

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND
PRACTICES OF HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS WITH
RESPECT TO LEARNER-CENTRED METHODS OF TEACHING IN
THE WINDHOEK EDUCATIONAL REGION**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

KAYISE MPOFU

MARCH 2002

**SUPERVISORS: PROFESSOR C. D. KASANDA
PROFESSOR A. F. NJABILI**

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standard for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

1. _____

Internal Examiner

Date

2. _____

Internal Examiner

Date

3. _____

Dean, Faculty of Education

Date

4. _____

External Examiner

Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Tom Mvimbi Mthunzi and Rhoda Mabhala Ndlovu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my great indebtedness to the following:

Professor C. D. Kasanda and Professor A.F. Njabili for their excellent guidance and thoughtfulness throughout this research.

Mrs C. Keyter for her generous and conscientious assistance throughout the course of this research.

The Home Economics teachers from the following schools: Windhoek High School, Cosmos Senior Secondary School, Academia Junior Secondary School, Augustineum Junior Secondary School and Jan Jonker Afrikaaner Junior Secondary School, for their cooperation during the collection of data.

My husband, Stanley, for his unwavering patience, understanding and support throughout my studies.

My children, Thembelani, Makhosini and Buhlebethu for their patience, understanding and constant encouragement throughout my studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to determine the knowledge, practices and attitudes that Home Economics teachers have on the learner-centred methods of teaching. The study addressed the following questions: a) what knowledge do Home Economics teachers have on the learner-centred approach to teaching? b) do Home Economics teachers' use learner-centred methods of teaching in their classrooms? c) what are the Home Economics teachers' attitudes towards the use of the learner-centred methods of teaching?

Using the case study method and purposeful sampling procedures data were collected through observation schedules and questionnaires from seven female Home Economics teachers in selected schools in the Windhoek region. The study found that Home Economics teachers used a variety of learner-centred methods of teaching that included group work, discussions and the question and answer method. The study also revealed that Home Economics teachers engaged in learner-centred practices that promoted active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process. Such practices included allowing students to evaluate their own work,

encouraging students to work in groups, and providing students with opportunities to respond to other students' contributions. However, the teachers preferred those learner-centred methods of teaching and practices that enabled them to retain control over the teaching and learning process. Further, the study showed that Home Economics teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of various learner-centred methods. In addition, it was found that they had adequate teaching and learning materials and equipment, but lacked textbooks.

In light of the above findings, the study recommends that the Home Economics teachers should use all the different learner-centred methods of teaching which include group work, discussions, question and answer method, project work, independent inquiry, dramatisation, role playing and simulations, in order to cater for individual needs and to maximize learner participation in the teaching/learning process. The study also recommends that the Home Economics teachers be given adequate textbooks. This could encourage them to adopt various learner-centred methods of teaching.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

IGCSE - International General Certificate of Secondary Education

MEC - Ministry of Education and Culture

MBESC- Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background information

Prior to independence in March, 1990 very few Namibians had access to education. The education system that was in operation then was segregatory in terms of colour, sex, race and ethnicity. White people had the most superior education system. They had the most qualified teachers, best facilities, best teaching and learning materials, just to mention a few. Schools for the black people had unqualified teachers, inadequate facilities and learning materials. Above all, the education system was segregated into eleven educational systems. Each ethnic group had its own system of education, such that, the different eleven education systems offered different curricula.

Separating people on the basis of race and ethnicity ensured that a few individuals reached higher levels of the separate education systems (MEC, 1993). Also, uneven distribution of resources ensured that most of the white rather than black children were selected for further education. Further, segregation ensured that black people remained inferior to the white elite with respect to education, jobs, authority and incomes (MEC,

1993, p.5).

In essence, the education system was designed such that only a few black Namibians had access to education, and that those who managed to gain access would not go very far in their educational endeavours. The few black people who managed to gain access to education were prepared for specific jobs that the German and the South African rule required, for example, they became messengers and clerks (MEC, 1993, p.2).

Most black people who entered the educational system were mostly equipped with basic literacy and numeracy skills. A major problem of the educational system then was that the curriculum that was offered in schools was not designed to address the needs of learners. The curriculum was designed to enable learners to read and write. For this reason, practical subjects such as Home Economics were not part of the curriculum at lower grades. For example, before independence, Home Economics was offered from Standard six to Standard eight. The Home Economics curriculum that was offered then was designed to equip learners with knowledge of hygiene and to be able to care for white peoples' homes, gardens and farms (Amukugo, 1993). Acquisition of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and practical skills of home management would enable black children to take up specific jobs that

white people had to offer, for example, being domestic workers.

On attainment of independence, the new government aimed at reforming the education system. This called for the development and designing of a new curriculum that would reflect the needs of the learners. Due to its relationship to everyday needs of individuals, Home Economics has, since independence been offered from Grades four to Grade twelve. The new curriculum in Home Economics that emerged was guided by the need to promote participation of learners in the teaching/learning process and thus promote the application of knowledge in real life situations (MEC, 1993). It was designed to meet the needs, aptitudes and aspirations of the learner. In short, the new curriculum was concerned with preparing the learner for real life situations, rather than examinations. For example, the IGCSE Home Economics syllabus (2000) states that there are three objectives which have to be followed. They are:

a) acquiring knowledge with understanding, for example, students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in relation to use of equipment and tools; use of safety and hygienic rules and use of basic quantities and methods of cooking.

b) handling information and solving problems, for example, students

should be able to read and interpret information; manipulate numerical and other forms of data and organise and manage time, equipment, materials and tools in a given situation.

c) acquiring experimental and investigatory skills, for example, students should be able to identify problems; obtain and interpret evidence on which to base judgements and choices; observe and record observations.

Compounding the problem of an irrelevant curriculum was that the methods of teaching that were used were largely teacher-centred. The teacher-centred methods of teaching are considered to be inefficient and frustrating to most learners and certainly are not consistent with the philosophy of education for all (MEC, 1993, p.10). Therefore, in order to ensure equity, there was need to introduce totally different methods of teaching that centred on the needs of the learners.

The Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1996) had this to say:

Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, and the teaching methods have to encourage involvement and the participation of learners. Teachers should structure lessons appropriately for each task. There should be variation in the organisation of the class according to which will be optimal for the task at

hand, individual work, work in pairs, small groups, or the whole class. There should be variation between teacher-directed work and learner directed work, depending on which is most effective in relation to the learning objectives and content of the lesson (MBEC, 1996, p.21).

The learner-centred methods of teaching had to be introduced to ensure active participation of the learner in the teaching/learning process. These methods are highly flexible, giving the learners a variety of options. Further, learners are supposed to plan their own curriculum with various degrees of teacher input. Finally, learners are instructed individually at various points in their learning. In essence, the learner is the starting point, the centre and the end of teaching/learning activities (Farrant, 1990; Shiundu and Omulando, 1992; Sibuku, 1997). The key feature of learner-centred methods of teaching is that all learning activities are based on the learner's needs, interests and experiences.

Berliner (1991) points out that learner-centred methods of teaching allow students to talk as much or more than the teacher during lessons. The learners are usually taught individually or in groups. They have a voice in choosing and organising learning activities. A wide variety of materials are provided for learners to manipulate and use. The learners have the freedom to move freely in the classrooms and are encouraged to work together. Learner-centred methods of teaching reflect and reinforce both values and practices of democracy whereby learners take responsibility

for their learning (Petty, 1993).

In learner-centred methods of teaching, learning is self-initiated and often involves the process of inquiry and discovery. In this kind of situation, the teacher acts as a facilitator and resource person to the individual students. The role of the teacher is to constantly plan and organize the most appropriate learning activities that promote understanding of what is being presented (Tobin, 1994; Brandes and Ginnis, 1996; Simola, 1996).

Learner-centred methods of teaching are participatory in nature because they focus on the pupil being actively and fully involved in the learning process. Home Economics as a subject is participatory in that it requires a lot of practical work in the different subject areas, which include Food and Nutrition, Family Studies, Management, Housing and Consumption, Clothing and Interior Design. Due to their practical nature, these different subject areas demand the use of various learner-centred methods of teaching that include group work, discussions, question and answer method, project work, independent inquiry, dramatization, role playing and simulations. Accordingly, the students, with the assistance of their teacher, seek solutions, solve problems, inquire, question, probe, find answers, wonder, explore, discover, investigate and manipulate information at their disposal. The interaction between the teacher and the

students results in the acquisition by the latter of skills and understanding necessary for human development (Jacobs and Gawe, 1996).

In the teaching/learning of Home Economics, the teacher acts as a facilitator, manager and supporter in the learning process. He/ she has to select and organize learning activities that make it easy for the students to understand, to be involved and to learn from strategies used. The teacher has to guide the students into the activities, through the activities and in the analysis of the activities. He/she has to listen to students' contributions and provide explanations where necessary (Freiberg and Driscoll, 1996).

As a manager, the teacher has to plan and organize activities, time and resources, effectively, in order to maximize learning. The teacher also plays the role of a resource person who provides information to his/her students. In addition, the teacher acts as a supporter in that he/she provides advice and encouragement, which is characterized by sensitivity and nurturance, to the individual students. Further, the teacher acts as a referee of students' behaviour to ensure physical and emotional safety (Bennet, 1976; Farrant, 1990; Berliner, 1991).

Since independence teachers in Namibia were expected to specify and

implement activities that are learner-centred that make it possible for learners from varying backgrounds and with different abilities to progress in their learning (MEC, 1993). It was hoped that these learner-centred methods of learning would enable each learner to achieve the best that he/she was capable of.

Based on the above background, there has been a policy that requires teachers to use learner-centred methods of teaching that encourage active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process (MEC, 1996). These include asking questions, group work, discussions, problem solving, project work, dramatization, role-playing, simulations just to mention a few.

Learner-centred methods of teaching

Group Work

Group work is an essential component of practical work in Food and Nutrition. Students are divided into groups of two or three depending on the size of the class. The groups are assigned specific tasks to perform under the supervision of the teacher. Group work gives students the opportunity to work together (Lemmer, 1986; Petty, 1993). Jacobsen et al (1985) point out that group work promotes interpersonal skills, co-

operative work habits, social skills and a sense of competence, necessary for future teamwork. They state that working together also arouses group loyalty, and self-esteem, especially if there is competition among groups. This can produce strong motivation among students.

The use of group work in class enables students to be actively involved in the learning process and gives them a chance to use methods, principles and the vocabulary that they have been taught (Lemmer, 1986; Petty, 1993). Also, group work, facilitates self-checking by students and peer tutoring. And errors are corrected in a supportive manner. In group work, the teacher has the opportunity to use the views and experiences of students in the teaching process. Further, the slow learners benefit from interacting with others and are encouraged to work harder. In addition, group work enables the students to relate to each other and work together easily. Responsibilities are shared among members of the group and, as such, students become accountable for their own learning (Perrot, 1982; Jacobs and Gawe, 1996).

On the other hand, group work is extremely time-consuming in that it requires a lot of preparation. It also requires a lot of space and teaching materials (Njabili, 1995).

Discussions

Discussions are a common method of teaching in Home Economics. They usually consist of questions, answers and comments by the teacher and the pupils (Cangelosi, 1993; Simola, 1996). The teacher's role is mainly that of a facilitator rather than a director of activities. Nevertheless, his/her role remains critical in that he/she should ensure the promotion of learning through student interaction and exchange of ideas.

Discussions help students to gain knowledge from sharing different experiences with others and, in the process, they also learn to acquire knowledge independently. Also, the interaction among students and their teachers helps students develop insight into issues, since they are directly involved in the teaching and learning process. Further, discussions expand and deepen the pupils' knowledge in that they help them to express their ideas and appreciate other people's points of view. In discussions, students get opportunities to manipulate information to suit their needs. This manipulation of information helps them to develop the higher cognitive skills, such as evaluation (Good and Brophy, 1997).

In discussions, the teacher gets the opportunity to work with the pupils at two levels: first, the pupils grasp the principles of the subject matter and, secondly, they are exposed to a situation whereby they can understand

and make use of the principles without the help of the teacher (Hohn, 1995). However, when using discussions in the classroom, only a small group of learners can be attended to at a given time. Also, discussions require a lot of time to be conducted adequately. Further, a lot of space and resources are necessary in the teaching/learning process (Njabili, 1995).

Question and Answer method

Also applicable in the teaching of Home Economics is the question and answer method. This method can be used to link what was learnt previously to new information. It can also be used to direct the attention of students to what is being presented as well as arousing interest, thereby stimulating learning. The question and answer method of teaching maximizes pupils' participation and ensures that the lesson moves at the student's pace. It also uncovers incorrect ideas and assumptions that students may have.

For the teacher, there is immediate feedback on the students' understanding of what is being presented. He/she also gets to evaluate learning as the lesson progresses (Cangelosi, 1993; Frieberg and Driscoll, 1996; Chipeta, 1997).

On the other hand, only one student can respond to a question at a given time while the rest are passive. The question and answer method inhibits discussion in the classroom and in some cases, the teacher can dominate, such that, the interaction becomes boring and frustrating for the learners (Cangelosi, 1993).

Project work method

Project work is a very important component of coursework in Home Economics. For example, in Fashion and Fabrics, learners are required to do a project that involves making two garments under the guidance of their teacher. Students can do the work individually or as groups. Usually the work done is based on the interests of the students. Project work promotes learner autonomy, because the learner actively participates as he /she works on the questions and experiments. Learners get the opportunity to choose tasks that they are capable of doing. In the project work method the teacher acts as a guide to his/her students (Hohn, 1995; Chipeta, 1997; Good and Brophy, 1997).

Project work can be time consuming. In some cases, pupils may cut down on time for other school activities to attend fully to the demands of the project (Chipeta, 1997).

Independent inquiry method

The independent inquiry method is applicable to the teaching of certain aspects of Home Economics. For example, in Family Life Education students could be asked to carry out a given task or activity independently. This method provides students with the help of the teacher to find information about certain topics. For example, students could be asked to find out information about different types of families. Students learn not only the content associated with the problems, but also learn ways of solving problems in real life situations (Lemmer, 1986; Well et al, 1996).

The main disadvantage of this method is that the teacher has less control over students' learning in that he/she cannot be sure of the breadth and depth of content acquired by learners (Jacobsen et al, 1985).

Discovery Method

Equally applicable to the teaching of Home Economics is the discovery method. This method promotes students' involvement in the teaching and learning process. The students are given the opportunity to practise the process of analysing data and thereby formulate abstractions from the data. It also increases the thinking skills of students. However, the discovery method is extremely time consuming in that it requires a lot of

preparation and it demands a lot of equipment (Lemmer, 1986; Simola, 1996).

Role-playing Method

Role-playing is yet another method of teaching that is applicable to the teaching of Home Economics. This method is enjoyable to the pupils in that they get to act different roles in the process of learning (Jacobs and Gawe, 1990; Petty, 1993). For example, in Family Life Education, students could be asked to play out different roles of different members of a family, depicting a situation where there is physical abuse of children in the family. Role-playing provides huge opportunities for teaching/learning in Home Economics. It enables students to explore their feelings, gain insight into their attitudes, values and perceptions. It also develops students' problem solving skills and attitudes. In addition, it gives them the opportunity to explore the subject matter in varied ways. Nevertheless, role-playing requires a lot of preparation. It takes a lot of time, and it requires a lot of resources such as space, people and materials. Also, it can present some artificiality of situations that can allow students to discount the values of learning. If not properly monitored, role-playing can deteriorate into play, jeopardising the serious learning potential inherent in the process of role-playing (Chipeta, 1997).

Dramatization Method

Dramatization is an aspect of role playing and, as such, equally applicable in the teaching of Home Economics. In this method, students act out roles or read from a written script to portray what is being taught. For example, students can act out what has to be done at the scene of a car accident.

Dramatization is a form of group problem solving. It enables students to explore concepts of fantasy and reality, cause and effect, language and sequence. Drama develops values, group interaction, greater understanding and tolerance of differences, critical thinking, analytic skills, and the ability to cope with real life situations as well as the curricula goals. Although dramatization has definite advantages, it has its disadvantages. Its two main disadvantages are that it lacks spontaneity and that it sometimes fails to develop critical thinking among learners (Jacobs and Gawe, 1990).

Simulations

Simulations are elaborate role playing activities and, as such, are also applicable to the teaching of Home Economics (Jacobs and Gawe, 1990).

Simulations depict real life situations, whereby pupils assume roles of decision makers and act like they are actually involved in real life situations. Therefore, simulations introduce an element of realism into teaching. However, simulations require a lot of time to act out the

different roles and make the appropriate decisions. Simulations require an enthusiastic and imaginative teacher to implement them successfully (Simola, 1996).

Accordingly, Home Economics teachers are required to use different learner-centred methods of teaching in their classrooms to meet the demands of the syllabus and to address the needs of the different capabilities of the individual learners.

Sguazzin (1998), states that classroom practices should be learner-centred and democratic. She points out that the teacher is the key agent of change in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher should contribute, understand, accept and know how to introduce new ideas to his/her students. Zimba (1995) describes the role of the teacher in the learner-centred approach as that of an organiser of instruction in terms of time, environment and resources; guide; counsellor; mentor; co-learner; resource person; facilitator; friend and problem-poser. It is the teacher's responsibility to create conditions that promote effective learning.

In Namibia, there has been a need to transform classroom activities from teacher-centred to learner-centred. As such, the learner-centred approach to teaching was incorporated into the curriculum of teacher training

colleges. For the benefit of serving teachers, the learner-centred approach became a major component of in-service training in the form of workshops at regional and national levels; cluster workshops within regions; subject meetings and classroom demonstrations (van Graan, 1998). Nevertheless, adoption of learner-centred methods of teaching by the teachers has been slow. Teachers seem to be positive about following a learner-centred approach to teaching but often lack knowledge and a deeper level of understanding of what this approach actually constitutes, or skills and techniques to apply in a classroom situation. In some cases teachers lack motivation to change existing classroom practices. Lack of motivation could be a result of the change that was “mandated” from top-down as part of policy (Van Graan, 1998).

The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) observes that the process of adopting a learner-centred approach to teaching is slow. It also points out that some of the older teachers do not have adequate skills to use learner-centred methods of teaching. In some schools the newly trained teachers are discouraged from using learner-centred methods of teaching by the principals who do not understand the learner-centred approach to teaching.

From what has been discussed above it is evident that some teachers lack

knowledge and skills in the use of learner-centred methods of teaching and as such, are slow in adopting the learner-centred methods of teaching.

Statement of the problem

Progress towards adoption of the learner-centred methods of teaching by teachers has been slow. Van Graan (1998) observes that the learner-centred approach to teaching "has a long way to go, it is not progressing as expected" (p.60). This study was done to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to the learner-centred approach to teaching at secondary schools.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- a) establish the knowledge that the Home Economics teachers have on the learner-centred approach to teaching.
- b) identify the Home Economics teacher's practice of the learner-centred approach to teaching.
- c) identify the Home Economics teachers' attitudes towards the use of the learner - centred methods of teaching.

Questions of the study

The following questions were addressed:

- a) What knowledge do Home Economics teachers have on learner-centred methods of teaching?

- b) Do Home Economics teachers use learner-centred methods of teaching in their classrooms?

- c) What are the Home Economics teachers' attitudes towards the use of learner-centred methods of teaching?

Significance of the study

The researcher hoped that the results of the study would provide some insight on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching. This information could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) as a basis for designing a strategy that would promote the adoption of the learner-centred approach to teaching by the teachers. Also, the information could be used by MBESC and teachers to improve the use of learner-centred methods of teaching in schools.

Limitations of the study

For a more comprehensive study involving many Home Economics teachers nationwide there was need for a substantial amount of time, human and financial resources. The available time, money and human resources were inadequate for a more comprehensive and in-depth study.

Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to Senior and Junior Secondary Schools that offer Home Economics in the Windhoek Education region.

Definition of Terms

a) Learner-centred methods of teaching are methods of teaching that promote active learner participation; encourage self initiated learning; involve the process of inquiry and discovery and promote understanding of what is being presented in the teaching/learning process

b) Teacher-centred methods of teaching are methods of teaching where attention and activities focus on the teacher. Learners usually sit quietly and passively and listen to the teacher. In teacher-centred methods of teaching the teacher is expected to have the knowledge required for the teaching/learning process, which he/she has to pass on to the learners. As a result, the teacher does most if not all the talking during the lessons.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of learner-centred methods teaching in general. A thorough review of literature revealed that few research studies have been done in Namibia on learner-centred methods of teaching. Very little if any research has been done in Home Economics with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching. Therefore, the literature review will focus mostly on learner-centred methods of teaching in general done in other countries.

Studies that have been done on learner-centred methods of teaching

In a review of 56 research articles on learning retention, Semb and Ellis in Freiberg and Driscoll (1996) found that learner-centred methods of teaching produce higher levels of thinking because these methods engage students in interactions with content. Interacting with content for example, enables the learners to be able to analyse, synthesize and evaluate information. As a result, learners are able to retain what has been taught for a long time.

Spalding (1992) conducted a study of how students learn, among high school students in the United States of America. He found that teachers dominated the teaching /learning process. The teachers did not give the learners the opportunity to contribute to the teaching and learning process, rather they (teachers) spent most of the time talking. The lack of participation by learners in the learning/teaching activity reduced the motivation to learn among students.

The above observations seem to suggest that teacher-centred methods of teaching can be boring to students. Obviously, if students are bored there would be a less likelihood of effective learning taking place.

In a study of "open classrooms" of Black and Hispanic high schools in the United States Cuban (1984) observed and interviewed teachers. He found that teachers and schools have been slow in adopting learner-centred methods of teaching because the methods were used without integrating its elements into a unified approach. Further, he found that teachers were inadequately monitored and that these methods allowed students to neglect important parts of the curriculum especially basic skills. As a result of this, learner-centred methods of teaching are often opposed in schools because they are seen as neglecting basic skills, fostering chaos and time wasting (Cuban, 1984). From the same study

Cuban (1984) also found that teachers had a tendency of teaching the same way they were taught themselves, whereby teacher-centred methods were used.

Cuban (1984) concluded that the teacher-centred methods of teaching cannot be completely discredited. He noted that teacher-centred methods of teaching have been extremely viable, are appropriate for some curriculum content and certain learning objectives just like learner-centred methods of teaching. They can be used to introduce and explain new concepts, add insight and expand on previously presented concepts and to review and summarize ideas. In light of these observations, he concluded that teachers should blend teacher-centred methods of teaching with learner-centred methods so as to add variety and ensure effectiveness of their presentations.

Good and Brophy (1997) arrived at a similar conclusion to that of Cuban. They point out that despite much research suggesting better alternatives, classrooms still appear to be dominated by teacher-centred methods of teaching. They note that teacher-centred methods of teaching are no less effective than the learner-centred methods of teaching. In the hands of an experienced or skilful teacher, teacher-centred methods of teaching can be dynamic tools in the teaching/learning process.

Van Graan (1998) conducted a study among teachers from three educational regions in Namibia. The teachers chosen for the study were facilitators in their respective schools and were considered to be using learner-centred methods of teaching. She used questionnaires, interviews and observations to collect data from the participants and found that teachers lacked knowledge, a deeper understanding of what the learner-centred approach constitutes and skills and techniques to apply in classroom situations. Also, she found that teachers lacked motivation to change the teacher-centred to learner-centred classroom practices because the change was “mandated” from the top.

The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) conducted research to look into all aspects of education, culture and training and to make recommendations for the early part of the next century. The study included many interest groups which included government staff, members of parliament, non-governmental organisations, traditional leaders, youth groups, private organisations and companies, vocational training centres, colleges and all schools. Focus discussions, hearings, briefings, electronic mail just to mention a few, were used to collect data from the participants. Among other things, the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) found that:

the process of change towards a more learner centred approach is a slow one, and much remains to be done. It is clear that in many cases the underlying purposes of the educational reform are not clearly understood while the skills of many of the older teachers were proving unequal to the task. They found that newly trained teachers arriving in a school are discouraged from teaching using the learner-centred approach by principals who do not understand the basis on which their junior staff are working (p.73-74).

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed here, it is evident that while the advantages of learner-centred methods of teaching are immense, many teachers are slow in adopting the learner-centred methods of teaching. As Brandes and Ginnis (1994) observed, teachers are still searching for a way of working with their learners, which will be more satisfying and will create closer relationships. Brandes and Ginnis (1994) also point out that while learner-centred methods of teaching are highly effective, commitment to something new, means a commitment in time and patience of teachers and students. Hence, teachers have been found to be reluctant to adopt learner-centred methods of teaching.

From the above discussions, it is evident that the findings from different studies that have been done are that teachers are slow in adopting learner-centred methods of teaching. In light of this, there was need to conduct a study to find out more of what really was the situation about the

knowledge, attitudes and practices of teachers in Namibia with respect to learner - centred methods of teaching.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As already pointed out in the background, the purpose of the study was to investigate the knowledge, attitudes and the practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching in selected schools in the Windhoek region. This section is concerned with describing the methods and procedures that were used to gather information from the subjects. To this end, this section describes the population, sample, the instrument, data collection procedures and analysis.

The case study was used for executing this study. The case study was appropriate for this study because it is an in depth investigation of an individual, group or institution (Gay, 1996). It allows the researcher to organise data for the purpose of reviewing social reality (Babbie, 1992).

Population

The population for the study was made up of Home Economics teachers in the Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in the Windhoek region. The

study population consisted of all Home Economics teachers in the Windhoek Region because very few schools offer Home Economics as a subject.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used in the study. A purposive sample as the name suggests is chosen for a purpose. For example, people may be chosen for a study because they all hold a particular position, or they possess a particular attribute that is relevant to the study. Offering Home Economics as a subject was a relevant attribute in this study. Accordingly, purposive sampling was used to include all the six schools that offer Home Economics in the Windhoek Education region. However, only five schools participated in the study because access was denied to one of them. All seven teachers from the five schools participated in the study.

Research Instruments

Observation schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents.

Observation Schedules

An observation checklist was used to observe the practices of the

participants. Use of observations provides the researcher with the opportunity to be an observer and/or participant. Patton (1990) points out that “ to understand a world you must become part of that world while at the same time remaining separate, a part of and apart from” (p.199).

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the sample. The questionnaire was made up of both closed and open- ended questions. The questions in Part 1 focused on demographic information about the respondents. Part II required knowledge on learner-centred methods of teaching. Part III consisted of questions about practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner - centred methods of teaching. The questions in Part IV dealt with the views and attitudes of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner - centred methods of teaching.

Data Collection Procedures

Before engaging in classroom observations and administering the questionnaires to the sample, the researcher requested permission from the Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture and the principals of the schools that were included in the study. At each school, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents. The researcher also explained to the respondents how the classroom observations would be

done. The researcher distributed the questionnaires personally to the teachers who were in the sample schools for the study. The researcher gave the respondents three days to complete the questionnaires, after which the researcher went back to collect the questionnaires personally.

After the questionnaires had been collected the class observations were conducted. Two lessons per teacher were observed. Classroom observations enabled the researcher to observe how teachers used the learner-centred methods of teaching in the teaching /learning process. Being able to observe directly the teachers' practices with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching clearly reflected what happened in the classrooms of the participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data that were collected were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Data were coded and categorized. Descriptive statistics were used to present and analyse data. Frequency tables were also used for data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

In this chapter the data that were collected are presented, analysed and interpreted according to the objectives that guided the study. The results are presented under each question given in chapter one.

Personal Attributes of Respondents

A total of six schools that offer Home Economics in the Windhoek Education region were expected to participate in the study. However, only five schools participated in the study because the researcher was unable to get permission to collect data in one of the schools. Seven female teachers from the five schools participated in the study. Traditionally, Home Economics is a female dominated subject area. Hence, it is not surprising that all the seven respondents were female. Respondents were asked to indicate their ages. Table 1 below provides their responses.

Table 1: Ages of the respondents (N=7)

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
21-25	1	14
26-30	1	14
31-35	1	14
36-40	0	0
41-45	2	29
46-50	0	0
51and above	2	29
Total	7	100

The age range of the respondents was between 21 and 51 as shown in Table 1. The majority (4) of the respondents were above 40 years. The age of the teacher may have a bearing on the teacher's use of learner-centred methods of teaching. The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) pointed out that some older teachers did not have adequate skills to use learner-centred methods of teaching, due to the fact that they were trained at a time when teacher-centred methods of teaching were in fashion.

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest education level. Table 2 below shows their responses.

Table 2: Respondents' Highest Education Level (N=7)

Highest Education Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Higher Education Post Diploma (HED) Post Diploma	2	29
Higher Education Diploma (Secondary)	1	14
Bachelor of Education	2	29
Bachelor of Education and PGDE	1	14
Bachelor of Education Honours Degree in Dietetics	1	14
Total	7	100

Table 2 shows that the respondents had different qualifications. The majority (4 out of 7) had degrees. However, only one of the four respondents had a Bachelor of Education and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education. The post-graduate diploma is a teaching certificate. Three respondents had diplomas in education. Traditionally, holders of the diploma qualifications are qualified teachers.

The level of education of an individual may have a bearing on the knowledge, practices and attitudes of that person with respect to the learner-centred approach to teaching. All the respondents are qualified teachers. Therefore, by virtue of their qualifications, these individuals are

expected to have knowledge on the learner-centred approach to teaching because the learner-centred approach to teaching was incorporated into the curriculum of teacher training colleges (van Graan, 1998). For the benefit of serving teachers, who might not have been exposed to the learner-centred approach to teaching during their training, the learner-centred approach to teaching became a major component of in-service training in the form of workshops at regional and national levels; cluster workshops within regions; subject meetings and classroom demonstrations (van Graan, 1998). In light of this, teachers who have been exposed to learner-centred methods of teaching should have knowledge of learner-centred methods of teaching and be able to use these methods in their classrooms.

Respondents were asked to indicate their teaching experience. Table 3 shows their responses.

Table 3: Respondents' Teaching Experience (N=7)

Number of years	No. of respondents	Percentage
1-5	2	29
6-10	0	0
11-15	1	14
16-20	3	43
21 and above	1	14
Total	7	100

As shown in Table 3 the majority of the respondents (5 out of 7) had been in the teaching service for at least eleven years while two had been teaching for between one and five years.

The number of years in the teaching service could have a bearing on one's knowledge, practices and attitudes with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching. The majority (5) of the respondents have been teaching for at least eleven years. This implies that these individuals were trained as teachers before independence in 1990 when teacher-centred methods of teaching were the order of the day. The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) observed that some of the older teachers did not have adequate skills to use the learner-centred methods of teaching.

On the other hand, only two respondents have been teaching for between one and five years. Therefore, these individuals are newly trained teachers who could have been exposed to learner-centred methods of teaching. However, the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999) pointed out that in some schools the newly trained teachers were discouraged from using learner-centred methods of teaching by their principals who do not understand the learner-centred approach to teaching.

Training in Home Economics

When asked if they had Home Economics training, all but one of the seven respondents indicated that they had been trained to teach Home Economics. The way Home Economics as a subject is designed, requires teachers to use a wide variety of teaching methods in their classrooms, such as group work, discussions, question and answer method, project work, independent inquiry, dramatisation, role-playing and simulations. These methods ensure active learner participation in the lesson.

The Home Economics Teachers' Knowledge Of The Learner-Centred Approach To Teaching

When asked whether they used different methods of teaching in their classrooms, all seven respondents answered in the affirmative. This is not surprising because the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1996) clearly stated that teachers should use a variety of teaching methods to promote active learner participation in the teaching/learning process.

However, only two respondents confirmed the existence of a government regulation requiring the use of a variety of learning methods (Table 4). As shown in Table 4, this reason was, together with “school requirement”, the least cited reason for using different learning methods.

Table 4: Respondents’ reasons for using different teaching methods (N=7)

Reasons	No. of Respondents	No. of Respondents as % of the Sample
It is a subject requirement	4	57
It is a requirement of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture	2	29
It is a school requirement	2	29
For improving the learning and teaching process	5	71
For motivating and stimulating learning	7	100

The most important reasons were “to motivate and stimulate learning”, “to improve the learning process”, and “subject requirement”, cited by 7, 5 and 4, of the respondents respectively. These findings generally concur with what Farrant (1990), Petty (1993), Tobin (1994), Brandes and Ginnis (1996) and Jacobs and Gawe (1996) said about the use of different methods of teaching. Among other things, they pointed out that the use of different learner-centred methods of teaching enabled the teacher to motivate, stimulate and improve the teaching/learning process. Further analysis of the answers pertaining to the question at hand revealed that the majority of the respondents (5) cited some of the reasons, while only two cited all the possible reasons for using different methods of teaching. Given that the respondents were asked to cite all the possible reasons that

apply to them, it could be construed that not all the reasons applied to the five that chose only some of them.

Respondents' Practices Of Learner-Centred Approach To Teaching

Table 5 summarises how often the respondents used each learner-centred practice.

Table 5: Respondents' responses on how often they used each learner-centred practice (N=7)

	Always		Some-times		Seldom		Never		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Total F	Total %
Learner centred practice										
Allowing students to work in groups	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0	7	100
Giving students the opportunity to evaluate their own work	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0	7	100
Allowing learners to choose learning activities	1	14	5	71	1	14	0		7	100
Encouraging peer tutoring	0	0	4	57	2	29	1	14	7	100
Allowing learners to teach one another	1	14	4	57	1	14	1	14	7	100
Involving learners in the organisation of learning activities	3	43	3	43	0	0	1	14	7	100
Allowing learners to move freely in the classroom	0	0	1	14	3	43	3	43	7	100

Key: F = frequency

Table 5 shows that two respondents always allowed students to work in groups, while the rest (5) sometimes allowed their students to work in groups. The two respondents who always used group work in their

teaching are probably placing too much emphasis on students working together. It could be construed from this finding that these teachers do not provide opportunities for students to work individually. This finding is contrary to what the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) (1996) said about organizing students in the teaching and learning process. The MBEC (1996) said that teachers should vary the organisation of the class according to the task being given. Students should be given tasks that promote individual work, working in pairs, working in small groups or working together as a class. Therefore, always allowing students to work in groups does not foster variety in instruction provision.

Again, two respondents always provided opportunities for their students to evaluate their own work, while the rest (5) sometimes allowed the students to evaluate their own work. Given the standing requirement for teachers to evaluate their students' work, it would appear that the use of "always" in this case does not in any way preclude the teacher's evaluation of the students' work. It can be concluded from these findings that Home Economics teachers frequently involved students in the evaluation of their own work.

One respondent always permitted her learners to choose learning activities, while the majority (5) sometimes allowed learners to choose learning activities. The remaining respondent rarely involved learners in the selection of learning activities. This finding suggests that the Home Economics teachers involved learners in the choice of the learning activities at various stages in their teaching. This finding is consistent with Berliner's (1991) assertion that learners should have a voice in the selection and organisation of learning activities. She pointed out that permitting learners to choose and organise the learning activities promotes attentiveness and co-operation during the teaching /learning process.

Table 5 also shows that the majority (4) of the respondents sometimes encouraged peer tutoring. Two respondents rarely encouraged peer tutoring, and the remaining respondent never used peer tutoring in her teaching. This finding seems to suggest that the Home Economics teachers sometimes used peer tutoring in their teaching. This finding is in line with Petty's (1993) observation that peer tutoring is a source of motivation for the learners and should be part of teaching.

Further, it can be seen from Table 5 that one respondent indicated that she always allowed learners to teach one another, while the majority (4)

indicated that they sometimes allowed learners to do so. Of the remaining two respondents, one rarely allowed the learners to teach one another, while the other one never allowed learners to teach one another. It can be concluded from these findings that Home Economics teachers occasionally allowed respondents to teach one another. These findings are in line with what Jacobsen et al (1985) said about learners teaching one another. They noted that the working together of learners is a valuable asset in teaching, as it promoted co-operative work habits, a sense of competence and elevated self-esteem among learners.

In addition, Table 5 shows that three of the respondents always involved learners in the organisation of learning activities, while the other three sometimes involved learners in the organisation of learning activities. The remaining respondent never involved learners in the organisation of learning activities. These findings are consistent with Berliner's (1993) observation, that learners should have a voice in the selection and organisation of learning activities. Allowing learners to choose learning activities provides opportunities for the students to be active participants in the teaching process.

Finally, one respondent sometimes allowed learners to move freely in the classroom, three rarely allowed free movement of students in class and

the other three never allowed students to move freely in the classroom. The practice of allowing students to move freely in the classroom is a hallmark of learner-centred methods of teaching (Petty, 1993). It reflects and reinforces both values and practices of democracy, whereby learners take responsibility for their own learning. In a classroom where learner-centred methods of teaching are used, learners have the freedom to move freely in the classroom. On the basis of these findings, it would seem that the Home Economics teachers rarely allowed learners to move freely in the classroom. It could therefore, be concluded that the Home Economics teachers rarely practised one of the main features of learner-centred methods of teaching.

Nevertheless, the overall picture that emerges is that, to a large extent, the Home Economics teachers practised learner-centred methods in their teaching. This was confirmed by the observation of lessons (Table 6).

Table 6: A checklist of respondents' learner-centred practices (N=7)

	Very Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Not used at all		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	Total F	Total %
Learner-centred practice								
Students are encouraged to work in groups	5	71	2	29	0	0	7	100
The teacher allows students to teach one another	5	71	2	29	0	0	7	100
The students are given the chance ask questions	4	57	3	43	0	0	7	100
Students are free to ask questions	4	57	3	43	0	0	7	100
Students are given the opportunity to respond to other students' contributions	3	43	4	57	0	0	7	100
The teacher responds to the learners' questions	3	43	4	57	0	0	7	100
The teacher encourages all students to participate in the learning activities	3	43	4	57	0	0	7	100
The teacher encourages peer tutoring	2	29	3	43	2	29	7	100
Learners are allowed to move freely in class	0	0	2	29	5	71	7	100

F = frequency

As shown in Table 6 observations revealed that all seven respondents encouraged students to work in groups, allowed them to teach one another, gave them a chance to ask questions and the opportunity to respond to other students' contributions, and encouraged them to participate in learning activities. Table 6 also shows that students were free to ask questions and that all seven teachers responded to the students' questions.

Further, observations showed that five teachers encouraged peer tutoring, while two did not. Finally, observations revealed that students are generally not allowed to move freely in class. Only two teachers allowed their students to move freely in class.

From both the respondents answers to the questionnaire and the observations is clearly evident that, to a very large extent, the Home Economics teachers practised learner-centred methods in their teaching. They involved learners in the selection and organisation of the learning activities, they encouraged peer tutoring, they allowed students to work in groups, they provided opportunities for students to evaluate their own work, they allowed students to teach one another at various points in their teaching and (though rarely) they allowed learners to move freely in the classroom.

From a list of ten different methods of teaching, the respondents were asked to indicate the methods they actually used in their teaching. Table 6 below shows the methods of teaching that respondents use in their teaching.

Table 7: Methods of teaching that respondents used (N = 7)

Teaching method	No. of respondents	No. of Respondents as % of the Sample
Question and answer method	7	100
Discussion method	6	86
Group work method	6	86
Lecture Method	5	71
Project work method	5	71
Independent inquiry method	3	43
Discovery method	3	43
Role playing method	3	43
Dramatisation method	2	29
Simulations	0	0

As can be seen from Table 7 the question and answer method was the most widely used method, cited by all seven respondents. The discussion method and group work shared the second position, cited by six respondents apiece. Sharing third position were lecture method and project work, each cited by five respondents. Next came the independent inquiry method, the discovery method and role-playing, each cited by

three respondents. Dramatisation was cited by two respondents while simulations were not used at all by any of the respondents.

Lesson observations confirmed the respondents' answers to the questionnaire.

Table 8: A checklist of methods of teaching that respondents used (N = 7)

Teaching method	No. of respondents that used it	No. of Respondents as % of the Sample
Question and answer method	7	100
Discussion method	6	86
Group work method	6	86
Lecture Method	5	71
Project work method	5	71
Independent inquiry method	3	43
Discovery method	3	43
Role playing method	3	43
Dramatisation method	2	29
Simulations	0	0

As shown in Table 8, observations revealed that the question and answer method was used by all seven respondents. The discussion method and group work were both used by six respondents during observations. Five teachers were observed using the lecture method and project work during

lesson observations. The independent inquiry method, the discovery method and role-playing, were each used by three respondents during observations. Finally, two teachers were seen using dramatisation during lesson observations.

It is worth noting that the lecture method, which for all intents and purposes is a teacher-centred method of teaching, was used by five of the respondents. It is also worth noting that while the Home Economics teachers used a variety of learner-centred methods of teaching, they preferred those learner-centred methods that give the teacher the opportunity to play a dominating role in the teaching/learning process. These methods included the question and answer method, the discussion method and group work. The above findings confirm what Cuban (1984) found in his study of “open classrooms” of Black and Hispanic high schools in the United States of America. He found that teachers have a tendency of teaching the same way they were taught themselves, whereby the teacher played a dominating role in the teaching and learning process. It should be noted that the current cohort of the Home Economics teachers in Namibia is, to a very large extent, a product of the old school where teacher-centred methods were the order of the day.

Tables 7 and 8 also show that very few respondents used teaching methods such as the discovery, inquiry, role-playing and dramatisation and none used simulations. Traditionally, these methods of teaching are viewed as some form of play, hence their limited use. This is not surprising, as Chipeta (1997) observed, the use of role-playing, dramatisation and simulations have to be monitored properly, otherwise these methods may present some artificiality of situations that can allow students to discount the values of learning. Further, he pointed out that if not properly monitored, these methods can deteriorate into play.

The above findings could also mean that the respondents are inadequately trained and ill prepared to use the various learner-centred methods of teaching. Van Graan (1998) undertook a study of teachers who were considered to be using learner-centred methods of teaching in Namibia. She found that the teachers seemed to be positive about following a learner-centred approach to teaching but often lacked knowledge, a deeper understanding of what the learner-centred approach constitutes, the skills and techniques to apply it in classroom situations.

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they used different learner-centred methods of teaching. Table 9 summarises their responses.

Table 9: Respondents' responses to how often they used different learner-centred methods of teaching (N=7)

Methods of Teaching	Always		Some-times		Seldom		Never		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	Total F	Total %
a) Discussion method	1	14	6	86	0	0	0	0	7	100
b) Question and answer method	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0	7	100
c) Group work	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0	7	100
d) Project work method	0	0	3	43	3	43	1	14	7	100
e) Lecture method	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0	7	100
f) Discovery method	0	0	1	14	3	43	3	43	7	100
g) Role playing	0	0	1	14	3	43	3	43	7	100
h) Dramatisation	0	0	1	14	0	0	6	86	7	100
i) Independent inquiry	1	14	0	0	3	43	3	43	7	100
j) Simulations	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	100	7	100

Key: F = frequency

Only one respondent always used the discussion method in her teaching, while the rest (6) used this method sometimes (Table 9). Two respondents always used the question and answer method in their classrooms, while the rest (5) used this method sometimes. Again, two respondents always used group work in their teaching, while the rest (5) used it sometimes. It

is evident from these findings that the Home Economics teachers used the discussion method, question and answer and group work at various times in their teaching.

Three respondents used project work sometimes, the other three rarely used this method of teaching, and one respondent never used project work in her teaching. These findings seem to suggest that the Home Economics teachers hardly used project work in their teaching. This is quite surprising, given that the Home Economics syllabus requires students to do three projects during the course of the year. What is even more surprising is that, one of the respondents indicated that she never used project work in her teaching.

Five respondents always used the lecture method in their teaching and the other two sometimes used this method in their teaching. These findings confirm what Good and Brophy (1997) said about the use of the lecture method. They pointed out that despite much research suggesting better alternatives, classrooms still appear to be dominated by teacher-centred methods of teaching. Teachers preferred teacher-centred methods of teaching because these methods give them control of the teaching and learning process.

Only one respondent used the discovery method in her teaching, three rarely used the discovery method, and the other three did not use that method at all.

Table 9 also shows that one respondent sometimes used role-playing in her teaching, three seldom used it, and the other three did not use it at all.

Further, Table 9 shows that only one respondent always used the independent inquiry method in her teaching. Three respondents rarely used the independent inquiry method, and the other three never used the method.

In addition, Table 9 shows that only one respondent sometimes used dramatisation in her teaching, and the rest (6) never used this method in their teaching. Finally, all the seven respondents never used simulations in their teaching.

It could be concluded from the findings presented in Table 9 that the Home Economics teachers used different methods of teaching at various stages in their teaching. The findings also suggest that Home Economics teachers used group work, discussions, the question and answer method and the lecture method in their teaching. These findings confirm an

earlier finding that the teachers preferred the methods of teaching whereby they had control of the teaching/learning process.

On the other hand, very few respondents indicated the use of the following methods; project work, independent inquiry method, discovery method, role-playing, dramatisation and simulations. As indicated earlier, these methods of teaching are traditionally not considered to be serious forms of learning. Instead, they are viewed as some forms of play hence teachers generally shun them. These findings are similar to what Cuban (1984) found in his study of “open classrooms” of Black and Hispanic high schools in the United States, that classrooms are still dominated by teacher-centred methods of teaching. Also, Cuban (1984) pointed out that the teachers believed that teacher-centred methods of teaching encouraged students to be attentive and co-operative. The teacher-centred methods of teaching reinforced the kinds of behaviour that teachers want their students to exhibit.

Methods Of Teaching Used By The Home Economics Teachers

The respondents were asked to indicate the three methods of teaching that they used frequently in their teaching. In addition, they were asked to

state the reasons for frequently using those methods. Table 10 below provides their responses.

Table 10: Methods of teaching that respondents used frequently in their teaching and reasons for frequent use (N=7)

Method of teaching	Reasons for frequent use	F	F as a % of sample
Question and Answer method	a) Promotes active participation of learners in the teaching/learning process	2	29
	b) Helps the teacher to identify what learners know and do not know	2	29
	c) It facilitates thinking among learners	2	29
Lecture Method	a) Helps students to be able to understand what is being taught	2	29
	b) Gives the teacher the opportunity to provide information when a new topic is introduced	2	29
	c) Learners benefit more from a lesson when the teacher provides information	1	14
Group work method	a) Helps to identify problems that learners have	2	29
	b) This method encourages learners to participate in the teaching and learning process	2	29
Discussion method	a) It helps students to think and participate in the teaching process	4	57

F = frequency

Four methods of teaching were frequently used by the respondents (Table 10). The question and answer method, cited by six respondents was the most frequently used method. The reasons for the frequent use of this method were; it promotes active participation of learners in the

teaching/learning process; it helps the teacher to identify what learners know and do not know and it facilitates thinking among students. As shown in Table 10 these reasons were each cited by two respondents.

The second most frequently used method cited by five respondents, was the lecture method. Of the five respondents that cited the lecture method, two said they frequently used this method because it helps students to understand what is being taught. Another two of the respondents frequently used this method because it gives the teacher the opportunity to provide information when a new topic is introduced. And one respondent said she used the lecture method because learners benefited more from a lesson when the teacher provides information. This finding is contradictory to what Spalding (1992) found in his study of high school students in the United States. He found that when teachers used the lecture method in their teaching, students got bored because the teachers did most of the talking all the time.

The other two methods of teaching, group work and discussions, were each cited by four respondents. Of the four that chose group work, two frequently used this method because it helped the teacher to identify problems that learners had, while the other two frequently used it because

it encouraged the learners to participate in the teaching and learning process.

With respect to the discussion method, all the four respondents said that they used this method frequently because it encouraged the learners to think and participate in the teaching and learning process actively.

From the above findings it can be concluded that the Home Economics teachers frequently used different learner-centred methods of teaching for various reasons. Nevertheless, the findings indicate yet again that the respondents preferred to use methods of teaching that give them the opportunity to have control over the teaching and learning process.

It is worth noting, once again, that the lecture method (a teacher-centred method of teaching) was mentioned as one of the most frequently methods of teaching. Again, these findings confirm what Good and Brophy (1997) said about the use of teacher-centred methods of teaching. They pointed out that despite much research suggesting that learner-centred methods of teaching are better than teacher-centred methods of teaching, classrooms still appear to be dominated by teacher-centred methods of teaching.

However, it should be noted that the major reasons given for the frequent use of certain methods of teaching suggest that the respondents value the participation of their students in the learning process. Reasons such as “participation of learners in the teaching process”, “identification of learning problems”, “facilitating thinking among learners” and “helping students understand what is being taught” are consistent with the practices of the learner-centred approach to teaching. These findings seem to point to the fact that the Home Economics teachers have made significant strides towards the use of learner-centred methods of teaching in their classrooms. It is important to note that despite making significant strides towards use of learner-centred methods of teaching the Home Economics teachers used the lecture method in their classrooms.

Respondents were asked to indicate three methods of teaching that they rarely used in their teaching. In addition, they were asked to state reasons for the seldom use of those methods. Table 11 below provides their responses.

Table 11: Methods of teaching that respondents rarely used in their teaching and reasons for rarely using them (N=7)

Method of teaching	Reasons for rare use	F	F as a % of sample
Role playing	a) Role playing is time consuming	2	29
	b) Learners do not take it seriously	1	14
	c) It is not suitable for certain topics	1	14
Discovery Method	a) Learners do not do the work assigned to them	2	29
	b) Students find it difficult to engage in discovery learning	1	14
	c) The method is only suitable when there is limited information on the topic being taught	1	14
Lecture Method	a) Students find the lecture method boring	2	29
Discussion	a) Learners fail to converse because of the poor command of the English language	1	14
Group work	a) Students do not concentrate when group work is used. They waste time playing during the lesson	1	14
Dramatisation	Students play a lot during the lesson because they do not consider this method to be a serious form of learning	1	14

F = frequency

Six methods of teaching were seldom used by the respondents (Table 11).

Role-playing cited by four respondents was one of the two most seldom used methods. Two respondents rarely used this method because they found it to be time consuming, one rarely used it because learners did not take it seriously, and another considered it to be unsuitable for certain

topics (Table 11). These findings concur with Chipeta's (1997) observations, that role playing is time consuming and if not properly monitored, can deteriorate into play, thus jeopardising the serious learning potential inherent in the process of role playing.

The other least used method of teaching cited by four respondents was the discovery method. The four respondents that cited this method explained their seldom use of the method as follows; two said that the learners did not do the work assigned, one of the respondents said that the learners found it difficult to engage in discovery learning while the other said that the method was only suitable for use when there was limited information on the topic being taught.

Another method of teaching that the respondents used rarely in their teaching is the lecture method, which was cited by two respondents. The two respondents indicated that they rarely used the lecture method because learners are bored by this method of teaching. This response is consistent with what Spalding (1992) found in his study of high school students in the United States. He found that when teachers used the lecture method in their teaching, students got bored because the teachers did most of the talking all the time. The lack of participation by the learners reduced the motivation to learn among students. Nevertheless,

the majority (5) of the respondents as shown in Table 10 indicated that the lecture method helps students to understand what is being taught, it gives the teacher the opportunity to provide information when a new topic is introduced and learners benefit more from a lesson when the teacher provides information.

The other three methods of teaching that were rarely used were the discussion method, group-work and dramatisation each cited by one respondent. The respondent who cited the discussion method said that she rarely used this method because there is very little interaction among the learners due to their poor command of the English language. The respondent who cited group work indicated that she rarely used this method because the students did not concentrate during the lesson; instead, they wasted time playing. And finally, the respondent who cited dramatisation said that she rarely used this method because the students played a lot during the lesson, due to the fact that they did not consider this method a serious form of learning.

The variation in the above responses points to the fact that there are methods of teaching that are rarely used by the Home Economics teachers for a variety of reasons. A closer analysis of these reasons shows that most of them give more freedom to the learner and thus less control to the

teacher. This suggests that teachers rarely used those methods that constituted a loss of control in the teaching/learning process. These findings re-affirm the earlier finding that teachers prefer those methods in which they retain control.

Home Economics Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Learner-Centred Methods Of Teaching

To determine the respondents' attitudes towards the learner-centred approach to teaching, respondents were asked to react to a set of eleven learner-centred practices. Their reactions are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Respondents' attitudes towards selected learner-centred practices (N=7)

Learner-centred practice	Agreed		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	Total F	Total %
Learners should be allowed to teach one another	7	100	0	0	7	100
Learners should be given the opportunity to evaluate their own work	7	100	0	0	7	100
Learners should be encouraged to work in groups	7	100	0	0	7	100
Students should be allowed to work individually	7	100	0	0	7	100
Students should be free to ask questions	7	100	0	0	7	100
Students should be given the opportunity to respond to other students' contributions	7	100	0	0	7	100
The teacher should encourage all students to participate in the teaching/learning process	7	100	0	0	7	100
The teacher should encourage peer tutoring	5	71	2	29	7	100
Students should be allowed to choose learning activities	4	57	3	43	7	100
Learners should learn quietly	3	43	4	57	7	100
Learners should be allowed to move freely in class	2	29	5	71	7	100

F = frequency

The majority (7) of the respondents reacted in the affirmative to nine of the eleven learner-centred practices. In the case of seven of the practices, all seven respondents were in agreement with the stated practice. The

seven learner-centred practices with which all seven respondents were in agreement were; the learners should be given the opportunity to evaluate their own work, the learners should be encouraged to work in groups, the students should be allowed to work individually, the students should be free to ask questions, the students should be given the opportunity to respond to other students' contributions, the teacher should encourage all students to participate in the teaching/learning process and learners should be allowed to teach one another.

The majority (5) of the respondents agreed with the practice of allowing peer tutoring, while two others disagreed. Again the majority (4) of the respondents agreed with the practice that students be allowed to choose their learning activities. This finding concurs with what Berliner (1991) said about students choosing learning activities. She indicated that learners should have a voice in choosing and organising learning activities. She pointed out that allowing students to choose learning activities encouraged them to be attentive and cooperative during the teaching and learning process.

In respect of the two learner-centred practices, the reaction of the majority of the respondents was in the negative. Four respondents believed that learners should learn quietly, while five believed that

learners should not be allowed to move freely in class. These findings confirm an earlier finding that the Home Economics teachers rarely allowed students to move freely in their classrooms. This clearly implies that teachers want their students to sit down quietly and pay attention to what they are told to do. As indicated earlier, these findings appear to confirm Cuban's (1984) finding that teachers have a tendency of teaching in the same way they were taught themselves, where students had to sit down quietly and do what their teachers wanted.

The overall picture that emerges from the above findings is that the majority (7) of respondents have positive attitudes towards the involvement of students in the teaching and learning process. On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that the Home Economics teachers have positive attitudes towards the learner-centred practices.

Availability Of Teaching And Learning Resources

Respondents were asked to indicate the availability of teaching and learning materials that are considered essential to the teaching and learning process in Home Economics. Table 13 provides their responses. An observation checklist confirmed the respondents' answers.

Table 13: Availability of equipment and materials for teaching and learning (N=7)

Item	Adequate		Satisfactory		Inadequate		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	Total F	Total F as a % of sample
Tables	7	100	0	0	0	0	7	100
Chairs	7	100	0	0	0	0	7	100
Textbooks	0	0	0	0	7	100	7	100
Stoves	5	71	0	0	0	0	5	71
Refrigerators	5	71	0	0	0	0	5	71
Freezers	5	71	0	0	0	0	5	71
Sewing machines	2	29	0	0	0	0	2	29

F = frequency

The availability of materials and equipment has a bearing on the teaching/learning process. All seven respondents had adequate tables and chairs. Five respondents had adequate stoves, refrigerators and freezers. Two respondents had adequate sewing machines. And all seven respondents had inadequate textbooks.

The variation in the total number of responses per item as shown in Table 13 is due to the fact that the respondents teach different subject areas of Home Economics. Accordingly, the five teachers who teach Food and Nutrition responded to relevant items such as freezers, stoves, and refrigerators. Similarly, the two teachers who teach Fashion and Fabrics

responded to the only relevant item, namely, sewing machines. Tables, chairs and textbooks are common to all the seven teachers hence all the seven respondents reacted to these three items.

The above findings seem to suggest that the Home Economics teachers have the necessary equipment (with the exception of textbooks) to implement the learner-centred methods of teaching. Lack of textbooks could have a bearing on the Home Economics teachers' use of the teacher-centred method rather than learner-centred methods. Also, lack of textbooks does not provide opportunities for students to read on their own and probably engage in some form of independent inquiry about certain topics.

Summary

In this chapter the collected data were analysed and interpreted in accordance with the questions of the study. The major findings were that the Home Economics teachers have knowledge about the learner-centred methods of teaching, they used a variety of teaching methods at various stages in their teaching, the Home Economics teachers preferred methods of teaching that give the teacher control of the teaching/learning process and they have positive attitudes towards use of the learner-centred

methods of teaching. The lack of textbooks may be fostering the continued use and popularity of teacher-centred methods of teaching in the Home Economics classes.

The next chapter summarises, draws conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings and objectives of the study, and recommendations are made.

Summary

Prior to independence in March 1990, very few Namibians had access to education. The education system that was in operation then was segregatory in terms of colour, sex, race and ethnicity. Segregation ensured that black people remained inferior to the white elite with respect to education, jobs, authority and incomes (MEC, 1993, p.5). The few black people who managed to gain access to education were prepared for specific jobs that the German and the South African rule required, for example, they became messengers and clerks (MEC, 1993, p.2).

The curriculum that was offered then was designed to enable learners to read and write. For this reason, practical subjects such as Home Economics were not part of the curriculum at lower grades. For example,

before independence, Home Economics was offered from Standard six to Standard eight. The Home Economics curriculum that was offered was designed to equip learners with knowledge of hygiene, technical skills and be able to care for the white peoples' homes, gardens and farms (Amukugo, 1993). Acquisition of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and practical skills of home management would enable black children to take up specific jobs that white people had to offer, for example, being domestic workers.

On attainment of independence, the new government aimed at reforming the education system. This called for the development and designing of a new curriculum that would reflect the needs of the learners. The new Home Economics curriculum that emerged was guided by the need to promote participation of learners in the teaching/learning process and thus promote the application of knowledge in real life situations (MEC, 1993).

Compounding the problem of an irrelevant curriculum was that the methods of teaching that were used were largely teacher-centred. The teacher-centred methods of teaching are considered to be inefficient and frustrating to most learners and certainly are not consistent with the philosophy of education for all (MEC, 1993, p.10). Therefore, in order to

ensure equity, there was need to introduce totally different methods of teaching that focus on the pupil being actively and fully involved in the learning process.

Since independence in Namibia there has been a policy that requires teachers to use learner-centred methods of teaching that encourage active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process (MEC, 1996). These include asking questions, group-work, discussions, problem-solving, project work, dramatization, role playing, simulations just to mention a few (Jacobs and Gawe, 1996). Nevertheless, adoption of learner-centred methods of teaching by the teachers has been slow. Van Graan (1998) observes that the learner-centred approach to teaching "has a long way to go, it is not progressing as expected" (p.60).

This study was undertaken to find out the knowledge, practices and attitudes that Home Economics teachers have on the learner-centred methods of teaching. The research problem was identified on the basis of the fact that progress towards the adoption of learner-centred methods of teaching has been slow, it is not progressing as expected (van Graan, 1998). The researcher felt that the results of the study would provide insight in the knowledge, practices and attitudes of Home Economics

teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching. This information could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture as a basis for designing a strategy that would promote the adoption of the learner centred methods of teaching by the teachers. Also, this information could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture and teachers to improve the use of the learner-centred methods of teaching.

The questions of the study were as follows:

- a) what knowledge do Home Economics teachers have on learner-centred methods of teaching?
- b) do Home Economics teachers' use learner-centred methods of teaching in their classrooms?
- c) what are the Home Economics teachers' attitudes towards the use of learner-centred methods of teaching?

The case study was used for executing the study. A total of seven female Home Economics teachers in Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in the Windhoek Education Region participated in the study because very few schools offer Home Economics as a subject.

Observation schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data from the seven respondents.

Findings

The major findings of the study were that:

a) Home Economics teachers used a variety of learner-centred methods of teaching that motivate, stimulate and promote active participation of learners in the teaching/learning process. These methods include group work, discussions, and the question and answer method. Nevertheless, the participants preferred to use learner-centred methods of teaching that gave them the opportunity to have control over the teaching and learning process. Also, the majority of the participants used the lecture method (which is a teacher-centred method of teaching) in their teaching. They indicated that the lecture method helps students to be able to understand what is being taught, it enables the teacher to provide information when a new topic is introduced and learners benefit more when the teacher provides information.

b) The Home Economics teachers rarely used project work, independent inquiry method, discovery method, role-playing and dramatisation in their teaching. Simulations were not used at all. These methods of teaching

were rarely used because most of them give more freedom to the learner and thus less control to the teacher, hence the limited use.

c) The Home Economics teachers practised learner-centred practices. They involved learners in the evaluation of their own work, encouraged students to work in groups; allowed students to work in groups, gave students the opportunities to ask questions, provided students with the opportunities to respond to other students' contributions; allowed students to teach one another at various points in their teaching, encouraged all students to participate in the teaching/learning process, encouraged peer tutoring and involved learners in the selection and organisation of learning activities.

d) The Home Economics teachers hold positive attitudes towards the use of various learner-centred methods of teaching that promote active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process. The Home Economics teachers allowed students to ask questions, allowed students to choose and organise learning activities, encouraged peer tutoring, allowed students to evaluate their own work, allowed students to work in groups, allowed students to work individually and allowed students to teach one another.

e) The Home Economics teachers have adequate teaching materials and equipment, but lacked the textbooks.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings it can be concluded that the Home Economics teachers use various learner-centred methods of teaching at various points in their teaching. Also, the Home Economics teachers use the lecture method which is a teacher-centred method of teaching in their classrooms. These findings indicate that the Home Economics teachers prefer methods of teaching that give them the opportunity to have control over the teaching/learning process.

Further it can be concluded that the teachers practised various learner-centred practices in their classrooms. These practices included involving students in the selection and organisation of learning activities, allowing students to work in groups, encouraging students to ask questions, allowing students to respond to other students' contributions just to mention a few.

Finally, it can be concluded that the Home Economics teachers hold positive attitudes towards the use of various learner-centred methods of teaching.

Recommendations

In view of these findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should use all the different learner-centred methods of teaching which include group work, discussions, question and answer method, project work, independent inquiry, dramatisation, role playing and simulations to cater for individual needs and to maximize learner participation in the teaching/learning process.
2. It is recommended that the Home Economics teachers be given adequate textbooks. This could encourage them to use various learner-centred methods of teaching.
3. It is recommended that research involving many Home Economics teachers from different schools throughout the country be done to check the validity and reliability of the findings of this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to the Regional Director, Windhoek Educational Region.

Department of Curriculum Studies, Instruction and Assessment
University of Namibia
P. O. Box 13301, Windhoek

The Regional Director (Windhoek Region)
The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
P. O. Box 13236
Windhoek.

Dear Sir,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT A SHIPENA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL; WINDHOEK HIGH SCHOOL; COSMOS SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL; ACADEMIA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL; AUGUSTINEUM JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL AND JAN JONKER AFRIKAANER JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL.

I am studying for a Master of Education degree at the University of Namibia. An important requirement of this programme is the research project. For my research project, I have chosen to investigate the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching in selected schools in the Windhoek Educational Region.

I therefore, kindly request permission to collect the necessary information using a questionnaire, from Home Economics teachers at the above mentioned schools. I have chosen these schools because they offer Home Economics as a subject.

I shall send a summary of the findings to the schools that will participate in the study. Also, the findings of the intended study will be placed in the University of Namibia Library for public use.

Enclosed is the copy of the questionnaire.

Yours faithfully

Kayise Mpofu (Mrs)

Appendix 2: Letter to the Home Economics Teachers.

Department of Curriculum Studies, Instruction and Assessment
University of Namibia
P. O. Box 13301, Windhoek

Dear Teachers

An investigation into the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching in selected schools in the Windhoek Educational Region

I am a student on the Master of Education degree programme of the University of Namibia. As part of the requirements for the Master of Education degree programme at this University, I am required to undertake research in the field of Education. I have chosen to investigate the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching in selected schools in the Windhoek Educational Region.

For the findings of a study of this nature to be useful honest views of concerned teachers are important. The researcher hopes that the results of the study will provide some insight into the current situation of Home Economics teaching and learning in Namibia. This information could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture to improve the teaching and learning of the subject.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you could kindly take a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire.

I would like to assure you that your answers to this survey cannot be identified with you in any way because all responses will be confidentially treated.

A summary of the findings shall be sent to all participating teachers for information and action.

Thank you for your co- operation.

Yours sincerely

Kayise Mpofu (Mrs)

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the teachers.

An investigation into the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Home Economics teachers with respect to learner-centred methods of teaching in selected schools in the Windhoek region.

Directions for completing the questionnaire:

- a) Please follow instructions and answer all questions as best as you can.
- b) Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Part 1

Tick () the appropriate answer

1. Sex:

Female ()

Male ()

2. Age:

21-----25years ()

26-----30 years ()

31-----35 years ()

36-----40 years ()

41-----45 years ()

46-----50 years ()

51 and above ()

3. What is your highest level of qualification?

- a) Primary Teacher's Certificate ()
- b) Education Diploma Primary (ED Primary Academy) ()
- c) Higher Education Post Diploma (HED Post Diploma) ()
- d) Higher Education Diploma Technical) ()
- e) Higher Education Diploma (Post Graduate) ()
- f) Higher Education Diploma (Primary) ()
- g) Higher Education Diploma (Secondary) ()
- h) Bachelor of Education ()
- I) Bachelor of Education and PGDE ()
- j) Bachelor of Education (Post Graduate) ()
- k) Master of Education (MED) ()

Other (Please Specify) _____

4. How long have you been in the teaching service?

- a) 1-----5 years ()
- b) 6-----10 years ()
- c) 11-----15 years ()
- d) 16-----20 years ()
- e) 21 and above ()

f) Other (please specify)

5. Did you take Home Economics as one of the subjects while training?

Tick () the appropriate answer

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

Part 11

Tick () the appropriate answer

6. Do you use different methods of teaching in your classroom?

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

7. If the answer to question 6 is Yes what are your reasons for using different methods of teaching?

Tick () all the reasons that apply

a) It is a subject requirement ()

b) It is a requirement of the Ministry of Basic Education,
Sports and Culture ()

c) It is a school requirement ()

d) For improving the learning and teaching process ()

e) For motivating and stimulating learning ()

f) Other (Specify) _____

8. If the answer to question 6 is NO, explain why

Part 111

9. How often do you do each of the things listed below in your teaching?
Tick () the appropriate answers.

	Always	Seldom	Never
a) Allow learners to choose learning activities.			
b) Encourage peer tutoring.			
c) Allow students to work in groups.			
d) Involve learners in the organization of the learning activities.			
e) Allow learners to move freely in the classroom.			
f) Permit students the opportunity to evaluate their own work.			
g) Allow learners to teach each other.			

10) Which methods of teaching listed below do you use in your teaching?
(Tick () all that apply)

- a) group work method ()
- b) discussion method ()
- c) question and answer method ()
- d) project work method ()
- e) independent inquiry method ()
- f) discovery method ()
- g) role playing ()
- h) Dramatization ()
- i) Simulations ()
- j) lecture method ()

11. Are there other methods of teaching not listed above in Question 10 that you use in your teaching?

Yes ()
 No ()

12. If the answer to Question 11 is Yes, please specify the methods.

13) How often do you use each methods mentioned in Question 10? Tick () the appropriate answer)

Method of Teaching	Frequency of Use		
	ALWAYS	SELDOM	NEVER
Group work method			
Discussion method			
Question and answer method			
Project work method			
Independent work method			
Discovery method			
Role playing			
Dramatization method			
Simulations			
Lecture			
Others (Please Specify)			

14. List three methods of teaching that you use frequently in your teaching.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

15. For each of the methods of teaching listed in Question 14 explain why you use each method frequently.

Method	Reasons for frequent use
a.	
b.	
c.	

16. List 3 methods of teaching that you seldom use in your teaching

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

17. For each one of the methods of teaching listed in Question 16 explain why you seldom use them.

Method	Reasons for seldom use
a)	
b)	
c)	

Part IV

18. Indicate with a tick () whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree
a) Learners should be allowed to move freely in class.		
b) Students should be allowed to choose learning activities.		
c) Learners should be given the opportunity to evaluate their own work.		
d) Learners should be allowed to work in groups.		
e) Learners should be allowed to work individually.		
f) Learners should be allowed to teach one other.		
g) Learners should learn quietly.		

Thank you

Appendix 4: Observation Schedule.

An observation schedule for the Home Economics teachers practices on the use of learner-centred methods of teaching.

1. Which of the following learner-centred methods of teaching listed in the table below does the teacher use in the teaching/learning process? (Rate each of the statements listed below)

	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not used at all
a) The learners are allowed to move freely in the classroom.			
b) Students are encouraged to work in groups.			
c) Students are given the chance to ask questions.			
d) Students are free to ask questions.			
e) The teacher responds to the learners' questions.			
f) Students are given the opportunity to respond to other students' contributions.			
g) The teacher encourages all students to participate in the learning activities.			
h) The teacher encourages peer tutoring			
i) The teacher allows students to teach each other.			

2. Is the classroom environment conducive to learning?

Yes ()

No ()

3. Which of the following methods of teaching does the teacher use in the teaching/learning process?

- a) group work ()
- b) discussions ()
- c) question and answer method ()
- d) role playing ()
- e) dramatization ()
- f) Other _____

4. Availability of teaching/learning equipment or items.

Item	Adequate	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Tables			
Chairs			
Textbooks			
Stoves			
Refrigerators			
Sewing machines			
Freezers			
Irons			
Ironing Boards			

5. What is the role of the teacher in the teaching/learning process?

- a) Facilitator ()
- b) Dominating ()

6. Does the teacher use learner-centred methods of teaching?

- Yes ()
- No ()

End of Observation schedule