailed below

A printout of the bank statement confirms the details stated below.

BANK BALANCE 16 September 2009		R 15 065.78	Notes
Income from this period			
Interest	R 36.29		1
Website Advertisement	R 930.41		2
Total Income		R 966.70	
Expenses from this period			
Transport	R 4350.00		3
Banking Fees	R 16.5		4
Repayment to Ubunye	R 6210		5
Total Expenses		R 10 576.50	
Deficit for period		R -9 609.80	
BANK BALANCE 30 November 2009		R 5 455.98	

Notes:

1. Three monthly interest payments were received from Standard Bank.
2. One payment was received from a company for advertising on the Teachout website
3. Two payments were made to Mdu's Transport for services rendered.
4. One fee was charged by Standard Bank
5. Teachout repaid bridging finance which covered the group's transport expenses earlier in the year

Table 3. Income Statement for this Quarter

6 Evaluations

2009: Duncan Clough

These evaluations are important as they provide an opportunity for TeachOut to reflect on any problems, and celebrate successes that have been reported. Although there were some difficulties in obtaining evaluations data back from sessions, we still managed to gather a comprehensive amount of feedback.

6.1 Learner Evaluation

Overall, the learners' responses to the questions in the evaluation sheets were significantly positive. The positive responses accounted for 79% and the negative responses were 11%, with only 10% of the responses being neutral. Clearly learners are pleased with TeachOut's operations. See Appendix A for a copy of the learner questionnaire.

In responses to Q12 on whether our tutorials were sufficient, 15% of the responses from learners indicated that they would like more tutorials. Some learners suggested that the session be held at least two times a week – a common response seen from all sessions.

In addition to this, the suggestions that the learners gave included requests to provide food during the tutorial sessions. Currently, TeachOut is looking at ways to provide the learners with food in 2010.

Learners also requested that TeachOut should provide solutions to the worksheets. The purpose of the tutorial sessions is to allow learners to work in small groups, to discuss possible solutions and to seek help from the tutors should they encounter any difficulty. Providing learners with printed solutions defeats the ultimate purpose of the tutorial sessions and it encourages learners to parrot learn the solutions as opposed to thinking independently. Therefore we do not plan to include solutions in the worksheets we provide to learners.

6.2 Learners Progress

In an attempt to get an understanding of how the learners have improved their academic results, the learners were asked to show in which mark ranges their June results were in and how much they expect to score in their final year examinations.

The learners' results and expected results are summarised for the individual learning areas on the next page. 60% of the learners appear to have scored in the lower marks range particularly in learning areas such as Mathematics and Physical Science. These are the learning areas which TeachOut will need to focus on providing sufficient resources to learners to allow them to improve their results.

The learners however feel optimistic about the examinations they will be writing in December. There appears to be a shift in the marks the learners expect to achieve, on average 82% of the

learners expect to score above 50% mark range. 13% of the learners expect to achieve in the 80% and above mark range. See Appendix B for more details.

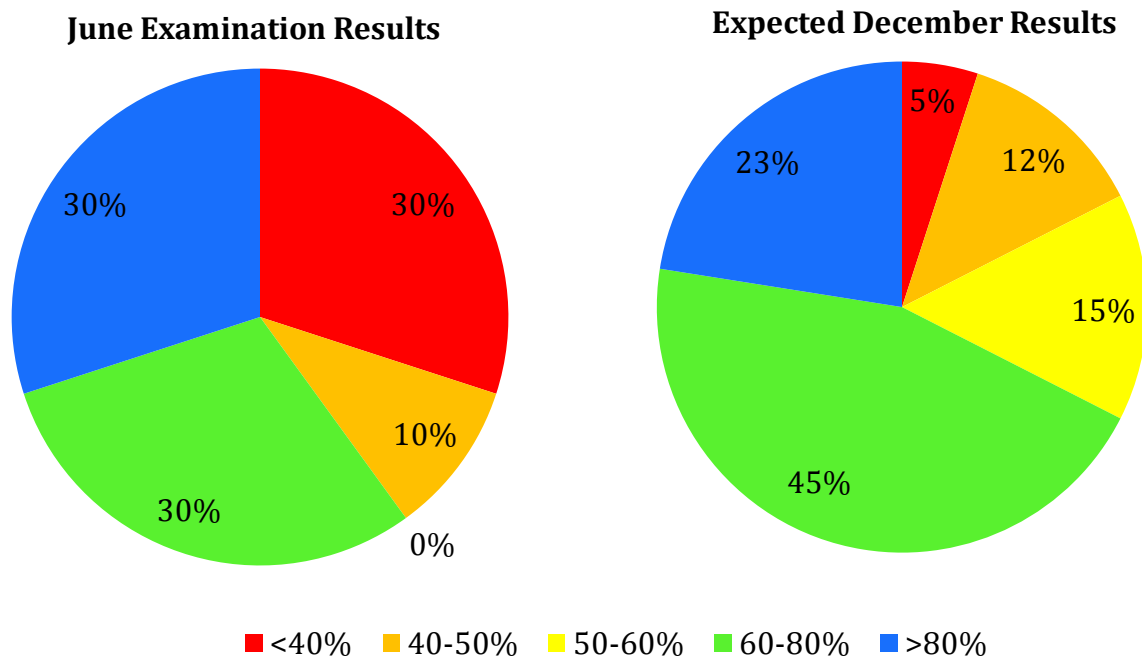


Figure 1: Summary of learners' past academic performance and their expected future performance.

6.3 Volunteer Evaluations

Evaluation sheets were given to volunteers. See 0 for a copy of the volunteer questionnaire.

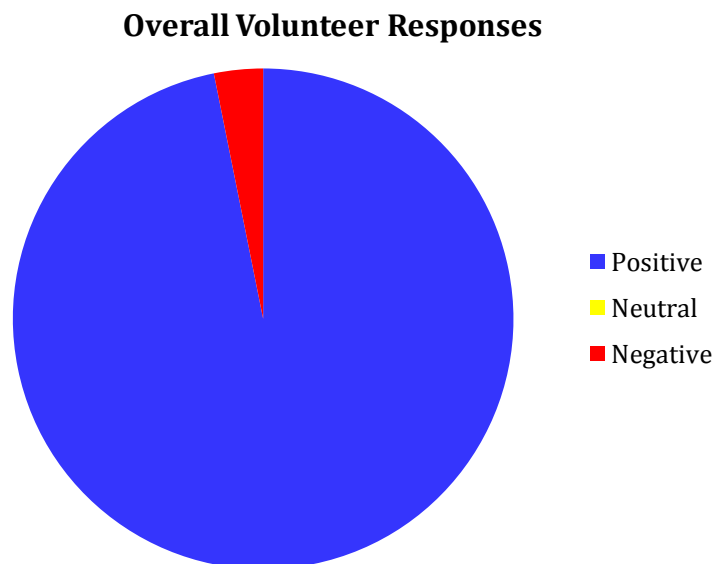


Figure 2: Average of responses from volunteers.

From Figure 2, it appears that 92% of the responses given by volunteers were positive and only 8% was negative. This confirms that the TeachOut committee was operating effectively, and despite the problems faced throughout the semester.

The negative responses which were given were primarily based on the teaching material. Many of the volunteers were concerned that the worksheets were either too difficult, or not relevant enough. Some of the volunteers suggested that the teachers contribute to drawing up the activities in the worksheets. Although it is unrealistic to expect this kind of help from the teachers, we will be exploring other avenues to get input from professionals in education.

Appendix A Learner Evaluation Questions

1 – Definitely yes 2 – Yes 3 – Neutral 4 – No 5 – Definitely not

1.	Was the material covered in tutorials relevant?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Were the notes that you were given helpful?	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Were the exercises you did during tutorials helpful?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Did the tutors explain work clearly?	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Were the tutors well prepared for the tutorials?	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Did the tutors go at the right speed when explaining things?	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Was working in groups helpful?	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Were the study and exam technique tips you were given helpful?	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Has TeachOut helped improve your understanding of your work?	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Has attending TeachOut helped to improve your marks?	1	2	3	4	5

What were your marks in this subject before being tutored by TeachOut:

<40% 40 - 50% 50 - 60% 60 - 80% >80%

How much do you expect to score in your December exam for this subject :

<40% 40 - 50% 50 - 60% 60 - 80% >80%

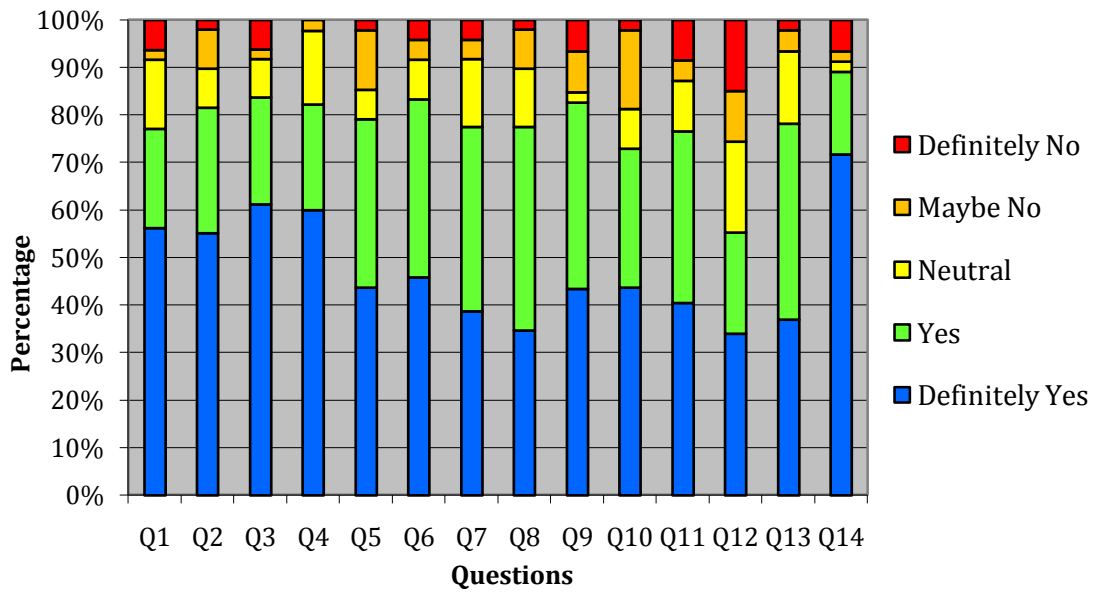
11.	Were the tutorial times convenient?	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Were there enough tutorials?	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Did your educator(s) tell you early enough about the tutorials?	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Did your educator(s) encourage you to attend the tutorials?	1	2	3	4	5

8. Were there any specific things about the workshops that were especially helpful?

9. Were there any specific things about the workshops that were not helpful?

10. What do you think could be changed about the workshops to make them more helpful?

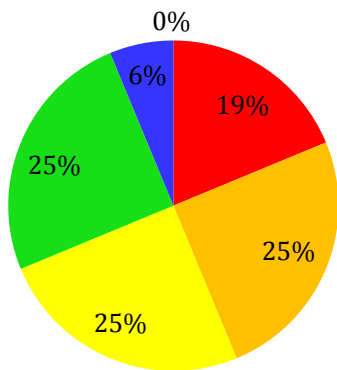
Appendix B Summary of Learner Responses



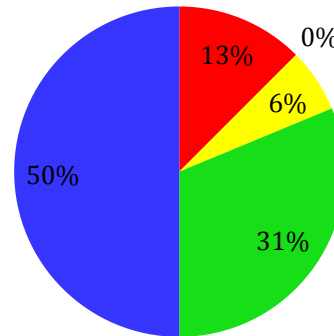
The pie charts below are grouped with the learners reported June Examination results of the left, and their expected December Examination results on the right. The all use the following legend

■ <40% ■ 40-50% ■ 50-60% ■ 60-80% ■ >80%

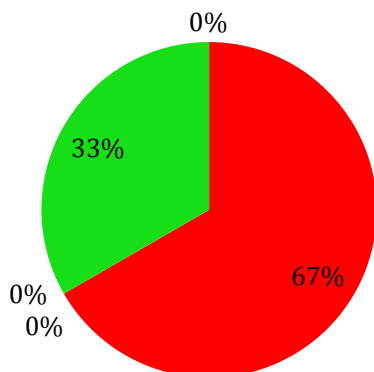
Yabonga Functional English



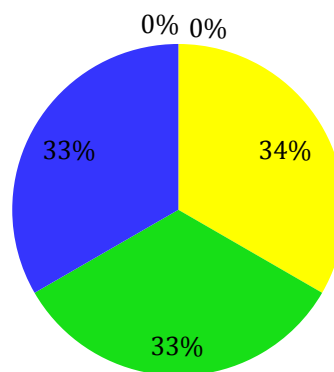
Yabonga Functional English



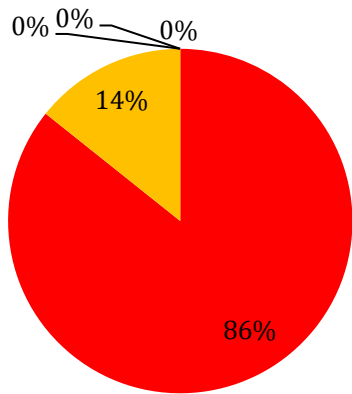
Grade 12 Mathematics



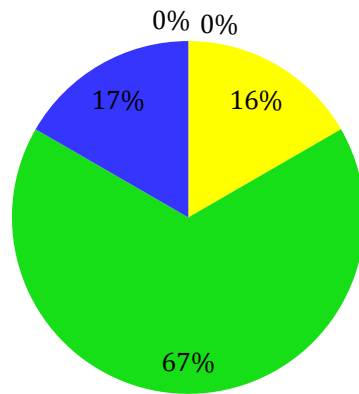
Grade 12 Mathematics



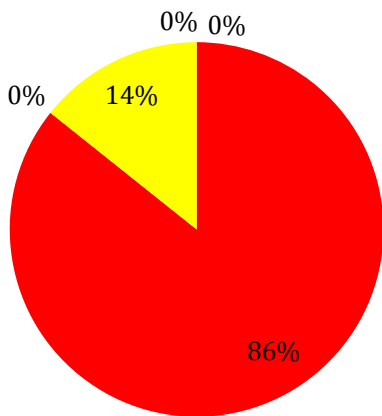
Grade 11 Physical Science



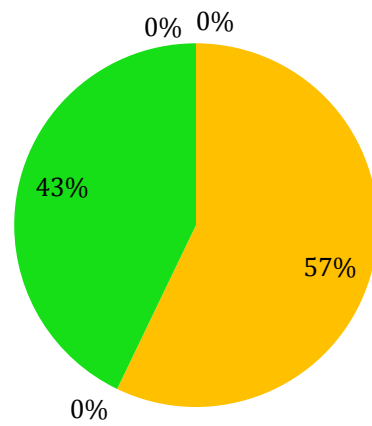
Grade 11 Physical Science



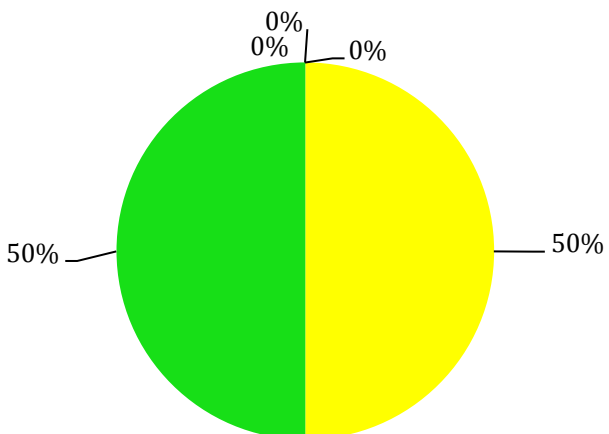
Grade 11 Mathematics



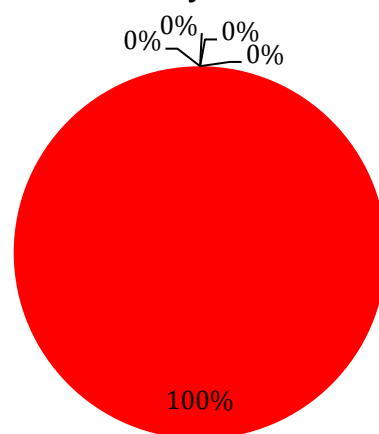
Grade 11 Mathematics



Grade 10 Physical Science



Grade 10 Physical Science



Volunteer Evaluation Questions

Please tick the appropriate box for each question:

1 - Definitely yes 2 - Maybe yes 3 - Neutral 4 - Maybe no 5 - Definitely no

1.	Were you happy with the level of communication from the committee?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do you think that the committee organized?	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Was the organization of sessions satisfactory?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Were you happy with the transport arrangements?	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Were you happy with the quality of the teaching material?	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Do you feel that your input is valuable for the learners?	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Have you enjoyed your experience with TeachOut?	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Are you interested in applying for a position on the committee next year?	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The length your tutorials was	too short	just right	too long		
10.	The time of the tutorials was	too early	just right	too late		
11.	Reminders for your sessions were sent	too early	on time	too late		
12.	Responses to your emails/sms's/phone calls were	on time	too late	no reply		
13.	The number of learners attending tutorials was	too few	just right	too many		

14. Were there any specific aspects of tutorials that were especially useful/well-done/etc?

15. Were there any specific aspects of tutorials that were not useful/well-done/etc?

16. What do you think could be changed about tutorials to make them more helpful?

Appendix C Summary of Volunteer Responses

