

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Ministry of Education undertook a number of reforms 1990s due to the decline in literacy levels in basic schools. The basic school curriculum was changed. New methods of teaching were introduced as measures of intervention. A deliberate move was embarked on to cater for multiple learning styles that could help the learners retain information and strengthen understanding. Pedagogies like New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), Step in to English (SITE) and Read on Literacy Course (ROC) were introduced in basic schools. These programmes were first piloted in selected provinces and schools. They have since spread to all government schools in the country. The introduction of the learner-centred approach was to legitimize learners' experience by allowing them space to participate in the process of knowledge (Carpenter, (2006). ROC has been used to teach literacy from grade 3 to grade 7.

The Zambian Government through the Ministry of Education hoped that the introduction of ROC could help create a society which made provisions for participation for all members on equal terms. It could also secure flexible readjustment of its institutions through interactions of the different forms of associated democratic life. To achieve this, society needed a type of education which gave individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secured social changes. Windschitl in Carter (2009) disagreed with this cause. He stated that the democratic

values that were part of learner-centred pedagogies did not in themselves contain a social vision. Though that was what many scholars would have us use them Carter (2006) raised concern over sentiments held on learner-centred methodologies. She asked as to what evidence there was that indicated that this learner-centred pedagogies led to improved outcomes or whether they are more effective. Tabulawa (2003) furthermore alleged that the superiority of learning centred pedagogies over the other pedagogies could not be justified at present by empirical evidence. He attributed the introduction learner-centred pedagogies in the developing world as an attribution of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to spearhead liberal democratic economy. Primarily, OECD was concerned with the educational outcome and educational provision of national governments. It has further dealt with issues of equity in educational outcomes and educational opportunities. The adequacy and effectiveness of resource management was also an area of concern. The line of thought has been that the introduction of Read on Literacy Course promoted and emphasized the democratization of classrooms through the adoption of a learner-centred pedagogy. Accordingly, the ideological project ensured quality and made teachers view themselves as professionals. Vavrus (2009) on the other hand names these changes and introductions in the classrooms as cultural politics of pedagogy. The traditional ethnographic focus on school culture expands to include the economic and political dimensions of theory and practice in aid-independent African states.

Numerous pilot projects were conducted before Read on Literacy Course was fully implemented. It was of great importance that the instructional method best fit a particular

teaching style and the lesson situation. The decisions teachers made about instruction depended very strongly on the particular goals they intended to achieve. The promotion of democratic teaching, learner-centred pedagogy therefore, emerged as the natural choice for the cultivation and inculcation of a liberal democratic ethos.

The introduction of learner-centred pedagogies is understandable. Samoff (2007:502) reveals that, “to secure funding and to meet aid agency requirements, African governments and education ministers regularly incorporate into their plans and programs what they understand the funding agencies to expect.” Furthermore, he urged that the analytical challenge was to explore how and why technical assistance agency staff pursued strategies that though intended to be helpful limited and undermined education innovation and reform in Africa. ROC, like so many innovations is donor driven.

In most cases, aid agencies regularly discourage innovation. Receiving countries are told that it is safer, more prudent and most cost-effective to use well established ways of doing things including curricular and pedagogical approaches (Samoff, 2007). It is not surprising that education ministry staff found themselves puzzled by programmes they did not create and detached from activities they do not fully own. With few exceptions, does aid remain aid, with providers and recipients not collaborating partners? Had ROC been introduced as an innovative pedagogy that could deal with the literacy levels even when existing evidence showed that such pedagogy had failed elsewhere? Farrel (2007:110) observed that at that time there was a “quiet revolution in schooling in developing countries, in many cases radically transforming particularly at primary level”.

The learner, the teacher and the learning environment have been factors to be considered for learning to take place. UNESCO (2004:238) acknowledges that “the learning process is complicated, but at its centre is the relationship between learners and teachers”. Learning at its core is an interactive face to face process. The learner has to be at the centre of the educational experience. The learning experience should not simply be a means but also an end in itself. Understanding a subject depended on the method adopted by the teacher. Hence appropriate methods were cardinal in the successful implementation of work in the classroom. A teacher needed to adopt good methods for effective teaching to take place. Methods made material easier to achieve because these methods took into account learning objectives, oriented activities and a flow of information between teachers and the learners.

This study intended to find out how effective these methods were to the learner and the teaching/learning processes. It was an important element in the study to establish if the learners were benefiting from all the activities that were taking place in the classroom. The introduction of Read on Literacy Course in basic schools should have considered the extent to which the programme suited its purpose in addressing the learners’ needs and capacities and focus on the organizational processes.

What the learners brought to the learning situation was important to establish. What?

The success of the teacher did not only depend on the ability of the learner, it was dependent on deciding what teaching method to use. What the learner brought to the learning situation was important to establish. These included the learners’ age and

developmental level, background, previous knowledge, material resources, environment and learning goals (Ganguly, 2008). These factors would in turn hinder effective learning if they were not probably handled.

Tabulawa (2003) argued that though the efficacy of the pedagogy was couched in cognitive and educational terms, its efficacy lay in its political and ideological nature. He further stated that, given its democratic tendencies, learners centred pedagogy were a natural choice for the development of democratic social relations in the schools of aid receiving countries. But the continuing belief that there was a casual relationship between learner-centred pedagogies and better educational outcomes continued to provide a pervasive rationale for their widespread adoption Carter (2009). The need to improve teaching and learning delivery made countries to adopt these pedagogies. The question of whether they are effective or not is what the research study intended to establish.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Ministry of Education has been changing the teaching methods in basic school. It is however not known whether the new methods were yielding their intended goals. This study therefore sought to find out whether the numerous child centered methods, with particular attention to Read on Literacy Course (ROC), were effective.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out how effective Read on Literacy Course (ROC) programme, as child centered pedagogy, was enhancing learner performance.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. To investigate the challenges of learner-centred methods like ROC in basic schools.
2. To examine the sustainability of learner-centred methods in basic schools.
3. To assess the effectiveness of ROC in basic schools.
4. To investigate how the performance of the learners is under ROC.

1.5 Research questions

The study aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges of learner-centred methods like ROC in basic schools?
2. How sustainable are the learner-centered methods in basic schools?
3. How effective is Read on Literacy Course in basic schools?
4. How is the academic performance of pupils under ROC?

1.6 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of this study might help the Ministry of Education and other relevant stake holders with interest in education realize the effect of the introduction of numerous child-centered methodologies in schools. It is further hoped that the findings

would unveil the attitude of the teachers towards the introduction of these methods in schools.

1.7 Definition of terms

Pedagogy – This is the art of science used by a teacher. It refers to instructions or style of instructions

Effective – This is the producing of an intended result or having a striking effect.

Literacy - According to the Curriculum Framework, essential literacy referred to the ‘ability to write so that the pupil could express thoughts, ideas, events and messages in such a way that other people could understand them’(M of E, 2003:13).

1.8 Theoretical framework

The study followed the constructivist theory as advocated by Vygotsky. Vygotsky (2006) propounded that constructivism is a child centred theory that proposes that learning environments should support multiple perspectives or interpretations of reality, knowledge construction, context-rich and experience based activities. The theory includes participatory, democratic, and inquiry-based and discovery methods in its learning. Constructivism and student-voice shared many characteristics that are most important in their common epistemological foundation.

As a philosophy of knowledge, social constructivism held that reality did not exist independent of social actors. It, instead, historically produced and culturally bound knowledge which enables individuals to construct and give meaning to reality. Social

constructivism's derivative pedagogies hence encouraged intellectual freedom, autonomy, and creativity, based in the primacy of an individual's own ability to think reflectively and construct knowledge. It also encouraged democratic decision-making, since it demands a collaborative relationship between actors.

The other characteristic was that of high degree of tolerance and flexibility to engage cooperatively in dialogue and activity with others that builds social understanding. In practice, these pedagogies are often implemented as learner-centred shared control of the learning process through a collaborative and flexible approach that enabled learners to be self driven. Vavrus (2009) contends that skills and values are cultivated by teachers employing methods grounded in social constructivism to which constructivist approaches to teaching support.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter intended to explore existing work done on learner-centred pedagogies. The literature review for the study has therefore been divided into two parts. These are the international levels and the local levels. Several studies have been conducted on the introduction and implementation of learner-centred pedagogies in the sub Saharan Africa.

2.2 International level

Breakthrough to Literacy is a literacy programme developed by the Schools Council in the United Kingdom (UK). This was then adapted by the Molteno Project for the African language schools. The Breakthrough to Literacy was governed by the following characteristics:

- Learner-centred: Encourage active participation in the learning process.
- Ability Grouping: Enables each learner to move at her/his own pace within a supportive group.
- Self-pacing: Allows individual learners to select their next phase of development.
- Small-group work: Provides a secure learning environment and ongoing consolidation.
- Critical thinking: Develops crucial thinking skills and enables learners to work independently.

- Phonic regularity: Capitalises on the phonic regularity and spelling systems of indigenous African languages.

In a study conducted at the University of Iowa, research was conducted on a single subject, named Garrett. The findings of this single subject were generalized to thousands of children from varied racial, ethnic and socio economic backgrounds (Mc Graw, xxxx). According to the research, Breakthrough's extensive and sustained professional development represents a continuous effort to enlighten teachers and maximize the way the programme is used in the classroom.

2.2.1 Importance of methods in teaching and learning

Methods are important ingredients in a lesson that enhance learning in the classroom. Teaching depended upon the ability of the pupil for its success. These teaching and learning processes are linked together and so intertwined that an attempt to separate the two would be laborious and futile. Because it was most effective when it occurred in quick response to the needs a learner felt, teaching may be best defined as the organization of learning. It involved the establishment of a situation in which it was hoped and believed that effective learning would occur. It is in view of this underlying proposition that stated that the most important place to measure the effectiveness of school development planning was within the four walls of a classroom. It was within these walls that learning was expected to take place within these walls that it could be determined whether the learning that was taking place was effective or not. Whether the

learning that occurs within these walls was effective or not was one of the objectives of the present study.

In a report by Kotze & Higgins (1999) they indicated that there was evidence of transfer of Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) method and teaching strategies to other curriculum areas. This meant that the ability to read and write laid the foundation for fluent literacy and improved educational standards. The goal was achieved by organizing effective learning experiences that met intellectual goals and learning outcomes, both in the classroom and beyond. There had been need to provide opportunities for learners to become more independent and self directed.

2.3 Local level

Zambia had its language policy in place for a considerable long time before she attained her political independence from Britain. The mother tongue was used for the first two years of primary education. English was used in schools under the pre-1966 system of education in upper primary education and beyond (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). The policy was reviewed and changed in 1966. The Education Act of 1966 endorsed that English be used as a subject and medium of instruction immediately a child enters school (UNESCO, 1968). Advocates of the English medium scheme argued that the introduction of English in Grade 1 tends to democratise the status of language by making it available even to those who did not enter the class of elites. For this present study, this information is important because questions whether this introduction had an effect on learners attempts to learn and understand materials of the curriculum or not. Dr Kaunda, the first

Zambia Republican President attributing great importance to the literacy said that “a child who read widely was an empowered child because knowledge was one of the best tools one could give to a child”. Furthermore, he stated that such an individual would actively seek to participate in the life of his or her community. The need for the use of vernacular languages and their role of ensuring quality in education was acknowledged and reached in 1991 when literacy standards among the Zambian school going children dropped. A new policy was formulated in 1996 when the Ministry of Education was prompted to address the falling standards among Zambian school going children (MoE, 1996). The implementation of the policy did not take place until 1998 when practical interventions took place.

The Zambian Government implemented the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) **when?** to provide competencies for the new generation of learners. The Primary Reading Programme has specific methodologies. The methodologies of the Primary Reading Programme aimed to improve the literacy levels among the learners to enable them read across the curriculum.

This assumption was supported by Tabulawa (2003) when he argued that the classroom provided a platform where the predisposition, habits of mind and social attitudes conducive to inhibiting a neoliberal market economy could be easily and actively promoted. He furthermore stated that given their democratic tendencies, learner-centred pedagogies had a natural choice for the development of democratic social relations in the schools of aid-receiving counties. Following this line of thought, it has been important to

note that even if the process of learning involved the acquisition of knowledge and skill through school or study, learner-centred pedagogies had social, epistemological and philosophical foundations.

Schools had an enormous task, therefore, to pick the most important concepts and skills to enable learners concentrate on the quality of understanding rather than on the quantity of information presented. This understanding could increase the capacity for the learners to acquire and productively apply new knowledge and skills to changes and challenges.

2.4 Traditional versus alternative methods

For many years, Zambia has used what had been termed as the “traditional methods” to teaching. In the traditional form of learning, learners in classes worked with a single adult, a certified teacher who held the key to knowledge. The learners received instructions. The timetable had discrete periods of 30 or 40 minutes that were each devoted to a separate subject. The supporting learning materials were organized by a standard curriculum (Farrel,2007).

Under the traditional method, the whole word approach was used. Reading was taught by introducing words to children as whole units. Little attention was paid to the sub lexical units. The whole word method involved teaching children to read and pronounce words as single units (MoE, 2003). The learners were expected to read the words without any conscious attention to sub lexical units. Repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts enabled them to do so.

By introducing ROC, the Zambian Education system embraced an alternate method to the traditional methods. These alternative methods were referred to as learner-centred pedagogies. In the learner-centred methods, the learners were active (Farrel, 2007). They were encouraged to peer-teach themselves. In peer-tutoring, the learners were able to assist one another in their respective groups. This meant that the learners who grasped any learning concept faster than the others would be able to assist those that had lagged behind. In this way, the teacher did not stand out as the anchor of all knowledge (Farrel, 2007:114). The role of the teacher shifted to that of facilitating and guiding.

McCombs & Whisler (1997:9) defined learner-centred education as “the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experience, perspective, background) with a focus on learning”. It involved the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurred. It also dealt with teaching practices that were most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning and achievement for all learners.

Currently, improvement of learner academic achievement, and education been treated education has a primarily technical issue (Giroux, 1992) in (Baltodano, 1994), state that learner-centred methods are highly advocated for. Carter (2009) wrote that many of the educators believed that the promotion of learner-centred pedagogies as best practice lay within the humanist and progressive tradition of education. Tabulawa (2003) in Crossley (2003) contended that the democratic learning were orientations that have been widely promoted by bilateral aid agencies were not of purely technical value. He further

suggested that such approaches to learning were undermined by a particular ideology suited to the fostering of these liberal democratic deemed important for the operation of free market economy. The opinions that emerged in the implementation of learner-centred methods like ROC were able to evoke the need to establish to what extent the methods were to implementing countries like Zambia.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education launched a major literacy program called Primary Reading Programme (PRP). Zambia adopted the Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) which has been used in a number of Sub Saharan Africa. Read on Literacy Course is a program that is built of the New Breakthrough to Literacy Programme (NBTL). NBTL was first piloted in the Northern part of Zambia. It was evaluated as an effective pedagogy for enhancing literacy levels. In a presentation by Tambulukani (2001) success was observed in the first two years of primary education in both local language and English. This research intends to establish whether this success has gained momentum as the learners progressed through their ladder of formal education. The Read on Course (ROC), as a program was embedded with learner-centred methods for Grades Three to Seven. It focused on bilingual literacy development and consolidation to help learners develop the basic literacy skills of schools and for life. In using methods like ROC, awareness in the teaching activities which reflected that learning as a process transformed and changed the learner had to be exhibited. ROC has been incorporated in middle basic schools to consolidate the successes of the Breakthrough approach. The learners should relate their learning experience to the world outside the classroom. They should be able to apply the knowledge, skills and perspectives in the larger community in order to function

effectively. The piloting and implementation of this program had been financed by USAID. The interest of aid agencies in learner-centred pedagogies was unprecedented and called for serious scholarly attention.

The programme started by embracing the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) course which dealt with Grade One while the Step In to English Literacy Course dealt with Grade Two. Pathway to English had been put in place to develop oral competency in English in Grade 1 and 2.

The Read on Literacy Course (ROC) for Grades Three to Seven provided for bilingual literacy development and consolidation to help learners develop the basic literacy skills. In terms of time allocation, in Grades 3 and 4 there has been an hour for literacy every day while Grades 5 to 7 had only two literacy hours in a week. Half-hour has been left for revision and remedial work each week.

2.5 Current situation

In January, 2002, has spread to all government run schools in Zambia. Farrel (2007) observed that when educational reforms are enacted, they are seldom implemented well. Hence, there is very little evidence of long-term and wide-scale impact on the primary mission.

2.6 The read on literacy course (ROC)

The role of ROC has been to develop learners who could be able to cope with the reading and writing requirements of Grade 8 and who were functionally literate in a modern society and to contribute towards the strengthening of the reaching and writing culture in Zambia. ROC has used the group based methods that has been initiated in Grade 1 in the Breakthrough to Literacy.

2.6.1 Methodology in ROC

The teaching of ROC adopted formalities that where different from the traditional approaches that were used under Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC). The differences were from the organization of the class setting to the class organization and management. The classroom had a teaching station. The teaching station also had a teacher's chair and a table for resources.

The teaching station was used for several purposes. The teaching station had to be large enough to accommodate all the learners at the beginning and end of the lessons. All the learners where expected to go to the teaching station at the beginning of each lesson. The teacher could invite each group to walk to the teaching station through a song or an activity. A carpet was provided for the learners to sit on when they were at the teaching station when the programme began. A mat or some improvised seating material are usually uses for learners to sit on.

The class was organized into four pace groups. Pace groups categorised learners in their groups of ability. The teacher arranged the learner's desk and benches into four groups and allocated one group to their learning stations. These four groups had the learning stations for independent group activities. The learners' chairs or benches were set in such a way that enabled all learners to face each other. Each group was identified by a name. It could be the name of an animal, a fruit, a colour or a bird. It was never by a number because this could indicate an element of superiority on one group over another.

2.6.2 Teaching process

The ROC teaching period is one hour. The literacy hour comprises of four components. Starting time lasts 15 minutes. During the starting time, the teacher calls learners to the teaching station and reads a story. Most of the stories are read from recommended books that have stories that are linked with the topic that is being taught.

In the second component, the teacher teaches each group according to their abilities at the teaching station. During this time, the teacher conducts focused teaching with one pace group. In this component of pace group contact, the teacher integrates teaching and writing. Both English and a local Zambian language are used to teach at the teaching station. This means that the learners who are not at the teaching station. Whilst one group is with the teacher at the teaching station, the other learners are given relevant reading and writing activities to work on at their own. The teacher explains clearly the activities the learners are to do in their groups.

The third component is when the pace groups work on specific activities. Out of the four groups, two groups are given activities that last for the 40 minutes. If individual learners finish the activity early, they are also encouraged to read books from the class library which is set up in one corner of the classroom. The class library comprises of books that are in both English and a local language. The group that is waiting to be called to the teaching station can read books from the class library. The group that goes to the teaching station first can do the work given to them and read books from the class library when they have finished. Reading has been highly encouraged.

Finally, the last 5 minutes are spent as sharing time. During this time the learners share with their friends the work that they had done during the hour and they learners are encouraged to evaluate their work.

2.6.3 Content in ROC

Literacy and language teaching are about communication. Both literacy and language involve listening, speaking, reading and writing. The focus of each is however, different. While language teaching focuses was on vocabulary, grammar, structures, and idiomatic expressions of a language, teaching literacy on the other hand focuses on teaching the skills involved in the process of reading and writing. It also deals with familiarity with shapes and sounds made by letters.

The results of the research conducted in Zambia by Ojanen (2007) revealed that despite the introduction and implementation of the new language policy in Zambia, children in

basic schools were still learning English letters, names and the confusion over two different alphabetic codes delayed the development of their literacy skills.

2.6.4 Basic literacy acquisition

Research showed that the roots of literacy began long before children entered school (Harste, 1984; Teale & Sultzby, 1986). The speed of early literacy acquisition was variable and highly impacted by instruction and experience. Literacy knowledge usually progressed from the development of letter recognition to sensitivity of beginning sounds and their associated letters. Egan (1999) stated that the acquisition of literacy was shaped by a set of cognitive capabilities or ‘tools’ that were present in oral cultures and expanded in the early stages of literacy. This meant that acquisition of literacy was a combination of societal verbal influence and contribution and what the learner could assimilate and accommodate in the process.

2.6.5 Cognitive components

The development of early reading skills has had an influence on academic achievement. The cognitive capabilities have laid emphasis on interrelated aspects of learning. Learning was viewed as a process of knowledge construction and not of knowledge recording or absorption. Furthermore, learning was knowledge – dependent and highly tuned to the situation in which it took place. This meant that, any differences in cognitive capabilities depended partly on prior knowledge and on habits of engaging with intellectual questions.

It cannot be disputed that learning to read was a significant milestone in the development of young children. The child's success throughout formal education depended in large part on the ability to read (Matafwali, 2008). The present study wishes to establish whether the introduction of the approaches on how to deal with the low literacy levels has made academic performance more effective?

In a PISA survey conducted in 2006, results showed that socio economic status was still the significant indicator of student performance and that the only aspect of that emerged as affecting pedagogy the length of time spent a week on a task.

The question of what had gone wrong with ZBEC still remained unanswered during the study. What led to the change of methods could probably be taken up in another study. This study intended to establish whether the learner-centred methods that were introduced enhanced learner performance.

2.6.6 Learning to read

A child learnt to speak from 0 to 5 years (MOE, 1999). Learning to read usually began from 5 years onwards. Both speaking and reading dealt with learning to use language. This meant that learning to speak and learning to read were very much woven. Both activities needed input from the environment. The assumption that languages interacted, and that learning one language had implications for learning another could therefore, not be ignored.

Language and literacy acquisition had very important social, educational and cognitive implications. Learning to read involves consolidation and development. It includes advanced comprehension, fluency and reading aloud, ability to read a variety of texts, reference skills (advanced book knowledge).

When learners were just beginning to develop literacy skills, a number of methods could be used to assist them. The teacher had a task to employ these methods and guide the learners how to effectively use them. In Read on Literacy the strategies commonly used were phonics, word recognition, basic grammatical knowledge, context and basic book knowledge. Particular attention was paid to word recognition in the study. Below are the strategies used to enhance word recognition.

2.6.6.1 Phonics

This was the relationship between letters and sounds they made. Phonics deals with what sound or sounds each letter, or combination of letters, was made of. Phonics involves the use of sound symbol relationship to decode words. Rhymes, stories, songs, poems and sentences were used to teach phonics. Beginning sounds had been introduced using any pictures and objects that are available in the classroom by various ways. It furthermore helped to sound out words that they had not seen before.

One way that has been used to teach phonics was by showing the learners a picture or an object and asks what it was. The learners could be given opportunities to reply. At other times, the teacher would tell them what it was. Another way to teach phonics was for the

teacher to ask the learners to listen to the beginning sound or write the letter/s on the board and ask learners to say them out aloud. The learners could be asked or prompted to mention other words that began with that sound. Other times, words would be written on the board and the beginning sound would be underlined.

2.6.6.2 Word recognition

Word recognition involved the use of sight words. In word recognition, readers were expected to recognize the word instantly without having to stop to focus them out. The skill to recognize more words by sight improved as they became proficient readers. In reading in Context, the learners used surrounding words to help figure out unfamiliar words. The use of root words, suffixes, prefixes and other word parts to recognize a word helped the learner to identify word parts.

Word recognition was the skill of being able to read a word by recognizing the shape, and being able to read it at a glance. Word recognition could be very effective as a method, particularly for learners who had good visual memories. It was also a good way of teaching words that were difficult to sound out. However, this method did not give learners any clues about how to read new words that they have never seen before. Although this is a useful strategy, it cannot be used alone.

One way to teach word recognition was to flash cards. In other situations, some common words were written on a piece of card and learners were asked to memorise them. These cards were quickly shown one at a time, the learners were asked to say the

words that were written on the cards. This is a good way of practicing sight words that are difficult to sound out.

2.6.6.3 Literal comprehension

Literal comprehension meant understanding what the words on a page meant at the simplest level. Whatever readers read the teacher needed to make sure that the learners they read with understanding. This was an area where language teaching and literacy teaching overlap.

2.6.6.4 Basic grammatical knowledge

Basic grammatical knowledge was how much learners knew about the concept and can apply the structures and word order of a language. A learner needed to know what kind of word to expect in a particular part of a sentence.

Read on Literacy Course also dealt with basic writing skills. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation, language structure, and text structure were compared to basic writing skills. Advanced writing skills included what to write and this was about the length, variety and quality. The teacher should set writing activities in both Zambian languages and English. Structured and controlled writing, extended writing, shared writing are also taught. Types of imaginative writing like story writing, writing poems, writing plays or dialogues, personal writing like writing letters, diary writing, functional writing like instructions, notices, essays and book reviews are included. Particular attention would be paid to the methods used when spelling was taught.

In order to ensure effectiveness in the learning process, the teacher was expected to:

- Mark work in a way that helps learners to improve writing as an art. One should not mark all kinds of work in the same way. Focus on what to look for is cardinal.
- Indicate where the mistake is.
- Help learners to read their work, and to identify and correct their own mistakes.
- Provide the learners with a checklist of the things they should be looking for.

Creating a conducive learning environment for the learners was the biggest challenge for the teacher. The teacher was challenged to create a positive, stimulating learning environment that enabled the learners to interact and participate. The teacher needed to empower the lessons to be responsible in the learning process. They need to encourage learners to view facts and information in new ways.

The teaching-learning processes encouraged by these methods are concerned with both the process and the content. These processes interact to determine goals and accommodate change. Various teaching and learning methods are used in the classroom to enhance learning. The methods and resources are important ingredients in creating interest in a lesson. Samoff (2007) state that ‘the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is dependent on the effective facilitation of communication, involvement and interaction among students, lecturers and course content.’ What this means is that the teacher should attend to classroom dynamics that enhance learning by using fair and reasonable methods of evaluating learning.

2.5 Previous research

Several research studies have been conducted on learner-centred pedagogies. These have ranged from the developed countries where educational levels are high, more technical and advanced.

A study by Sekeleti (1983) where he set out to establish whether English should be used as the medium of instruction immediately a child enters school or whether the child should be first be taught in a local familiar language. He furthermore wanted to establish whether English could be used as a medium of instruction of the curriculum. The findings of his research showed that pupils could neither read nor write at grade three and four. In conclusion he stated that ‘Government policy for primary schools seemed to be influenced more by intent than reality.

Another study was conducted by Mc Adams (1973). He was at that time Director of the English Medium Centre which is currently called the Curriculum Development Centre, (CDC). In his research, he adopted the ZPC and the other traditional method prior to the introduction of ZPC. The findings of the research revealed that ZPC pupils scored higher on tests of English and Social studies but poorly in Maths. ZPC pupils’ English scores were bimodally distributed with about half the pupils scoring as poorly despite the four years of 70% exposure to English medium. Despite the retardations and reading deficiencies found in the ZPC pupils, Mc Adam concluded that the ZPC scheme was working effectively with very minor educational loses.

Evidence showed that the emphasis of learner-centred pedagogies as the official in schools has not only been in Zambia. African countries like Botswana, Namibia and South Africa had also undergone similar educational face lifts. Educational aid, just like all foreign aid, represented a transfer not only of resources and technologies, but of culture and values as well (Stokke, 2000 in Tabulawa, 2003).

2.6 Summary

It has been observed that numerous methods are used with the learner in order to enhance teaching and learning process. The cardinal point is to establish whether these methods that fall under the umbrella of child-centered approaches help the learner at the end of the learning processes, or whether the learner is over burdened with all the activities. Since what occurs in the classroom is solely focused on the learner, there is need to establish the real cause of learning obstacles in the classroom. The study will consider methodologies of Read on literacy Course (ROC) and MARK and see how effective they are. The teacher, however, needs skills and teaching strategies with learners needing remedial work. Learners consolidate and extend the skills to learn to read in the higher grades. This is done both in the literacy hour and by applying their literacy skills to other subjects. In this way, all teachers are involved in improving the literacy skills of their learners. It is also worth to mention here that all subjects are, to some degree, literacy lessons.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study set out to find out whether the learner-centred pedagogy, namely Read on Literacy Course that has been introduced in all the basic schools in Zambia has been effective. This chapter outlines the methodology that was selected and used in the study. The methodology includes the study design, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments for data collection and how they were administered, data collection techniques and analysis.

3.2 Study design

The descriptive survey design was used in conducting this research. Orodho in Kombo & Tromp (2006) defines the descriptive survey design as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Sidhu (2006) states that a survey usually involves collecting data by interviewing a sample of people selected to accurately represent the population under study. Survey questions concern people's behaviour, their attitudes, how and where they live, and information about their backgrounds. The study opted to use this method taking into account the nature of the research at hand. This study used mainly qualitative methods of data collection; however, quantitative methods of data collection were also employed to yield pragmatic data to substantiate the qualitative data.

3.3 Target population

The study population was all basic schools in Mufulira district. Two schools were selected for the purposes of carrying out the research. The criteria used were to get one school from the urban area and the other from peri-urban area. Both schools provide education from grades one to nine.

3.4 Sample size

The sample size consisted of 310 subjects broken down as follows: 26 teachers (12 males and 16 females) and 284 pupils from the two selected schools in Mufulira District. These schools have been referred to as School “A” and School “B” in the study. School “A” is an urban town school whilst School “B” is a peri-urban school.

Respondents’ gender

There were 310 respondents who participated in the research study. The sample consisted of 26 teachers and 284 pupils. Of the teachers, 12 were males (46.2%) and 14 were females (53.8 %). Of the pupils, 161 were boys (56.7 %) and 123 (43.3%) were girls.

3.5 Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling was used in the study. Purposive sampling was used because it allowed the researcher to select the participants who could provide the richest information, more interesting and will manifest interesting characteristics. (Kahn: 2008). At each school, probability sampling technique was used to determine teachers and pupils who should participate in the study. White (2005:117), states that probability sampling

technique ensures that every element in the sampling frame has an equal chance of being included in the sample. All the 26 teachers and 284 pupils from the selected schools were available and showed willingness to take part in the study. Where possible, the researcher tried to balance the number of both the female and male teachers and pupils who participated in the study.

3.6 Research instruments

In collecting data for this research, the following instruments were used: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules and focus group discussion guides.

3.6.1 Pre-testing of research instruments

Before commencing the final data collection for the study, the researcher pre-tested the research instruments. This exercise was carried out at two sampled basic schools with similar characteristics to those in the actual study. These schools were located in the same town. This exercise was essential in that it helped the researcher to assess the validity of questions set for the study and whether the respondents did understand the questions in the instruments, hence the purpose of the study and finally as to whether the instruments would yield the intended results of the study. It also enabled the researcher to reconstruct or rephrase the questions so that they answered the objectives of the study. This was in line with Bell (2005) states that all data gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long to complete, check whether all instructions are clear and should be ideally used are similar to the proposed sample.

3.7 Data Collection procedure

The pupils were given class tasks. Two sets of task items were administered for each of the grades. The tasks were given according to the ability groups. The tasks were taken from the respondents in their respective classes grades from the Rainbow Workbooks. (See appendix). Rainbow workbooks are distinguished by the colours, blue, orange, green, red and yellow. The tasks in the Rainbow Books were administered to whole classes as normal classroom activities. The researcher involved the class teachers in carrying out these tasks. Selected pages were photocopied and administered to whole classes. This was done to reduce undue pressure to the learners.

An Inventory of resources was another instrument that was used in order to gather information on the availability of teaching and learning resources that is used in Read on |Course. The Inventory of Resources was categorized in three: resources from the Ministry of Education, Non Governmental Organisations and those supported by the loc

3.8 Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data from the questionnaires while qualitative data which was obtained through interviews and Focus Group Discussions was analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes. Computer generated tables of frequencies and percentages were used in describing distributions of the variables which were presented in the form of tables or pie charts.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study aimed at finding out the effectiveness of ROC as a learner-centred pedagogy in selected basic schools in Mufulira District. The findings are presented according to the stipulated objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were to: investigate the challenges of learner-centred methods like ROC in basic schools; examine the sustainability of learner-centred methods in basic schools; assess the effectiveness of ROC in basic schools; and investigate how the performance of the learners is under ROC.

4.2 Number of years teachers have taught ROC

Table 1 below shows the number of years of teaching ROC by the teachers in the schools under study.

Table 1: Years of teaching

| Years | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| 0 – 5 | 22 | 84.6 |
| 6 – 10 | 3 | 11.5 |
| 11 – 15 | 1 | 3.9 |
| Total | 26 | 100.0 |

The research findings revealed that majority 22 (84.6%) of the respondents had been teaching for between less than a year and five years while three (11.5%) of them indicated that they had been teaching ROC for between six and ten years. This meant that they were incorporated into the teaching profession when the teaching of ROC had already been introduced in the Zambian educational system.

4.3 Whether respondents had training in ROC

Figure 1 below shows whether teachers had training in teaching ROC.

Figure 1: Whether teachers was trained in Read on Course

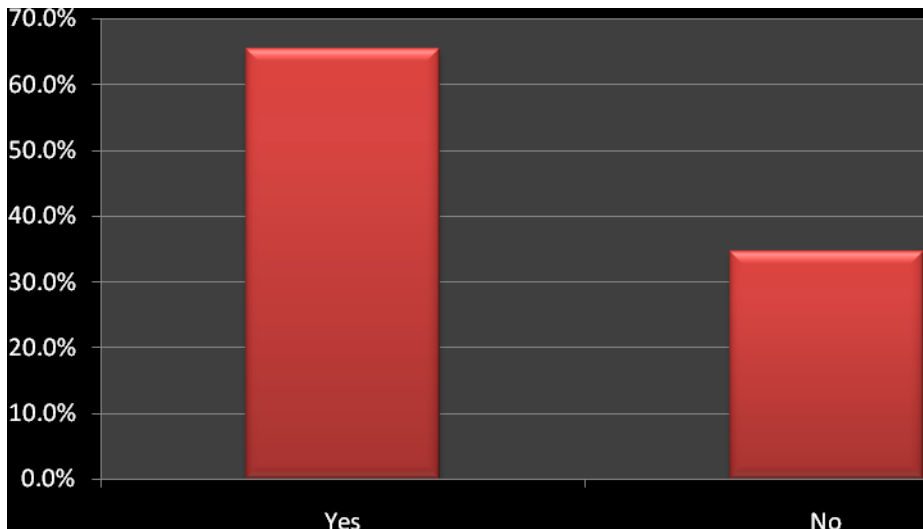


Figure 1 above shows that 17 (65.4%) of the teachers indicated that they had had some training on how to teach Read on Course while 9 (34.6%) of them said that they had had no training at all. For the teachers that had not received any training in teaching ROC, it was learnt that the teachers acquired the knowledge on how to teach using ROC from a number of sources; 11 (42.3%) of the teachers indicated that they acquired knowledge on

how to teach ROC from the teachers guide and activity books, 7 (26.9%) stated that they acquired the knowledge through Teachers Group Meetings, 3 (15.4%) acquired the knowledge from teacher interaction and observing trained teachers and the rest, 3 (15.4%) through self motivation. All the respondents who had not received any training said that they would love some training.

4.3.1 Duration of training in ROC

Figure 2 below shows the duration of training in the Read on Course programme.

Figure 2: Duration of training

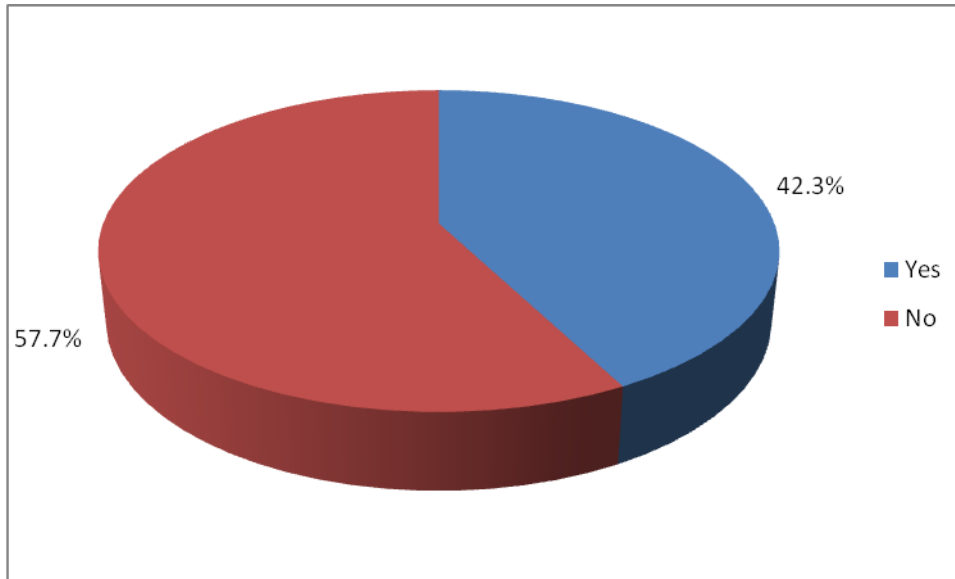


As regards the duration of the training, the study revealed that it varied amongst the respondents with the majority of them saying it took days, 11 (42.3%) while yet another 11 (42.3%) said it took weeks. The rest, 4 (15.4%) of the respondents said the training took hours.

4.3.2 Adequacy of teacher training in ROC

Teachers were asked to indicate whether the training they had in teaching ROC was adequate enough. Figure 3 below shows their responses.

Figure 3: Adequacy of Training in ROC

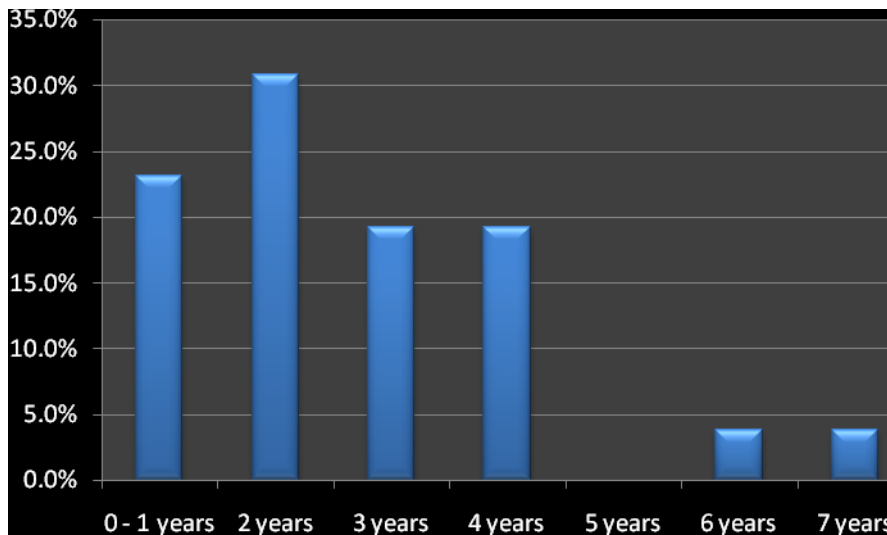


The findings of the research study, as can be seen in Figure 3 above, revealed that 11 (42.3%) of the participants indicated that the training they had received to teach ROC was adequate while 15 (57.7%) of them stated that the training was inadequate.

4.3.3 Experience in teaching ROC

Teachers were asked to indicate their teaching experiences in ROC. Figure 4 below shows their responses.

Figure 4: Teaching experience



As regards teaching experience, most of the respondents 8 (30.8%) said they had 2 years experience followed by 6 (23.1%) who said they had 0 – 1 teaching year experience. Two teachers representing (3.8%) each had 6 and 7 years experience in teaching ROC, respectively.

4.3.4.1 Whether ROC was too involving

Discussions with the teachers revealed that teaching ROC was involving and that it was also time consuming which consequently turned to time wasting. Time consumption was attributed to over-enrolment. In view of this, it was not possible for teachers to attend to

all the groups adequately. As a result, it seemed that the objectives of the lessons were not achieved as expected.

4.3.4.2 Time Allocated to ROC

As regards time allocated to ROC, 18 (69.2%) of the respondents indicated that the time allocated for teaching using ROC was inadequate while 8 (30.8%) said it was adequate.

Commenting on whether the one hour given to literacy was sufficient, 16 (61.5%) of the respondents indicated that it was not enough while 7 (26.9%) of them said it was enough. The rest 3 (11.6%) did not respond to this question.

When asked to propose what they felt would be appropriate time for teaching ROC, most 19 (73.1%) of the respondents were of the view that one hour and thirty minutes would be sufficient enough.

4.3.4.3 Teaching and learning materials

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the school had enough teaching and learning materials. Majority 16 (61.5%) of the teachers revealed that the available resources for teaching ROC were not adequate because schools failed to purchase materials like makers and charts due to insufficient funds; books are just locked up in the lockers; there is an unequal portion between the number of books and the pupils; there has been no reinforcement of books from the Ministry of Education after the first delivery; the issue of tear and wear are not readily addressed and the challenge of dealing with same books for all the grades from grade three to grade seven.

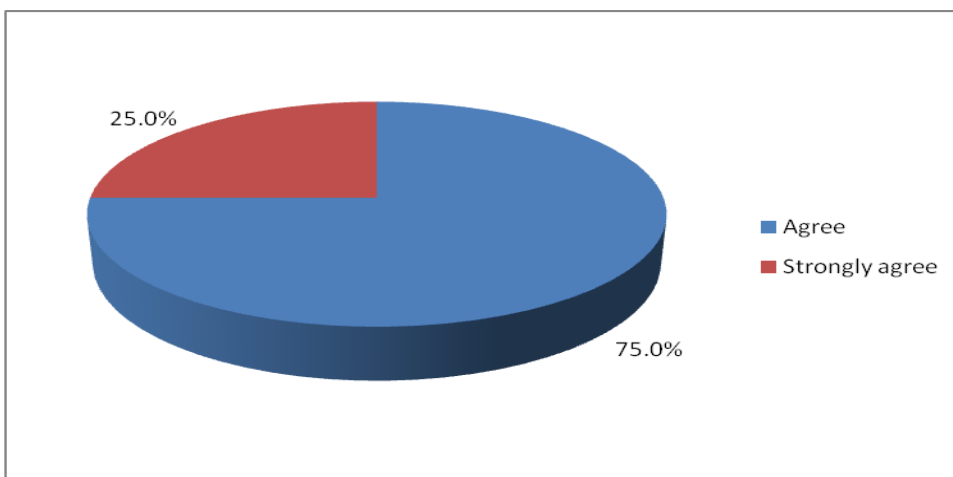
However, 10 (38.5%) of the teachers indicated that the resources that were available were adequate enough. Schools receive different books according to levels. Government supplied books to the schools through the Ministry of Education. ROC does not restrict learning materials.

When it came to allowing the learners to use library books at home, 12 (46.2%) of the teachers said that they allowed the learners to take the books while 14 (53.8%) of the respondents stated that they did not allow the learners to take the books from the class library to their homes.

4.4 Teachers' perceptions on learners' ability to read

Teachers were asked to indicate their perceptions as with regard to learners' ability to read. Figure 5 below shows their responses.

Figure 5: Whether learners doing ROC were able to read effectively



As regards ability to read, Figure 5 above shows that 20 (76.9%) of the teachers “agreed” that learners doing ROC were able to read effectively while 6 (23.1% of) them “strongly” agreed that learners read effectively.

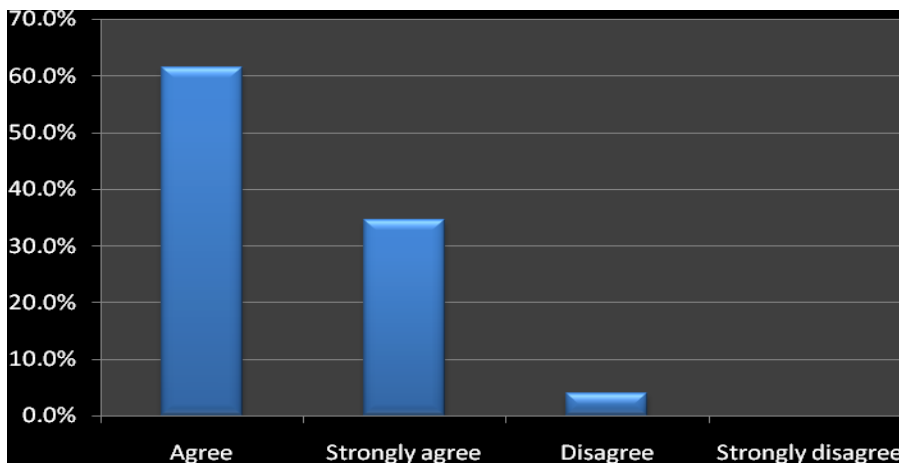
4.5 Teachers’ perceptions on learners’ ability to develop reading skills

Teachers were asked to indicate whether with the coming of ROC pupils had developed reading skills. Most of the respondents, 14 (53.8%) “agreed” that the learners develop initial reading skills in two languages by the end of the foundation years (Grades 1-4) while 12 (46.2%) “strongly agreed”. From the above, there seem to be an indication that learners developed reading skills after the introduction of ROC in schools.

4.6 Teachers’ perceptions on learners’ ability to read a variety of materials effectively

Figure 6 below show teachers perceptions on learners’ ability to read a variety of materials effectively.

Figure 6: Teachers responses on Learners’ ability to read

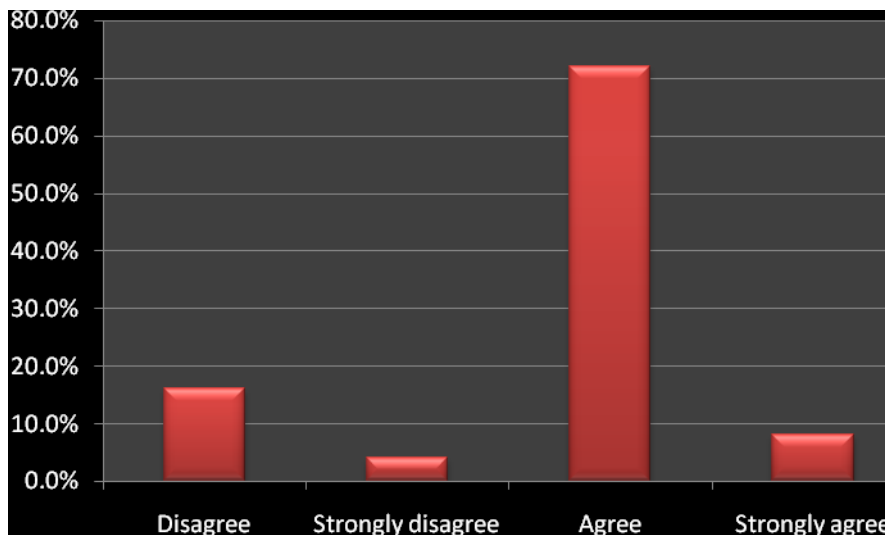


Furthermore, the teachers were asked to indicate whether learners were able to read a variety of materials effectively after the introduction of ROC in schools. Figure 5 below show their responses. The figure shows that majority of the respondents, 16 (61.5%) and 9 (34.6%) “agreed” and “strongly agreed” respectively, that learners were able to read a variety of materials effectively while 1 (3.9%) “disagreed”. The above statistics it seems that learners’ ability to read improved after the introduction of ROC in schools.

4.7 Teacher’s perceptions on learners’ ability to write

Figure 7 below shows teachers’ perceptions on learners’ ability to write after the introduction of ROC in schools.

Figure 7: Teachers’ perceptions on learners’ ability to write for a variety of situations



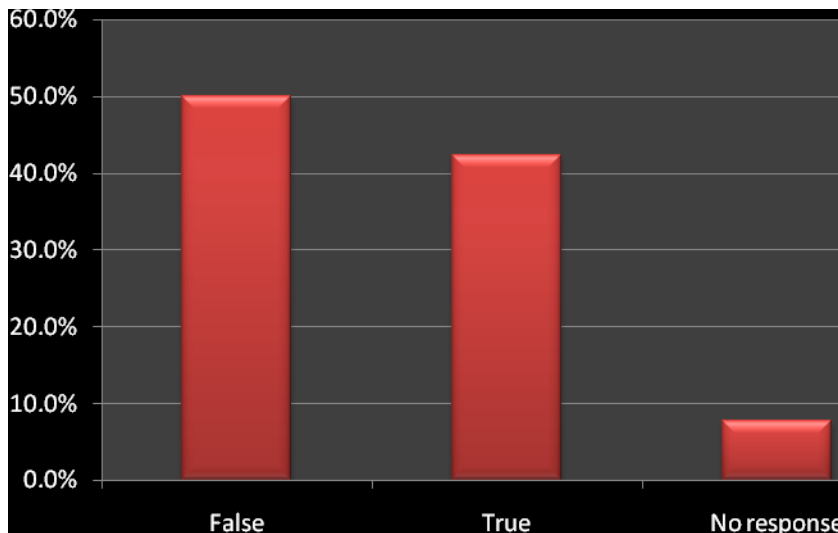
As regards teachers’ perceptions on learners’ ability to write for a variety of situations, Figure 7 above shows that the majority of the teachers, 18 (72.0%) and 2 (8.0%) “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that learners were able to write for a variety of situations

while 4 (16.0%) “disagreed” and 1 (4.0%) “strongly disagree”. From the above data it seem to show that learners were able to write for a variety of situations after ROC was introduced in schools.

4.8 Whether alternating between the two languages (English and Zambian Language)

Figure 8 shows the responses of teachers on whether alternating between the two languages – English and Zambian Language was complicated to the learners.

Figure 8: Whether alternating between English and Zambian Language affected learners’ performance



Teachers were asked to indicate whether alternating between the two languages (English and Zambian language) so that half of the time they read and write in English and half of it they read and write in a Zambian Language was complicated for the learners. Most of them, 13 (50.0%) said it was “false” while 11 (42.3%) of them said it was “true”. Only 2 (7.7%) of the respondents never responded to this question.

4.9 Whether numerous activities in reading and writing in the literacy hour disadvantaged the slow learners

Teachers were asked to show whether numerous activities in reading and writing in the literacy hour disadvantaged the slow learners. Some of the respondents said it was “true” while others said it was “false”.

For the teachers who said it was “true”, they argued that the literacy hour had specific activities which needed to be applied to specification. Furthermore, inadequate time allocated to the activities, usually left out slow learners.

On the other hand for the teachers who said it was “false”, their argument was that the numerous activities in reading and writing in the literacy hour usually disadvantaged the slow learners because, different activities were given according to the ability level and learners were encouraged to participate freely in the lesson. In addition, some teachers believed that it was through the numerous activities that the slow learners improved their skills.

4.10 Whether organizing the class into four pace groups at a teaching station was very taxing for the teacher

Some respondents indicated that it was “true” that organizing the class into four pace groups, each group being taught to their level of competence, one group at a time, at the teaching station was very taxing for the teacher while others said it was “false”.

For the teachers who said it was “true”, their argument was that the lesson consumed a lot of time. This extended to the teachers’ preparation of different activities to suit each group according to their ability levels. In addition, learners at the teaching station needed more time and guidance and this could not be rushed. Basically, this led to teacher burn out.

For the teachers who said it was “not true” that organizing the class into pace groups was taxing for the teacher, however, argued that not all the groups were given activities to do on the same day; the other two groups worked on their own. In addition they said that the activities encouraged the slow learners to read and write more often.

4.11 Criteria used to put children in ability groups

In order to put the learners into groups, the learners were assessed. The assessment was done based on the content taught to them. More than 72% of the teachers stated that usually, learners had to be assessed three times before a decision could be made. Test assessment involved assessing a specific time, reading ability and the levels of reading and writing (reading of words and writing of numerals). This was usually done by using the activity books.

4.12 Whether it is true or false that ongoing assessment was rarely done due to insufficient time

As regards ongoing assessment, most of the teachers, 12 (46.2%) indicated that it was “true” that on going assessment was rarely done due to insufficient time. However, 9

(34.6%) of the teachers said that it was “not true” that ongoing formal assessment was rarely done due to insufficient while 5 (19.2%) of them did not respond to this question.

4.13 The Class Inventory of Materials

The findings of the research revealed that ROC needs a lot of materials. From the class inventory of resources used during the study, the researcher found out that schools had a lot of text books in schools, but these seemed to be locked up in cupboards and not used adequately. School B, for instance received 350 books in 1992 and all the books are in stock. The information collected from the inventory of materials showed that schools had a lot of books. Most of these books had been distributed to schools by the Ministry of Education. Both School A and B had not received any items like books and magazines from the community.

4.14 Advantages of using ROC as a learner-centred method

The findings of the study revealed that ROC, as a learner-centred pedagogy has a number of positive aspects in its implantation. It involves learners and encourages interaction between the teachers and the learners. Learners improve their reading and writing skills. Learners work on their own allowing them to remember what they are doing. ROC encourages interaction between teachers and learners. It also encourages critical thinking. Children learn very fast due to pictures which accompany activities.

4.15 Disadvantages of using ROC as a learner-centred method

The study revealed that ROC as program is lengthy as it runs from grade 3-7. This makes the methodology monotonous. The other disadvantage is that it is not examinable and it is not timetabled in grade seven. ROC is lengthy, time consuming and it leaves other subjects neglected. It has heavy work load for teachers and some learners cannot express themselves as they feel shy. Slow learners do not get sufficient help.

4.16 Performances of learners under ROC

The findings in this section are results from the activities that were administered to selected classes in grades 4, 5 and 6 in School “A” and School “B”. The activities were administered by the class teachers. For the purpose of this study, activities that were administered were those that could be taken by even the weakest pace group. This basically meant that the other pace groups could have been at an advantage.

The findings were analysed using the Rainbow Reading Ladder colours. Teachers use the ladder to determine which level the learner should be placed in. The expectations are that learners in the orange level can read fluently and can choose to read silently. Learners in the green level use phonics to sound out any new words in the local language.

4.16. 1 Profile of School “A”

School “A”, is in an urban setting. The basic school has a male School Manager and a female Deputy School Manager. There are 36 female teachers and 6 male teachers. Most of the males teach in the upper station of the basic school.

Performance of learners in school “A”

(a) Grade Four

Activity One

The learners were able to read the words with minimum difficulties. The activity required that the learners complete sentences. The results of the activity showed that 65% of the learners scored less than 40% on the task.

Activity Two

Tasks involved sorting words according to tenses. The learners had an activity that asked them to look at the words that were in pairs and then write them in continuous tense. An example given was that of run- running. The words were first read as a class and then written individually. The words were placed under –ed and –ing. It was observed by the researcher that the learners added the term ‘word’ to each word. This showed that the learners did not understand the context and what was expected of them in the exercise. The exercise showed that 35% of the pupils scored 60% while 65% of them scored less than 30%.

The average performance of the results for the grade pupils of School “A” showed that the results for yellow level were spread across the learners. 50% of the learners in green level scored between 0% and 10%. The remaining 50% pupils scored between 30% and 50%. In Level red, 64% of the learners did not get any items correct, while 25% of them got 20% and 11% of them scored 50%. The performance of the pupils in Level yellow was spread ranging from 30% to 90%.

(b) Grade Five

Activity One

The activity expected the pupils to look at the picture on the work page. The page had pictures of various animals. The participants were expected to find the names and write them in alphabetical order. This was a follow up exercise from the previous exercise where they had listed the names of the animals. The performance levels was fairly good with 62% of the pupils scoring more than 50%,

Activity Two

The activity involved sorting out of animals and putting them in their correct place. One page had pictures of animals that were clearly labeled. The pupils were expected to place them in the correct place in terms of where they belonged. For instance, in the wild or on the farm. The results of this activity revealed that the learners had problems in linking and placing the animals in the correct places. The view of the researcher was that the biggest problem that seemed to emerge from this activity was that the learners did not know which animal was found in which environment. It could be deduced that, whilst

they were able to spell the name of the animals, they had limited knowledge of what these animals really were. The results showed that 68% of the learners got less than 30% while 20% of them scored 40% and 12% of them scored 70%.

A summary of the performance of pupils in grade 5 at school “A” showed that the pupils in the Orange Level, 70.1% of them scored 50% while 28.9% of them scored 28.9%.

The performance of the learners in Green Level had 20% of the pupils scoring 0% while 33.3% of them scored 20% and the rest spread from 50% to 70%. The pupils in Red Level had their scores concentrated between 30% and 50%. Yellow Level learners had 33.3% of them scoring 0% while 16.4% of them scored 20% and 16.4% scored 60%.

(c) Grade six

Activity One

In this activity, the learners completed the sentences with pronouns like hers, mine, yours, his or ours under the topic, whose is it? The study showed that 48% of the pupils scored 50% while 32% of them scored 75% and 20% scored 90%.

Activity Two

In this activity, the pupils were expected to write the sentences correctly by taking selecting the words that had same sounds but had different meanings. More than 80% of the pupils scored less than 20%.

In the first task, the learners were expected to re-write a story. This task involved the skills of both reading and writing. The participants also did tasks that allowed them to fill in letters to complete words. Furthermore, they were required to put in missing letters to finish words.

In one exercise the learners were expected to use the days of the week. They sentences were written and the first letter of the word that was to be filled in was given. In the other task, the learners were expected to look at the pictures and fill in the blanks with the words either where or were. Due to the poor performance in the two tasks, a third task was given. This involved the use of singular nouns. The results had little impact on the average performance of the respondents.

4.16.2 Profile of School “B”

School “B” is situated to the east of Mufulira District. It is approximately 15 km from the town centre. One needs to get on a bus in order to get there. This has meant that most of the learners live within the vicinity of the school. The school is surrounded by families that are either self-employed or are out of employment.

Performance of learners in school “B”

(a) Grade 4

Activity One

The learners were able to read the words with minimum difficulties. The activity required that the learners complete sentences.

The performance of the pupils in grade 4 at School “B” was as documented below. No one in Orange Level got above 10%. In Green Level, 27% of the learners scored 0%; 18% scored 10%; 27% scored 20%; and 9% scored 50%. In Red Level, 63% of the respondents had no item correct. No learner, however, got less than 40% in Yellow Level. The activity involved writing words in pairs. An example of run-running was given.

Activity two

Tasks involved sorting words according to tenses. The learners had an activity that asked them to look at the words that were in pairs and then write them in continuous tense. An example given was of run- running. The words were first read and then written. The words are placed under –ed and –ing. It was observed by the researcher that the learners added the term ‘word’ to each word. This meant that they did not seem to understand the exercise.

(b) Grade five

Activity One

The activity expected the pupils to look at the pictures on the page. The page had pictures of various animals. The participants were expected to find the names and write them in alphabetical order. This was a follow up exercise from the one where they had listed the names of the animals.

Activity Two

The activity involved sorting out of animals and putting them in their correct place. One page had pictures of animals that were clearly labeled. The pupils were expected to place them in their correct places. The two places where categories of *in the wild* and *on the farm*.

The average performance from the two activities showed that the learners in Orange level had an average percentage of 40%. In Green Level, 40% of the learners got all the activities wrong while 30% of them got 60%. In Red Level, 72% of the learners scored 40% and no one got a mark higher than 40%. More than half of the learners in Yellow Level got 0% and 20% of them scored 60%.

(c) Grade six

Activity one

In this activity, the learners completed the sentences with pronouns like hers, mine, yours, his or ours under the topic, whose is it?

Activity Two

In this activity, the pupils were expected to write the sentences correctly by taking note of the words that had the same sounds but had different meanings. The pupils did not seem to understand the instructions.

The average performance from the two activities showed that learners in Orange Level scored between 30% and 40% while 30% of the learners got 30% and 60% of them scored 40%. In Green Level 63% of the learners scored 10% while 20% of them scored 20%. In Red Level no one got more than 20%. Similarly, no pupil got more than 20% in Yellow Level. Special attention was given to Green and Yellow Levels where 50% and 60% of the learners got 0%. Yellow Level was well spread and somehow Red Level results were considered acceptable.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research study. The discussion takes into account the research objectives. The research objectives were: to investigate the challenges of learner-centred methods like ROC in basic schools; to examine the sustainability of learner-centred methods in basic schools; to assess the effectiveness of ROC in basic schools; and to investigate how the performance of the learners is under ROC.

5.2 Challenges of ROC in schools

Teachers that are involved in teaching ROC face numerous challenges. These challenges range from handling large classes to teacher burnout due to too much work. According to the research findings, it is not possible for the teachers to attend to all the pace groups adequately because of the challenges in dealing with large classes. Furthermore, learners respond differently to the learning situations due to individual difference. This finding is in line with Sekeleti (1983) who in his conclusion stated that government policy for primary schools seemed to be influenced more by intent than reality.

Using vernacular languages which may need translation is a challenge teachers who teach ROC face. This is because the local language used at school during ROC may not be the

one that the learner uses at home. This means that the child has to deal with two second languages.

It cannot be disputed that teaching ROC is not only very involving but it is also demanding. A lot of commitment is needed for planning and organizing pace group activities. Tabulawa (2003) also points out that schools had an enormous task, therefore, to pick the most important concepts and skills to enable learners concentrate on the quality of understanding rather than on the quantity of information presented. This understanding could increase the capacity for the learners to acquire and productively apply new knowledge and skills to changes and challenges.

Challenges in ROC may also extend to the use of teaching and learning resources which may not be easily accessible because they are in most cases locked up in the head master's office who is seldomly found in his office as he has other responsibilities to attend to.

5.3 Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources

Though the supply of books has improved greatly, not much can be said for the utilization of these new resources (MOE, 1996). The legacy of years of resource-starvation has left its mark on schools and teachers have books locked up in drawers and not utilized fully by the learners. The fact that few classrooms have facilities for the storage or display of books and materials only compounds the situation with these items being locked away in storerooms or heads' offices.

From the data collected from the inventory of resources, it was revealed that schools have a lot of reading books which are underutilized. The findings also revealed that most of the books were not used because they had outlived their usefulness as the syllabus has changed overtime. A considerable number of books, from UNICEF and US AID on a number of issues including HIV/AIDS were provided to the schools when ROC was implemented. Most of the items are worn out. In order to sustain the running of the program, the Ministry of Education needs to continuously provide teaching and learning materials. An explicit example was that of carpets that were used at the teaching stations. Apart from one or two worn out carpets in the schools, the learners either sit on the floor or on sack woven mats.

5.4 Assessment

It is true that ROC puts great emphasis on assessment. When and how it should be conducted are systematically tabulated. However, the findings of this research revealed that it is not possible to assess the learners as often as they are supposed to be assessed. It was not possible to conduct regular formal assessment because of the large classes. The test assessments involve assessing the reading ability and the levels of writing. This includes reading of words and writing of numerals. This was usually done by using the activity books.

The findings of the research study also showed that 47% of the teachers stated that ongoing assessment was rarely done due to insufficient time. This finding could be likened to that of Farrel (2002) who argued in support of traditional methods in which

learners in classes worked with a single adult, a certified teacher who held the key to knowledge. The timetable had discrete periods of 30 or 40 minutes that were each devoted to a separate subject and the supporting learning materials were organized by a standard curriculum (Farrel,2007). Under the traditional method, the whole word approach was used. Reading was taught by introducing words to children as whole units.

MoE (2003) also state that under traditional method, the whole word method involved teaching children to read and pronounce words as single units as opposed to ROC. The learners were expected to read the words without any conscious attention to sub lexical units. Repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts enabled them to do so.

5.5 Learners' Performance

As far as learners' performance was concerned, the study showed that 72% of the teachers indicated that learners using Read on Literacy Course had better skills in writing. However an interesting finding was at school "B" in a grade six class where out of the ten learners, no pupil got beyond 40% at the red level, an indication that pupils had not mastered the writing skills despite the introduction of ROC in the school.

Although 54% of the teachers had indicated that learners developed, none of them was able to get an average score of 50% and above in the red level which could be interpreted as having 0% in all the items taken. When the researcher asked how this was so from the participating teachers, the explanation was that the learners needed to be re-graded. This

meant re-allocating them into another ability group that demanded less involving activities.

The research data further suggested that most of the learners were struggling or were not able to read. This was evidenced by results from School B where the learners under the red level, particularly grade six, failed to get than 40%. This brings out an issue of concern especially when teachers in the study gave different views. These results reflect an element discussed by Samoof (2007) that people in developing countries will write reports that the donors expect to read.

Interesting data was revealed when 36.8% of the sample did not indicate whether learners develop initial reading skills in two languages by the end of the first four years. One thing that the study revealed was that both Schools “A” and “B” did not use the Read on Literacy Course pedagogy because it was the general impression that the learners were not able to deal with it as yet.

It was, in the view of the researcher that, the biggest problem that seemed to emerge from this activity was that the learners did not know which animal was found in which environment. It could be deduced that, whilst they were able to spell the name of the animals, they had limited knowledge of what these animals really were. This finding seem to be in line with Samoff (2007) who stated that overall control over major decisions in the aid relationship remains very distant from the local settings that are critical locus of improving education quality.

The findings of this present research confirm this line of thought that educational planners often devise policies based on administrative and political considerations at the expense of the important educational linguistic and pedagogical (Sekeleti, 1983).

The findings of the study reveal that the performance of the learners is below bar and yet quite a number of the teachers' responses indicated that the learners were able to read at the end of grade four. We see a trend where teachers in the Ministry of Education say what they need to say and not what is on the ground. This finding supports the assertion put forward by Samoff (2007) that Ministers of Education document what is expected in order to get aid.

When the learners fail to connect, supports Serpel (1978), that language teaching at the moment unfortunately promoted the sterile recitation of idealized forms divorced from understanding.

A common replica of previous findings is in a study conducted by Sekeleti (1983) where his findings revealed that 'pupils on the whole were not able to read by grade three'. This could be a rational explanation as to why ROC is not used in grade three in most schools. His findings further revealed that not even grade 4 pupils were able to do the reading test, let alone the writing test. How can learner performance be so poor when NBTL supposedly is a success story?

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This research study has demonstrated that ROC, as a learner-centred pedagogy is not as effective as the educational expectations would like to reflect. There is overwhelming evidence from the findings of this present research that indicate that the levels of literacy are not improving. The performance of the learners is a great contradiction to what the teachers start.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations have been made:

1. More intensive training should be provided for teachers to equip them with relevant skills to manage the implementation of ROC.
2. The Zambian Government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that there is a constant supply of relevant teaching and learning materials that are need to sustain programmes.
3. The educational policy makers should take into account empirical data to research to make informed decisions. Hoppers, (1981: 7) states that even when sufficient data was available and past experience has been evaluated, it is still possible for decision makers often out of political expediency to persevere with traditional assumptions remedies. Sekeleti, (1983) made the same observation when he

wrote that 'educational planners often devise policies based on administrative and political considerations at the expense of the important educational, linguistic and pedagogical factors'.

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Appendix A

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

This is research conducted to find how sustainable Read on Literacy Course is in basic schools. All the information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Personal Information

School:

Sex: Age:

Academic and professional qualifications

- 1 Years of teaching in basic schools.....
- 2 Years of teaching Read on Literacy Course (ROC)
- 3 Did you undergo any training for teaching Read on Course?
{Yes} {No....}
4. If yes, how were you trained?
Hours { } Days { } Weeks { }
Was the training adequate?
{Yes....} {No....}
5. If you have not been trained for Read on Course, how have you acquired the skills and knowledge on Read on Course?
.....
.....
6. Would you like to have training?
{Yes....} {No....}
7. State your experiences in teaching Read on Course.
.....
.....

8. Learners doing Read on Literacy Course are able to read effectively a variety of materials.

{Strongly disagree} {Disagree} (Agree) (Strongly Agree)

9. Learners develop initial reading skills in two languages by the end of Foundation years. (Grades 1-4)

{Strongly disagree} {Disagree} (Agree) (Strongly Agree)

10. Learners are able to write for a variety of situations

{Strongly disagree} {Disagree} (Agree) (Strongly Agree)

11. The alternating between two languages so that half of the time they are reading and writing in English and half of the time they are reading and writing in a Zambian Language is complicated for the learners.

{True} {False}

12. The numerous activities in reading and writing in the Literacy hour usually disadvantages the slow learners.

{True} {False}

If true, explain.....

If false, explain

13. Organising the class into four pace groups, each group being taught to their level of competence, one group at a time, at a teaching station is very taxing for the teacher.

{True} {False}

If true, explain

If false, explain

14. What criteria do you use to put children in ability groups?

.....

15. How many pupils do you have in your class?

.....

16. Is the one hour allocated for literacy adequate to address the needs of the learners in your class?

{Yes} {No}

How much time would you propose?

17. Do you allow children to take readers' books home?

{Yes...} {No....}

18. On going assessment (formal) is rarely done due to insufficient time.

{True...} {False}

19. Are the available resources for teaching Read on Literacy Course adequate?

{Yes....} {No....}

Explain.....
.....
.....

Did you teach under Zambia Basic Primary Course (ZBEC)?

{Yes....} {No.....}

20. What are the advantages of using Read on Literacy Course as a learner-centred method?

.....
.....
.....

21. What are the weaknesses of using Read on Course?

.....
.....
.....

23. What are the differences between methods that were used in ZBEC and those that are being used now in Read On Course?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 'B'

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

This is research conducted to find how sustainable Read on Literacy Course is in basic schools. All the information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Class Inventory for Teachers

| Source | Items received | Quantity | Items available | condition |
|------------------------------------|--|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Ministry of Education Headquarters | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rainbow Reading Library | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rainbow Reading Library Ladder | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ODA/GRZ book boxes | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNICEF Supplementary books | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HIV/AIDS Supplementary books | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language Course books | | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | (English & Z Language | | | |
| | • Textbooks for other subjects | | | |
| | • Dictionaries | | | |
| | • ZPC materials -ZPC Supplementray -wall charts -work books -activity cards -work cards -sentence cards -command cards | | | |
| From the Community | • Magazines | | | |
| | • Books | | | |
| | • Poster | | | |
| | • Telephone directories | | | |
| | • Street maps | | | |
| School (Any supplements) | • | | | |

Appendix 'C'

ACTIVITIES

| LEVEL | GRADE 6 | GRADE 5 | GRADE4 | |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|--|
| YELLOW | | 22,23 | 39 | |
| ORANGE | 85 | | | |
| GREEN | 61 | | 44 | |
| RED | | 31 | 44 | |