

STUDENT CENTERED TEACHING AND COMPETENCE ACQUISITION:
A CASE OF ARIA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, ARUA, UGANDA

BY


CANDIA MORRIS

14/U/12912/GMVP/PE

A RESEARCH SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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DECLARATION

I Candia Morris declare that this is my original piece of work and has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for the award of any degree.

Sign 

Date 06/10/2016

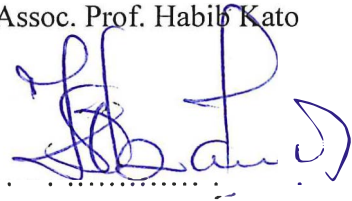
Candia Morris

APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that this research entitled “student centered teaching /learning and competence acquisition: a case of Aria senior secondary school, Arua, Uganda” is submitted with our approval as research supervisors.



Assoc. Prof. Habil Kato



Dr. Obanda Peter



Date



Date

DEDICATION

With great pleasure, I dedicate this research to my children Sakaru Gladys, Letaru Winnie, Asianzu Patricia and Aleti Vincent. Above all I dedicate this work to Almighty God who has granted me the gift of life, good health throughout this research period and who enabled me overcome challenges in the entire study period and beyond.

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God bless you all.

ACRONYMS

ABL:	Activity Based Learning
BOG:	Board of Governors
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
ICT:	Information Communication Technology
PTA:	Parents Teachers Association
KYU:	Kyambogo University
MVP:	Masters in Vocational Pedagogy
SS:	Secondary School
TVET:	Technical Vocational Education and Training

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of students centered teaching approaches on competence acquisition with specific reference to Aria Senior Secondary School in Arua District. The researcher used future workshop approach with the stake holders to identify and delimit the areas of the study. The stakeholders included the Board of Governors (BOG), the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) executive, members of the school administration, the teaching staff and the students. During the FGD, the following challenges were identified; Use of teaching approach with limited activities, poor lesson attendance by both teachers and students, inadequate supervision of teaching process by administration, poor study skills of learners, failure to form discussion groups, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate preparation of teachers, low coverage of syllabus, miss use of ICT facilities by students, idleness among students, limited instructional materials, boy girl relationship and few practical lessons.

In the utopian phase of the future workshop solutions to the challenges were identified. In the reality phase of the future workshop implementable strategies for enhancing student centered teaching approach were identified as follows; Use of teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons, marking of students register during lessons by teachers to address the challenge of students missing lessons, approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans by head teacher to address the challenge of inadequate preparation by teachers and formation of students discussion groups to promote substantive discussion of ideas.

The above strategies were implemented and evaluated. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made basing on the study findings. It was agreed that Suggested strategies to challenges by stake holders which were not implemented should be implemented and these include; Motivation of teachers through staff performance appraisal, professional development of the staff, award of certificates for teachers whose subjects are well performed, verbal and material appreciation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUDUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Teaching is the act of giving lessons on a subject to a class or pupils (Johnson, 2011). It aims at showing students how to do something. Teaching can occur both formally and informally. Within a school teaching takes place as formal education.

Learning is the process by which we acquire and retain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behavior patterns or physical growth (Farant, 2007). According to Johnson (2011) learning is knowledge gained through study. This does not necessarily denote the acquisition of information, but can also be skills, behaviors, values as well as human beings engage in the process of learning from birth till death.

Teaching and learning are opposite sides of the same coin; A lesson is taught until it has been learned. Therefore student – centered education is a realistic response to what we know about students, their development, interests and characteristics (Farant, 2007).

Student centered teaching methods encourage learners' participation, attracts learners' attention and build good relationship between teachers and learners (Walter, 1988). According to Davis (1997), the design and selection of teaching methods must take into account not only the nature of the subject matter but also how students learn. In today's school the trend is that the student centred teaching approach encourages a lot of creativity. Davis (1997) further argues that it is a known fact that human advancement comes through reasoning and it's through student centered approaches that schools can produce competent students.

The aim of Aria Senior Secondary school is to produce competent students who can participate in community activities as secondary school education is not only important to an individual but also to the community. The school lays foundation for higher education and training. According to Maicibi (2005), education makes contribution through provision of

knowledge, attitudes, values and approaches for an individual in facing new situations. According to Tadaro and Smith (2006), education contributes to economic arrangement and organisation of various sectors in the economy such as agriculture, education service sector and industry. This is because the way people are trained affects the skills, work habits and character of those who work in those sectors. Education generates improvement in productivity where increase in literacy influences output per worker (Schultz & Thirwall, 1981).

For students to acquire competences required there is need to use student centered teaching approach as it improves on their skills acquisition. Student Centered Approach to teaching is where both teachers and students play active role in the learning process. The teacher's primary role is to facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material. Student learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects, student portfolios, and class participation (Freira, 1970).

Similarly according to Hertz (2010), Student-Centered Approach to Learning encourages effective teaching and learning. Effective teaching is that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Ultimately, for a judgement about whether teaching is effective, to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students.

A secondary school is expected to adopt appropriate teaching and learning methods so as to achieve the national aims and objectives of secondary education. According to Uganda Governments white paper of 1992 (Uganda Govt. 1992) the aims and objectives of secondary education includes; instilling and promoting national unity; enabling the individual to apply acquired skills in solving problems in the community; instilling positive attitudes towards productive work and imparting and promoting a sense of self discipline, ethical and spiritual values, personal and collective responsibility and initiative.

However challenges often arise in the pursuit of student centered teaching approach. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary (2008: 1300), a challenge is something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to overcome successfully and therefore tests a person's ability. To me challenges are obstacles to a set target.

For this study action research approach was adopted to identify challenges faced by Aria SS in the pursuit of student centered teaching approaches and the intervention strategies to achieve its aim to produce competent students who can participate in community activities. The action research approach was adopted because action researchers are co-producers of knowledge with social actors based on free agreement to participate (Nielsen and Suesson, 2006).

1.2 Situation analysis

In the action research approach adopted a situation analysis was done to establish bench mark to the study.

1.2.1 Future workshop

A future workshop analysis was used with the stakeholders of Aria SS to identify challenges of student centered teaching approach and intervention strategies. A future workshop is a method for citizens groups for planning a better future (Apel, 2004). A future workshop is also defined as a technique meant to shed light on a common problematic situation, to generate visions about the future, and to discuss how these visions can be realized (Jungk and Mullert, 1970). It has key phases; Phase one, the critique phase which involves identification of challenges, phase two, the utopian phase which involves suggesting solutions to the challenges and phase three reality phase which involves the interviewee participants picking out the applicable solutions.

1.2.1.1 The critique phase

In critique phase interactions were held with stakeholders of Aria SS using future workshop approach. The stakeholders included the Board of Governors (BOG), the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) executive, members of the school administration, the teaching staff and the students. During the FGD, the following challenges were identified; *Use of teaching approach with limited activities, poor lesson attendance by both teachers and students, inadequate supervision of teaching process by administration, poor study skills of learners, failure to form discussion groups, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate preparation of teachers, low coverage of syllabus, miss use of ICT facilities by students, idleness among students, limited instructional materials, boy girl relationship and few practical lessons*

Ranking of the challenges identified by stake holders was done. With stakeholders the challenges were ranked using matrix system (Walter, 1989). This is where two challenges are picked and compared at a time and most pressing one is identified by show of hands. Through this process participants arranged challenges starting from the most serious ones up to the least serious ones (Table 1).

Table 1: Ranking of challenges

Challenges	Frequency of comparison	Ranking
Use of teacher centered teaching approach instead of learner centered approach	10	1
Inadequate preparation of teachers	8	2
Inadequate instructional materials and learning facilities	8	3
Few practical lessons	6	4
Failure to form and use discussion groups	4	5
Inadequate motivation of teachers	4	6

Source: primary data

From table 1 above the challenge with the highest frequency is the most critical compared with the one with lesser frequency Hence use of teacher centered approach is the most critical challenge is the most critical challenge.

1.2.1.2 Utopian phase

In the utopian phase the following solution to the challenges were identified;

Team teaching and extra lesson coverage, regular preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans by teachers and regular checking of lesson plans and schemes of work by school administration, routine roll calls for both students and teachers as follow up, buying of more learning aids i.e. Commerce, Entrepreneurship books and Accounts books, more practical lessons from 2 - 4 per month, forming and encouraging discussion groups, encourage use of English language through debate once a week and drama once a term, checking of students notes by subject teachers, guidance and counseling meetings on study skills and disadvantages of boy girl relationship, proper time management, electing a student leader in charge of ICT, reward to best performing teachers inform of

certificates and token of appreciation, organizing seminars and workshops at least once a term per subject and further training of teachers

1.2.1.3 The reality phase

Prioritization of the possible solutions was done with stake holders. The following were identified as priority; *formation and use discussion groups, adequate preparation of the teacher and improving lesson attendance by both teachers and students.*

Therefore the study was carried out with the view of implementing and evaluating of the priority strategies for Aria SS achieve its vision of producing well informed, participatory and effective mind in society.

1.3 Motivation statement

Pertaining to my experience at Aria SS as a Vocational Education Teacher and an Administrator (acting deputy head teacher) and from respondents there is need to improve on teaching methods in the school. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development (Oviawe, 2009). The training in TVET requires student centered approaches to enable students appreciate and practice the taught skills. However the methods used at Aria SS for imparting these skills are theoretical according to stake holders, therefore there is need for effective use of student centered teaching and learning approaches.

1.4 Problem statement

Use of learner centered teaching approaches has a positive impact on competence acquisition (Farant, 2007). In Aria SS many teachers use lecture methods hence limiting students participation and competence acquisition. The school faces challenges in using student centered teaching approaches. The challenges may originate from school administration, teachers or students. In Aria secondary school I interacted with school stakeholders through future workshop procedures where it emerged that missing of lessons by both teachers and students is common, teachers concentrate on teaching theory than practices coupled with inadequate teaching materials. Failure to address these challenges compromises use of learner centered teaching hence limiting learners' acquisition of the required competences.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of students centered teaching approaches on competence acquisition with specific reference to Aria Senior Secondary School in Arua District.

1.6 Specific objectives

Together with the stake holders the following specific objectives of the study were agreed upon:

- i) To identify factors affecting student centered teaching approaches
- ii) To examine strategies that will enhance use of student centered teaching approaches
- iii) To implement the identified strategies for enhancing student centered teaching approaches

1.7 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated from the objectives to guide the study and to help address the research problem and objectives stated.

- i) What are the factors affecting student centered teaching approaches in Aria SS?
- ii) What intervention strategies can be used to enhance student centered teaching approaches in Aria SS?
- iii) Whether the intervention strategies identified be implemented successfully?

1.8 Scope of the study

1.8.1 Content scope

The study specifically sought to; establish challenges affecting Aria secondary school in using learner centered teaching approaches identify the intervention measures that can be used to enable the school to have effective teaching and evaluate the impact of the intervention strategies used.

1.8.2 Time scope

The study was conducted within a period of four months from February 2016 to May 2016.

1.8.3 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Aria secondary school in Arua District, West Nile in Northern Uganda.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study brought out results that will be useful to school stake holders that include members of Board of Governors (BOG), administrators, teachers, students and parents by making them work together in order for the school teachers to effectively use student centered teaching approaches. This was through identifying challenges and strategies for effective use of student centered teaching methods that includes using group discussion, debate and drama methods as cases of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature is reviewed under the themes, student centered teaching methods, factors affecting student centered teaching and strategies for improving student centered teaching.

Global student centered teaching is defined as a realistic response to what we know about children, their development, interests and characteristics where teachers are certainly not sentimental about their students nor do they let them do as they like; but they do respect their student's individuality and try enable each one to fulfill his potential. To me student centered teaching is involvement of students in the teaching process.

2.1 Types of student centered teaching methods

Effectiveness of learning depends on the teaching methods used (Creswell, 1998). According to Davis (1997), the design and selection of teaching methods must take into account not only the nature of the subject matter but also how students learn. In today's schools the trend is that teaching should encourage a lot of creativity. Davis further argues that human advancement comes through reasoning. Similarly, Walter (1988) and Hessler (1992) state that reasoning and original thought enhances creativity. In the Student centered approach to teaching, while teachers are an authority figure in this model, teachers and students play active role in the learning process. The teacher's role is to facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material.

According to Umar (2004), student centered approach to teaching encourages effective teaching and effective teaching is that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Defining effective teaching is not easy. Ultimately, for a judgment about whether teaching is effective, to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students.

According to Frankel (1990), educational system must embrace a student centered perspective to maximize high standards of learning, motivation, and achievement for all

learners and their teachers. According to Frankel (1990), the student centered perspective begins with a focus on knowing and understanding each learner in the context of a deep understanding of the learning process itself. It couples a focus on knowing and respecting individual learners with the best available research and practitioner experience about learning. It also provides a model and rationale for transformation in our schools. The student centered teaching methods include discussion, activity based learning, student presentation, gaming, demonstration and collaborative learning.

2.1.1 Discussion

According to Lave and Wenger (1991) learning is a form of social co-participation where the social situation in which it occurs is a focal point.

In another development, Leady (1980) argues that teacher use the discussion strategies that build skills required for productive collaboration. This component involves students collaborating on meaningful tasks and responses to questions. While the teacher uses strategies such as collaborative learning and strategic selection of groups to establish an atmosphere of collaboration, the focus is on the meaningful learning for students. Such collaboration may also involve the whole class focus on related projects, such as an entrepreneurship field trip or community survey. This view was supported by Inglar (2002) who states that teachers should ensure that; class rooms are arranged in such a way as to maximize engagement and interaction through collaborative discussion; there is regular setting of group tasks; and establishment of ground rules about how the groups will operate.

According to Inglar (2002), teachers should ensure there is explicit teaching of students to work as a team by assigning different roles within groups to make students responsible for particular aspects of tasks. They also assign tasks that require the sharing of expertise and ensuring that students' contributions are valued by teachers and other students Kahn (1986).

In a related study Wenger (1991) found that discussions on business process and activities make the individual learner acquire skills through actual engaging in the process, under the attenuated condition of legitimate peripheral participation. This process of skills attainment

is highly interactive and productive. Learning is by participation in a particular task Wenger (1991).

2.1.2 Experiential learning

According to Bjerknes (2002) experience is built through interaction between the individual and the environment and is enhanced when an individual acts together with others at least in a social context. Similarly Dewey (1997) points out that a man living alone would have little or no chance to reflect upon his past experience to extract its net meaning. According to Dewey (1997, p. 73), to learn from experience is to make a backward and forward linkages between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Similarly Senge (2000, P. 3) argues that learning is at once deeply personal and inherently social. It connects us not just to knowledge in the abstract world, but to each other. According to Vygotsky (cited in Harry, 2001, p. 18) learning is through the mediation of others, through the mediation of adults that the child undertakes activities. With this he emphasizes that an individual becomes aware of him or herself only in and through interaction with others. My view is that one's experience helps him to solve new problem.

2.1.3 Activity Based Learning (ABL)

According to Wenger (2008), when students are given tasks it makes them build their own mental structures through interaction. Similarly Editors (2004) says that constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about what people learn. The theory explains that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.

2.1.4 Learning by discovery

This component is demonstrated by teachers: Encouraging students to be discoverers, explorers and creators in variety of ways (Freira, 1996). According to Freira (1996, p.14) learning by discovery is a way of discovering one self and a potential to name things around us. In this respect, people if empowered are capable of making their own internalization and analysis of the world around them and make use of it as they interact

with others. Learning in this sense is letting people discover things on their own, in a social set up with others. If an individual is provided with the proper tools and materials, then he/she can gradually perceive the personal and social reality and the contradictions in it. He/she becomes conscious of his or her perception of that reality, and deals critically with it. This nature of learning supports the students-centered approach to learning where learners try out tasks and are enabled to do with reality of learning how things work by themselves (Kvale 1996). My experience shows that students cannot easily forget knowledge they get through discovery method of learning. Similarly knowledge a student gets through this method motivates him/her to discover more knowledge.

Relating to Freire's approach of learning by discovery is a view by Dewey (1997, p.75) who points out that every experience with a meaning has some element of thought and that a cut and try is inclusive in all our experiences. Reflecting about this view, it is evident that where ever we succeed, the process to success has phases of trial and failure until a workable procedure is achieved. Although Dewey (1997) does not bring it out as learning by discovery, but it's my opinion that the phases one goes through to success reflect a high level of discovery. At this point I wish to make my submission that experiential learning, learning by doing and learning by discovery only differ by nomenclature.

2.1.5 Learning through games

Learning through games makes learning effective and attractive because through games students are well informed and encouraged to be participatory (Kaufman 1992). Similarly according Murphy (2011) games use many other techniques with a link to the principles of learning. Game designers place emphasis on feedback, which goes with practice as part of exercise.

Games use the technique of simplicity to reduce distractions, balance difficulty verses skill, and accurately correlate actions to corrective feedback. This impacts flow and motivation and increases the positive feelings toward the activity, which links back to the principles of exercise, readiness, and effect (Kralik 2002).

According to Wenzlar (2011) games use immersion and engagement as ways to create riveting experiences for players which is part of the principle of intensity. Finally, part of

the primary appeal of games is that they are fun. Although fun is hard to define, it is clear that it involves feelings such as engagement, satisfaction, pleasure, and enjoyment which are part of principle of effect (Gee, 2007). From my experience, though use of game teaching technique has all the fore mentioned benefits only few teachers use it for imparting competences to students. Simple game such as dividing students into groups and making some of the groups as buyer and others as sellers could make them understand easily the relationship between buyers and sellers especially when teaching qualities of a good retailer.

2.2 Factors affecting student centered teaching

Using student centered teaching approaches has practical constraints such as inadequate instructional materials, inadequate motivation of teachers and inadequate preparation by teachers (Hull, 1943).

2.2.1 Motivation of teachers

When teachers are inadequately motivated they don't perform well. According to Maslow (1970) people are born with innate needs that they strive to satisfy and therefore need to be motivated. However, in contrast to Freud (1915) who said that motivation simply satisfaction of biological needs or tension reduction, Maslow (1970) believes that the ultimate direction of motivation is not simply satisfaction of biological needs or tension reduction but striving for self-actualization.

Consequently his theory accentuates the positive, intellectual, uplifting side of human beings. For Maslow (1970), innate forces and an innate hierarchy of needs give human behavior its distinctive energy and direction. I concur with Maslow because if teachers are well motivated, imparting of required competences becomes easy and efficient though he did not explain how to get resources for motivating the teachers. Often motivation is associated motivation with material and monetary gains. In fact, the evidence shows that attempts to enhance motivation in this way are unlikely to achieve that end. Even if they do, the impact on subsequent learning is close to zero (Gorard, See & Davies, 2012).

2.2.2 Practical lessons

According to Chan (2002), when students have few practical lessons, it limits competence acquisition since they fail to relate theory with real life situation. This is because students can only relate theory to real life situation if they are taught practical and are trained at work places. During practical lessons students are expected to develop relevant knowledge, skills and competencies to the world of work (Chan, 2002). Solomon (1993) observed that practical teaching helps students relate theory to practice.

Okello (2009) asserts that the nature of Ugandan education system is generally theoretical with little or no practical experience provided to learners through use of relevant tools and materials.

According to the education policy review commission of Uganda government (1992), the secondary school curriculum in Uganda has not been implemented adequately in schools due to the wide spread absence of the requisite facilities, equipment and personnel. For instance, the teaching of practical and science subjects degenerated into a theoretical exercise with emphasis continuing to be placed on academic performance. There has been neglect of the practical aspects and the application of knowledge to the solving of problems especially in rural areas, in industry and in social life generally.

2.2.3 Instructional materials and learning facilities

The schools with limited instructional materials such as reference books, practical guides, computers, internet services and many other teaching aids make the teaching process almost impossible (Mbagwa, 2014). This concurs with Okinyal (2006) who asserts that “Lack of instructional material and infrastructures like lecture rooms, teachers’ houses, workshops, tools, equipment, books and libraries affect Products and the competencies directly required in the labour market”. The use of inadequate instructional materials and facilities affect teachers’ motivation in teaching imparting vocational education skills.

On the other hand when adequate instructional materials are provided to the teachers, they feel energized and motivated and their sense of ownership and empowerment increased. Well implemented school improvement plans on the use of instructional materials and facilities in teaching and learning can increase collegiality and give teachers the satisfaction

whereby commit themselves to school improvement goals. According to Eya (2006) instructional materials make the teachers' job easier, faster and more effective. He maintained that when a teacher sees that he has relevant materials to teach his subject, he becomes more eager to go and teach than when the relevant materials to teach his subject are inadequate.

2.2.4 Lesson attendance by both teachers and students

On poor lesson attendance by both teachers and students, studies by Nakpodia (2007), Morrison et. al. (1965) and Nwideduh (2003) point out that when a student is regularly absent from class, it has an adverse effect on their academic performance and discourages student centered teaching and learning approach. This is because frequent absences may lead to missing out on vital information, facts and instructions that result in partial understanding of a topic, submission of incomplete work and poor participation in class activities. Similarly, Econ (1995) found that teacher's absenteeism leaves learner unguided. Stake holders of Aria SS revealed that though many teachers are committed, some miss lessons and never compensate them.

2.2.5 Teacher preparation

According to Maicibi (2005), inadequate preparation by teachers' limits student centered teaching and learning approach. Similarly Inglar (2002), point out that level of teacher preparation affects quality of teaching and learning. He further states that teachers need adequate preparation of schemes of work, lesson plan and learning aids if they are to use student centered teaching approach. Many teachers are believed to teach without schemes of work and lesson plans if the school administration fails to supervise, motivate and encourage them to adequately prepare lesson plans before teaching students (Hertz, 2010)

2.2.6 Use of discussion groups

Failure to form and use discussion groups limits student's participation and student centered teaching (Briton, 1991). Similarly according to Tesser (1991), students interact and learn freely when they form and use discussion groups instead of listening to the teacher exclusively.

Discussions encourage students to work hard especial when tasks are given to them ahead of discussion so that they work out solutions to be presented in the discussion (Gombe, 2009).

From my teaching experience students interact freely in discussion groups than in lessons conducted by teachers. Furthermore discussions encourage students to learn and discover new concepts as they search for solutions to tasks to be discussed.

2.3 Strategies that can address the Challenges of student centered teaching approach

2.3.1 Use of discussion groups

According to Gombe (2009) teachers play vital role for proper functioning of discussion groups. Studies by Briton and Tesser (1991) ascertain that when a classroom operates with student- centered instruction, students and instructors share the focus. Instead of listening to the teacher exclusively, students and teachers interact equally. Group work is encouraged, and students learn to collaborate and communicate with one another.

2.3.2 Motivation of teachers

There are strategies such as staff appraisal, professional development of the staff, award of certificates for teachers whose subjects are well performed, verbal and material appreciation.

Staff appraisal motivates the staff to perform better. According to Beach (1980) staff appraisal is assessment based upon collected data for the purpose of improving staff performance and motivation.

Professional development of the staff emphasizes more of training teaching staff to perform their duties appropriately and improve on qualification such that there is improved performance (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). My experience is that when teachers go for further studies they are motivated and perform better as they master the subject matter and become competent. Similarly according to Goethals, Howard & Sanders (2004) developing portfolios are increasingly becoming one means of demonstrating the skills, experiences, and accomplishments of the beginning

teacher. I agree because when a teacher develops a portfolio it indicates that he becomes more competent is able to use student centered approach to teaching effectively.

Award of certificates to teachers whose subjects are well performed. Stake holders agreed that certificates of good performance be given to teachers who use student centered approach to teaching and whose subjects perform better. According to Maslow (1970) innate forces and an innate hierarchy of needs give human behaviour a distinctive direction hence giving certificates of good performance to teachers encourages them use student centered approach to teaching.

2.3.3 Use of practical lessons

According to Tippelt & Amos (2003), project training is encouraged by the principle of coherence. They argue that it introduces a learner to practical situations which are likely to be in the consequent work places. Similarly Gombe (2009) adds that the project centered method of training brings students to discover the hidden reality and exposes them to the real production processes. This is further advantaged by the presence of a master as a facilitator who guides the learners to perfection.

To Jorgensen (2008), learning is not all about the mental work but also bodily interaction, social and emotional aspects. In the same vein, Nilson (2008) asserts that no human being exists without his/her surroundings as well as other aspects of his body. According to Nilsson, there is need to integrate theory with practical because one cannot do without the other as learning takes place holistically, that is biologically, mentally and socially.

2.3.4 Adequacy of instructional materials and learning facilities

According to Inglar (2002) the choice of learning aids should fulfill the aims and objective of the lesson to be taught. An aid used in one lesson might not relay the same message when used in another lesson. A teacher therefore should carefully plan and choose the aids to be used in one particular lesson Learning aids if not properly chosen might mislead the pupils instead of promoting understanding.

Farrant (1980) asserts that instructional materials and facilities arouse the interest of students in the teaching and learning. According to Mbagha et al. (2014) it is only a well-developed instructional system headed by the teacher and assisted by adequate instructional

materials and facilities that can positively influence the production of high caliber graduates at all levels of the educational system. In the same vein, Ogbu (2014) emphasized the importance of adequate, effective and efficient instructional materials and facilities in technology and vocational education, if wastages must be curbed in Technology, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

2.3.5 Lesson attendance by both teachers and students

Teachers should also sign daily arrival and departure book and account to school administration for the days missed. Teachers are urged to conduct students' roll call during their lesson and forward names of students absent for disciplinary action. According to Musaazi (1983) it's the role of parents and teachers to insure that students don't miss lessons. From my experience some schools dictate that students should have particular attendance percentage in order to qualify for exams.

2.3 Preparation by teachers

Harris (1998) explains that one of the factors for effective teaching is adequate preparation by the teacher. He also encourages supervision of the teachers by school administration. This view was supported by Mbiti (1974) in his study of the roles of school administration which includes supervision.

2.4 Evaluating impact of intervention strategies implemented

Regular reflection within the project team is an integral feature of an action research project. Innovations can be fine-tuned as the activity proceeds if participants meet on a regular basis to check on the efficacy of the strategies undertaken (Eya, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Todd (2012) describes methodology as procedures used to obtain and analyze data. This chapter thus presents materials and aspects of methodology that were used in this study, i.e. the research approach, respondents and their selection, sampling techniques and the methods and tools for data collection and analysis.

3.1 The research design

A cross-sectional analytical study was done (Sekaran, 2000). The research was qualitative and descriptive in nature and it was a participatory action research (PAR) using the future workshop approach. This approach of research emphasizes participation and action of stakeholders. Action research as described by VanBaren (2012) a research, an educational research in this case involves collecting data regarding the current educational situation, analyzing it, developing a plan to improve it, establishing changes after a new plan has been implemented and developing conclusions regarding the improvements. Based on the above definitions and explanation of action research, we found the use of action research approach relevant to help Aria SS effectively use student centered teaching methods since action research approach is participatory and democratic. This is in line with Billet (2001) who pointed out that, engagement of stakeholders in problem solving ensures implementation of the suggested solutions.

An action research was adopted to identify the factors affecting student centered teaching methods and strategies at Aria senior secondary school in the pursuit of student centered teaching and learning approaches.

The study was qualitative and it was used to describe and explain events and situations in the study. Qualitative research methods are valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena; tracking unique or un expected events; illuminating the experience and interpretation of events by actors with widely differing stakes and roles; giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard; conducting initial explorations to develop theories and to generate and even test hypotheses (Sofaer, 1999). According to Beng (1989), all data is

qualitative. In specific terms, qualitative data is in form of words. Unlike quantitative data which is in numerical form, qualitative data is very subjective.

3.2 Study population

The primary participants of this study were the stake holders of Aria secondary school. The study targeted a population of 305 stakeholders including 12 BOG members, 13 PTA executive members, 5 members of school administration, 30 teachers and 250 students. Involving stake holders would ensure that they own the problem solving cycle in order to realize change easily. This was in agreement with Billet (2001) who stressed that, engagement of stakeholders in problem solving ensures implementation of the suggested solutions.

3.3 Sample size

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size. This is where already designed table with different ranges of population is used to determine sample population size (Appendix iv).

Table 2: Categories of participants involved in research

Category	Study population	Sample size	Selection technique
BOG	12	12	Purposive
Administration	5	5	Purposive
PTA Executive	13	13	Purposive
Teachers	30	28	Random
Students	250	148	Random
Total	310	206	

Source: primary data

3.4 Sampling techniques

The categories of participants in the study are shown in Table 4. The participants were selected either by purposive technique or random technique.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling technique was used in which the researcher selects samples based on certain purpose. This sampling technique helps to increase utility of findings. According to Onen (2009) purposive sampling is where a researcher decides who to include in the sample based on their typicality. The technique was selected because it selected typical, useful respondents, save time and funds. The Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to collect focused information from parents, school administration, teachers and students. The sample of the study involved 148 students, 28 teachers, 13 PTA executives, 5 administrators and 12 BOG members (Table 4).

3.4.2 Simple random sampling

Random sampling is a technique where every member in the sample population has an equal opportunity of being selected (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). A list of all students was got from director of studies office and the respondents were selected by picking any name from the list until the required number was got.

3.5 Methods and tools for data collection

A research tool is a technique or method of data collection. According to Walter (1989) “A research tool is a technique or method that makes it easy for the researcher to collect information”. In a similar view Mikkelsen (2005) points out that tools are the instruments used in the process of collecting data. There are many different tools can be used and the task of the researcher was, therefore, to select a dependable tool. Ary et al. (2010) says that the choice of a research tool depends on the suitability of a particular tool with the study objectives. However, no single tool is the best for all types of data collection. In this study the researcher selected and used the best possible data collection tools so as to obtain data capable of enabling the achievement of the specific objectives of this research. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources.

3.5.1 Primary tools of data collection

Under primary source the tools used for data collection included; future workshop, interviews, group discussions, photography and observation.

3.5.1.1 Future workshop

A future workshop approach was used with stakeholders to identify and delimit the areas of the study. The future workshop model has key phases: Phase one is critic phase and it involves identification of challenges by the participants, phase two is utopian phase and in this phase participants give suggested solutions to the challenges identified and next phase is reality phase which involves identification of implementable solution or strategies.

According to Apel (2004) future workshop is a research method which enables the participants in a project to out solutions to a problem according to the existing situation. The method is an intuitive and analytic way to highlight problems and look for suggestions to solve them. The Future Workshop can be used in situations of teaching. This technique has also been used in Norway for developing a work-based learning at the construction site (Sannerud, 2012).

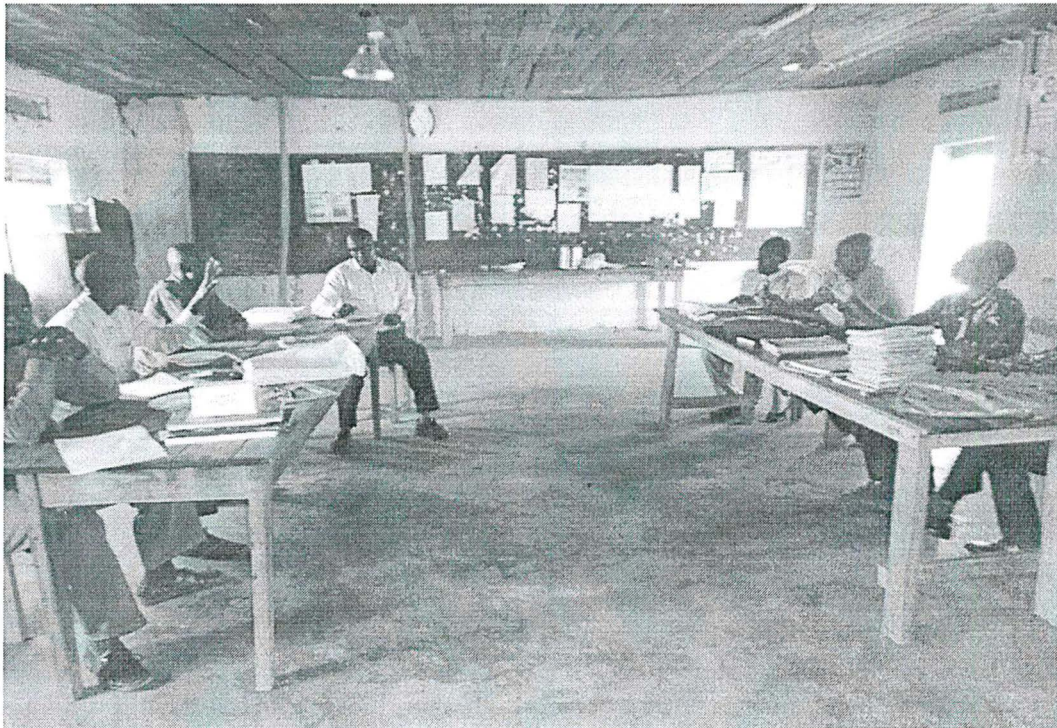


Plate 2: Future workshop interaction with stake holders of Aria SS

3.5.1.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is a small set of individuals, purposively selected to discuss the key issues identified by a researcher (Kane, 1995). Discussion is a participative method that involves a homogenous group of respondents in the discussion of issues of common concern through a moderator (Mbabazi, 2007). In this study focus group discussions were used especially during problem identification, data collection, validation and report writing. This was due to the fact that participatory action research approach maintains that problems are not defined by experts but should be based on group discussions (Mikkelsen p. 36-37).

3.5.1.3 Observation

Observation relies on the researcher seeing, hearing, testing and smelling things. It does not depend on getting information through someone else. Miller (2006) said that observation means using ears and eyes to obtain data about people, events and places. The role of the observer varies from the passive, detached, complete observer to the active participant in the group that is being observed. If the researcher is “a genuine participant in the activity being studied” then the researcher is called a participant observer (MCMillan, 1996). According to Cohen (1980), participant observation is observation in which the observer participates together with the subjects. In this study participant observation offered the researcher an opportunity to gather live data from a naturally occurring social situation. Observation data collection technique was used to collect data on available books in library, nature of laboratory, teaching aids, methods of teaching and availability of teaching space.

3.5.1.4 Photography

Photography is defined as the process of producing images by the action of radiant energy and especially light on a sensitive surface (Donaldson, 2001). Photography serves the purpose of recalling some vital aspects that transpired during the field study time. According to Buchanan (2001), in some cases the photos are merely used as a photographic record of the research process to supplement other kinds of data. In this study the researcher took photos during the research process in order to back up his observations. The various forms of photography were used for data collection and for

organizing, interpreting, and validating qualitative inquiry (Smith and Murray, 2001). In this study photo-documentation is used and covers evidence of documents such as sessions of meetings between researcher and stakeholders.

3.5.2 Secondary tools of data collection

The researcher used a documentary check list with a number of items including the organization chart, the staff list, List of the BOG, list of PTA executives, students list and school time table. This involved documentary analysis. Documentary analysis is the method that involves deriving information by carefully studying written documents, or visual information from documentary sources (Mertens, 2005). According to Kumar (2005) documentary analysis enables the researcher in the initial stages of the research to establish the theoretical roots of the study clarify ideas and develop the methodology and in the later stages it helps to consolidate knowledge.

The documentary analysis was used to reveal the structure of secondary education, aims and objectives of secondary education and vision of the school. It was used to identify members of PTA executive, teaching staff, daily lesson attendance by both teachers and students, student leaders and entire student's body. The document analysis employed work-process analysis which involved analysis of linked activities in an organization as it endeavors to achieve its targets (Baldrige, 2009).

3.5.3 Reliability and Validity of Data and collection tool

Reliability refers to how consistent a research procedure or instrument is. It, therefore, means the degree of consistency demonstrated in a study. Hence, reliability implies stability or dependability of an instrument or procedure in order to obtain information. Reliability, therefore, means that whatever is done should be done consistently (Kahn, 1986).

In this study the researcher pre-practiced focus group discussion and interview methods with different individuals to prove their accuracy. These individuals included; senior one, senior two, senior three and senior four students of Aria SS as well as fellow students on MVP programme, staff and administrators of Aria SS. According to Ary (1990) reliability too, depends on the ability of students participating because an instrument may be reliable

to group X it may not be so to group Y, therefore it was important to involve different individuals. Validity of data was achieved by analyzing the same data with three different data collection methods. In the end, this helped to improve the correctness of the data and in some instances one can disregard data because of inconsistency. Rowley (2002) and Golafshani (2003) support this strategy because he asserts that it ensures coherence and confirmation or further qualification of data.

According to Millar (2008) validity refers to the quality that a procedure or an instrument used in a research is accurate, correct, true, meaningful and right. Validity, therefore, implies that what we want to obtain is what we are supposed to measure. So if whatever we use in the study enable us to get what we want to get then there is validity (Anastasia, 1982). In light with this, the researcher insured that there was consultation and collaboration with supervisors for the purpose of developing items on the instruments which were used to collect accurate and desired data.

Criterion-validity implies that the instrument should be relevant and free from bias. Such type of validity is essential in instruments designed for selection and classification (Kahn, 1986). So the researcher used future work to encourage participation of stake holders in the action research.

The researcher got information from both primary and secondary source to get valid information and avoid biasness.

According to Amin (2005) replays can help with validating data therefore, the researcher used voice recorders to record discussions and play them for analyzing data.

3.5.4 Ethical Considerations

I guaranteed ethical considerations by; acknowledging other people's work in the area of the research by ensuring in-text citation and referencing the respective sources at the end of the report to avoid plagiarism, asking for permission from school authorities of Aria SS and from each respondent to obtain information as well as to record our conversation and endeavoring to respect the request for anonymity of my respondents in my report.

3.6 Data collection plan

The research process started with situation analysis as described in chapter 1 using Future Workshop procedure (Chapter 1.2). In the critique phase of the future workshop the factors affecting student centered teaching at Aria SS (Objective 1) were identified and prioritized (Chapter 1.2.1). In the utopian phase, possible strategies to address factors affecting student centered teaching were identified while in the reality phase of the future workshop strategies were identified that would be implemented to address the factors affecting student centered teaching (Objective 3). These were identified as; *Use of teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons, marking of students register during lessons by teachers to address the challenge of students missing lessons, approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans by head teacher to address the challenge of inadequate preparation by teachers and formation of students discussion groups to promote substantive discussion of ideas.*

In the course of implementation, the action of implementation went hand in hand with observation, monitoring and reflection. The observations were recorded on regular basis to enable the researcher assess the effect of actions or interventions intended for the proposed change. McConaghy (1986) recommends keeping of a journal in which to record these incidents and our professional judgments thoughts of those episodes. If the action or intervention intended for the proposed change does not improve the situation, another strategy shall be implemented thus spiral of action cycles follow.

Furthermore, the spiral of action research cycles follows a process of action, observation and reflection to achieve greater understanding, followed by further action and reflection. Reflection is intentional and grounded in the situation (Bryant, 1996).

Regular reflection within the project team was an integral feature of an action research project. Innovations were fine-tuned as the activity proceeded as participants met on a regular basis.

At the end of an action cycle it would be particularly important to reflect critically on what happened using the observations and notes made in diaries. The following reflective questions would be used. How effective were your changes? What have you learnt? What

were the barriers to change? How can you improve the changes you are trying to make in future?

Critical reflection can take place in isolation but it is usually more fruitful if takes place within small group discussions where ideas and impressions can be shared and where hopefully changes in attitude and practice in those concerned with the innovation can be brought about. This was used on various occasions during the study.

The action plan for implementation of the identified strategies are shown in Table 5.

Table 3: Action plan for implementable solutions as per 5th October 2015 meeting

Activities	Responsible person (s)	Time frame
Formation of student's discussion groups and making them active.	Director of studies and the teaching staff	From 22nd/Feb/2016
Staff appraisal meetings	The head teacher and the heads of department	28th/Feb/2016 and 15th/May/2016
Organizing practical lessons every week for students	Subject teachers and laboratory assistant	From beginning of first term 2016
Buying of more teaching and learning aids (Text books, charts and practical apparatus)	Head teacher	Second month of first term 2016
Marking teachers lesson attendance book and submitting to head teacher	Class prefects	From beginning of first term 2016
Signing of daily arrival and departure book by teachers	Director of studies	From beginning of first term 2016
Conducting students' roll call during lesson and following students absent for disciplinary action.	Subject teachers	From beginning of first term 2016
checking teachers schemes of work, lesson plans and lesson notes	The head teacher and heads of department	After every two weeks from beginning of first term 2016

Source: primary data

CHAPTER FOUR

ACTION IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

4.1 Introduction

During situation analysis challenges and strategies for enhancing student centered teaching in Aria secondary school were identified using the future work shop approach(Chapter 1.2.1). In the reality phase of the Future Workshop implementable strategies were identified as follows; *Use of teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons, marking of students register during lessons by teachers to address the challenge of students missing lessons, approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans by head teacher to address the challenge of inadequate preparation by teachers and formation of students discussion groups to promote substantive discussion of ideas.*

4.2 Implementation

4.2.1 Use of teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book

The head teacher and the teachers of Aria SS designed teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book (Plate 4) as was agreed upon during FGD (Chapter 1). Each teacher would sign the daily arrival book on each arrival to school and class prefects marked teachers' lesson attendance book and the teachers also signed it. This was meant to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons and it was also used by school administration to follow up the teachers and ensure that they taught.

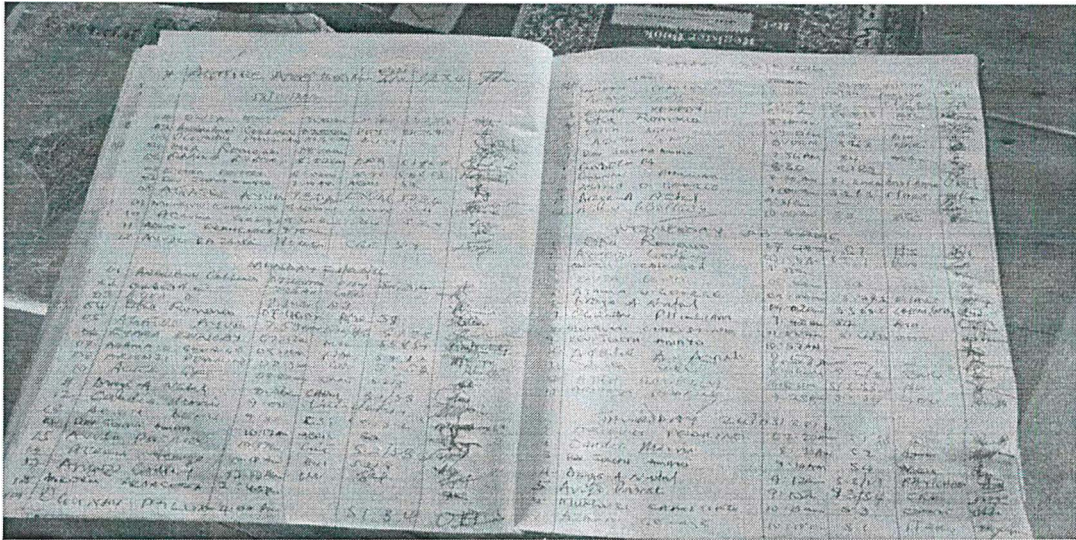


Plate 4: Teachers daily arrival book to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons

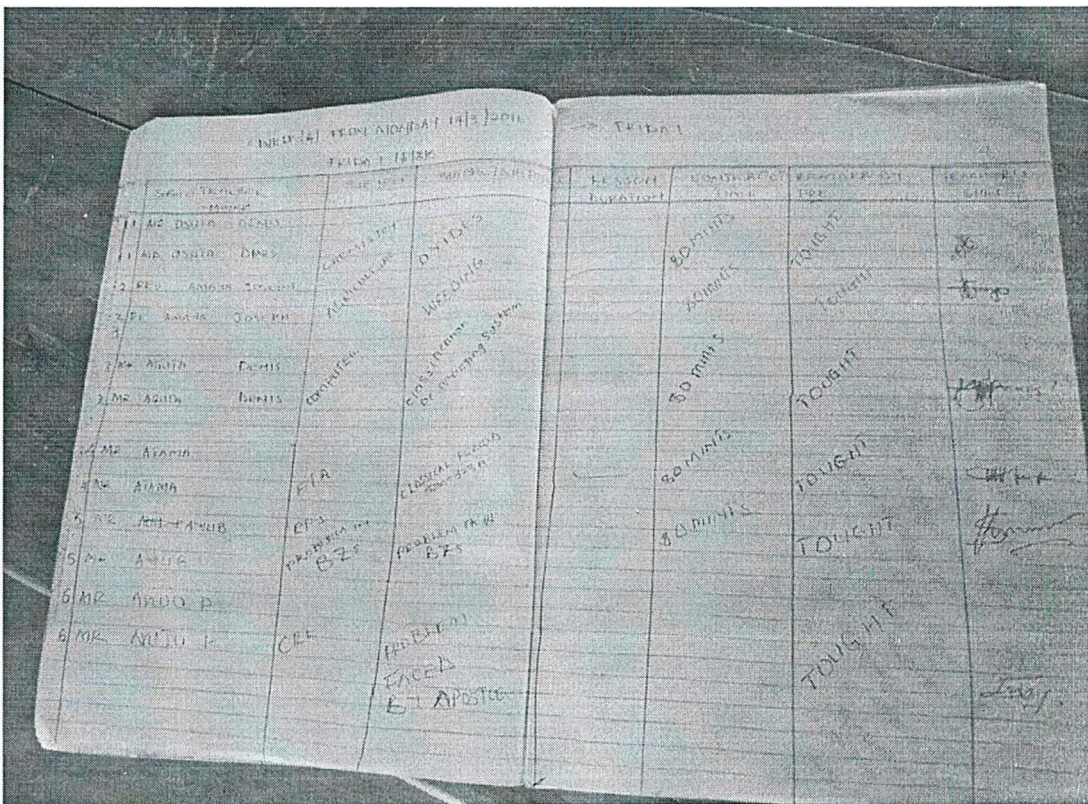


Plate 5: Teachers daily lesson attendance book marked by class prefects

On the other hand the teachers marked students' register during lesson periods and made follow up of students who miss lessons. The head teacher would check and sign marked students register. This helped to control missing of lessons by students.

NO	NAME	DATE
1	ESMERINE JOYCE	P/P/P
2	MARION ROBERT	P/P/P
3	FRIMMAY POLY	P/P/P
4	ANDELA NURKIN	P/P/P
5	IMKIRO NURKIN	P/P/P
6	CHILIBEL GRADIES	P/P/P
7	MATHEW GRADIES	P/P/P
8	ORELLI SCWIA	P/P/P
9	AYILO KATO	P/P/P
10	NYAYAYI BENARD	P/P/P
11	COBILLA ROYEL	P/P/P
12	TAIRIE HILARY	P/P/P
13	SAVOUR DOMINIC	P/P/P
14	AKSHAY GREGG	P/P/P
15	ABDULLI MICHAEL	P/P/P
16	STICADO GONDOBA	P/P/P
17	ICZAI GEMER	P/P/P
18	AMINA SHINE	P/P/P
19	NOGSON'S SHARON	P/P/P
20	ADOLEMO TOS	P/P/P
21	ORIKU HEIDA	P/P/P
22	ABILE FORSYTH	P/P/P
23	BAINE GUNDAS	P/P/P
24	KIRIBET MOJIA	P/P/P
25	ASVEN TSN	P/P/P
26	CHESONGA SHENGE	P/P/P
27	ASTU MERISA	P/P/P
28	FRANZI ROYAL	P/P/P
29	IMAN CHERIE	P/P/P
30	ALIBENUS HONZEL	P/P/P
31	ASHAIKE KATHING	P/P/P
32	BAYONG CHEVATE	P/P/P
33	CHAKIL TRED	P/P/P
34	MAYIEN SHITA	P/P/P
35	AMICIA DORISH	P/P/P
36	AUDUCH COBIA	P/P/P
37	ESHEL M. ESTHER	P/P/P
38	SARWALI NIKUM	P/P/P
39	DEANIDA GEMIN	P/P/P
40	MILO SERRIN	P/P/P
41	ALLOS SCAN	P/P/P
42	FRASER IUSON	P/P/P
43	ESKIL TSN	P/P/P
44		P/P/P
45		P/P/P
46		P/P/P
47		P/P/P
48		P/P/P

Plate 6: Copy of marked students register during lessons by teachers

4.2.2 Approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans

The head teacher approved teacher's schemes of work and lesson plans before the teachers conducted lessons (Plate 7). This was a measure by stakeholders to address the challenge of inadequate preparation for teaching by teachers (Chapter 1.2). The stakeholders also agreed that schemes of work and lesson plans are conditions for a teacher to get PTA allowances and conduct lessons as student centered teaching requires. Such an approach requires adequate preparation by the teacher.

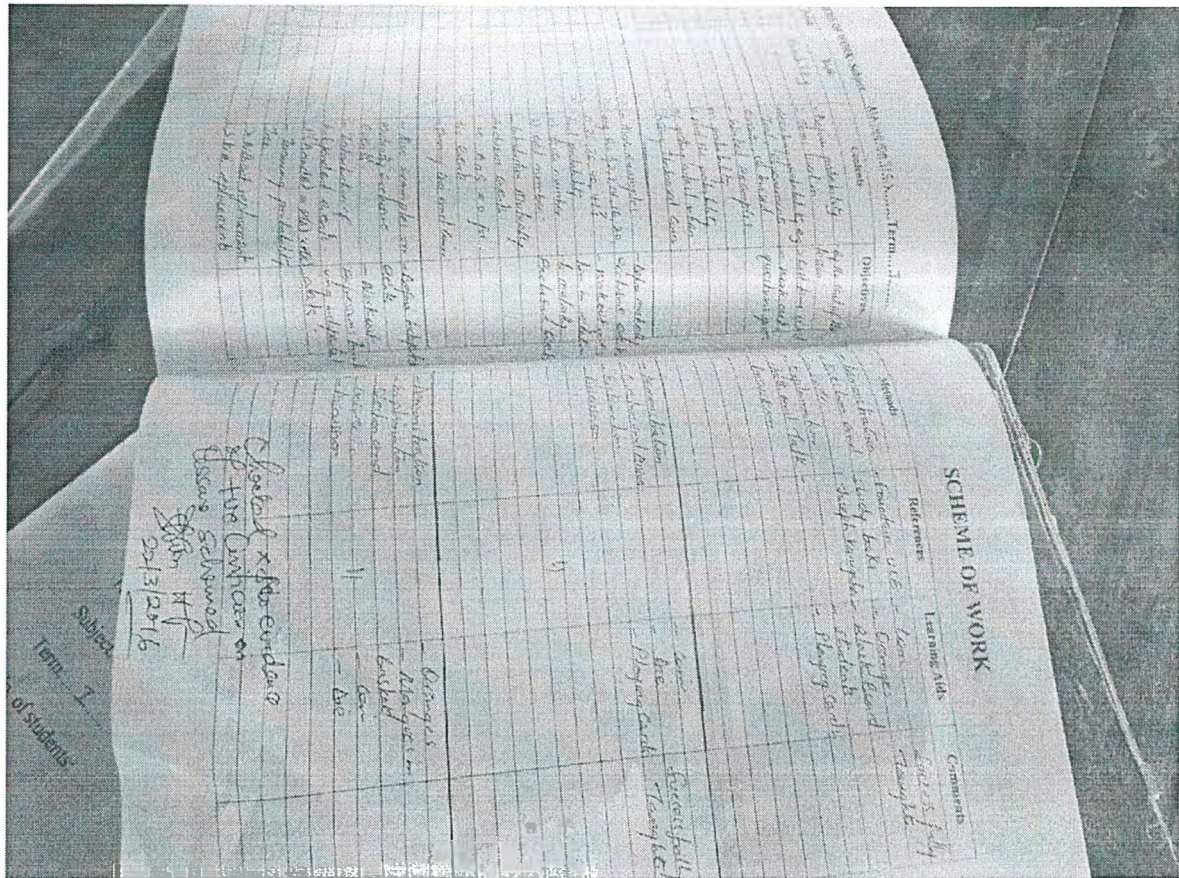


Plate 7: A copy of approved teachers schemes of work by head teacher

4.2.3 Formation and use of discussion groups

Formation of discussion groups during lessons was done (Plate 8 and 9). Teachers participated in formation of discussion groups and promoted substantive discussion of ideas. Discussions were done and discussion groups were guided by the teachers.

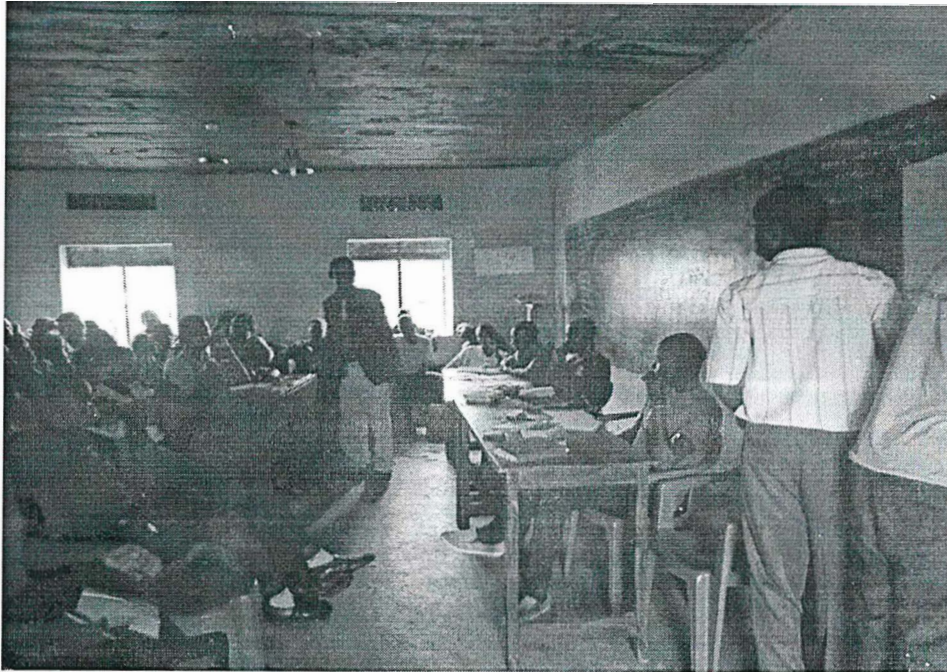


Plate 8: Formation of student's discussion groups by students and teachers



Plate 9: Students participating in a discussion

4.3 Evaluation of the impact of the intervention strategies

During the evaluation of the impact of the implemented measures, observation, monitoring and reflection were recorded regarding the progress of agreed implementable interventions with participant teachers that were assigned to improve student's competence acquisition. The researcher at this stage is presenting the assessment of the impact of action points.



Plate 10: Evaluation meeting

4.3.1 Lesson attendance by both students and teachers

As teachers marked students register during lesson periods and made follow up of students who missed lessons, this improved students' lesson attendance. Before the measure was implemented the percentage of students' lesson attendance was 70% and after implementation the percentage stood at 92% (Table 3). However, some students still missed lessons particularly due to non-payment of school fees. Attendance is shown in plate 11 where p stands for present and a for absent.

Table 4: Students lesson attendance before and after implementation of strategies

CLASS	Before strategies	After strategies
Senior 1	70%	88%
Senior 2	65%	93%
Senior 3	72%	85%
Senior 4	70%	96%
Average	70%	92%

Source: Director of studies record of attendance from March 2016 to June 2016

Plate 11: Copy of marked students register during lesson by teachers

4.3.2 Formation and use of discussion groups

Students’ discussion groups were formed and became operational. This improved acquisition of competences by students (Table 5). This was observed in student’s participation in the discussions from which they acquired the social skills as measured by the Likert scale (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002) conducted on participating teachers at the school. The frequency of teachers scores on the social skills acquisition of students are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Students acquisition of social skills

Social skills	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Participation in group discussion	4	15	3	3	0	25
Expression and communication skills	10	14	0	1	0	25
Interaction	3	20	2	0	0	25
Team work	6	15	1	2	1	25

Source: primary source

Table 5 above shows that there was improvement in acquisition of social skills of which majority of teachers agreed that there is improvement in student's acquisition of social skills. Though few disagreed in overall there was improvement in competence acquisition especially in student's expression and communication skills according to the teachers.

4.3.3 Approval of schemes of work and lesson plans by teacher

Approval of teacher's schemes of work and lesson plans by head teacher greatly improved student centered teaching and competence acquisition. Interviewee participants observed that this made teachers adequately teach as they became focused in their teaching. The director of studies in his lesson observation noted that; *'the content delivery, coverage of syllabus and quality of teaching has improved as a result of adequate preparation by the teachers'*.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the factors that were found to affect student centered teaching at SS and strategies that were found to enhance use of student centered teaching and competence acquisition as evidenced by the impact of strategies implemented in this study. This also involved stakeholder consultation to generate recommendations for future action.

5.2 Factors affecting student centered teaching at Aria SS

The factors affecting student centered teaching approach were identified during situation analysis using the Future Workshop procedure (Chapter 1.2.2). The most serious factors identified were; motivation of teachers, practical lessons, instructional materials and learning facilities, lesson attendance by both teachers and students, preparation of teacher and formation and use of discussion groups.

5.2.1 Motivation of teachers

During the plenary session, it was found out from stake holders of Aria SS that teachers are inadequately motivated. Teachers complained of the insufficient and delayed PTA allowance given to them. According to Hull (1943) teachers who are confronted with the poor motivation and confidence of low attaining students may interpret this as the cause of their low attainment and assume that it is both necessary and possible to address their motivation before attempting to teach new material. Similarly according to Maslow (1970) innate forces and an innate hierarchy of needs give human behavior its distinctive energy and direction. I concur with Maslow because if teachers are well motivated, imparting of vocational skills becomes easy and efficient though he did not explain how to get resources for motivating the teachers. Many people including teachers mainly associate motivation with material and monetary gains and yet motivation can be verbal.

5.2.2 Practical lessons

In plenary it was found that there were few practical lessons conducted as time allocated for practical was not enough and the school had inadequate facilities in the laboratory. The inadequate facilities in the laboratory encourage the teachers to teach practical skills in abstract. Hence learners fail to relate theory with real life situation because this can only take place when practical are inadequately carried out. This concurs with Solomon (1993) who observed that practical teaching must take place for better understanding of the concept. Laboratory help students relate theory to practice by interacting with available objects before they transfer their skills to real life (Koskinen, 2011). Similarly Okello (2009) asserts that the nature of Ugandan education system is generally theoretical with little or no practical experience provided to learners through use of relevant tools and materials experimentation and illustration.

During FGD, it was found that students' field trips at Aria SS for practical lessons outside the school were inadequate as a result of limited funding to cater for transport, accommodation, and feeding. This in the long run limits students' competence acquisition from community perspective. Only by being in the field study one is able to meet the right stakeholders, co-experience and ultimately build trustable relationships (Koskinen, 2011).

5.2.3 Instructional materials and learning facilities

In discussions at plenary the teachers and the students further complained about the limited instructional materials such as the reference books, practical guides, computers, internet services and many other teaching aids make the teaching and learning process almost impossible. This concur with Okinyal (2006) who asserted that "Lack of instructional material and infrastructures such as lecture rooms, teachers' houses, workshops, tools, equipment, books and libraries affect products and the competencies directly required in the labour market". The schools with limited instructional materials such as the reference books, practical guides, computers, internet services and many other teaching aids make the teaching/ learning process almost impossible (Mbagha, 2014). The use of inadequate instructional materials and facilities also affect teachers' motivation in imparting the required competences to learners.

5.2.4 Lesson attendance by both teachers and students

On lesson attendance it was found from the stake holders that both teachers and students have poor lesson attendance. Studies by Nakpodia (2007), Morrison et. al. (1965) and Nwideduh (2003) point out that when a student is regularly absent from class, it has an adverse effect on their academic performance and discourages student centered teaching and learning approach. This is because frequent absences may lead to missing out on vital information, facts and instructions that result in partial understanding of a topic, submission of incomplete work and poor participation in class activities. Similarly, Econ (1995) found that teacher's absenteeism leaves learner unguided. Stake holders of Aria SS revealed that though many teachers are committed, some miss lessons and never compensate them. According to Park & Kerr (1990), lack of attendance is statistically significant in explaining why a student fail to acquire the required competences.

5.2.5 Preparation of teacher

During interaction with interviewees' participants, it was found out that many teachers teach without schemes of work and lesson plans. This negatively affects competent acquisition as teaching becomes ineffective. Stake holders said this is as a result of inadequate motivation of teachers and loopholes in teacher's supervision by the school administration. According to Maicibi (2005), inadequate preparation by teachers' limits student centered teaching and learning approach. Similarly Inglar (2002), point out that level of teacher preparation affects quality of teaching. He further states that teachers need adequate preparation of schemes of work, lesson plan and learning aids if they are to use student centered teaching approach. Many teachers are believed to teach without schemes of work and lesson plans if the school administration fails to supervise, motivate and encourage them to adequately prepare lesson plans before teaching students (Hertz, 2010).

According to Inglar (2002), the most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and adequately prepare lessons before conducting lesson. When teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level and inadequately prepares his lesson it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to

evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.

According to Hertz (2010) quality instruction includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers which needs adequate preparation of the teacher. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning are also elements of high quality instruction.

5.2.6 Formation and use discussion groups.

Students complained that as much as they have made attempts to form and use discussion groups, they are not facilitated by teachers making the groups to be ineffective. According to students, they expect teachers to guide in formation of discussion groups, give discussion questions and attend discussions which do not happen.

Kravik's (2004) observation that students learn better when they work in groups and together with teachers in praxis

According to Lave and Wenger (1991, p.14) learning is a form of social co-participation where the social situation in which it occurs is a focal point. His view encourages discussion method which makes students freely interact among themselves and learn faster.

Failure to form and use discussion groups limits student's participation and student centered teaching (Briton, 1991). Similarly according to Tesser (1991), students interact and learn freely when they form and use discussion groups instead of listening to the teacher exclusively.

Discussions encourage students to work hard especially when tasks are given to them ahead of discussion so that they work out solutions to be presented in the discussion (Gombe, 2009).

From my teaching experience students interact freely in discussion groups than in lessons conducted by teachers. Furthermore discussions encourage students to learn and discover new concepts as they search for solutions to tasks to be discussed. According to Bjerknes (2002, p.8) experience is built through interaction between the individual and the environment and is

enhanced when an individual acts together with others at least in a social context. Similarly Dewey (1997) points out that a man living alone would have little or no chance to reflect upon his past experience to extract its net meaning. Similarly Senge (2000, P. 3) argues that learning is at once deeply personal and inherently social. It connects us not just to knowledge in the abstract, but to each other. According to Vygotsky (cited in Harry, 2001, p. 18) learning is through the mediation of others, through the mediation of adults that the child undertakes activities. With this he emphasizes that an individual becomes aware of him or herself only in and through interaction with others.

5.3 Implemented strategies for enhancing student centered teaching at Aria SS

5.3.1 Teachers daily arrival book and lesson attendance book

The head teacher and the teachers of Aria SS designed teacher's daily arrival book and lesson attendance book as was agreed during plenary sessions with the stakeholders (Plate 4). This was to improve on lesson attendance as it had been observed by stake holders that both teachers and students had poor lesson attendance. As a result of the strategy lesson attendance by students improved from 70% to 92% (Table 4) Studies by Nakpodia (2007), Morrison et. al. (1965) and Nwideeduh (2003) point out that when a student is regularly absent from class, it has an adverse effect on their academic performance and discourages student centered teaching approach. This is because frequent absences from class may lead to missing out on vital information, facts and instructions that result in partial understanding of a topic, submission of incomplete work and poor participation in class activities. Similarly, Econ (1995) found that teacher's absenteeism leaves learners unguided.

During the study it was found that though many teachers were committed, some were missing lessons and did not compensate them. This was revealed by the head teacher in an evaluation meeting when he said; '*though many teachers are committed some are not.*' According to Park & Kerr (1990), lack of attendance is statistically significant in explaining why a student fail to acquire the required competences.

Use of teachers' daily arrival book and lesson attendance book improved lesson attendance (Plate 4). However to me it has to be complemented with close lesson supervision because some teachers have low coverage as they miss lessons (Plate 5). Mbiti (1974) in his study of

the roles of school administration which includes supervision reported that, for effective teaching/learning there is need for close supervision of the learner and the teacher by the school administration.

5.3.2 Approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans

Student centered teaching approach requires adequate preparation by the teacher before conducting the lesson if students are to acquire the competences required. Harris (1998) explains that one of the factors for effective teaching is adequate preparation by the teacher. In this study it was agreed with stakeholders that before a teacher conduct lessons schemes of work and lesson plans ought to be approved and this measure was implemented by the Head teacher. Also this was a condition for the teachers to be paid PTA allowance.

During a focused group discussion the head teacher indicated that; *'many teachers used to teach without schemes of work and lesson plans'*. This negatively affected student competence acquisition as teaching became teacher centered (chapter 1.2). However, stake holders pointed out that this was as a result of inadequate motivation of teachers and inadequacies in teacher supervision by the school administration. The head teacher also indicated that; *'schemes of work and lesson plans were not checked as teachers could not avail them whenever required for checking before implementation'*. According to Maicibi (2005), inadequate preparation by teachers' limits student centered teaching and learning approach. Similarly Inglar (2002), point out that the level of teacher preparation affects quality of teaching. He further stated that teachers need adequate preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans and learning aids if they are to use student centered teaching approach. Many teachers are believed to teach without schemes of work and lesson plans if the school administration fails to supervise, motivate and encourage them to adequately prepare lesson plans before teaching students (Hertz, 2010). In this study it was found that teachers who adequately prepared lesson plans before teaching were confident to use the learner centered approach. In the focused group discussion, teachers indicated that; *'use of learner centered approach requires adequate preparation of lesson plans and learning aids for the teacher to be confident'*.

According to Inglar (2002), the most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and adequately prepare lessons before conducting lessons. When the teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level and inadequately prepares his lesson it is a significant

impediment to students' learning. Besides a strong understanding of the subject matter being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, to be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and subsequently identify students' common misconceptions. In this study it was found that teachers who have deep knowledge of the subject and adequately prepares for the lesson easily control the class and effectively delivers the content. 'This was revealed by the deputy head teacher who said that; *teachers needed adequate preparation and should have deep knowledge of the content if they are to deliver effectively*'.

According to Hertz (2010) quality instruction includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by teachers which needs adequate preparation by the teacher. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely and progressively introducing new learning are also elements of high quality instruction.

5.3.3 Formation and use of student discussion groups

In this study group discussion with guiding questions was used as an agreed measure to improve learner participation in the teaching process. It was observed that group discussion makes teaching student centered as it encourages student participation (Plate 8). Which result showed learners improved acquisition of social skills. However, studies by Briton and Tesser (1991) showed that when a class room operates with student – centered instruction students and instructors share the focus. In this study teachers participated in the formation of discussion groups which promoted substantive discussion of ideas by further generating discussion questions and the teachers guiding the discussion groups as agreed during the stake holders meetings. However some students complained that; *as much some teachers made attempts to form and use discussion groups, many of the teachers did not shown interest making the discussion groups to be ineffective*. According to students; *'they expect all teachers to guide in formation of discussion groups, give discussion questions and attend discussions which did not happen'*. However this is characteristic of innovations whereby there are early innovators and laggards in innovation adoption (Heine, 2002). Similarly in communities of practice social learning and adoption of innovation does not occur at the same level (Etienne, 2009).

Kroeger (2004) observes that students learn better when they work in groups and together with teachers in praxis. Similarly according to Lave and Wenger (1991, p.14) learning is a form of social co-participation where the social situation in which it occurs is a focal point. His view encourages discussion method which makes students freely interact among themselves and learn faster.

Failure to form and use discussion groups limits student's participation and student centered teaching (Briton, 1991). Similarly according to Tesser (1991), students interact and learn freely when they form and use discussion groups instead of listening to the teacher exclusively. Discussions encourage students to work hard especially when tasks are given to them ahead of discussion so that they work out solutions to be presented in the discussion (Gombe, 2009).

From my teaching experience students interact freely in discussion groups than in lessons conducted by teachers. Furthermore discussions encourage students to learn and discover new concepts as they search for solutions to tasks to be discussed. According to Bjerknes (2002, p.8) experience is built through interaction between the individual and the environment and is enhanced when an individual acts together with others at least in a social context. Similarly Dewey (1997) points out that a man living alone would have little or no chance to reflect upon his past experience to extract its net meaning. Similarly Senge (2000, P. 3) argues that learning is at once deeply personal and inherently social. It connects us not just to knowledge in the abstract, but to each other. According to Vygotsky (cited in Harry, 2001, p. 18) learning is through the mediation of others, through the mediation of adults that the child undertakes activities. With this he emphasizes that an individual becomes aware of him or herself only in and through interaction with others. Therefore, in this study the early reception of student discussion groups in some instances could be an indication of the worth of students' discussion groups.

SUMARRY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENTATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study as adopted together with stakeholders of Aria SS was to identify practical strategies that would enable teachers at Aria secondary school to use student cantered teaching approaches to enhance competence acquisition.

Focus group discussion and future workshop techniques were used together with stakeholders to analyze the context, identify the concerns and determine the strategies to the factor affecting student centered teaching approach.

The findings indicated that there was a desire by stakeholders to improve students' competence acquisition by use of student centered teaching approach. However they had concerns which includes; inadequate preparation of the teacher before conducting lesson, irregular lesson attendance by both the teacher and the learner, inadequate involvement of the learner in teaching and learning and adequate learning materials and failure to form and use students' discussion groups.

The strategies identified were; Use of teacher's daily arrival book and students' lesson attendance book to address the challenge of teachers missing lessons, marking of students register during lessons by teachers to address the challenge of students missing lessons, approval of teachers schemes of work and lesson plans by head teacher to address the challenge of inadequate preparation by teachers and formation of students discussion groups to promote substantive discussion of ideas.

Implementation of the strategies showed that use of use daily arrival book and lesson attendance book improved teachers lesson attendance. Marking of students' lesson attendance improved students' lesson attendance from 70% to 92%. Approval of teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans led to adequate preparation of teachers. Formation and use of students' discussion groups led to improved social skills acquisition by students.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings the following conclusions were made;

- Learner's efficient competence acquisition requires learner centered teaching approach.
- Student centered teaching approach requires adequate preparation by the teacher, regular lesson attendance by both teachers and students and support of teachers by administration, parents and government in form of motivation and learning materials.
- Competence acquisition by students of Aria SS improved as a result of implementing intervention strategies to the challenges of student centered teaching approach identified by the stake holders.

Recommendation

On the basis of the findings and conclusions the following recommendation were made;

- Suggested strategies to challenges by stake holders which were not implemented should be implemented and these include; Motivation of teachers through staff performance appraisal, professional development of the staff, award of certificates for teachers whose subjects are well performed, verbal and material appreciation.
- More practical lessons should be carried out. Two practical lessons to be conducted in a week instead of one lesson.
- More instructional materials and learning facilities should be acquired as the limited instructional materials like the reference books, practical guides, computers, internet services and many other teaching aids make the teaching process difficult in the school.
- Teachers should be encouraged to be present at school during working days so that they are available for learners when they need career guidance and counseling and also need help in the various subjects.
- Student centered teaching approach needs good student's discipline, therefore school rules and regulation be enforced to keep students good discipline.

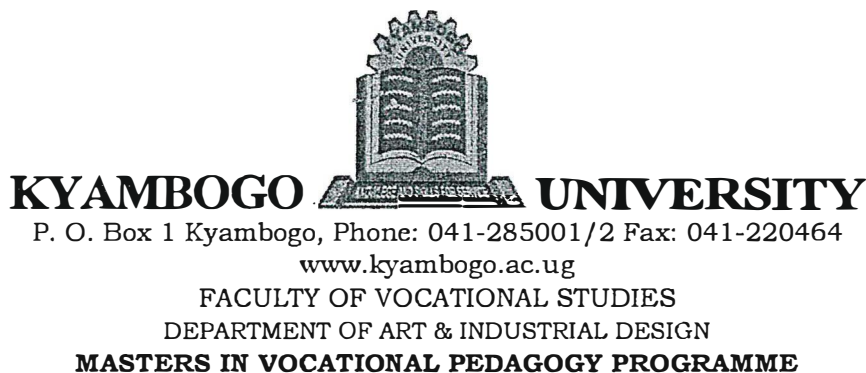
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Appendix 1
Introduction letter



10 November, 2015

*THE HEADTEACHER ANIA SECONDARY
SCHOOL, BOX 198, ANIA.*

RE: INTRODUCTION OF CHANDIA MORRIS

This comes to introduce to you **CHANDIA Morris** a student of Masters in Vocational Pedagogy (MVP) Programme at Kyambogo University. This student bears registration no. 14/U/12912/GMVP/PE and in his final year. As a requirement for graduation, this student is expected to carry out Action Research through a collaborative process with World of Work.

Any support rendered to him is highly appreciated.

Looking forward to your usual support.

Yours Sincerely,

Chris Serwaniko
Project Coordinator, NORHED MVP Program
Masters in Vocational Pedagogy Program

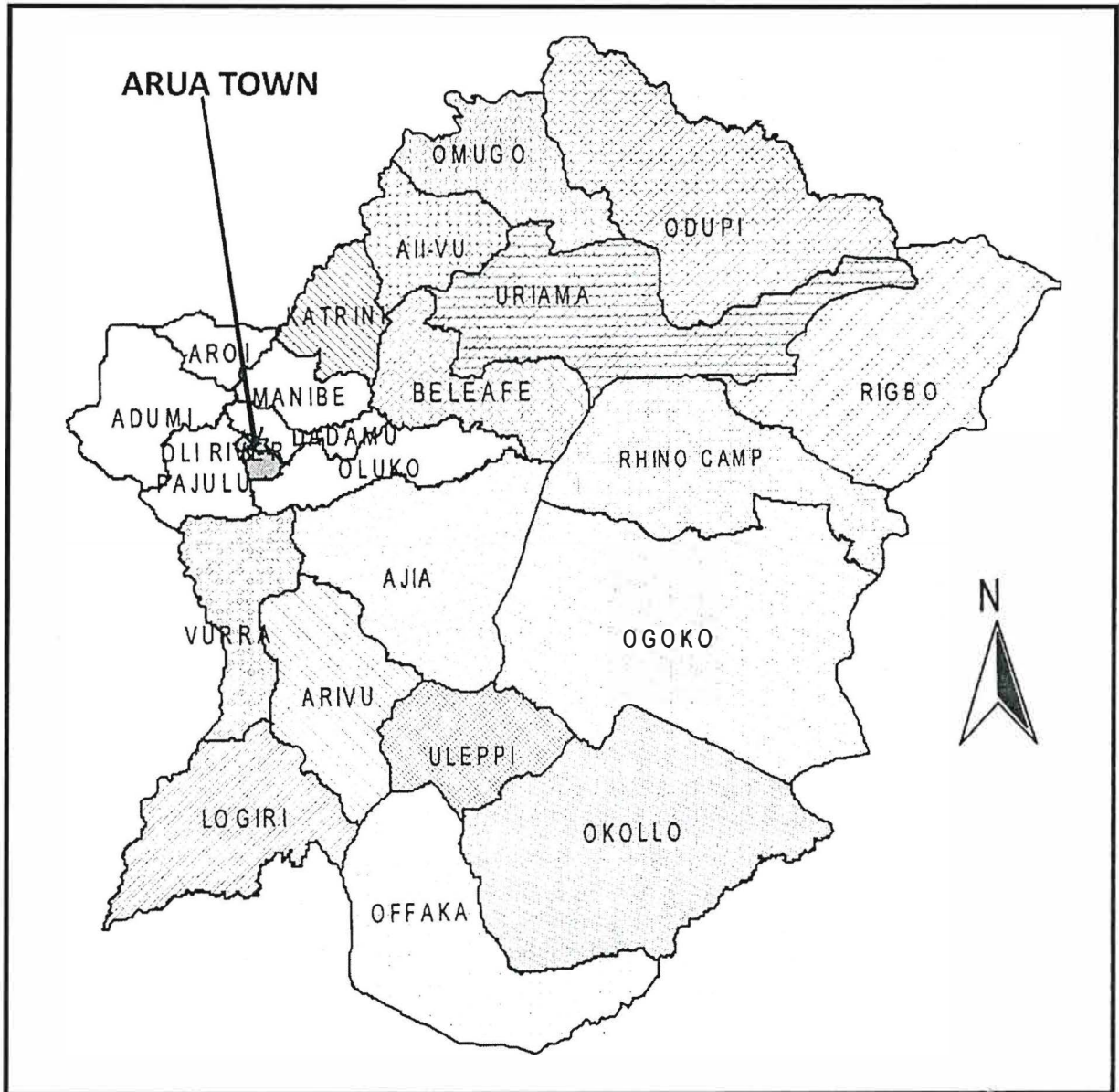
Appendix II

Map of Uganda showing Arua District



Appendix III

Map of Arua District where the research took place




Appendix IV

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula used for determining population sample size

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is population size, "S" is sample size

Source: secondary source


KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

P. O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO
Tel: 0414 289267, Fax: 256 41 220464
Web site: www.kyu.ac.ug

Kyambogo University Graduate School

Form: KYU/GS/PR/1

APPENDIX 2: PROGRESS REPORT RESEARCH WORK

FACULTY VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT ANI AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
EDUCATION

STUDENT'S NAME: CANDIA MORRIS

REG. No. 1410/12912/GMVP/PEPHD/MSc/MA/MA Phil..... Full/Part Time

PROJECT TITLE: STUDENT CENTERED TEACHING/LEARNING,
AND COMPETENCE ACQUISITION: A CASE OF ANA SENI
SECONDARY SCHOOL, ARUA, UGANDA.

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED - RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITTEN
- ACTION RESEARCH IS CARRIED.
- CHAPTER FOUR AND FIVE ARE WRITTEN BUT
NOT YET COMPLETED.

PROPORTION OF ORIGINAL WORK PLAN COMPLETED.....
80% OF ORIGINAL WORK PLAN COMPLETED

CONSTRAINTS, PROBLEMS/SUGGESTIONS.....
- IN ADEQUATE FUNDS
- SOME STAKEHOLDERS EXPECTING FINANCIAL BENEFIT
- BUSY SCHEDULE OF THE SUPERVISORS (SOME)

WORK PLAN FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS.....
- DOCUMENTATION OF RESEARCH WORK.
- MEETINGS WITH SUPERVISORS
- PLAN TO FINISH IN LATE AUGUST (BY 30TH 08-06)

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE..... DATE 12/07/2016

COMMENTS: BY THE PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

CANDIA IS STEADILY PROGRESSIVE. DATE OF SUBMISSION
REASONABLE:

NAME & SIGNATURE..... CITUS SEMWANGI -

DATE..... 13.07.16

APPENDIX 3: NOTICE OF SUBMISSION OF THESIS

The student to submit three (3) copies of this form and submit it to the Graduate School

TO: The Chairperson, Kyambogo University Graduate School Board

FROM: Student's Name: CANDIA MORRIS
Registration Number: 141U1291216MVP/PE
Student Number:
Department: ART AND DESIGN
Faculty/School: VOCATIONAL
(Part Time/Full time) FULL TIME

I propose to submit my thesis (MAG, MARS, MBA, MeD.PPM, MAH, MSc.SCM, MSP, MOPP or PhD) for examination on or before Day: 28th Month SEPTEMBER Year: 2016

Area of Specialization: BUSINESS EDUCATION (e.g. Sport science, Literature etc)
Thesis Title: STUDENT CENTERED TEACHING/LEARNING AND COMPETENCE ACQUISITION: A CASE OF ARUA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, ARUA, UGANDA

Student's signature: [Signature] Date: 26/08/2016

Comments from the following:

(a) **Principal Supervisor:**

He is doing editorial work
Name: Dr. Kato Habib
Sign: [Signature] Date: 26/08/2016

(b) 2nd supervisor(s) comments:

I am happy to progress with

Name:

Sign:

Date:

25/8/2016

(c) Programme Coordinator

Morris as recommended by his supervisors has steadily progressed meaning that he can submit his thesis for examination on time

Name:

Sign:

Date:

26.08.2016

a) Chairman Departmental Graduate & Research Comments:

Recommended to proceed

Name:

Sign:

Date:

27/9/2016

Chairman Faculty Graduate & Research Comments:

On course

Name:

Sign:

Date:

22/9/16