

Learners' Reflections on Service Learning Pedagogy in the Teaching of Civic Education Lessons in Zambia

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ABSTRACT

Service learning practice in the recent past has been a focus of scholars in Zambia and is gaining popularity and attention among academia as alternative pedagogy in the Civic Education secondary school curriculum. In the quest to find a better pedagogy for teaching Civic Education, the study explored pedagogical practices from the learners' perspective in trying to understand the service learning practices that could be prevalent in schools. Using an explanatory sequential design, this study was done in two phases. The first stage involved collecting quantitative data through a structured questionnaire while the second stage involved collecting qualitative data using focus group discussions. Three elements were critically considered during this procedure, that is, how the learners rank methods of teaching in a classroom in accordance with what they deemed as most interesting to the less interesting methods; the service learning practices they are engaged in and lastly, the service learning practices that address pedagogical shortfalls. Among the major findings of this study were that the teaching of Civic Education in Zambia was not premised on learner centered pedagogies. Learners were keen about learning Civic Education using interactive pedagogies but were not receiving the desired learning environment. Another finding was that learners' academic learning was not linked service learning activities. The study concludes that there is still a weak link between schools and communities and the gap can only be bridged by institutionalizing service learning pedagogy in the teaching of Civic Education.

Key Terms: Service learning, pedagogy, Civic education, curriculum academic learning, community service, experiential learning, democracy

INTRODUCTION

Due to the on-going debates about the search for pedagogical practices among different scholars such as Muleya (2015), Chola (2016) and Sakala (2016), who argue for the search of active learning pedagogies for the school system in order to realize the goals of Civic Education in the secondary school lessons, this study explores the Service learning (SL) practices in secondary schools in Zambia from a learners' perspective. Chola (2016) alludes that there was need to institutionalise SL so that it becomes the basis of teaching methodologies in schools, as well as increasing policy and leadership in Civic Education to achieve public goals and solve public problems. Muleya (2015) thus argues that using active civic learning pedagogical practices in the teaching of Civic Education can lead to social change and transformation of society.

Over the years, the need for service learning as a pedagogy of instruction has gained center stage in the school curricula (Bates, 2009; Wade 1997). There is need to locate pedagogies that can change and transform learning for learners. In Zambia, the school system has been more theoretical than practical over the years (Kaumba, Kabombwe and Mwanza, 2020). SL, in the author's view, is a better way to allow learners to experience and connect with their communities. This explores teaching pedagogies used in the teaching of Civic Education by allow learners to rank the methodologies that interest them the most in the classroom to the least interesting. This was done in order to understand the dynamics of what is prevailing in the classroom in comparison to what learners expect should happen as they learn. Sakala (2016) found that teachers were mostly using teacher centered pedagogies and did little to engage with learners in classroom

lessons.

This study further ascertains activities that learners are engaged in during the learning of Civic Education so as to understand the extent to which there is practicality in the teaching and learning of Civic Education in schools in an attempt so as to locate SL practices prevailing in the classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study followed a mixed-method approach using an explanatory sequential design. In this design, as defined by Creswell (2012), which involves the procedure to first gather quantitative data and analyse it to give a general picture of the issue under investigate, that is, understanding the service learning pedagogies through a structured questionnaire. The idea was to establish the current trends in pedagogical practices in the teaching of Civic Education. The second phase was collecting qualitative data through focus group discussions. The qualitative data helped interpret some of the outcomes of the quantitative data. The study included 350 learners from 8 schools in Lusaka and Livingstone. 302 learners answered questionnaires while 48 participants participated in focus group discussion. Each focus group comprised of 6 learners. Descriptive statistics in form of 'mean' was used to analyse data from the structured questionnaire. This allowed for the ranking of the pedagogies by the learners. The smallest mean meant that a particular pedagogy received the highest positive responses. Seven common methods were listed and learners needed to rank them on a scale of one (1) to Seven (7). In which one (1) represented the most interesting method and seven (7) the least interesting method.

The qualitative data was analysed using the thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis involves the coming up of themes or subjects that come up during the discussions (Haradham, 2018). This form of data analysis compels the researcher to select wording of the themes accurately in the way they represent the meaning of the responses given by respondents. The information collected from focus group discussion was coded into themes and this was done by carefully listening to the audio conversation in order to reduce and present key responses.

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPT

Brief History of Service Learning

Service learning can be traced from around 1639, with the founding of Harvard College, there was an intention of the first American college to prepare citizens for active involvement in the community (Kenny, 2001). In 1740, the academy of Philadelphia, which later became the University of Pennsylvania, envisioned this institution as a university dedicated to promoting civic engagement (Harkavy and Hartley, 2010). Harkavy and Hartley further describe the blend of pragmatic idealism that Franklin echoed in the founding documents of hundreds of private colleges after the war of independence in which there was an attempt to advance mechanical and agriculture sciences in the Act of 1862, to expand access to higher education and encourage citizenship. By 1873, the trustees of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical college aimed at educating learners of farmer mechanics as men fitted for attainments of greater usefulness and higher duties of citizenship. SL can also be traced back to 1903 in the United States and is located in the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (Loriene, Kelly and Alex, 2009). At a conference in Atlanta on SL in 1968, a link was made between service and learning. Throughout the 1970s, experiential learning programmes became popular and the 1971 white House conference on Youths reported calls linking service and learning. SL is regarded in some way as a new pedagogy (Speck & Hoppe, 2004).

In the Context of Zambia, the actual and fresh ideas of forms of seemingly SL begin to be traced as far back as 1967 when there was realisation of incorporating production activities in the school system (Ministry of

Education [MoE], 1967). Although this would be viewed as a minimal way of understanding SL, it was a landmark of an attempt in achieving true education.

The Zambian school system currently, is education of a few based on selection of the mentally fittest or strongest, what Mweetwa (n.d) and Muzata (2017) call an education dominated by examination. The MoE (1967) alluded to the above as the aim of the examination in schools. This notion has continued to date and examinations are used as means to separate the weak from the strong. Education provisions in Zambia offered far too little service leaning approaches to education since inception. Around 1967, there was still a strong critical view that education was too academic and hardly relevant to the growing needs of a young developing nation. It was equally observed in 1972 that even with the introduction of subjects like Typewriting, Agriculture and Home Economics, there was little development of learners' experience with education of practice.

The Ministry of Education's Annual report of 1977 also pointed out a number of issues that reflect a need for a school production that would give learners an all-round education (MoE, 1997). However, the emphasis in this report was on education value of the production activity than on the economic value, which is a good component if the true meaning of the production activity would be utilised in the realisation of a practical education system.

The policy document of 1992, *focus on learning*, recognised the role of education in creating the common good and preparation of individuals into fully human with acceptance of the role each one of them plays in the human development of the other. However, the enumeration of the goals of education in the *focus on learning policy document* was more individually-centred and emphasis was made of an individual's development towards political development and abandons the fabric nature of social life from which politics emanate.

The Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF) of 2013 made a change of emphasis on education from the examination based system to the competence-based school system. Even with these changes in the curriculum, Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019) note that the curriculum implemented was not successful and teachers still followed the examination path and content delivery only. With Zambia moving towards a competence-based curriculum in 2013 (Kaumba, Kabombwe & Mwanza, 2020), it meant that schools needed to adopt pedagogies what would make possible the achievement of competencies. Competence requires that the learners do not only know but also do.

SL offers that desired opportunity for learners to explore and create meaning out of the world; it bridges theory and practice through the use of co-ordinated and guided co-curricular activities. The achievement of the qualities of democracy cannot only be confined to family, school, college or university, but society as whole. As learners experience and interact with the community, they begin to form positions and question positions; this allows them to better understand content in the subject.

While education is recognised as an agent of change (CDC, 2013), this change cannot take place without a well-thought-out curriculum. Change in behaviour of every learner must be a well-planned venture, with well-outlined activities and values that define ultimately the place of a learner in society, and positioning this learner at the centre of the change process. A curriculum needs to formally respond to social changes and create cultural development oriented environment.

Conceptualising Service Learning

SL is defined as a method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organised service experiences (Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform, 1993; Wade, 2009). Stagg (2004: 1) argues that SL is generally a "curriculum-based form of community service".

While a curriculum is defined as the document of plan or instructional guide used in the teaching and learning process, with a desire to bring about change in behaviour (Offorma, 2014). Ball and Bowe (1992) explain two crucial element of the curriculum; the first is curriculum as ‘text,’ which denotes planned and imagined venture. While the second is curriculum as context, this implies how it plays out in different schools. Mitchell (2013) sees curriculum as the learners total experience, not just the teaching but includes unintended learning outcomes.

For SL to work, teachers are supposed to link academic learning to experiences (within and outside school). SL offers that desired opportunity for learners to explore and create meaning out of the world; it bridges theory and practice through the use of co-ordinated and guided co-curricular activities. The different conceptual definitions of SL provided points to place the learners between reality and abstract knowledge in producing a rounded citizen for democratic challenges and responsive citizenship. There is life outside the classroom in which the learners should learn by experience, either voluntarily or involuntary. The curricula and extra curricula activities should lead to more practical ways of learners experiencing learning that reflects on the concepts to be learnt throughout the school day (Hampden et al., 2015).

Service learning is strongly linked to building democratic tendencies among learners. Eyler and Giles (1999; Astin and Sax (1998) point to the effects SL has on the learners who undergo the service learning itself through volunteer programs. The authors note that learners’ civic responsibility tends to be enhanced and this is good for the achievement of the qualities of democracy to society as whole. As learners experience and interact with the community, they begin to form positions and question positions; this allows them to better understand content in the subject. The learners must live by the experience to sharpen their daily understanding of the world. Kolb believed that learning is a social process in which there is an interaction between personal and social knowledge (Kolb, 1984). The author argues that experiences shape and actualise the developmental potentialities in an individual and thus, this view gives an indication that SL must be planned. Jacoby (1996; 2003) has argued that SL is a form of experiential education in which learners engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes. SL provides a means of doing and of making the entire community a learning environment (Witmer and Anderson, 1994).

Service Learning as a method of teaching Civic Education

SL is critical in the preparation of citizenship. McCowan (2009:18) sees SL as an important element in the development of citizenship through volunteering and community involvement. According to Chola (2016:71), SL is an increasingly accepted tool that can provide culturally-relevant teaching and deep, experiential learning. Chola in his study argues that SL practices in the secondary schools were weak but reveals that SL was a necessary method to use in the teaching of Civic Education in Zambia. Muleya (2016:14) is of the view that SL fits well in the teaching of education and sees SL as a method that can lead to the realisation of social change and transformation in society. This is in agreement with Ohn and Wade (2009: 200) who see SL as an acceptable practice in schools that can lead to strengthened democratic and participatory practices in the community.

SL as pedagogy has two components: contribution to learning oriented pedagogy as opposed to teaching pedagogy and contribution as a form of experience education (Lisman, 1998). Learners must be at the centre of the learning process as opposed to teacher-directed orientation, thus SL should stand out as action-based nature of learning.

SL is an education pedagogy/method that is grounded in experience as a basis for learning and critical reflection intentionally designed to enable learning to occur (Jacoby, 2015). Reflection in SL stimulates learners to integrate experience and observations with existing knowledge to examine theory and practice. Witmer and and Anderson (1994) have echoed that SL is truly grounded in experiential learning but

emphasise that SL differs from experiential learning in two ways; firstly, the goal of SL is to direct the learners into practical setting where the primary motivation is service, and the second being that learning takes place in two ways (as learners take part in the experience and as they reflect upon what happened during the experience and the result of it).

SL across the disciplines of Civic Education has been aimed, at promoting greater civic engagement by learners (especially in recent years) (Luis & Jeffrey, 2008). It is observed that learners who take part in SL typically demonstrate enhanced understanding of citizenship related issues. SL practice is viewed as an appropriate pedagogy to encourage more active and engaged citizenship. Ehrlich (1999) expresses rational thinking about Civic Education which has been strongly influenced by experiences with community-based SL, and in which the author was convinced that serving and acting in one's community is powerful training for democratic citizenship.

Theoretical framework

This study rests on Kolb's theory of experiential learning. The school of thought informs the value of education, the manner in which learning is to be practiced and the place of man in society. Many scholars have played a significant role in establishing the field of experiential learning to influence learning, education and development. Scholars such William James, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin and Paulo Freire among others, have contributed the development of the theory. Kolb (1984) developed the model of experiential learning based on the work of Lewin. Lewin's view was that learning is best facilitated when there is a conflict between a learner's immediate concrete experience and a detached analysis of it by the individual. Lewin's cycle of action, reflection, generalisation, and testing is characteristic of experiential learning. There should be a link between the classroom and the future work for which the classroom is supposedly preparing the learner. This calls for the translation of abstract ideas of academia into the concrete practical realities in the learners' lives (Kolb, 1984). Kolb hence defines experiential learning as a particular form of learning from life experiences.

In the analysis of Brookfield (1983), experiential learning must not be looked at as merely a 'fieldwork,' which means connecting learning to real-life situations. He presents two possible viewpoints in which it should be considered. Firstly, it is used to describe the learning were a learner acquires and applies knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting. This implies that learners have a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it. The second strand of experiential learning is education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life. Learning here is not sponsored by some formal educational institution but is undertaken by learners themselves.

Methodologies used during teaching have a bearing on the nature of the results schools produce. Mulenga (2015) notes that the extent to which teachers are able to effectively teach is dependent on the knowledge and skills they acquire. Learning that is achieved through reflection upon everyday experience and is the way that most of us do our learning. This form of learning would be attributed to self-motivated desires and a conscious choice by individuals based on the knowledge obtained over the years to influence change. There is nothing in isolation about life, what we experience everyday has direct effects on what we become. Affective education is effective education (Khatib, 2012).

The use of SL as a pedagogy then, gives a platform upon which learners can develop into well rounded citizens ready to actively engage and participate in the affairs of their society. Howard (1998) however warns that teachers undertaking this pedagogy of teaching must not be meek. The pedagogy, because of its nature, needs dedication and renewed motivation and it is something that must be undertaken with patience knowing that to change a classroom environment is not something that changes in a twinkle of an eye.

FINDINGS /RESULTS

Learners Methodological Ranking

Learners were asked to rank seven (7) common methods of teaching they are exposed to according to their order of interest in the classroom. On a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 representing the most interesting while 7 the least interesting. Table 1 displays the ranking of the methodology according to the liking of the learners. Debate method, as presented in Table 1, was ranked as number one and accounts for a *mean* of 3.47, while group discussion was a *mean* of 3.63 coming second, with storytelling carrying a *mean* of 3.78 at number three. Field trip is at number four with a *mean* of 4.07. Brainstorming is fifth with a *mean* of 4.10. The results in Table 1 show that question and answer, and lecture method techniques were less preferred by the learners – with a *mean* of 4.15 and 4.63 respectively.

S/N	Method	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking Position
1	Debate	3.47	2.212	1
2	Group discussion	3.63	2.077	2
3	Storytelling	3.78	1.872	3
4	Field Trips	4.07	1.984	4
5	Brainstorming	4.10	1.719	5
6	Question and Answer Technique	4.15	1.841	6
7	Lecture Method	4.63	2.059	7

Table 1: Learners ranking of the methods of teaching

Learners' activity of participation in Civic Education

As a way to identify the gravity of involvement, and activities learners had with their schools and surrounding communities, the study listed 7 random activities to check the extent to which learners were engaged. Table 2 shows the statements to which learners were tested. The statements are arranged in order of the most positive response to the most negative response from the lowest to highest mean. Table 2 shows that learners were actively engaged in the school cleaning activities and do not do our door activities that are tied to academic learning.

S/N	Test Item	Mean	Std. deviation
1	I participate in cleaning the school surrounding	1.95	1.242
3	We don't do any outdoor activities, we only learn from class	2.39	1.568
2	I sensitise local communities on issues of concern	2.45	1.395
5	I donate clothes, food etc.	3.05	1.373
4	I participate in community cleaning activities	3.07	1.417
6	I get the opportunity to engage with public/community leaders	3.35	1.315
7	I participate in community meetings	3.52	1.271

Table 2: Learners activity of participation in Civic Education

Qualitative views on methods of teaching and learning activities

The respondents in qualitative findings are given identifiers. Respondents in focused group discussions are

given RP. Each Focus Group had six (6) learners and these are given identifiers RP1 to RP6. Eight focus group discussions were conducted from the eight schools and these are identified as FDG1 to FDG8.

Learners in focus group discussion noted that the lessons need to be more real and recommended different activities. RP1 in FDG7 noted that teachers need to create more interactions among classes and schools, and organise more debates so that we can express ourselves on many issues. RP2 in FDG7 gave an example, *“We learn about elections but we have never seen a voters’ card or a voting booth. How can we marry what we learn to reality?”* The learner emphasised the need for teachers to make the lessons interesting by making the learning real in order for future learners to be interested in the subject.

Learners shared their views on the use of methodologies in the classroom and identified methods that are mostly used by teachers which include; *question and answer, discussion method* and in rare cases *debate and role play*. Learners expressed elements of dissatisfaction in the manner the teaching and learning of Civic Education was taking place. RP3 in FDG1 stated that, *“learning is not all about writing notes and reading books.”* The learners’ expression here reviews some element of teachers who seemingly believe have less time to facilitate learning but focus on finishing the syllabus without due regard to allow learning to take place.

In focus group discussions with the learners, the ultimate response to whether or not they were involved in any activities outside the classroom was a definite “no”. Learners echoed that practical activities are an important component to the learning process. Learners were of the view that the current trends in the classroom learning were somewhat boring. RP4 in FDG2 expressed the following:

Seeing something happen live is much better. We should go out there and experience what we learn. We are young, papers and books stress us. Therefore, if teachers want us to be successful in a subject like Civic Education, having experience is the best for us.

Learners in FDG8 noted that teachers were only *making them write notes and lecturing them*. RP1 during the discussion noted that, *“Teachers only ask us questions.”* It was equally noted from the discussions that most activities done by the learners were not tied to academic curriculum. Learners in FDG2 explained that cleaning activities were sometimes done at the beginning of the school term as well as every 30th of the month in most cases to pick up litter. The only other time they got to work was when they were punished for making a noise or any other offence within the school premises.

Learners also noted having participated in sensitisation initiatives often organised by the learners themselves in clubs or when invited by civil society organisations. RP3 in FDG4 expressed that, *“Last term we had gone to Chipata compound of Lusaka district to sensitise the community there about cholera. We went to a few homes, asked them what challenges they had and informed the relevant authorities to help the people out. The people complained that the Environmental Council of Zambia did not facilitate garbage collection in the community.”* The respondent further stated that the activity was not a school or community initiative. The event was organised by one of the organisations in Chipata compound that facilitates participation of schools in various ventures targeted at helping the Chipata compound community.

Learners noted the lack of good pedagogical practices in the learning of Civic Education. During the FDG2, RP6 had this to say about their teacher, *“She moves in a fast pace when lecturing such that the slow learners fail to catch up. She should not leave us behind. Currently, she has just completed substance abuse and will be moving on to another topic but then there are learners who are still writing notes on culture, which we learnt before substance abuse. The learners who are fast are doing fine.”*

RP2 in FDG7 noted that, *“The classroom teaching was not bad however we need more practical examples and work so that we appreciate what we learn.”* RP6 during the same interview noted that, *“We need more techniques and field trips so that we gain more exposure,”*

adding that we could give the teachers 75% for their teaching but they need to take us to court or parliament so that we see real-life proceedings.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

More teaching and learning strategies have emerged over time and it has been a challenge to upgrade existing ones and innovate new methods in order to keep the education climate and classroom both interesting and motivating for the learners (Farah, Nilam, Saminathan and Vishalini, 2016). This is one challenge that schools and curricula in Zambia grapples with. Muleya (2015), Chola (2016) and Sakala (2016) point to a lack of SL approaches in the secondary schools, especially in teacher pedagogical practices. Kaumba, Kabombwe and Mwanza (2020) have equally lamented on the failure of the curriculum in Zambia in meeting the need for the development of competencies through appropriate teaching pedagogies. Muleya, Magasu and Mweemba (2020) reveal different challenges of pedagogy approaches in the teaching of Civic Education in Zambia, among the many items identified is the lack of assessment and interactive pedagogical application in the subject.

Learners Methodological Ranking

The methodological rankings were undertaken to check if there was a mismatch between the methods teachers used in the classroom with what the learners expect should happen in the classroom. The findings of the study in table 1 show that the learners are more interested in methods that are interactive in nature and the focus group discussion reveal dissatisfaction and a lack of interactive pedagogy in the learning process. The results suggest that learners of Civic Education present a picture to which they perceive classroom practices that should favour more interactive methods such as debate, group discussions and story-telling. Snider and Schnurer (2002) argue that the use of debate method as a teaching technique can make a classroom more learner-oriented whereby learners can take responsibility for their own learning. Micheal (1993) has argued that learners' debates are effective ways to foster co-operation, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for learning among middle school learners. Thus, teachers can use debates in any discipline to improve reading levels and other complex issues.

The methodological ranks in table 1 by the learners depict the desire for an intense engagement in the learning process and an opportunity to share experiences. A study by Lawler, Joseph and Narula (2014), explored the use virtual storytelling in determining its impact for college students. The study observes that visual storytelling enables progressively high engagement in advocacy and altruism in self efficacy and sociality of the college students. The author also noted that visual storytelling enables generally high interpersonal SL skills and is a powerful SL tool.

The use of imagination (Egan, 1989) to engage learners is emphasised on using stories and metaphors to make sense of the world and experiences. From the results, it can be observed that learners are interested in storytelling as a method with the same magnitude with debate. One common characteristics between debate and storytelling as a method is that, it is learner centred and both methods allow and give learners more time to express themselves.

There is much interest showed by learners in the subject of civic education when learning is premised on interactive pedagogies. Alan, Susan and Hugh (2002) argue that interactive pedagogies may include methods such as working in groups, role play and working in pairs. From the results in table 1, the top five methods as ranked by learners, demonstrate the desired interest for interactive classes. The lesson being drawn from the results is that Civic Education teachers may not be paying much attention to the needs of the learners as they do not keenly utilise methods that are of the learners' interest. Study by Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019); Muleya, Magasu and Mweemba (2020) show that teachers in schools are inclined towards pedagogies that are teacher centered. Muleya (2015) in a study "*Trends of teaching Civic Education in Zambia,*"

noted that teaching and learning to Civic Education needed to be learner centred if the learner was going to influence change in the community and society at large. This study indicates that there is a need to pay critical attention to the learning needs of learners. Elvis (2013) has argued that in any meaningful teaching, education must be organised in ways that bring fundamental change to the learner.

Teaching and learning function is a complex process involving three inseparable and mutually supporting components (Van-Manen (1977) in Muleya, Magasu and Mweemba, 2020). These include the teacher-cum-facilitator, the learner to whom the teaching and learning activities are intended and instructional resources. The teacher in this regard is the centre however not the focus of the learning process. The teacher only acts as the bridge, linking the learners and resources, including the subject matter. This research has however established that the teacher often played the leading role and was the centre stage of the learning process.

In the Focused Group Discussions, Learners identified a number of methods and activities that civic education teachers can employ in the teaching and learning in order to make the subject meaningful. The methods include, debate, group discussions, storytelling, field trips and brainstorming. Pedagogies play an important role in the teaching of Civic Education and the best pedagogy should combine instruction in the classroom with experience. Itin (1997) argues that utilising experiential learning in the classroom was beneficial for the learners. When we combine classroom instruction and experience, we are able to apply knowledge to social problems. Changes in experience education can be explained by contextual change in society (Parker-Gwin and Mabry, 1998). There is a well-thought-out position in this study that the use of such pedagogy in the teaching and learning of Civic Education was farfetched. Although the 2013 Teachers Curriculum Implementation Guide in Zambia prefers the use of learner-centred pedagogies and clearly points to the use of role play as pedagogy for learning. For example, in Civic Education, the practices in the classroom from the views obtained from clearly show a disjuncture of application on the methods of instructions.

Using interactive pedagogies such as brainstorming could be beneficial for learners. According to Almutari (2015), brainstorming is one of the most important strategies in provoking creativity and solving problems in the educational, commercial, industrial and political fields. Brainstorming can also lead to high class discussions in the classroom and be a conduit upon which learners can begin to reflect on the experiences. Brookfield and Perskill (2005) have argued that the discussion method would be appropriate to selected subjects as it could be used for learners who have some prior knowledge in a given discipline such as social sciences or humanities. However, William (1981) emphasises that even though the discussion method is a good method, it is not the only best method, many other pedagogies exist that can be used for proper times and situations. The lack of support of the group discussion method on the part of the learners could be born from what maybe observed in William's (1981) writing as the lack of appropriate use. Sybing (2015a) sees a discussion as an interaction between multiple speakers, usually revolving around a particular topic of contention or question on which the learners must come to consensus. With membership of discussion between three or four, as recommended by Sybing, discussion requires that the learners involved use their critical thinking skills to not only express their opinion but also to evaluate the opinions of others in an open-ended unrehearsed interaction. The application of methods has a direct bearing to the way learners tend to get or lose interest in its usage. The learning point in this study is that, teachers of Civic Education should not over rely on one or two methods but should explore a variety to meet the interest of learners.

Classroom Activities during the Learning of Civic Education

A number of activities were identified during interviews as important to the interactive teaching and learning that can bridge academic learning to experience in the subject of Civic education. While it is observed from the results that learners participate in school cleaning activities within the school surrounding, this was not linked to their academic learning. The results gathered from learners in both the questionnaires and the focus group discussion show that there is not much engagement happening between

the school and the community. Schools should be able to provide motivation opportunities to connect classroom instruction with practical community problem-solving.

Community participation through SL can be used as a tool to improve learner learning. In a study done by Moonga (2018) in selected primary schools of Lusaka District, the author shows that school community participation is currently weak. In a Ministerial statement made to Parliament of the Republic of Zambia on 21 February 2014, while taking about “*Empowering learners by putting theory into practice,*” the Minister had this to say:

This theme is intended to remind our teachers that their teaching and strategies should focus on producing learners who will have life skills to cope with different challenges of life. This is in line with the Patriotic Front manifesto that seeks to orient the curriculum at all levels of education to put emphasis on life skills.

The statement demonstrates government’s willingness to have an education system that produces learners that will address the needs of society by putting theory into practice. Muleya (2019) echoed this need in which the current government’s educational vision aims at providing education which is responsive and relevant to the requirements of society. Pontes, Henn and Griffiths (2019) state that Citizenship Education can be a tool for Civic generation, well-planned and well-utilised as a school subject, Civic Education can be an effective education for citizenship and solve the main ills faced by society and help in the building of moral value for the communities. Cress (2009) emphasises that for civic engagement to be effective, it must be intentionally integrated into curricula and co-curricula learning goals. Learners who are forced to volunteer or provide a service can become resentful, and blame community members for their own predicament and maintain entrenched stereotypes about individuals and communities. Thus, there should be well organised and structured time for young persons to think, talk and write about what he or she thinks (Ohn & Wade, 2009) in order to cause learning to take place and to ensure learners do a service willingly.

There is little to lack of willingness among learners to get involved in the political life. The learners are not able to engage with leaders or participate in meetings and community debates. This is a worrisome trend that needs to be urgently resolved otherwise Civic Education will not be able to be responsive to the goals of the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework of 2013. Muleya (2019) emphasises that the reintroduction of Civic Education rose out of the need to produce learners who would be versed in the ideals and practices of a democratic community.

Central to the curriculum of 2013 is teaching learners about how they can live as true citizens in the community following the ideals of what may be referred to as transformative Citizenship Education. Staurt (2018), like Crick (1998), argues that SL is heightened in the value of service that lies in the ability to foster moral awareness (‘do well by doing good’), can be seen as a high order humanist conception. In addition, that SL enhances effective learning and aids community. SL experiences therefore can be seen as an instructional technique that encourages individuals to be socially responsible and engage in moral actions. Umpleby (2011) has intensely noted that SL is not simply a pedagogy but rather a means to empower learners and educational institutions to become more aware of the needs of the communities of which they are a part and to become engaged and civically active in a mutually beneficial way.

The poor pedagogical practices in the school system as observed in this study undermine the citizen preparation in Civic Education. Among the main reasons noted as a hindrance to engaged learning process, Muleya, Magasu and Mweemba (2020) have argued that the teachers’ timetable had too many classes/lessons, giving teachers less time to engage in learner-centred methods. The study by Sakala (2016) showed that teacher training in colleges and universities was not anchored on interactive pedagogy and this affects the manner in which Civic Education is delivered in school settings as the teachers are not well exposed and equipped to democratic and SL programmes. Bates (2009) has expressed the need for teacher training by stating that teacher training should also be modelled on SL – the author argues that SL is an

opportunity for teacher candidates to learn more about teaching and learning by engaging learners in meaningful activities with the larger community. Teacher preparation offers the chance to prepare teachers who may be more committed to SL because they have the knowledge, tools and experience to apply the pedagogy. Print (2000) also comments similarly on the use of interactive methods by teachers, and states that teacher professional development and changing pre-service teacher education will become a major challenge for government, universities and schools. He makes emphasis from an Australian perspective about the need for well-prepared, knowledgeable teachers using an array of appropriate pedagogies in schools if real change and goals of Civic Education are to be met. No matter how brilliant a curriculum is, no matter how wonderful curriculum resources are, and how useful the research is, the civic initiatives boarder on an effective teacher (Print, 2000). It is in this regard that this study proposes a radical pedagogical approach that teachers can take to equip themselves in an attempt to carry out this mammoth task as change agents.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of Civic Education in the sampled schools was clearly classroom-based. There are no planned and intended activities that can link theory and practice of Civic Education. Learners do not undergo the required training that will allow them to share their experiences and link the experiences to the academic learning. This shortfall in pedagogical practices means that there is little to no room for teachers to connect classroom learning to community experiences. The results show that the service learning pedagogy is not practiced at school and is not prevalent in the school system in Zambia. The sentiments echoed by the learners in the study reveal that what the teachers may be practicing in the classroom situations is not what the learners intend to have in their learning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for teachers to adopt SL as pedagogy and make possible experiential learning to take place. Teacher training in University and Colleges should factor in the use of interactive pedagogies so as to influence teacher practices.
2. SL as a practice should be institutionalised in the school system. For this to be achieved there is need for further research in order to explore effective ways in SL can be fully adopted as pedagogy.
3. The schools need to enhance the use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to conduct capacity building and introduce teachers to a wide array of new and trending pedagogical issues in Civic Education.

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