

**ACTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION: A STUDY OF THE BASIC  
EDUCATION TEACHER DIPLOMA IN-SERVICE TRAINING  
TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN THE ONDANGWA WEST &  
EAST EDUCATIONAL REGIONS.**

Master of Education Degree

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EDUCATION TEACHER DIPLOMA IN-SERVICE TRAINING  
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
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OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE**

**BY**

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## Approval Page

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

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out whether Basic Education Teacher Diploma In service Training (BETD INSET) graduate teachers practiced and encouraged active learner participation in their classrooms. Further, the study attempted to find out the factors that might be hindering active participation of learners in the instructional process.

Two research approaches were used to collect data, namely interviews and observations of the BETD INSET graduate teachers' classroom practice with respect to active learner participation.

The purpose of interviews was to solicit the views, experiences and practices of the BETD INSET teachers regarding active learner participation in their classes. In addition, three lessons of each of the 15 BETD INSET teachers were observed. Classroom observation provided the researcher with the opportunity to actually observe how the teachers practiced active learner involvement and the class interactions during the instructional process.

The frequency tables were used to analyze the data collected.

From the results of this study, it seems that the BETD INSET programme has positive effects on the teachers' practice in the classroom. It seems as if the teachers have changed their teaching methods as required by the new teaching philosophy, namely Learner Centered Education (LCE) in Namibian schools that promotes active learner participation. The discussion method was observed as a common teaching method used by the BETD INSET teachers in their classrooms. Discovery and experiential methods were practiced less by 40 % in the BETD INSET teachers' classrooms.

The results also indicated that the learners' role had changed from passive receivers to knowledge constructors. To a large extent, 70% of the learners made contributions to the class discussion by answering and asking the teacher questions. However to a lesser extent, 30% of the learners formulated concepts and learned by doing.

It was also found that various factors hindered the practice of active learner participation in the BETD INSET teachers' classes such as:

- Language problems experienced by some learners
- Classes lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning facilities;
- Shyness among learners;
- Automatic promotion from grade to grade;
- Very large classes sizes; and
- Poor involvement of parents in the education of their children.

The study recommends that the BETD In service programme be continued until all other teachers who have got other qualifications other than the BETD certificate are catered for in order to enable them practice active learner participation in their classes.

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Finally, I wish to thank God who gave me the strength and wisdom to complete my studies.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to:

my mother:	Vistorina Nakwedhi Shikage
my children:	Michael Elago-lyandje Ifugula
	Selma Ndapandula Ifugula

for all their patience, love and support during my educational career.

## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

The work contained in this research was completed by the author at the UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA during 2000 and 2001. This is the original work of the author and that all the sources that the author has used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature of Student

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BETD	=	Basic Education Teachers Diploma
ETP	=	Education Theory and Practice
INSET	=	In –service training
INS	=	Integrated Natural Science
LCE	=	Learner Centered Education
MBESC	=	Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture
MEC	=	Ministry of Education and Culture
MHEVTST	=	Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology
NIED	=	National Institute for Educational Development

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

This chapter gives an overview of the education system in the pre-and post independent Namibia. Special attention is given to the teaching and learning practices in classrooms situations. The chapter also highlights on the theoretical framework of the study, its rationale and the limitations thereof.

#### **Education system in Pre-independent Namibia:**

Before Namibia became independent in 1990, the education system was characterized by acute disparities, inequities and tensions (Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 1993: 19). Education was organized and based on the apartheid system that was introduced by South Africa in 1948 and lasted until 1990. As a result of the apartheid policy of separate systems of education for whites, coloured and blacks, there existed gaps and inequalities between them. Education in Namibia was not only divided along racial lines but also along ethnic or tribal lines. For each of the eleven black ethnic groups, second tier education authorities were supposed to handle the macro and micro level curriculum development. Unequal budgetary provision, unequal resources and unwillingness of the majority to participate in teaching and learning activities led to enormous disparities in the education system. For example Salia- Bao (1991) and Cohen (1994) reported that:

- Expenditure on education for Blacks was only a small fraction of the expenditure on the education for Whites. For example in 1989, Whites spent R64 621 000 in their schools to cater for 16292 pupils. On a per capita basis the Owambos spent R377 on each pupil while the Whites spent R3966, i.e. over ten times as much.

- Education was compulsory for the Whites from seven to sixteen years but not for the Blacks.
- Education for Whites was also free in Namibia but Blacks had to pay for their children's education. Blacks used the Bantu syllabus, which was inferior to that provided to the white learners in Namibia. The Bantu syllabus for the Blacks was harder to use and it suffered from lack of both teaching materials and resources. In the end, teachers and learners were less motivated to teach and learn. The teacher/pupil ratio was higher in Black than White schools at both the primary as well as the secondary school levels. For example in 1988 the teacher/learner ratios were as follows: Whites, 15:1, Coloureds, 29:1 and Blacks, 38:1 (Cohen, 1994: 163). In addition, the majority of teachers in black schools were either under-qualified or unqualified.

There were also disparities in the state of teacher education before independence, just like in the general education system. Prior to 1978, the White and Coloured teachers were trained in teacher training institutions in South Africa, while Black teachers were trained in the wings of the various schools within the country. Obviously inconsistencies in the application of curriculum issues throughout the country existed, in basic education as well as in the senior secondary phase. This led to discontent among the Blacks as the curriculum and study programmers were viewed as irrelevant to Namibia (MEC, 1993; Salia- Bao, 1991).

The teaching methods were also mainly teacher centered. Teaching practices were informed by the view that:

- Learners were empty vessels that went to school to be filled by the teacher.

- Learners had to sit quietly, listen passively and absorb the facts passively as sponge absorbs water.

It was assumed that learners had no prior knowledge or experiences. As a result most learners were not given the opportunity to think or discover things for themselves. Covering the material was more important than understanding it. The education system prior to independence discouraged interactions between the teacher and the learner as well as among the learners. On the other hand teachers were regarded as the ones who knew everything and were there to supply knowledge to the children.

Basically, the education system prior to independence was deeply rooted in a passive approach to teaching. That approach supported technocratic pedagogy, a pedagogy that was in line with the theory of banking education. Banking education is the type of education, which, according to Freire (1998) is characterized by the act of transferring knowledge into the empty minds of the learners. Karlsson (1999) describes the education in Namibia before independence as traditionally teacher-centred, where attention and activities were focused on the teacher. Both the teachers and the learners believed that education was serious if the teacher did most, if not all, of the talking. The basic premise governing this belief was that the teacher was the one with the knowledge. But those “knowledgeable teachers” did not teach learners how to construct and implement their own meaning, rather, the entire schooling experience consisted of dependent or passive learning (Freire, 1998).

Teachers were never bothered whether the learners understood what was being taught or not. It was assumed that if the teacher taught the content, then learning had automatically taken place, and if it did not then it was the learner’s fault. Learners’ interests and needs

were never taken into consideration. Teaching and learning were built around the teacher's right answers and the learners were to memorise and reproduce.

The role of the teacher was to transmit knowledge to the learners, who had to sit quietly, listened passively and absorbed facts from the knowledgeable teacher (Freire, 1998; Warren, 1996).

The colonial education system therefore characterized by inferior, irrelevant and poor classroom practice, low-level learner participation and poor learner performance. This forced the new government, to introduce educational reform of a very substantial nature after independence.

### **Educational system after independence**

The reform called for a unified system of educational administration, management and control to be established from the previous eleven ethnic and racial education entities. Seven regional education offices have since been established, i.e., Windhoek, Rundu, Katima Mulilo, Khorixas, Ondangwa East, Ondangwa West and Keetmanshoop educational regions.

The educational reform was based on four educational goals of access, equity, quality and democracy, aimed at bringing quality as well as quantity in education and hence help in maintaining a democratic society (MEC, 1993).

The aim of access is to create more and equal opportunities for all Namibian children to enter and finish school. Equity has to do with fairness. Countrywide all learners should

receive, equal education including resources, equipments and qualified teachers. Equally, school facilities such as proper classrooms, appropriate instructional materials have to be provided countrywide. Quality includes many components, i.e. teachers should be well prepared and should stimulate active learning in their classes. On the other hand, learners must have sufficient textbooks and instructional materials while physical facilities like libraries and laboratories should also be available to enhance learning (MEC, 1993).

The aspect of democracy aims at the broad participation of teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process. Learners should take responsibility for their own learning which should enable them to participate fully and actively into the teaching and learning process (MEC, 1993).

For Namibia to achieve these four educational goals, teacher education as well as teaching methods were considered as most important areas of reform, because the education of the children and young people of Namibia is one of the greatest and most challenging tasks before the nation.

At the heart of the proposed school reforms were strategies that the teaching method should be learner- centered (LCE) and interactive. That is, teachers were supposed to have a “holistic view of the learner, valuing the learners life experiences as a starting point for their studies” (MEC, 1993). LCE approaches promote active learner participation and encourage self-discovery and understanding in learning. This is what Dewey called learning through solving problems, when learners are required to “take risks in proposing possible solutions and defending their views on the matter, while teachers keep more in the background and assume the role of a facilitator rather than give all the answers” (Akinpelu,

1988). Learners should, therefore, be involved in constructing their own knowledge rather than receiving it passively from the teacher. Groups and project work, demonstration lessons, debates, discussions, and communicative activities were encouraged. The goal of teaching and learning was to enhance understanding, problem solving and democratic learning.

LCE requires a pedagogy, which promotes learning with understanding through activities and active participation. It is also based on the assumption that learners construct their own knowledge. Bruner (1996) observed that learning best occurs when individuals construct their own meaning. Constructed knowledge comes from active involvement. Learner-centered education recognises that learners have experiences and prior knowledge to contribute to and link it to the educational process (MEC, 1993) and Johannesen (1998) affirms that if you want a learner to acquire new knowledge, the learner should be able to link new knowledge to relevant aspects of his or her prior knowledge.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC, 1993: 81) stipulated that, “a learner – centered approach demands a high degree of learner participation, contribution, and production. ” What teachers do must be guided both by their knowledge of concepts and skills to be mastered and by their experiences, interests and learning strategies for the learners (MEC, 1993).

This idea is also supported by Gous (1998: 43) that learning is through activities, project work, presentation, various exposure, curiosity satisfaction and independent inquiry. In his contribution, Schrecko (1994) observed that in a Learner Centred Education (LCE) approach, the learner must be taken as being at the center of the teaching and learning

process, which means that his/her interests and needs should be taken into account when a teacher is planning or presenting a lesson. The learners must be engaged in hands on meaningful experiences and have to think constructively. Pomuti (1996:3) stated that teachers, while planning a learner centred lesson, should strive for activities that involve all the learners during the lesson instead of planning what the teacher will say or do. Learners should be involved in collaborative effort with others so that they can share their learning with them rather than merely receiving the products of education.

The Learner Centered Approach has two main identifiable themes. These are: (i) an intense concern with the individual learner's interests, and ii) the importance of the active participation of the learner in his/her own learning.

In the LCE teaching and learning approach, the teacher should plan instructional activities that demand active learner participation, i.e. learners should be fully involved in the teaching and learning process. S/ he must create learning opportunities that encourage discovery and inquiry learning, construction of knowledge, interactions, problem solving and link the learner's existing knowledge to new knowledge. Further, the teacher should ask questions that stimulate learners to think. In this teaching and learning process the teacher must be a guide, co- learner, resource person, and facilitator. On the other hand the learner must be a co-learner, constructor of knowledge, a problem solver, a growing and developing individual (MEC, 1993).

### **Teacher education**

Teacher education, as earlier indicated, needed to be reformed to prepare teachers that would be able to teach using the new learner centered approach, following the Ministry's

policy and guidelines of basic education (MEC, 1993). Subsequently in 1993, the Ministry of Education and Culture developed and introduced a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) to be implemented at the four colleges of education to facilitate Teacher Education Reform. The BETD espouses a participatory approach to teacher preparation and supports the philosophy of learner-centered education. The BETD is a three-year national Basic Education Teacher program, which aims at preparing student teachers that will be able to teach from grade one up to ten in the Basic Education phase of the Education system.

In 1994 the BETD in-service programme was established on part time basis for serving teachers in Namibian schools. The programme had to be conducted over six years. In the same year the first group of 500 students -teachers countywide was taken as a pilot phase for the BETD in- service course. This programme was intended to serve two major purposes: first, to improve teachers' teaching skills in schools and secondly, to enable teachers to upgrade their professional qualifications while still at work in the classroom.

In 1997 the BETD in -service (INSET) programme was modified to be conducted over a four-year period to train unqualified or partly qualified Basic Education teachers. The BETD in- service programme follows the philosophy of learner- centered education and a democratic pedagogy, methods that promote learning through understanding and active participation. The BETD INSET has both face to face and distance modes of delivery in the following compulsory subjects.

- Education Theory and Practice (ETP)
- English Communication Skills (ECS), and
- School Based Activities (SBA).

Every INSET teacher must take them unless she/he has been exempted (credited) due to prior learning in a specific subject area. Options are offered in four specialized areas:

- Lower Primary Education (LPE) Grades 1-4,
- Mathematic and Integrated Natural Sciences Education (Math & INS) Grades 5-10,
- English Language Education (ELE) and Namibian Language (NL) Grades 5-10, and
- Social Science Education (SSE) Grades 5-10 (MHEVST, 1999).

Basic Education in Namibia, and therefore teacher education for Basic Education is based on learner-centered principles. Central to this is the view that knowledge is not a static amount of content, but is what the learner actively constructs and creates from experience and interaction within the socio cultural context. INSET teachers will therefore be prepared to be able to stimulate the natural curiosity and eagerness of young people and are prepared to organize teaching and learning so that the starting point at each stage of the learning processes each learner's existing knowledge, skills, interests and understanding, derived from previous experience in and out of school (MHEVTS & MEC, 1999).

In particular, the core subject, ETP, explores the professional themes of the BETD in-service programme from the perspective of learner centered education. A vital feature of a learner centered approach is that learning experiences should relate to the learner's previous knowledge and experiences. Learners must be placed at the center of the teaching-learning process. In a learner-centered education active participation of learners is encouraged.

The BETD INSET teachers are introduced to problem solving method of teaching during training. In this way they are able to know what kinds of problems they are facing in their own classrooms and what solutions they can apply. That is, they should be able to identify a problem, formulate hypotheses, identify instruments of collecting and analyze the data found.

It is therefore important that all of the learning/teaching processes in ETP modules are designed to allow the participants to experience LCE for themselves. Specifically, BETD INSET teachers should be able to actively involve their learners in the teaching and learning process which leads to active learning (MHEVST & MEC, 1999).

### **Theoretical framework**

The new Government of the Republic of Namibia vision clearly affirmed access to quality education as the right of all Namibians based on the belief that all can learn when provided with a learner- centered democratic pedagogy. The change in the vision is based on a rejection of the idea that knowledge is static, that the teacher is the expert that delivers and transfers a body of knowledge to passive learners. This new vision is based on the constructivist theory (MEC, 1993).

Constructivists reject the idea that in the teaching -learnig process the emphasis should be placed on memorization and / or copying of information, rather than thinking about information in order to build understanding. Constructivism acknowledges that knowledge cannot be given directly from the teacher to the learner but must be constructed and reconstructed by the learner. As new information becomes available, teachers must create learning situations where learners can build their own knowledge through active learning

process. With active learning, learners are encouraged to think independently, to observe, to pose questions, to explore, to contribute and to work in collaboration with others .It is envisaged that through this process of learning and understanding, each learner can become aware that he/she is creating and constructing his /her own knowledge (Bruner, 1996; MEC, 1993; Piaget, 1992; Orstein, 1987).

Learning is an active and interactive process whereby individuals are encouraged to construct meaning for themselves and create knowledge by sharing experiences with others through collaborative interaction. The learner's previous knowledge constructions, beliefs and attitudes are considered in the knowledge construction process. Teachers serve as guides, monitors, coaches and facilitators of the learning process (MEC, 1993; Dewey, 1916; Vygotsky, 1962; Warren, 1996).

The above-mentioned ideas are based on the work of educational philosopher, Dewey (1859-1952) and educational psychologists, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Bruner, among others. Dewey (1916) indicated that the experiences of the individual learner should become the starting point in the class. For him sharing, cooperation and democracy were significant human values that schools should encourage. Learning should be directly related to the interests of the child. Dewey emphasized learning through problem solving .The teachers' role is not to direct but to advice or facilitate. Dewey further argued that in a learning process the child has to take the responsibility for his/her own learning. The learners in the teaching-learning process must be encouraged to follow this 'natural' proclivity to seek, enquire, explore, immerse him /herself in the environment and to learn by experience. Further, the teacher should act as a facilitator. Dewey recommends a process of learning,

which involves the child as an active participant in various learning activities (Dewey, 1916).

Vygotsky (1962) indicated that each and every child is unique and he/she must be expected to learn at his/her pace. Vygotsky further emphasized the value of prior experiences and knowledge. He emphasised that neither knowledge nor the acquisition of knowledge is static to a particular stage. He further suggested that the learner's knowledge, ideas, attitudes and values develop through interactions with others. His focus is for the learner to construct meaning and knowledge but not to memorize the information.

On the other hand Piaget (1967) stated that educational experiences must be organized according to the developmental stages of learners. Piaget emphasized that thinking capacity must be strengthened among learners at different stages. He further argued that learning is a constructive process. Learners must be able to incorporate the information they are taught into their schemas.

Bruner (1966) indicated that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current and past knowledge. As far as instruction is concerned, the instructor should try to encourage the students to discover principles by themselves rather than simply accepting the teachers' explanations. He believes that teachers should provide problem situations that stimulate learners to question, explore and experiment. The instructor and learner should engage in an active dialogue. The teacher's role is to provide guidance, feedback and motivation.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The BETD INSET teachers are introduced and trained to base their classroom practice on the learner -centred principles, which promote democratic pedagogy and active learning. But, since the introduction and implementation of learner- centered approaches in the BETD INSET teacher programme, no study has been carried out to find out whether BETD INSET teachers do apply the LCE approach in their classrooms. Specifically, whether learners are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. This study will seek to find out whether BETD INSET teachers practice and encourage active learner participation in their classrooms.

## **Questions of the Study**

The following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. To what extent do BETD INSET graduate teachers design learning activities that encourage active learner participation in the instructional process?
2. To what extent do BETD INSET graduate teachers design learning activities that enable them to practice active learner participation in the instructional process?
3. To what extent does class interaction take place in the BETD INSET graduate teacher's classrooms that encourages active learner participation?
4. What methods do BETD INSET graduate teachers use in their instructional process?
5. To what extent do learners construct knowledge for themselves?
6. To what extent does the classroom organization encourage active learning?
7. What are the factors hindering the use of active learner participation?

## **Rationale of the Study**

This study is important in the sense that it seeks to examine the impact of the BETD INSET programme on the INSET graduate teachers classroom practice. Results of the study will also indicate whether the classroom teaching skills of the BETD INSET graduate teachers had changed to be in line with the new LCE teaching approach. This information will give an indication to the MEC and NIED on how successful the programme is in improving the teaching skills and classroom practice of the BETD INSET teachers. Knowledge of the problems that are hindering the practice of active learner participation will help the Government officials, teachers, parents and community at large to provide necessary support for the improvement of the education system.

## **Limitations**

Due to limited financial resources, time constraints, and long distances from Windhoek to schools, it will not be possible to cover all schools and all BETD INSET programme centers countrywide. The study will therefore, concentrate on selected schools in the Ondangwa West and East educational regions.

## **Delimitations**

This study will focus on the BETD INSET graduate teachers teaching at grades 5-10 (all specialized areas). Participating teachers will be located within a radius of 30 km of Oshakati and Ondangwa towns.

## **Definition of terms**

### ***Learner centered Education:***

Will be understood to mean an education that places the learner at the center of the teaching and learning process. The psychological and sociological needs as well as the interests of the learners are taken into account (MEC,1993).

### ***Active Participation:***

Will be understood to mean the full involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process. The learners are expected to be engaged in discussions in both small groups and the whole class. They are also expected to ask questions and try out new knowledge/experience on their own. In addition, a learner must be involved in practical activities (MEC, 1993).

### ***Class interactions:***

Malamah-Thomas (1987) defines class interaction as a process in which a teacher and learners have a reciprocal effect upon each other. This means that the teacher asks questions and the learners respond and vice versa.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter attempts to provide an overview of active learner participation. It will also focus on the theories about participatory teaching and learning strategies. After a thorough review of literature it was clear that few research studies have been done within Namibia on active learner participation. Therefore the literature review will comprise mainly research done in other countries.

#### **Active learner participation**

The MEC (1993) describes active participation as a high degree of interaction and involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process. If learners are actively involved in the teaching and learning process they can construct knowledge and that knowledge is retained longer. MBESC (1996) states that children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, the teaching methods used should be chosen to encourage the learners' active involvement and participation. This is what Brandes and Ginnis (1986: 13) observed, that, most people learn best by being 'with it'. Pomuti (1998) further defined active and meaningful learning as enabling the learners to feel involved, make contributions, ask questions, formulate concepts and learn by doing, appreciating other learners' creative endeavors in a good spirit and using concrete materials. Kyriacou (1997) clarifies this further with the following words: "Such active learning approaches have increased in use, not that they foster greater understanding, better skills and increased transfer of learning but also because of their beneficial effects on motivation and attitudes toward learning". This indicates that appropriate approaches that

promote active learner participation increases learner's understanding, improves his/her skills in practical activities and motivates the learner to know more.

The implications are that this approach of active participation involves interactive teaching and learning. It directs learning by enabling learners to understand, share information and learn through a productive process. Learner centered education requires teachers to base their lessons on learners' previous experience and level of maturity already. Further, teachers are expected to have a sense of commitment, confidence, reflective attitude, critical curiosity, problem solving skills and a sense of empowerment. This will enable them to employ active learning strategies in their classrooms (MEC, 1993).

Studies (Lowman, 1984; Perrot, 1982; Woolfolk, 1995; Seeler, Turnwald and Bull, 1994) have shown that in the classroom, for the teachers to employ active learner participation they have to engage learners in teaching and learning activities by using the following participatory teaching and learning strategies;

- class discussion;
- discovery and inquiry (experiential) teaching and learning.

According to the studies, the abovementioned strategies promote construction of knowledge, interaction, self-discovery learning, problem solving and creative thinking.

These strategies are discussed in more detail below.

### **Class discussion**

Lowman (1984) concluded that learners participate actively, if useful class discussion is planned. Useful class discussion consists of learners' comments with frequent probes and

clarifications by the teacher. The probes should facilitate involvement by the learners and assist them to develop thinking. Class discussion can be done in small or large groups.

According to Hewit and Whittier (1997), class discussion can also be done in the form of brainstorming. The teacher provides the question or a dilemma with prompts if necessary, then learners generate numerous responses through discussions. The learners therefore, think analytically, considering several alternatives and debating the merits of various criteria to be used in judging the alternatives. They concluded that using this technique results in more learner participation.

Lowman (1984) observed that during class discussions learners pay closer attention for a while, merely to see what the teacher is going to do or what the others have to say. They probably will think about what they might say if they were to enter the discussion, even if they do not actually speak out. Subsequently, he declared that discussion in itself increases involvement and requires learners to demonstrate independence by constructing responses on their own. He further noted that discussion helps learners assimilate and integrate information they have initially acquired from reading or presentations. It also helps the learners to connect new and old knowledge. He concluded further that discussion enhances involvement that could promote independent thinking and motivate the learners.

Warren (1996) concluded that discussion by the whole class or in small groups helps learners to apply their own knowledge. He further noted that it also provides practice in speaking, listening, questioning, critical thinking and interpersonal skills. For Warren, class discussions enhance retention of what is learned. Meaningful class discussion could

therefore be said to enhance learner participation, understanding, creative thinking and interaction between teachers and learners or among the learners themselves.

Seeler, Turnwald and Bull (1994) indicated that one way to increase learner participation within the teaching is for the teacher to ask questions. High-level cognitive questions encourage critical thinking, problem solving and stimulate learners to assume greater responsibility to seek information on their own. Seeler et al, added that open-ended questions stimulate learner participation during the teaching and learning process. They further indicated that the questions should aim at developing the cognitive skills of comprehension, application, analysis and synthesis.

Brown (1975) indicated that in class, learners must be asked higher order cognitive questions to enable them create new knowledge. He argues against lower order cognitive questions, which usually have single correct answers. Higher order cognitive questions, he contends, require the learner to think and create or construct knowledge rather than just reproduce knowledge or information. The evidence reviewed by Perrot (1982) led here to conclude that higher cognitive questioning, which causes learners to go beyond memory and use other thought processes in forming an answer have an important role in knowledge construction. She further added that using questions during discussions improves the quality and quantity of learner participation.

Arrowsmith (1975) added that when teachers pose questions to learners, they must allow adequate wait-time of about five seconds. The quality of learners' answers improves this way since it allows learners to think critically. Perrott (1982) believes that the teacher must pause for three to five seconds after asking a question. This will encourage longer

and more thoughtful responses from the learners. Further, she suggested the following sequence during discussion, i.e. pausing, interpretation, prompting, seeking clarification, refocusing, probing and redirection in order to enhance the amount and quality of pupil's participation.

Arrowsmith also stated that in the case of whole class discussion, the class seating arrangement should allow learners to see one another at all times. A large circle or two semi circles will satisfy this need. This way all the learners can see the face of the speaker and are thus more likely to stay attentive. In this way learners listen to each other, take turns talking and avoid the temptation to whisper to the person next to them. It also helps them to think carefully about what they will say next. Class organization therefore, encourages the practice of LCE.

Brandes and Ginnis (1986) suggest that a circular class organization could be a safe place where learners can speak freely, express their opinions, share their feelings and contribute to the discussion without fear of ridicule and with a sense that there are no right or wrong answers. They further stated that listening skills are also important during discussion. Learners tend to contribute more if they are being listened to and not criticized and their ideas are not put down. Positive approaches from the teacher in the classroom will lead to necessary co-operative interaction between the teacher and learners. Malamah –Thomas (1987) observed that the teacher who is able to create an open and encouraging atmosphere in a class discussion will facilitate smooth flow of learner–teacher interaction.

Positive attitude and approaches in classroom discussions are the most effective big tools in driving a learner to participate actively and perform effectively. Without it learners tend to be dull and will learn almost nothing.

Hewit and Whittier (1997) observed that discussion could be enhanced by dividing the class in to smaller groups. However it is important to be sure that learners understand what they are to discuss before breaking into groups. This involves establishing a focus. Providing each group with a series of questions can develop a focus or having the entire class brainstorm a series of questions that they wish to discuss.

Woolfolk (1995) also indicated that in small working groups learners might be given a task or question to work on. During that time learners ask questions, answer each other's questions and comment on each other's answers. He further indicated that in small group discussions learners are directly involved and have greater chance to learn than in larger ones. Woolfolk added that in small group discussions learners learn and express themselves clearly, justify opinions and tolerate different views. It also gives students a chance to ask for clarification, examine their own thinking and follow personal interests and assume responsibility for their own learning.

Schrenko (1994), in his study about structuring LCE schools, reported that teachers find that learners are much more willing to engage in difficult problem solving tasks when they work in groups rather than as individuals. Brandes and Ginnis (1986) believe that if everyone in the learning group is awake, alert, interacting and yet acting individually, there is involvement and mutual support among the group. Hertz- Lazarowitz and Norman (1992) believe that a primary motivation for the use of cooperative small group is that

learners can help other learners who are having difficulties in learning or understanding the material.

Literature made it clear that if learners are working in small groups, there is a greater opportunity of every member (learner) to take part in discussion or to contribute to the discussion.

Warren (1996) observed that active participation is higher in cooperative situations rather than in competitive or individualist ones and cooperative efforts result in more frequent use of higher level reasoning strategies gains in skills of learners working with one another. In-group work there is an interaction if all the members in the group contributed and shared equally.

According to Woolfolk (1995) and Malamah- Thomas (1987), an efficient and average classroom size should be of 20-25 learners. This encourages all learners to take part actively in teaching and learning activities.

Woolfolk (1995) as indicated earlier observed that learning is an interactive process. For the effective learning to take place there must be sound interaction between the teacher and the learners or among the learners themselves. Sufficient interaction can take place if the class is reasonably small and when the teacher is able to value the ideas of all learners. In small classes (i.e. 20-25 learners), every member of the group will be able to contribute to the group. Woolfolk (1995) holds the view that in large groups, group discussion is often unwieldy and in many cases, a few learners will dominate the discussion while the others daydream.

If the class is large, the teachers find it difficult to control the participation of every learner. Van Graan (1998) reported that group-work in large classes i.e. 40-45 learners do not work because teachers found it difficult to control the quality of the ideas and participation of learners. She further stated that teachers reported that weaker learners dodge behind stronger ones and thus become invisible.

Studies have also shown that poor communication could affect the active participation of learners, especially when the teacher uses unclear language (Kyriacou 1997; Lawrence 1996; Kafupi, 1999). Kafupi (1999) further indicated that instructions, which are not clear to the learners, confused them and consequently they will not know what is expected of them.

Mwamwenda (1996) observed that, the clearer the teacher is in his/her presentation, the more likely pupils would participate in the teaching and learning process. Woolfolk (1993: 477) indicated that teachers who give clear presentation and expansion of their subject tend to have students who learn more.

The way a teacher expresses him /herself is important in promoting understanding and participation of learners in lessons. Hence it is important that teachers are proficient in the medium of instruction. It is also important that learners are able to use the same medium of instruction as proficiently as their teacher.

Learners who are not confident in English do not contribute or ask questions in class. As a result, they are left out of class activities as passive observers, through not taking part

(Karlsson, 1999). Calvin (1997) in Mayumbelo and Nyambe (1999) reported that the lack of proficiency in the English language prevents many learners to take part in classes. They do not contribute, or ask questions during general discussions because they are unable to speak fluently. Annithar (1997) in Mayumbelo and Nyambe (1999: 74) observed learners and confirms that the medium of English is a big obstacle to learners to fully participate in class discussions. Tubaundule (1999) agreed with Annithar's findings that a learner's poor grasp of the medium of instruction was an obstacle to class participation.

### **Discovery learning:**

Hewit and Whittier (1997) define discovery learning as the process in which the teacher guides learners step by step by finding new information, concepts, ideas or understanding. Bruner (1966) stated that by discovery learning, learners learn how to solve problems, develop an understanding of their own learning process and the process of learning becomes rewarding to them. Bruner believes that learners must actively participate in the learning process and learn on their own.

Hewit and Whittier (1997) noted that the principle of discovery teaching and learning is the belief that learners learn by doing and thinking, and not by sitting and listening or watching the teacher. For Bruner, discovery learning, involves a teacher organizing the class so that the learners learn through their own active involvement. This strategy must be viewed as an opportunity for the learner to explore, compare and in general become a skilled observer of his/her environment. Hewit and Whittier (1997) further indicated that the process of discovery learning facilitates the acquisition of new information beyond that actually planned for the lesson.

Bruner (1971) believes that teachers should provide problems, baffling situations, or questions stimulating learners to question, explore and experiment. In this process the teacher must guide learners to new information, concepts, ideas or understanding.

Woolfolk (1980) describes the process of discovery learning and notes that instead of explaining how to solve the problem, the teacher provides the appropriate materials and encourages learners to make observations, form hypotheses and test solutions on their own. The teacher therefore serves as a facilitator.

Arrousmith (1975) stated that discovery approach provides a model for independent problem solving that in turn gives learners the opportunity to analyze and manipulate information. He further noted that the ability to remember and retrieve information that a learner has 'discovered' appears to be greater. To him, questioning and frequent redirecting of probes during discovery learning encourage learners to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. He concludes that thought-provoking questions are useful in eliciting the deeper, more complex learner thinking that is an essential feature of learning through discovery.

Hewit and Whittier (1997) are of the view that during discovery learning teachers should provide direction, guide learners to discover the relationship or patterns that will assist them in developing abstractions, concepts, or principles. They further concluded that during this process learner's curiosity is stimulated and this will promote active participation.

Hewit and Whittier (1997) stated that the teacher's responses must encourage learners to explore further or re-evaluate their replies. Gage and Berlin (1984) found that what a

teacher says to or about the learner's responses might clarify, expand, synthesize or evaluate it. Thus the teacher's responses should never be negative in nature.

The literature reviewed seems to suggest that discovery learning promotes active learner participation and understanding since learners have to discover and construct new knowledge for themselves.

### **Inquiry (experiential) learning**

Dewey (1916) stated that during inquiry learning, the teacher presents a puzzling event, question or problem. The learners formulate hypotheses to explain the event or solve the problem, collect data to test the hypotheses, draw conclusions and reflect on the original problem and on the thinking process needed to solve it. To him teaching and learning process is more problem solving oriented in which learners have to participate actively.

Kolb (1984) describes experiential learning, as one in which a learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it. He further observed that learning involves the creation of knowledge through the transformation of experience. Warren (1996) found that "experiential learning" gives learners real world experience in applying concepts they have learned in class, and introduces them to new concepts as well.

Howard (1995) stated that inquiry teaching methods encouraged learners to pose questions to understand their immediate situation within the broader socio-cultural context by being 'with it'. Hewit and Whittier (1997) and Perrot (1982) stated that in inquiry learning,

learners genuinely feel they must find out why something is the way it is. Many inquiry activities of this nature take the form of individual and group projects and are often conducted more independently of the teacher than any of the teaching approaches. This can be done in classrooms, investigations in the field or laboratory, interviewing people, visiting museums and factories, etc and in this way learners gather their information. Hewit and Whittier further indicated that usually learners brainstorm possible solutions and construct ways to test out each one.

Crebbin (1994) believes that inquiry method in classrooms is intended to develop skills of analysis and creative thinking among learners. She added that by using this method, the learners must be encouraged to follow the 'natural' proclivity to seek, enquire, explore and to immerse him/ herself in the environment and to learn by experience. Crebbin also believes that inquiry learning would not take place if the question presented for study can be answered without true investigation from learners. She further noted that inquiry teaching and learning method enhances depth of understanding leading to systematic decision-making.

Dewey (1916) and Schrenko (1996) pointed out that teaching in this way of posing problems (inquiry learning) teachers will promote each child's internal motivation for them to try out new experiences actively. The teacher's role is to help the learner learn the values of democratic participation and not imparting information but by enquiry into problematic situations.

On the other hand, Perrot (1982), Brandes and Ginnis (1986), Malamah-Thomas (1987) and Kyriacou (1997) stated that for the learners to participate actively and to learn effectively

they must have access to resources and other educational facilities. The classroom environment should also be conducive to learning.

According to Mostert (1998), Brandes and Ginnis (1986), Malamah-Thomas (1987) and Kyriacou (1997) among others, teachers play an important role in the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process. They are the ones who have the responsibility of creating a conducive atmosphere where learners feel accepted, loved, respected, motivated and want to learn actively. Without a good relationship in class, the learning environment becomes difficult and the lesson will become dull for the learners and in the end they will learn nothing. Kyriacou (1997) indicated that the relationship between the teacher and the learners is of fundamental importance to effective teaching and active learning. Mostert (1998) also pointed out that the relationship between the teacher and the learner might have a greater impact on learning than any other single factor in the classroom. A warm and friendly class environment is conducive to learning. She further indicated that learners who feel free to ask questions and have an open and relaxed relationship with their teachers would benefit more from teaching than those who are tense and terrified of the teacher. McIntyre (1994) discovered that learners always participated and learned better in an environment that is conducive to learning and in which they feel accepted, trusted and loved by the teacher.

Calvin (1997) in his school based study reported that most of the common reasons for the lack of participation given by the learners, was that there was not a very good relationship between them and their teachers. As a result learners were afraid to ask questions, contribute and generally take part in classroom activities. Kafupi (1999) observed his colleagues teaching and realized that learners actively participated in the lessons because

the teachers spoke to them in a polite and relaxed way. Lawrence (1996) stated that the teachers should avoid sarcasm, ridicule and scolding of learners in front of their peers in the classrooms. This will decrease the learner's self-esteem as well as their participation in the teaching –learning process.

According to Mwamwenda (1996) and Kyriacou (1997), learners need to be motivated for them to actively take part in the teaching and learning process. In many instances unmotivated learners participate poorly in the learning activities and this leads to poor performance.

Kyriacou (1997: 61) suggested that the teacher should use attention-gaining techniques to arouse learner's interest in the subject matter by finding out more about some event, topic and phenomenon. The Presidential Commission on Education (1991) found a relationship between low learner achievement and non-inspiring teachers. They further reported that effective teachers must guide, inspire, and motivate their learners to participate actively in the teaching – learning process.

Mwamwenda (1996) observed that teachers had a tendency to concentrate on a few pupils mainly those who raise hands willingly and forget those who do not put up their hands.

The majority of learners fall into this second group. Consequently this situation results in low pupil classroom participation. This means that a teacher should also direct questions to learners who do not put up their hands in order to enhance their participation and learning.

The next chapter presents the methodology to be used to collect the data from the subjects.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This study used descriptive and exploratory methods to obtain information from the subjects on active learner participation in class. The exploratory method was favoured because it would give adequate initial information about the BETD INSET graduate teachers practice in Namibia. The descriptive method was also use in order to describe the status quo vis –a- vis the BETD programme.

#### **Population**

An ideal population could have been all BETD INSET graduate teachers in Namibia. However, because of the geographical vastness of the country and the lack of financial resources, the scope of the study was narrowed to cover the Ondangwa East and West Educational Regions only.

The population of this study was the four hundred and fifty BETD INSET teachers who were enrolled at the Ongwediva College of Education in the 1996 and 1997 academic years and who to graduate in the year, 2001. The whole population stays and teaches in the schools in the Ondangwa East and West Educational Regions.

This was the first cohort to graduate from the BETD INSET programme after it had been modified and improved to embrace the Learner Centered Approach.

## **Participants**

Random sampling of fifteen INSET graduate teachers teaching at Grades 5 to 10 were drawn from the defined population. The fifteen INSET teachers were considered a representative enough sample to give clear information regarding the practice of active learner participation by the BETD INSET teachers in the Ondangwa West and East. Educational Regions.

## **Techniques for data Collection**

For this study, interviews and observations were used to collect data from the participants.

### ***Interviews***

Structured as well as semi-structured interviews were developed and used to collect data from the participating teachers. The interview questions were developed based on the major research questions given in chapter 1. The interview questions were developed by taking into consideration the following factors: the classroom and school environment factors, such as the types of classroom activities, the teaching methods used, class organisation, proficiency in the medium of instruction by both teachers and learners and the availability of resources to the teachers and the learners.

The purpose of the interview was to solicit the views, experiences, and practices of the teachers regarding active learner participation in their classes. The interviews allowed the researcher to access information that was not directly observable. By talking with people one can access their feelings, beliefs, attitudes and thoughts. The interview method was

chosen because the participants could be probed and their responses could be clarified and followed up. Patton (1991: 238) defines probing as an interview tool that is used to “go deeper into the interviewee’s responses.” Bell (1987) supports the use of the interview as a data collecting method citing its adaptability as a major advantage in its use. She observed that a skillful interviewer could follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which other methods can never do. The way in which a response is made can provide information that a written response would conceal (Bell, 1987).

Interviewees in this study were informed of the purpose of the study, the use of the data, and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. An interview lasted for half an hour to an hour. During that time the interviewer established rapport with the interviewees for them to co –operate. In a conducive atmosphere participants would be open to give freely needed information.

The questions were open – ended and designed to reveal what was important to understand about the active participation of learners in class. When interviews conducted, the questions to facilitate discussions were centered on the following themes: type of teaching-learning strategies used by the BETD INSET graduate teachers, type of learning activities the BETD INSET graduate teachers designed, the teacher / learner relationship, class size, resources, teachers’ and learners’ mastery of English, the medium of instruction. Note taking of responses was used during the interview sessions.

### ***Observation***

Observation was used as the second data gathering method of the BETD INSET graduate teachers’ practices regarding active learner participation in their classes. The researcher

visited the BETD INSET graduate teachers' classrooms as non-participatory observer. By observing, the researcher understood more and experienced more of the participants world. Patton (1990: 199) supports this and notes that; " Enter into their world. Observe and wonder. To understand a world you must become part of that world while at the same time remaining separate, a part of and apart from."

Forty- five (45) lessons (three each) of the 15 teachers were observed. Classroom observations provided the researcher with the opportunity to actually observe how the teachers applied or practiced active learner participation and the type of class interactions and activities that learners were actively engaged in during the teaching and learning process. The researcher observed also the relationships between the teachers and the learners and the access of learners to the resources that enhanced active learner participation. According to Bell (1987:88) "direct observation may be more reliable than what people say in many instances", therefore, the researcher felt that this method would clearly reflect what took place in the classes of the subjects.

Further, to ensure that the information collected would be valid, the interview as well as observation schedules were reviewed by both my supervisor, and a colleague at Windhoek College of Education and their comments and suggestions were used to revise the final instruments.

### **Procedures**

A letter of permission was obtained from the Faculty of Education, University of Namibia to carry out the research. Permission to carry out the research was also requested from the MBESC, and the Ondangwa education regional offices and the principals of the sampled

schools. Through letters, telephone calls and personal visits the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Once the researcher went to a particular school, she explained once more the purpose of the study to the school principal and the participants. An explanation of who was to be interviewed and observed and how the interview was to be carried out were clearly explained. All fifteen teachers were interviewed.

### **Data Analysis**

In view of the descriptive nature of this study, data was systematically coded, categorized and compared. Then by comparing the data from the two instruments used in collecting data from the sample, cross checks were carried out, percentages were calculated and presented in frequency tables (Patton, 1990). The interpretations of the data were based upon the patterns found in it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS THE RESULTS

This chapter presents the research findings, interpretation and discussions of the results.

Data analysis for this study focused on qualitative data obtained through the use of the two research instruments for measuring the practice of BETD INSET teachers in their classrooms. It was based on lesson observations, field notes, and teachers' responses to the interview questions on active learner participation during the instruction process.

The results of the analysis will be presented in frequency tables.

#### **Participants:**

This section addresses the data of the participants in terms of sex, school locality, subjects and grades they are currently teaching.

The personal data of the participants are indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Personal data of the BETD INSET teachers.**

<b>BETD INSET Teachers</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Locality Of School</b>	<b>Subject currently teaching</b>	<b>Grade currently teaching</b>
T1	F	Semi-urban	Oshindonga	10
T2	F	Semi-urban	Oshindonga	5&10
T3	F	Semi-urban	Social science	7
T4	M	Semi-urban	English	6
T5	M	Semi-urban	Maths &Integrated Natural Science (INS)	6
T6	M	Rural	Social science	5&6
T7	M	Rural	Social science	6
T8	M	Rural	Maths & (INS)	7&9
T9	M	Rural	Maths & Ins	9&10
T10	M	Rural	Social science	9&10
T11	F	Rural	Oshindonga	7
T12	M	Rural	English	5
T13	F	Rural	Social science	7
T14	F	Rural	Maths &Ins	6
T15	M	Rural	Maths &Ins	8

Table 1, shows that nine (60%) of the INSET teachers were male, while six (40%) were females.

Ten (67%) of the INSET teachers teach in the rural areas while, five (33%) teach in the semi- urban schools. Furthermore, ten (67%) of the INSET teachers taught one grade only while five (33%) taught two grades.

## HOW BETD INSET TEACHERS PRACTICE ACTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.

**The classroom atmosphere in which teaching and learning takes place.**

The following question was addressed: **To what extent do the BETD INSET teachers create a learning environment that supports the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process in their classrooms?**

Table 2 gives information with regard to teachers and learners relationship.

**Table2: Teachers and learners relationship**

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Friendly	13 (87%)
Hostile	2 (13%)

With regard to the relationship between the INSET teachers and their learners during the instructional process, it was noted in Table 2 that thirteen (87%) of the 15 INSET teachers observed were polite, patient and friendly when presenting their lessons. Two (13%) of the INSET teachers observed were appeared hostile to their learners when they presented their lessons.

It can therefore, be concluded that the majority (87%) of the BETD INSET teachers created a conducive learning environment that supported the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process in their classrooms. Learners had an open and relaxed relationship with their teachers, were free to ask questions and contributed to the discussions actively.

This study agreed with McIntyre (1994) who discovered that learners always participated and learned better in an environment that is conducive to learning and in which they feel accepted, trusted and loved by the teacher.

During the instruction of the remaining two (13%) of the BETD INSET teachers who were observed to be hostile to the learners, the learners were not relaxed, confused and generally did not contribute much to the teaching and learning process.

This study also supports the observations of Kryriacou (1997) who emphasised that the relationship between the teacher and the learners is of fundamental importance to effective teaching and learning.

### **Classroom environment**

The following question was addressed: **To what extent do the BETD INSET teachers' class and school environments support the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process in their classrooms?**

Table 3 gives information with regard to classroom environment.

**Table 3: Classroom environment**

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Chaotic/ very poor condition	10 (67%)
Friendly/ orderly	5 (33%)

In table 3, it was found that the instructions of ten (67%) of the INSET teachers took place in very poor classroom conditions with broken windows, overcrowded, few or either broken chairs and desks and poor classroom roofs with holes in them, classrooms with no educational materials displayed on the walls and in some cases few text books and other teaching and learning facilities.

The instructional process of five (33%) of the INSET teachers took place in a friendly classroom environment that is conducive to learning with intact windows, adequate chairs and desks, sufficient teaching and learning materials.

As indicated above, it was found that the instructions of the 10 (67%) BETD INSET teachers took place in very poor classroom conditions. Because of poor classroom conditions, with broken windows, overcrowded, few or either broken chairs and desks and poor classroom roofs with holes in them, classrooms with no educational materials displayed on the walls and in some cases few textbooks and other teaching and learning facilities the learners coped with difficulty. And this hampered their active participation during the teaching and learning process. The respondents had these to say with respect to the poor learning environment they experienced:

*During the rainy season, rain comes in and during the winter season, learners experienced cold weather in the classes and this hinder active learner participation. Further, because classes have broken windows, and over crowded we cannot even arrange for reading corners or either display posters and other educational materials on the wall or leave some teaching and learning materials in the classes as the goats or any one could enter classes any time they wish too and destroy every thing.*

The BETD INSET teachers further observed that:

*Teaching overcrowded classes, this will make the classroom to be without enough fresh air and as a result learners will feel dizzy and fell asleep. Further, because of large classes of 45- 55 learners in one class, we cannot reach each and every learner to apply individualization in class and in most cases slow learners are left behind. All these hinder learners to participate actively.*

Furthermore because of tightly packed classes the BETD INSET teachers found it difficult to move around and give individual support to learners. One INSET teacher indicated as follows:

*My class is too large with fifty –two learners and as a result I found it difficult to organize and control it in small groups, in which learners could work together and benefit by exchange the ideas and information.*

The findings of this study correspond with those by van Graan (1998) who observed almost the same aspects and reported that group- work in large classes (i.e.40-45) learners does not work because teachers found it difficult to control the quality of the ideas and participation

of the learners. She further stated that the teachers reported that weaker learners dodge behind stronger ones and thus become invisible in all class activities.

It was observed during this study that there was poor interaction between the teacher and learners in large classes of more than 40 learners. In such classes some learners especially the slow and the unmotivated ones sat passively day dreaming during the instructional process.

Eighty three percent (83%) of the BETD INSET teachers further added that,

*“Because of three to five learners sharing one textbook, this makes it difficult for each and every learner to participate actively in the class activities.”*

One (7 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that she has 42 learners in class with five textbooks only. Two (13%) of the INSET teachers indicated that they have about 120 learners in Grade nine and only one textbook available. They further indicated that since in most cases textbooks are not enough for each and every learner, teachers have to keep them. As a result the learners come to class unprepared and this hampers active learner participation during the instructional process. The INSET teachers added that:

*Materials for making teaching aids such as posters are not available at our school, unless you buy them with your own money but, for how long one can do that? In most cases we have to create our own teaching and learning aids or either go and teach without them.*

*We need also practical facilities to show practical examples to the learners for them to understand and learn better especial in Mathematics, and Physical science. Teaching without teaching aids, will be difficult for the learners to understand the subject matter and in most cases they tend not to follow or participate actively in the presentation.*

*If we could be supplied with sufficient textbooks and materials this could make for us to implement active learner participation easier.*

The findings represented so far reveal that (73%) of the class and school environments are not conducive to the practice of active learner participation. Further, as observed it seems to indicate that the teachers have little support for affective practice of active learner participation in their classrooms.

However, on the other hand it was also observed that the instruction process of 27% of the BETD INSET teachers took place in the environments that were conducive to active learner participation.

One can conclude that the learners participate actively in a friendly classroom environment, that is conducive to learning with an average number of learners of between 30-35, intact windows, adequate chairs and desks, sufficient text books and teaching and learning facilities.

## **TEACHING METHODS AND LESSON PRESENTATION**

This section presents the teaching methods, the teacher's role, types of questions asked, class organization, and proficiency in the medium of instruction of the BETD INSET teachers and learners during the instructional process.

The following question was addressed: **What methods do BETD INSET teachers use in their instructional process?**

Tables 4,5 and 6 provide the information regarding the methods used by the BETD INSET teachers during the instructional process.

Table 4 provides information with regard to classroom discussion.

**Table 4: Ways in which BETD INSET teachers involve learners in class discussion?**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Teacher asks questions	14 (93%)
Learners contributing to the discussion	11 (73%)
Allow wait time of between 3-5 seconds	8 (53%)
Directing and re- directing questions	6 (40%)
Learners share ideas among themselves	5 (33%)
Learners asks questions for clarification	3 (20%)
Teacher poses problems	2 (13%)
Probing by teacher	2 (13%)

Table 4 shows that 14 (93%) of the BETD INSET teachers asked questions during their lesson presentation. Only two (13%) of the INSET teachers posed problems to their learners.

In the lessons of the eleven (73%) INSET teachers learners contributed actively to the discussions during the lesson.

The results also show that eight (53%) of the INSET teachers allowed wait time of between 3-5 seconds before they expected an answer from the learners. The table further shows that 6 (40%) of the teachers directed and re-directed questions among the learners. Further the table shows that learners shared ideas among themselves during the lesson presentation of five (33%) of the BETD teachers. Nonetheless the table shows that the learners asked questions for clarification during the lessons of only three (20%) of the INSET teachers lesson presentation.

In Table 5 the findings with respect to the use of the Discovery learning method in the BETD INSET teachers' classrooms are presented.

**Table 5: The BETD INSET teachers involvement of learners in self –discovery learning (N= 15)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Teacher asks questions	6 (40%)
Learners discover information on their own	6 (40%)
Teacher poses problems	3 (20%)

Table 5 shows that six (40 %) of the INSET teachers posed questions. It was also found that six (40%)of the BETD INSET teachers led the learners to discover new information on their own. Further, only three (20%) of the INSET teachers posed problems to their learner to solve.

Table 6 provides information on whether the BETD INSET teachers use experiential / Inquiry learning in their lessons.

**Table 6: How BETD INSET teachers involve learners in experiential learning during the instructional process (N=15)**

Activity	Frequencies (%)
Teachers pose problems	3 (20%)
Learners solve problems	3 (20%)
Learners learn by doing	3 (20%)
Learners involved in group project	2 (13%)
Learners involved in individual project	1 (7%)
No response	3 (20)

In Table 6, the results indicate that out of fifteen teachers, only three (20%) posed problems to their learners. A similar number involved their learners in problem solving. Further, the results indicate that only two (13%) of the INSET teachers gave class activities to the learners to be done as group project, while only one (7%) of the INSET teachers gave individual project (s) to his learners. The remaining 20% of the INSET teachers did not give any response.

During class observation it was observed that 93% of the teachers mainly used the class discussion method during the instructional process. It was also found that a similar number of the teachers involved their learners during the teaching and learning process by asking them questions. During class discussions the learners paid close attention for a while, merely to see what the teacher was going to do or what the others will have to say. They probably thought about what they had to say if they were to enter in to the discussion, even if they did not actually speak out. One teacher responded, *“I normally use class discussion method, because by using this method one can promote creative thinking among the learners”*.

*“I prefer question and answer method because in this way the learners could effectively involved in the teaching and learning process”*, another one added.

The results of this study agreed with Seeler, Turnwald and Bull (1994) who indicated that one way to increase learner participation within the lesson is for the teacher to ask questions. High – level cognitive questions encourage critical thinking, problem solving and stimulate learners to assume greater responsibility in seeking information.

Further it was found that discovery and experiential learning was little practiced in the BETD INSET teachers' classrooms. Forty percent of the INSET teachers asked questions but did little to facilitate the learners to discover new information on their own. Questioning and frequent re- directing of probes during the discovery learning encouraged the learners to participate actively in the instructional process.

Hewit and Whittier (1997) are also of the view that during discovery learning teachers should guide learners to discover the relationship or patterns that assist them in developing abstractions, concepts or principles. Perrot (1982) believed that the teacher must pause for three to five seconds after asking a question. This will encourage longer and more thoughtful responses from the learners. According to Perrot (1982) interpretation, prompting, seeking clarification, re- focusing, probing and re-direction of questions enhance the amount and quality of learner's participation.

Furthermore it was observed that the majority, 80 % of the INSET teachers failed to pose problems to the learners or to involve them in problem solving activities.

According to MEC (1993) learners learn and participate more actively as they enabled to formulate concepts, learn by doing and directly in touch with the realities being studied.

## **LESSON PRESENTATION and CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

The following question was addressed: **To what extent did BETD INSET teachers designed learning activities that allow them to practice active learner participation?**

Table 7 illustrates the different classroom activities that the teacher did or prepared, to involve learners in the instructional process.

**Table 7: Classroom Activities used to involve learners actually in the teaching and learning process (N=15).**

Activity	Frequency (%)			
	Adequately applied	Barely adequately applied	Inadequately applied	Total
Teacher involves learners in class discussions	7 (47%)	7 (47%)	1 (7%)	15 (100%)
Teacher provides opportunities for learners to work in small groups	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	9 (60%)	15 (100%)
Teacher provides opportunities for learners to work in pairs	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	13 (87%)	15 (100%)
Teacher involves learners in individual work	6 (40%)	2 (13%)	7 (47%)	15 (100%)
Teacher involves learners in problem-solving activities	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	12 (80%)	15 (100%)
Teacher facilitates discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves	4 (27%)	7 (47%)	4 (27%)	15 (100%)

Table 7 shows that seven (47%) of the INSET teachers involved learners in class discussion adequately. The result shows also that seven (47%) of the INSET teacher involved their learners in class discussion barely adequately. Four (27%) of them asked questions and immediately they expected answers from the learners. Some, three (20%) teachers asked questions and failed or re-directed the same questions to other learners in class for them to involve all learners in the lesson. Some, four (27%) teachers failed to facilitate or direct learners step by step to discover/get information on their own.

One (7%) of the INSET teachers did not even involve learners in the class discussion. He used the traditional way of teaching i.e. (teacher –centered). He stood in front of the class

and solely supplied knowledge to the learners. Further the table shows also that three (20%) of the INSET teachers provided adequate opportunities for learners to work in small groups, while another three (20%) barely adequately provided opportunities for learners to work in small groups. Nine (60%) of the INSET teachers mainly used either whole class discussion or lecture method. Two (13%) of the INSET teachers provided opportunities for the learners to work in pairs while thirteen (87%) used/ applied either whole class discussions or discussion in small groups instead of work among pairs of learners.

The Table further indicates that eight (53%) of the INSET teachers involved their learners in individual work adequately, while seven (47%), inadequately involved learners in individual work. The Table also shows that only three (20%) of the INSET teachers involved their learners in problem solving activities while twelve (80%) were inadequate in that activity. Four (27%) of the INSET teachers facilitated discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves adequately, while seven (47%) of the INSET teachers barely facilitated discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves. The Table furthermore shows that four (27%) of the BETD INSET teachers inadequately facilitated discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves.

The result also shows that during the lessons presentation of seven (47%) teachers, learners interacted among themselves adequately. While during the lesson presentations of eight, (53%) INSET teachers, learners barely interacted themselves. Eight (53%) INSET teachers showed a good adequate interaction between themselves and the learners, while seven (47%) showed almost no interaction. Twelve (80%) of the INSET teachers directed the learning process all the time while three (20%) were not able to direct the learning process.

The results in Table 7 appear to show that the common class activity learners were actively involved in, in the BETD INSET teachers' classroom was class discussion. The results also indicate that learners were involved to a little extent in problem solving activities as well as in discovery learning.

## THE TEACHER'S ROLE

The teacher in the classroom has an important role to play that can help promote or demote active learner participation in the instructional process. Table 8 gives the roles that the BETD INSET teachers were involved in during the teaching and learning process.

**Table 8: The BETD INSET teachers' roles during the teaching and learning process (N= 15)**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Facilitating the instructional process	12 (80%)
Asking questions	12 (80%)
Building new knowledge on learners' previous knowledge	10 (67%)
Supporting discovery of information	9 (60%)
Explaining subject matter and new concept	9 (60%)
Allowing wait time of between 3-5 seconds	8 (53%)
Checking for learner's understanding	7 (47%)
Encouraging learners to think	7 (47%)
Directing and redirecting questions	6 (40%)
Creating learning opportunities that encourage discovery of information	6 (40%)

Table 8 shows that twelve (80%) of the BETD INSET teachers were able to facilitate the instructional process. Twelve (80%) of the BETD INSET teachers asked questions during the instructional process. Further, the results indicate that nine (60%) of the INSET teachers supported their learners during the teaching and learning process. The results also show that six (40%) of the INSET teachers directed and re-directed questions to learners during the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, the results indicate that eight (53%) of the INSET teachers waited for 3 to 5 seconds before they expected answers from their learners. The results also show that seven (47%) of the INSET teachers encouraged learners to think, while ten (67%) of the INSET teachers considered and build new knowledge on learner's previous knowledge.

Nine (60%) of the INSET teachers explained the subject matter and new concepts to the learners. The table further indicates, that seven (47%) of the INSET teachers checked the understanding of learners while they were teaching by asking questions.

The results further illustrate that six (40%) of the INSET teachers managed to create learning opportunities that encouraged discovery of subject knowledge.

The results reveal that about 60% of the BETD INSET graduate teachers have changed their classroom practice or role from teacher- centred, in which they regarded themselves as the sole suppliers of knowledge to the learner to LCE. The LCE approach encourages the construction of knowledge and active learner participation. In LCE, teachers became co-learners, resource persons and facilitators (MEC, 1993).

### **TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE TEACHER**

The types of questions the teachers ask can promote, stimulate and improve the quality and quantity of learner participation during the teaching and learning process.

#### **The types of questions asked by the BETD INSET teachers,**

A total of twenty (20) questioning instances were observed in the BETD INSET teachers' classes. Of these nine (45%) of the INSET teachers used factual questions during the lesson presentation, while eleven (55 %) of the INSET teachers used open or divergent questions.

The BETD INSET teachers who used open or divergent questions where asked to indicate why they used these questions. They indicated that open or divergent questions develop the thinking or reasoning capacity of learners. Further they held the view that open questions allowed the learners to develop the language skills and learn how to express themselves freely. Furthermore, they noted that by using open-ended questions the teachers determined the learners' understanding in order for them to give the appropriate support. *“By using open questions learners can express themselves freely and come up with their*

*own initiatives. This will direct the teacher how far learners know about the topic”, the BETD INSET teachers responded.*

The BETD INSET teachers further explained that they used open-ended questions in order to determine whether the learners could create knowledge on their own. *“I prefer open ended questions because by this type of questions learners learn how to think and create something on their own. Then later I must support and direct them where it needed,”* some INSET teachers commended. Another BETD INSET teacher added, *“I prefer open ended questions in order to get different information from learners and to arouse them so that they can participate actively by recognize their views.”*

The results of this study correspond with that of Brown (1975) who indicated that in class, learners must be asked open and higher order cognitive questions to enable them create new knowledge. He further contended that higher order questions require the learner to think and create or construct knowledge rather than just reproduce knowledge or information. This is exactly what the quoted BETD INSET teachers appear to be saying.

The results of this study also render support to Seeleer et al (1994) who concluded that open-ended questions stimulate learner participation during the teaching and learning process.

Some (33%) of the BETDINSET teachers further explained that sometimes they used closed ended questions in order to motivate their learners, especially the slow ones and to check whether certain definitions, concepts and formula (s) are learned or known.

It may be safely concluded that using questions during discussion, especially open-ended questions improves the quality and quantity of learner participation. Further according to the respondents close- ended questions also play an important role in the classroom especially in motivating the slow learners.

## THE LEARNERS' ROLES IN THE LEARNING PROCESS.

The learners in class have prominent role to play, i.e. contributing to the discussion, sharing the ideas, etc. and this promote active learner participation and interaction among learners as well as between the teacher and the learners during the instructional process.

**Table 9: The learners' role in the learning process (N=15 ).**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Contributing to the discussion	11 (42%)
Sharing the ideas	7 (27%)
Comments on other learners 'answers	4 (15%)
Asking questions for clarity	4 (15%)

A total of 26 instances were identified involving active learner participation in the lessons as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 shows that during lesson presentation, of eleven (42 %)of the BETD INSET teachers' classes, learners contributed to the class discussion and in seven (47%) BETD INSET teacher classes, learners shared ideas among themselves. Further, the results indicate that during the lesson presentation of four (15 %) of the BETD INSET teachers, learners were able to comment on other learners' answers while in four (15 %) of the BETD INSET teacher ' classes learners were free to ask questions for clarity.

The results indicate that less than a half of the learners actively participated during the instructional process.

The results presented under this section appear to indicate that the learners' role in the teaching and learning process has changed from being passive receivers to knowledge constructors. The results also indicate that in the lesson presentations of the BETD graduate teachers the learners contributed adequately to the class discussions.

## CLASS ORGANIZATION

In class, the teacher should arrange chairs (class seating) in such a way as to encourage active learner participation. Accordingly the classroom seating was in order to find out whether the BETD INSET teachers arranged class seating that encouraged active learner participation.

Although several methods of classroom arrangement are possible such as semi circle, large circle, round tables, horseshoe that may facilitate active learner participation, it was found that teachers used only two types of the class organization i.e. small groups by 60 % of the INSET teachers and rows and columns by 40 % of the other INSET teachers.

Although 60 % of the BETD INSET teachers observed used small groups as classroom arrangement in their classrooms, all participants (100%) interviewed answered that they prefer class seating in small groups.

The teachers elaborated on why they used or preferred class seating in small groups. They noted that seating in small groups, learners participated actively rather than in big groups, shared ideas, listened and corrected one another. *“I believe that in small groups or in pairs learners share ideas and learn better in this way”*, one teacher explained.

Teachers further reported that even learners themselves prefer seating or working in small groups and further resulted in working effectively.

*“I prefer them to sit in small groups for them to share ideas, but because the class is large this could not be applied”*, one INSET teacher added.

Another five (33%) of the INSET teachers indicated that they preferred all seating arrangements. The seating arrangement in class depended on that day activities.

During the observations of classes, the teachers' views were confirmed.

It was observed that in small groups or in pairs learners tended to ask more questions and more freely, contributed more to the discussions, listened and helped one another more often than in whole class lessons. The study seems to suggest that class organization has an

effect on active learner participation in the instructional process. Small groupings tended to enhance active learner participation as compared to whole class grouping or row and column seating arrangement.

## **TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH**

The mastery of the medium of instruction by both teachers and learners in the classroom affect the amount and quality of teacher and learner participation in lesson activities.

Table 10 gives information with regards to the observed teachers' proficiency in English during lessons.

**Table 10: Teachers' proficiency in English (N= 15).**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Teacher uses clear and appropriate language	8 (53%)
Teachers express themselves clearly and freely	8 (53%)
Teachers use simple and understandable words	7 (47%)
Teachers give clear instructions	6 (40 %)

Table 10 indicates that eight (53%) of the INSET teachers used clear and appropriate language. A similar number expressed themselves clearly and freely. Further, the table indicates that seven (47%) of the INSET teachers used simple and understandable words. Furthermore, the table indicates that six (40 %) of the INSET teachers gave clear instructions.

It was also observed that in the lesson presentation of seven (47%) of the INSET teachers, the learners expressed themselves clearly and freely.

The results indicate that about half (47%) of the teachers and more than half (53%) of the learners have problems in expressing themselves in English, which is the medium of instruction. The teachers failed to express themselves clearly and as a result learners did

not understand what the teachers wanted to say or wanted them to do. Furthermore, 53% of the teachers observed, had pronunciation problems and as a result learners themselves pronounced words wrongly and sometimes seemed not to understand what the teacher was trying to say.

It was observed that language problem was one of the major obstacles that prevented teachers to express themselves freely and explain the subject clearly to the learners. It also appeared to curtail sustained learner exchanges during discussions.

Twelve (80%) of the INSET teachers interviewed indicated that the language problem had been observed as one of the factors that hindered learner participation in their classrooms. Further, the researcher observed that proficiency in English prevented many learners from participating actively in lesson activities since they found it difficult to express themselves clearly in that language.

This study seems to support Karlsson's (1999) findings that learners who are not confident in English do not contribute or ask question in class. As a result, they are left out of class activities as passive observers, through none participation. Further, it also confirmed Calvin's (1987) conclusion that the lack of proficiency in the English language prevents many learners to take part in classes. They do not contribute or ask questions during general discussions because they are unable to speak fluently.

The three teachers observed teaching Oshindonga, which is a mother tongue expressed themselves clearly and freely, and the learners participated actively, which led to active learning.

## EFFECTS OF CLASSROOM SIZE ON ACTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Classroom size has an effect or influence on active learner participation during the instructional process.

**Table 11: Influence of Classroom Size on learner participation (N=15)**

<b>Class size</b>	<b>Frequencies %)</b>
Large (40 +) learners	8 (53%)
Average (35-39) learners	4 (27%)
Small (0-30) learners	3 (20%)
<b>Total</b>	15 (100%)

Table 11 indicates that eight (53%) of the BETD INSET teachers taught large classes of forty learners and above. Four (27%) of the BETD INSET teachers taught average classes of thirty five to thirty nine learners, while three (20%) of the BETD INSET teachers taught small classes of less than thirty learners.

The results indicate that the instructional process of (53%) of the teachers took place in large classes of 40 to sometimes 55 learners, while the instructional process of three (20%) of the teachers took place in small classes of 30 learners or less.

It was also observed that in large classes the teachers experienced difficulty in giving individual attention to each and every learner in class. As a result some learners, especially the slow learners were usually left behind, did not participate in class activities and, watched as passive observers to classroom activities.

*“Because classes are very large, this gives us difficulty to reach each and every learner during the instructional process,”* one teacher responded.

Subsequently, this study appears to confirm that large classes hinder the active participation of learners in class activities.

## RESOURCES IN THE BETD INSET CLASSES.

For the learners to participate actively and to learn effectively they must have access to resources and other teaching and learning materials. These resources usually make explicit the content being taught.

Table 12 gives the BETD INSET teachers' responses to the question on the availability of a variety of teaching and learning resources in their schools.

**Table 12: Availability of resources and other teaching and learning materials in schools visited (N=15).**

Resources	Frequency %			
	Available	Not available	Few	Shared
Chalkboard	15 (100%)	0	0	0
Text books	1 (7 %)	0	0	14 (93%)
Library	5 (33%)	10 (67 %)	0	0
Laboratories	2 (13%)	13 (87 %)	0	0
Magazines	0	11 (73 %)	4 (27%)	0
Newspapers	0	11 (73 %)	4 (27%)	0
Photo copying machines	5 (33%)	10 (67 %)	0	0
Posters	0	6 (40%)	9 (60%)	0

The results in Table 12 indicate that in all thirteen (100%) schools visited, chalkboards were available. Only one teacher was found with enough textbooks available for each and every learner in class, while in fourteen BETD INSET teachers' classes textbooks were shared among four to five learners. Only five BETD INSET teachers were found have libraries available at their schools, while the other ten had none. These ten INSET teachers have storerooms instead of libraries and learners do not have access to the resources. Two (13) five BETD INSET teachers have laboratories while 13 (87) INSET teachers do not have any. Without laboratories as well as other practical teaching and learning facilities, teachers could not present or explain their subjects clearly. Eleven BETD INSET teachers do not have magazines or the newspapers respectively, while only four, have got a few of

these. Five BETD INSET teachers have photocopying machines at their schools, while ten (67%) have nothing. It was also observed that posters were not available in five BETD INSET teachers' schools, while ten had a few.

The unavailability of teaching and learning resources and facilities observed hampered the practice of active learner participation in the BETD INSET teacher's classrooms

**THE RESPONSES OF THE BETD INSET TEACHERS TO THE QUESTIONS REGARDING PRACTICE OF ACTIVE LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS**

The following section presents answers to a number of questions that sought to find out the BETD INSET teachers' practice of active learner participation.

Interviews were conducted to confirm and consolidated what had been observed regarding active learner participation in the BETD INSET teachers classes.

**Question 1: How do you design teaching and learning activities that enable you to actively involve learners in the teaching and learning process?**

The responses to this question are given in Table13.

**Table13: How BETD INSET teachers design teaching and learning activities to enhance active learners involvement in the teaching and learning process (N= 15)**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (%)*</b>
Design teaching and learning activities based on learner's previous knowledge	9 (60%)
Prepare teaching and learning aids to motivate learners and to let them understand better the lesson	7 (47%)
Design teaching and learning activities based on learner's level of understanding	4 (27%)
Taking the environment into account when teaching	3 (20%)
Teacher introduces the lesson and explains of what is to be done	2 (13%)

\*Frequencies are more than the participants, because in most cases the teachers gave more than one answer.

Table 13 indicates that nine (60%) of the BETD INSET teachers indicated that before introducing the lesson for the day, they first had to check the learner's prior knowledge, then from there they linked the new knowledge (subject matter) to the previous knowledge.

Four (27%) of the INSET teachers responded that they had to check the learner's level of understanding, then design activities based on the level of the learners understanding. By doing this, the learners are expected to easily follow and participate actively in the lesson.

Three (20%) of the INSET teachers responded that before designing the class activities, they had to take the environment into account. According to them, the subject matter could be explained better by using the learner's environment and this resulted in better understanding of the content.

Seven (47%) of the INSET teachers indicated that during the designing of the teaching and learning activities for the day, they had also to prepare teaching and learning materials to assist learners to understand the subject matter easily and to motivate them.

Furthermore, the table shows that two (13%) of the INSET teachers indicated that before explaining the subject matter in detail to the learners they first had to introduce the lesson or topic and then explain clearly what is to be done.

## **Question 2: Which teaching methods do you normally use in the instructional Process?**

For the teachers to employ active learner participation they have to engage learners in the teaching and learning activities by using the participatory teaching and learning methods in the instructional process. Table 14 shows the teaching methods chosen by the BETD INSET teachers that they use in order to encourage and practice active learner participation in their classrooms.

**Table 14: The teaching methods used by the BETD INSET teachers (N= 15).**

<b>Teaching method</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Question and answer	14 (34%)
Class Discussion	1 (34%)
Lecture method	4 (10%)
Experiential learning	4 (10%)
Discovery learning	4 (10%)
Textbook method	1 (2%)

To this question, participants answered as indicated in Table 14. Fourteen (34%) used the question and answer method and the same number i.e. 14 or 34% used the whole class discussion, (in pairs or in small groups) by posing questions to the learners. Four (10%) of the INSET teachers used lecture method, four (10%) of the INSET teachers used inquiry/experiential method to present their lessons, and another four (10%) used the discovery method to present their lessons. Only one (2%) of the INSET teachers used the textbook method.

The information presented in Table 14 shows that the class teaching skills of the BETD INSET teachers had changed to be in line with the new LCE teaching approach. It must be noted that during the class discussions, the learners were observed to participate actively, paid more attention to what to contribute to the discussion, asked questions, shared ideas and learned from one another. Further, during the class discussions, the learners discovered and constructed knowledge by themselves, rather than to being spoon-fed and then re – produce information. Further the question and answer method appeared to promote good interaction between the teachers and the learners, and among learners themselves. By this way learners learn actively. The findings of this study agreed with the MEC (1993) and Warren (1996) for example, who indicated that learning is an active and interactive process whereby individuals are encouraged to construct meaning for themselves and create knowledge by sharing experiences with others through collaborative interaction.

**Question 3: How does the class and school environment at large contribute to learner participation in the teaching and learning process?**

Different factors in the class and school environment can contribute to active or passive learner participation in the teaching and learning process. The class and school environment should be conducive to learning, for the learners to participate actively and to learn effectively. Table 15 gives the responses to question 3.

**Table 15: Factors in the class and school environmental that contribute to learner participation in the teaching and learning process (N= 15).**

<b>Environmental factors</b>	<b>Frequencies (%)</b>
Lack of teaching and learning facilities	8 (15 %)
Classes are overcrowded	8 (15 %)
Poor involvement of parents	8 (15 %)
Shortage of chairs & desks	7 (13 %)
Classes have broken windows	7 (13 %)
Classroom roofs have holes in them	5 (9 %)
Lack of electricity	5 (9 %)
Schools are unprotected as a result, facilities are stolen	3 (5 %)
Classroom environment is fine	3 (5%)
School built close to the main road	1 (2%)

Frequencies are more than the participants, because in most cases the teacher gave more than one answer.

Regarding the effect of the class and school environment on learner participation, the participants indicated that the, “*classroom environment in our classes and the school at large is not conducive at all and this lead to passive participation of learners.*”

Eight (15%) of the INSET teachers experienced a problem of large classes, while another eight (15%) of them had a problem with the lack of teaching and learning facilities,

textbooks and other educational resources which hampered the practice of active learner participation.

Seven (13%) of the BETD INSET teachers indicated that their classroom environment was not conducive to teaching because their class windows are broken and this hampered the teaching and learning process, especially during the rainy and winter seasons. Five (9%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their classroom roofs have holes in them, and rain comes in during the rainy season making it difficult for learners to concentrate. A further seven (13%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their classes do not have enough chairs and desks for all learners. In most cases the learners have to share desks and sit on broken chairs or on the floor.

Five (9%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their classrooms and the school at large did not have electricity. This according to them prevented the use of most of the teaching and learning aids that may require electricity. Three (5%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their classes and school environment were not conducive to teaching and learning because the school lacked protection. As a result the little teaching aids they had were stolen.

One (2%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their school is built close to the main road, as a result learners are tempted to look through the windows when cars pass by.

Three BETD INSET teachers (5%) indicated that they had a friendly and conducive classrooms environment.

**Question 4: Do you think that the teaching and learning facilities and resources at your school are adequate to facilitate effective teaching and learning?**

**Explain your response.**

The results indicated that two (13%) of the BETD INSET teachers had adequate resources at their schools, while thirteen (87 %) said they had inadequate teaching and learning facilities and resources. This, they observed worsened the lack of active learner participation in the lessons.

**Question 5 What factors/considerations do you usually take into account when you are to introduce a new subject matter/topic to the class?**

The BETD INSET teachers indicated that the following factors (see Table16) are taken into account when they introduce a new subject matter/topic to the class.

**Table 16: Factors that the INSET teachers take into account when introducing a new topic to the class (N= 15).**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Pre-knowledge of learners should be considered	13 (39%)
New and difficult words should be considered and explained	4 (12%)
Environment in which the learners are should be taken in to account	4 (12%)
Understanding of learners	3 (9%)
Stage of development of learners	3 (9%)
A teacher must prepare an appropriate teaching aids	2 (6%)
Needs of learners should be taken in to account	1 (3%)
Background of the learners	1 (3%)
Interests of the learners	1 (3%)
Teachers sometimes should consult his/her colleagues for assistance or do cross teaching	1 (3%)

Table 16 indicates that thirteen (39%) of the INSET teachers indicated that firstly, they had to consider the pre-knowledge of the learners. Four (12%) indicated that the environment in which the learners are should also be taken into account, while another four (12%) of the participants indicated that to introduce a new subject matter to the learners, they have to consider new and difficult words first.

Three (9%) of the INSET teachers take into account the development stages of their learners and their understanding and another two (6 %) indicated that they prepared appropriate teaching aids to assist the learners. One teacher (3%) responded that the needs of the learners should be considered and the lesson should then be presented accordingly, and one (3 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that the background of the learners must be taken into account. Further, one more teacher (3%) indicated that teachers should take into account the learners' interests whenever they introduced a new topic.

From the results in Table 16 it became clear that 39% of the INSET teachers tended to find out what the learners knew already and then linked the new knowledge to the existing knowledge. By taking into account the learners' pre-knowledge, the teachers were trying to enhance the learners' understanding and active participation in the lessons. The results also confirmed the constructivists' theories that indicated that, if teachers want the learners to learn something new, then new learning experiences should be based on what the learners know already.

The same Table 16 shows that 12 % of the INSET teachers introduced the new subject matter within the learner's context. By doing this, the INSET teachers indicated that the learners would understand better the lesson and learn the content easily. They further added that this promoted active learner participation in the instructional process.

The results also indicated that nine percent of the INSET teachers took into account the understanding and developmental stage of the learners when preparing their lessons. "*We usually organize teaching and learning activities according to the developmental stage and understanding of our learners*", the INSET teachers responded.

This seems to show a positive change of the BETD INSET teachers to a new teaching methodology that encourages, active learner participation in the lesson.

**Question 6: What type of questions do you usually use during the teaching and learning process?**

The results indicated that all fifteen teachers (100%) used open or divergent questions, while ten teachers (67%) also used closed questions.

The teachers elaborated on why they used these questions. They noted that open or divergent questions developed the thinking or reasoning capacity of the learners. Further, they held the view that open questions allowed the learners to develop the language skills and learn how to express themselves freely. Furthermore they noted that by using open-ended questions the teachers determined the learners' understanding in order for them to give the appropriate support. The BETDINSET teachers further explained that they used open-ended questions in order to determine whether the learners could create knowledge on their own.

Some, (67 %) The BETDINSET teachers further explained that sometimes they used close-ended questions in order to motivate their learners, especially the slow ones and to check whether certain definitions, concepts and formula are learned or known.

**Question 7: Which strategies do you use to involve all learners in teaching?**

The BETD INSET teachers used various attention gaining techniques or strategies to arouse the learners' interest and to involve them in the class activities. The strategies used are given in Table 17.

**Table 17: Strategies used by INSET teachers to involve learners in the instructional process (N= 15).**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Frequency (%) *</b>
Teacher directs question to a learner who does not show involvement	11 (25 %)
Teacher calls learner by name	8 (18%)
Remedial teaching is given to slow learners	7 (15%)
Teachers encourage and motivate learners by talking to them	5 (11%)
Teacher makes jokes to learners	5 (11%)
Teacher gives the learner responsibility. For example, to be a secretary or a reporter to the group	4 (9 %)
Teacher changes the method of teaching	2 (4 %)
Teacher gives a particular learner an activity to do	2 (4 %)

\*Number of responses are more than the participants because some gave more than one response.

The results in Table 17 indicate that the INSET teachers used the following strategies in teaching their learners in the teaching- learning process. Eleven (25 %) used to direct a question to a particular learner who did not show involvement in the lesson. Eight (18%) indicated that they called learners by name although they did not raise their hands. Two (4 %) of the INSET teachers responded that they involved all their learners by giving them activities to do, specifically those who are not actively involved. Four INSET teachers (9 %) responded to the question that learners who were not involved in the lesson, are given certain responsibilities to carry, for example to be a secretary or a group reporter. Five INSET teachers (11%) responded that the slow learners in class are given remedial teaching for them to be at the same level with their classmates while a similar number of five (11%) of the teachers indicated that they encouraged and motivated the learners to take their education seriously since it is the key to a better future. Furthermore, five teachers (11%) indicated that during the instructional process they also made jokes and this awakened the learners to participate in the instructional process. Two (4 %) of the teachers indicated that they usually changed the teaching methods to ensure learner understanding.

From the findings it became clear that the BETD INSET teachers used different attention-gaining techniques, i.e. asking questions, calling the learner by name, making jokes, to involve the learners during the instructional process. According to them in many instances the unmotivated learners participated poorly in the teaching and learning activities and this lead to poor performance.

The results of this study do not support Mwamwenda (1996) who observed and concluded that the teachers had a tendency to concentrate on a few pupils mainly those who raise hands willingly and forget those who do not put their hands. Although the majority of the learners fall into this second group the teachers tended to be inclusive of all learners in the class. Nonetheless the none raising of hands results in low learner classroom participation.

**Question 8 : What type of class organization do you favor and Why?**

Table 18 indicates the types of class organization favoured by the INSET teachers in order to encourage active learner participation.

**Table18: Type of class organization favoured by INSET teachers (N= 15)**

<b>Class organization</b>	<b>Frequency (%)*</b>
Small groups	15 (52%)
Columns and rows	5 (17 %)
Pairs	9 (31 %)

\*Number of responses are more than the participants because some of them gave more than one answer.

Table18 shows that fifteen (52 %) of the BETD INSET teachers favoured learners to sit in small groups. On the other hand nine (31%) of the respondents preferred also their learners to sit in pairs, while the other five (17%) said they also used columns and rows depending on the activity of the day.

**Question 9: What are the factors that hinder learner participation in your classroom?  
How do you overcome them?**

The BETD INSET teachers indicated the various factors that hindered them from practicing active learner participation in their classrooms. These are illustrated in Table 19

**Table 19: Factors that hinder learner participation in the BETD INSET teachers' classrooms (N=15).**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Learners have language problems	12 (11.7 %)
Lack enough textbooks and other teaching and learning facilities	12 (11.7 %)
Shyness among learners	11 (10.7 %)
Poor encouragement from the class mates	11 (10.7%)
Automatic promotion of learners	9 (8.8 %)
Too large classes of 40 + learners	8 (7.8 %)
Poor co-operation and poor involvement of parents in the education of their children	8 (7.8 %)
Poor classroom conditions	7 (6.8 %)
Hunger among learners	4 (3.9 %)
Absenteeism among learners	4 (3.9 %)
Poor collaboration among learners to work in small groups	3 (2.9 %)
Environmental factors	3 (2.9 %)
Low income of parents	2 (1.9 %)
Learners with special educational needs who attending mainstream	2 (1.9 %)
Curriculum irrelevant to learners' needs	2 (1.9 %)
Lack of inner-interest / motivation among learners	2 (1.9 %)
Transfer of learners from one school to another	1 (0.9 %)
Poor preparation for the lessons by the teachers	1 (0.9%)

In Table 19, the BETD INSET teachers indicated the following factors as having a negative effect on active learner participation during the teaching and learning process.

- Learners have language problem:

In Table 19, eleven point seven (11.7 %) percent of the BETD INSET teachers indicated that learners found it difficult to say or to ask something in class because they could not express themselves well in English. The INSET teachers concluded that the language problem is one of the major obstacles hampering the active participation of learners during the teaching and learning process.

To overcome this problem they (INSET teachers) encouraged learners to speak more and read more novels, newspapers, and magazines and to use the dictionary as much as possible. One respondent said, *“We have a rule at our school that nobody is allowed to speak in vernacular language in the school compound”*. They further added that, *“they make use of tape recorder, radio”*, so that learners may be exposed to different speakers.

- Lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning facilities:

Eleven point seven percent of the INSET teachers indicated that they experienced lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning facilities in their classes as well as at their schools. The unavailability or sharing of teaching and learning facilities and resources hindered the INSET teachers from practicing active learner participation in their classrooms. The MBESC should provide enough teaching and learning materials and infrastructure to promote active learner participation in the teaching and learning process

- Poor encouragement from the classmates:

Ten point seven percent of the INSET teachers indicated in Table19 that the learners experienced poor encouragement from the classmates by laughing at one another. This kind of behavior and the unhealthy support from classmates (i.e laughing at one another) caused

shyness among learners. As a result, the learners sat passively and listened to the teacher because, he/she was afraid to mention or ask something and to be laughed at.

The INSET teachers tried to encourage and motivate the learners to talk freely and reprimanded others who laughed at their classmates whenever they made a mistake. *“In most cases I prefer to re- direct the same question to the one who laughed,”* one INSET teacher added. So, the INSET teachers often tried to seriously talk to the particular learners and let them understand that one learns by mistakes.

- Automatic promotion:

Nine (8.8 %) of the INSET teachers indicated in Table 19 that some learners had been promoted automatically from one grade to the next grade without mastering activities and content of the previous grade. *“ For example, in the lower and upper primary phase, most of the learners been automatically promoted according to their ages, without knowing how to read, write or count, and this affects so much active learner participation in class activities. Some learners can even reach grade 7 or 8 without knowing how to read”*, the INSET teachers responded. They further indicated that in most cases automatic promotion promoted higher failure rates especially in Junior Secondary School. The INSET teachers suggested that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture should re- consider this issue, so as to improve the quality of education given to the learners.

- Large classes:

In Table 19, eighty (7.8%) of the INSET teachers indicated that their classes were too large. *“Teaching 40- 55 learners in one class hampering the practice of active learner participation,”* the INSET teachers responded. Further they indicated that in large classes they found it difficult to control the participation of each and every learner. It was also difficult to design the teaching and learning experiences according to the needs and interests of the individual learners.

- Poor co-operation and involvement of the parents in the education of their children:

Seven point eight percent of the INSET teachers indicated that there was poor co-operation and involvement of the parents in the education of their children. This seems to indicate that there was a need for a healthy relationship between the parents and the teachers so that both can support and help the learners to participate actively during the instructional process. The BETD INSET teachers elaborated further that, the parents must understand the worth of Education of their children, because in most cases the parents absented their children from school without valid reasons and this affected active participation of learners. Furthermore, 40 % of the learners came to school without writing materials and as a result they were not able to take part in the teaching and learning activities.

- Hunger among learners:

In table 19 four (3.9 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that some of the learners came to school without having eaten anything and apart from that they did not bring anything along to eat with them. As a result of hunger they felt weak, dozed, never participated, contributed nothing, and fell asleep in class

- Absenteeism among learners:

In table 19, four (3.9 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that some of the learners absented themselves frequently from school. The frequent absence of learners from the school without valid reasons hampered the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process, since the learners often lacked the background knowledge and information. Therefore, the parents as well as the learners should be encouraged to take education very seriously.

- Environmental factors:

In table 19, two point nine (2.9 %) percent of the teachers indicated that the environment in which the child is contributed a lot to his/her participation during the instructional process.

The INSET teachers further said that the learners from ‘poor locations’ and those from the villages (stock houses) who were not exposed to any media in their homes or their parents did not know how to speak and write English, participated poorly during the teaching and learning process in comparison with children from the urban or semi-urban towns who were exposed to the various media and had educated parents. The INSET teachers further confirmed that the home environment appeared to affect the mental capability of the learners and their participation in class activities.

- Poor economic condition and low income of parents:

In table 19, two (1.9%) of the INSET teachers indicated that the parent’s poor economic condition had a negative effect on the active participation of learners in class activities. Many learners came to school without notebooks, pens or pencils. As a result, they were not able to take part in doing class activities. Instead they sat quietly, passively watching the other learners. In most cases they wasted time walking from one class to another, asking for a pen. As one BETD INSET teacher observed *“Sometimes the situation in which parents live prevent them from helping their children effectively.”*

The teachers emphasised that the poor economic condition in which the learners found themselves was one of the major problems contributing to passive learners participation in many of their classes and schools at large

- Learners with special educational needs who attend mainstream instruction:

In table 19, two INSET teachers (1.9 %) indicated that they found it difficult to adequately involve learners with special education needs who attended mainstream classes. These learners required more special attention, which the INSET teachers could not provide, and as a result could not let them participate actively during the teaching and learning process especially since in most cases the classes are overcrowded. MBESC should therefore, provide special classrooms or schools with specialized teachers in which learners with special education needs could be attended to fully.

- Lack of inner interest or motivation:

In table 19, two teachers (1.9 %) indicated that some learners lacked inner interest or motivation. As a result they sat passively in the classrooms. The teachers explained that in order to get them involved they had to talk to both the learners and their parents. Further, they added that in order to improve the learners' inner interest or motivation to become actively involved in the instructional process, the teachers, the school principals and the parents should encourage the learners by giving them rewards as a way of motivating them. Motivated learners participated actively in the teaching and learning process as Mwamwenda (1996), observed.

- Poor teacher preparation for the lesson:

In table 19, (0.9 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that the teachers who used to go to teach without being prepared themselves thoroughly, found it difficult to involve learners in the class activities. In order to practice active learner participation, teachers should prepare in advance thoroughly for the teaching and learning activities to be done successfully in class.

**Question 10: Would you say the BETD INSET programme was useful and helpful to you in providing alternatives of changing your classroom practice?**

All fifteen (100%) of the BETD INSET teachers interviewed responded positively that the INSET programme was useful and helpful to them in providing alternatives to changing their classroom practice for the better.

Table 20 gives the reasons why the BETD INSET teachers thought the programme was useful and helpful in improving their practice.

**Table 20: Reasons why the BETD INSET programme was viewed as useful and helpful to the participants (N= 15).**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
They learned how to use different teaching methods i.e. discussion, inquiry and discovery for them to involve learners during the teaching and learning practice	15 (16 %)
They learned that learners also can create and contribute knowledge /ideas to the lesson, so discussion between teacher and learner or among themselves is important	15 (16 %)
Communication is improved through the BETD INSET programme	8 (8.6 %)
They learned that learners can construct/create their own knowledge	8 (8.6 %)
Learned how to assist learners with special educational needs	7 (7.5 %)
The BETD INSET programme improves their subject knowledge	6 (6.4 %)
They learned how to apply remedial teaching to slow learners	6 (6.4 %)
They learned how to prepare teaching aids from local materials	6 (6.4 %)
The BETD INSET programme enlightened them on that the environment is also an important factor in the development of learners	5 (5.7 %)
They learned how to talk to a colleague if they have certain problem (s) in their classes or with a certain topic	5 (5.7 %)
They learned how to identify and solve problems in their own classrooms	4 (4.3 %)
They learned to consult community, the expert (s) for certain topics in which they are not competent enough	4 (4.3 %)
They learned a lot on how to apply the four educational goals, i.e. access, equity, quality and democracy in their own classrooms	4 (4.3 %)

As indicated in Table 20, it became clear that the BETD INSET programme was viewed as useful and helpful to the participants. The BETD INSET teachers learned how to use different teaching methods i.e. discussion, inquiry and discovery for them to involve learners during the teaching and learning practice. Further, they learned that learners also can create and contribute knowledge /ideas to the lesson, so discussions between the teacher and the learner or among learners themselves is important. The BETD INSET teachers indicated that communication is improved through the BETD INSET programme. Furthermore, through the BETD INSET programme, they learned that learners can construct/create their own knowledge.

**Question 11: What kind of support would you need from the MBESC, NIED and the regional office and community at large to implement active learner participation you classrooms?**

The BETD INSET teachers answered that they might need the following support from MBESC, NIED, Regional Office and Community / Parents for them to implement learner participation effectively:

**1. MBESC**

All fifteen teachers (100%) felt that the MBESC should provide enough and on time the teaching and learning materials, textbooks, resources, posters and chinks to schools. They further indicated that MBESC should make sure that the schools have libraries, laboratories and facilities in the different subjects so that the learners may have adequate information and for the teachers to work effectively and sufficiently. Inadequate textbooks, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure worsened the implementation of LCE and active learner participation in particular.

The BETD INSET teachers further suggested that the Ministry should re-consider and investigate the practice of automatic promotion in the lower primary grades. The automatic promotion of learners from grade to grade they insisted is worsening the provision of quality instruction.

They further suggested that the Ministry should support the school effects by supplying enough teachers in schools to curb the problem of high teacher/learner ratio of 45- 55 learners in classes, which hinders the teachers from reaching each and every learner.

All teachers who hold other qualifications other than the BETD, should go through the BETD In-service programme for them to familiarize themselves with the new teaching methods. They further insisted that those teachers are still using the traditional way of teaching, (i.e. teacher- centered).

Three (20 %) of the BETD INSET teachers further suggested that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture should emphasize community expert/ classroom teacher collaboration. Six (40 %) of the BETD INSET teachers furthermore indicated that the MBESC should build enough and modern classrooms with electricity for them to use the teaching and learning aids that may require electricity.

## **2. NIED**

One (7%) of the INSET teachers felt that the NIED should replace or re-write the Oshindonga and the Oshikwanyama literature because the existing ones have been used for many years and have now become old and boring to the learners. The similar number felt that NIED should write and send a circular to all the schools in which they would indicate the importance and necessity of collaboration between the teacher and the community expert. Three (20%) of the INSET teachers suggested that NIED should conduct more in-service training and supply more support to the advisory teachers.

### **3. Regional Office:**

Nine (60%) of the BETD INSET teachers felt that the regional officials should visit schools and see for themselves the situation of classes and of schools for them to improve the situations that hinder active learner participation in the learning process.

Ten (66%) of the BETD INSET teachers also felt the regional officials should organize meetings and motivate parents to explain to them the importance of schooling and how they can help in maintaining quality. The Regional officials should organize and conduct workshops, continue with in- service training, to empower and equip teachers with sufficient information on subject knowledge and teaching skills.

Further four (26 %) of the INSET teachers indicated that the regional officials should also motivate teachers to use more teaching and learning aids because this will motivate and assist the learners to understand the lesson more. Another two (13%) of the respondent requested that the regional office should offer them accommodation, especially those teachers staying very far from school.

### **4. Community and Parents:**

Twelve (80 %) of the BETD INSET teachers felt the support from the parents is necessary. The parents should get fully involved in the education process of their children. The Parents should attend the parents-teachers meetings and do class visits to see their children's work. A similar number of the BETD INSET teachers indicated that the parents should be encouraged to motivate their children to come to school every day and to do their homework too. The parents should also assist their children by providing them with enough study time. A similar number further indicated that there must be good co- operation between teachers and parents regarding the education of the learners. Few teachers (27%) indicated that the community and parents around the school is supportive and would like them to continue.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter will deal with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the research findings and discussions.

#### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to find out whether the BETD INSET graduate teachers practiced and encouraged active learner participation in their classrooms. It also sought to find out whether the BETD INSET graduate teachers organized their classroom sittings in a way that promoted active learner participation. The study also sought to find out if the mastery of the medium of instruction (English) by both teachers and learners in classrooms affected learner participation in lesson activities. Further, the study also attempted to find out the factors, which, might be hindering active learner participation in the instructional process.

#### **Questions of the study**

This study addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent do BETD INSET graduate teachers design learning activities that encourage active learner participation in the instructional process?
2. To what extent do BETD INSET graduate teachers design learning activities that enable them to practice active learner participation in the instructional process?
3. To what extent does class interaction take place in the BETD INSET graduate teachers classrooms that encourage active learner participation?
4. What methods do the BETD INSET graduate teachers use in their instructional process?

5. To what extent do the learners construct knowledge for themselves?
6. To what extent does the classroom organization encourage active learning?
  
7. What factors hinder the use of active learner participation?

In order to find out the BETD INSET graduate teacher's classroom practice with respect to active learner participation, interviews as well as observations of these teachers' classroom practice were conducted.

The interview and observation schedules were designed taking in to consideration the following points:

- The classroom and school environment factors that contribute to active learner participation.
  
- Type of classroom activities the BETD INSET graduate teachers designed. Did these activities promote active learner participation and the interaction among learners themselves as well as interaction between the teacher and the learners?
  
- What teaching methods do the BETD INSET graduate teachers use during the instructional process. Do these methods encourage active learner participation?
  
- The types of questions the BETD INSET graduate teachers use during the instructional process. Do these questions stimulate learners to think and construct knowledge on their own?
  
- What type of classroom organization (arrangement of chairs and desks) do the BETD INSET teachers favor? Does the classroom organization stimulate active learner participation?

- Proficiency in the medium of instruction by teachers and learners. Do teachers as well as learners express themselves clearly in English, the medium of instruction?
- The availability of resources to the teachers and learners. Do teachers and learners have access to the resources as well as other teaching and learning facilities?

The purpose of interviews was to solicit the views, experiences and practices of the BETD INSET teachers regarding active learner participation in their classes. In addition, three lessons of each of the 15 BETD INSET teachers were observed. Classroom observations provided the researcher with the opportunity to actually observe how the teachers practiced active learner involvement and the class interactions during the instructional process.

The data obtained were analyzed using frequency tables.

The findings of this study seem to indicate the following: The majority of the teachers (87%) created a healthy teacher – learner interaction that fostered active learner participation in the instructional process. It was also observed that the instruction of 67% of the BETD INSET teachers took place in poor classroom conditions, and this hampered active learner participation.

It was also observed that, seventy percent of the BETD INSET teachers had changed their old teaching practice i.e. from teacher –centred to a learner – centred approach. In most cases the teachers tried to involve learners in the instructional process by asking them questions. The results showed that the most common classroom activities in which learners participated actively were either whole class, or small group discussions.

Teacher- centred lecturing was used by 30% of the teachers. However, the results showed that 40 % of the BETD INSET teachers practiced discovery and experiential learning in their classrooms. The results also showed that learners were little involved in problem solving and discovery of knowledge through hands on activities.

The results of this study indicate that more than half (60%) of the BETD INSET teachers involved learners in the lesson by using various strategies, while seventy –three percent of the teachers directed questions to the learners who did not show any involvement. This was the most common procedure of the teachers. Fifty –three percent of the BETD INSET teachers called learners by name to involve them in the lesson. In some instances, 67 % of the teachers asked questions to get learners’ prior– knowledge. It was observed that the questions posed by the BETD INSET teachers to the learners increased their participation in the instructional process.

More than half, 60% of the BETD INSET teachers used open or divergent questions. According to the BETD INSET teachers, open- ended questions stimulated and promoted learning with understanding in the learners. Forty percent (40%) of the teachers asked factual questions. Factual questions stimulate motivation among learners especially the slow ones and were used to check whether certain definitions, concepts and formula were learned or known.

The results also indicated that the learners’ role had changed from passive receivers to knowledge constructors. To a large extent (73 %) of the learners made contributions to the class discussion by answering and asking the teacher questions. However to a small extent (30 %) of the learners formulated concepts and learned by doing.

The results further indicated that 50 % of the INSET teachers preferred their learners to sit in small groups. By this way learners had the opportunity to see each others faces and were much more willing to share ideas and support one another. Further, it was observed that in small groups learners tended to participate more actively than in large groups, because they were not shy or afraid. The other members in the group tended to pay more attention to what is been discussed.

Further, the study indicated that in most cases, 53 % of the instructional process, the learners showed understanding and participated actively. When they failed to participate or said nothing, the reasons were that the learners did not understand English very well or failed to express themselves in English. In some cases, 47% of the teachers did not express themselves well or clearly or did not explain enough what was to be done or discussed.

During the Oshindonga lessons, the teachers and learners expressed themselves clearly and freely and learner participation was at a maximum as compared to subjects in which English was used as the medium of instruction.

The results indicated that fifty- three percent (53 %) of the BETD INSET teachers taught large classes of forty learners and above, while only 20% taught small classes of less than thirty learners. The BETD INSET teachers found teaching large classes difficult and hampered active learner participation since they could not interact with each individual learner.

The research findings also show that the BETD INSET teachers could not practice active learner participation maximum ally because of the lack of textbooks, libraries, laboratories and other teaching and learning facilities.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

From the results of this study it seems that the BETD INSET programme appeared to have an effect on the teachers' practice in the classroom. It also seems as if the teachers have changed their teaching methods as required by the new teaching philosophy of LCE in Namibian schools that promote active learner participation. The discussion method was observed as a common teaching method used by the BETD INSET teachers in their classrooms.

However, most of the BETD INSET graduate teachers observed seemed to have a misconception of the LCE approach and group work. It seems, to most (70 %) of them the LCE approach is only when learners sit in small groups and do group work.

Discovery and experiential methods were practiced little by 40% in the BETD INSET teachers classrooms. It was also found that, the following factors hindered the practice of active learner participation in the BETD INSET teachers' classes;

They are as follows:

- The schools lack resources and other teaching aids.
- Large classes.
- Some learners are shy to express themselves.
- Teachers and learners poor proficiency in English.
- The parents are not involved in their children's education. They do not seem to help them with school homework and also they do not make time available for them to do their studies.
- Poor classroom conditions or environments with a lack of textbooks, teaching and learning facilities. Some classes do not have enough chairs and desks. As a result the learners do not feel comfortable and tend to participate poorly in class activities. Some classes have broken windows, so active learner participation could not be fostered to a maximum in these classrooms.
- Automatic learner promotion to higher grades without mastering basic competencies of lower grades.
- Absenteeism among learners. This has a negative effect on the learners since they will not be able to master all the class activities that took place when they were absent.
- Hunger among learners. Learners who used to come to school without having eaten anything used to withdraw their attention from the teaching and learning process and participated little in the lesson activities.
- Poor home environmental factors. In some homes learners are not exposed to any media and their parents are uneducated with less support to their education. All these factors contributed to passive learner participation in lesson activities.
- Low income of parents. Because of the low income of many parents, many learners used to come to school without notebooks, pens, or pencils. As a result in class, they would not be able to take part in doing class activities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations follow from the results of this study:

### **A. The BETD INSET Programme**

The following recommendations pertain to the BETD INSET programme.

It is recommended that:

1. During the BETD INSET contact sessions, tutors should give more emphasis and more guidelines on how the BETD INSET teachers could facilitate the discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves in their own classrooms.
2. The BETD INSET teachers should be given more assistance and more training in how to involve their learners in hands on experience, learning by doing and how to solve problems on their own. This will encourage learners to think and learn with understanding.
3. The BETD INSET Programme should provide the BETD INSET teachers with more information and more training on how to direct and re- direct questions during the instructional process in order to involve all learners and provoke them to think.
4. The BETD INSET teachers should be prepared in ways of organizing and using the teaching and learning aids more frequently during the teaching and learning process. This helps learners to understand and participate more actively in the lesson.

### **B. The MBESC**

It is recommended that the MBESC do the following in order to encourage the BETD INSET teachers to practice active learner participation in their lessons;

1. Supply enough and on time resources, teaching and learning materials. This will enable the teachers to practice active learner participation in their lessons.

2. The educational officials should visit schools more frequently and observe classroom teaching environments for them to improve the situations. Conducive classroom teaching environments stimulate active learner participation.
3. Supply enough teachers to the schools to reduce the problem of higher teacher /learner ratios in the schools. In small or in average classes the teachers are able to reach each and every learner. Subsequently learners participate actively in the lesson activities.
5. Automatic learner promotion should be reviewed. This seems to hamper active learner participation. More than half of the INSET teachers (60%) felt that the learners will perform better in the next or higher grade if he / she had mastered the basic competencies of the previous or lower grades.
6. Provide security to the schools to reduce theft of the few equipments, resources and facilities the schools possess.
7. Provide libraries and laboratories at schools. More teaching and learning materials, and practical facilities to assist both teachers and learners, should be provided.
8. Build more special schools to cater for learners with special educational needs or alternatively special classes in mainstream schools with qualified special needs teachers. At the moment learners with special needs benefit little from the mainstream educational system.
9. Should build more classrooms to reduce the large class sizes. Shortage of classrooms and subject teachers caused large class sizes of about 40+ learners and this may have a negative effect on active learner participation.
10. Renovate the existing classrooms. Their dilapidated conditions appear to be hindering the implementation of active learner participation.

11. Build houses for the teachers or provide accommodation near the school, especially in rural schools, to cater for the needs of those teachers who are not from that area who experience accommodation problems.

### **C. The Ondangwa Regional Office**

It is recommended that the Ondangwa Regional education officials should;

1. Supply enough and on time textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. For the learners to participate actively and to learn effectively they must have access to resources and other teaching and learning materials.
2. Visit schools more frequently and observe the situations of classrooms and schools. Firsthand information may help in improving the situations that are hindering the practice of active learner participation during the instructional process.
3. Organize meetings with parents so that they can explain to them the importance and quality of schooling and of education for their children. During these meetings, Regional officials should motivate and encourage the parents to be fully involved in the education of their children by helping with their homework, providing school requisites, etc.
4. Motivate the teachers to use more teaching and learning aids as this will motivate and assist learners to understand the taught lesson content.
5. Motivate and encourage school principals to implement and practice communication in English for both teachers and learners on the school premises so as to improve their communication skills.

## **D. The Community and Parents**

It is recommended that the parents and community should;

1. Get fully involved in the education process of their children. Learners need full support and assistance from their parents for them to learn actively.
2. Establish a good collaboration between the teachers, school principals and parents. If parents are aware of what is going on at school, specifically with their children, then this will help and guide them to give necessary assistance to their children
3. Attend parents-teachers meetings and regularly carry out class visits. Regular follow up on the learners' class activities by their parents may encourage the learners to participate and learn actively.
4. Parents should encourage and motivate their children to come to school every day and to do their homework too. The frequent absence of learners from the school hampered the active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process, since the learners often lacked the background knowledge and information.
5. Parents should assist their children to learn effectively by providing them with enough time to study. Parents who over loaded their children with a lot of work after school, prevented them from making regular study and this might affect their active participation in lessons.
6. Make sure that their children have basic teaching and learning facilities i.e. writing materials, pens, books, etc, to enable them to study easily and for them to do class assigned work.
7. Provide enough and balanced diet to their children. Hunger in the BETD INSET teacher's classrooms was indicated as one of the obstacles to active learner participation.

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## APPENDIX 1: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

DATE: -----

TEACHER NO: -----

SUBJECT: -----

GRADE: -----

SCHOOL: -----

NO OF LEARNERS: -----

### 1. THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TEACHING AND LEARNING TAKES PLACE.

Teachers and learners relationship

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Cordial		
Hostile		
Respect		
Polite		
Patient		
Other		

Classroom environment

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Chaotic		
Friendly		
Tidy		
Orderly		

## TEACHING METHODS

### Classroom discussion

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Teacher asks questions		
Teacher poses problems		
Learners ask questions for clarification		
Learners contributing		
Learners sharing ideas among themselves		

### Discovery learning

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Teacher asks questions		
Teacher poses problems		
Learners discover information on their own		

### Experiential learning/ Inquiry learning

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Teachers pose questions/problems		
Learners solve problems		
Learners learn by doing		
Individual project		

COMMENTS:

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**2. PRESENTATION AND CLASSROOM ACTIVI**

Activities	Frequencies			Comments
	Adequate	Barely Adequate	Inadequate	
Teacher involves learners in class discussion				
Teacher provides opportunities for learners to work in small groups				
Teacher provides opportunities for learners to work in pairs				
Teacher involves learners in individual work				
Teacher involves learners in problem-solving activities				
Teacher facilitates discovery of new knowledge by the learners themselves				
Interaction among learners themselves				
Interaction between teacher and learners				
Teacher directs the learning process all the time				

### 3. THE TEACHER'S ROLE

<b>Teachers Roles</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Facilitating instructional process		
Asking questions		
Supporting		
Directing and redirecting questions		
Probing		
Allow wait time for 3-5 seconds		
Encouraging learners to think		
Build new knowledge on learners' previous knowledge		
Explaining subject matter and new concept		
Checking for understanding		
Posing problems		
Creating learning opportunities that encourage self- discovery		
Encouraging learners to learn by doing		

### 4. TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE TEACHER

<b>Question Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Factual or convergent questions		
Open or divergent questions		

5. THE LEARNER'S ROLE

<b>Learners Role</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Asking questions for clarity		
Contributing		
Comment on other learners' answers		
Involve in self – discovery learning		
Sharing the ideas		

6. CLASS ORGANIZATION

<b>Arrangement of chairs:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Semi circle		
Large circle		
Round tables		
Horse shoe		
Small groups		
Rows and Columns		

7. PROFICIENCY IN MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION BY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Teacher uses clear and appropriate language		
Gives clear instructions		
Teachers express themselves clearly and freely		
Learners express themselves clearly and freely		
Teachers use simple and understandable words		

8. CLASSROOM SIZE

<b>Class Size</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Large (40ss +)		
Average (35-39)		
Small (0-30)		
No of boys		
No of girls		

9. RESOURCES

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>N/Available</b>	<b>Few</b>	<b>Shared</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Chalkboard					
Text books					
Library					
Laboratories					
Magazines					
Newspapers					
Photo copying machines					
Posters					

Comments:

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## APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

How do you design teaching and learning activities that enable you to actively involve learners, in the teaching and learning process?

Which teaching methods do you normally use in the instructional process?

How do the class and school environment at large contribute to learner participation in the teaching and learning process?

Do you think that the teaching and learning facilities and resources at your school are adequate to facilitate effective teaching and learning? Explain your response.

What factors/ considerations do you usually take into account when you are to introduce a new subject matter / topic to the class?

- a) What type of questions do you usually use during the teaching and learning process?
- b) Why do you use these kinds of questions?

Which strategies do you use to involve all learners in your teaching?

What type of class organization do you favor? Why?

What are the factors that hinder active learner participation in your classroom? How do you overcome them?

Would you say the BETD INSET programme was useful and helpful to you in providing alternatives of changing your classroom practice? Why? Please explain.

What kind of support would you need from the MBESC, NIED and the regional office and community at large to implement active learner participation in your classrooms?