IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES: THE CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ASRAT DAGNEW

Department of teacher education and curriculum studies, college of education and behavioral Science, Bahir dar University, Bahirdar, Ethiopia

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR/KORESPONDENČNI AVTOR
asratboza@yaho.com

Abstract/Izvleček The purpose of this study was to investigate implementation of active learning strategies at secondary schools in Ethiopia. To conduct the study, descriptive survey design was employed. The study was complemented by a mixed method approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools such as observation checklists, questionnaires and interviews. The findings of the study reported that most of the respondents perceived active learning strategies positively. Despite their positive perceptions, their usage of active learning strategies was low. Finally, it is recommended that responsible bodies should reorganize the conditions and facilitate necessary input for the implementation of active learning strategies.

Izvajanje aktivnih učnih strategij: primer srednjih šol
Namen raziskave je bil preučiti izvajanje strategij aktivnega učenja na srednjih šolah v Etiopiji. Uporabljena sta bila deskriptivna metoda raziskovanja in pristop mešanih metod, pri čemer smo uporabili tako kvalitativna kot kvantitativna orodja za zbiranje podatkov, kot so kontrolni seznami za opazovanje, vprašalniki in intervjuji. Iz izsledkov raziskave izhaja, da ima večina anketirancev pozitivna stališča do aktivnega učenja, a da kljub pozitivnim percepcijam učitelji pri svojem delu aktivne učne strategije uporabljajo v omejenem obsegu. Predstavljena so priporočila odgovornim organom za ustvarjanje pogojev in sredstev za uvajanje aktivnih učnih strategij v srednje šole.

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Introduction

Education in any country is aimed at bringing intended learning outcomes to learners. In schools the purpose of education is realized at various levels, starting from a single topic of instruction at a subject level in a given grade. The learners' capacity to solve problems will prepare them for membership in a modern community. Education has an immense impact on society; it trains the human mind to think and take appropriate decision and action. It is a process that transmits experience and new findings over years, (Ministry of Education, 1994).

To develop skills, knowledge and appropriate behaviour on the part of learners, the only means is promoting education. To impart education to the student, various methods and strategies should be applied in the classroom. Methods are ways of imparting multiple concepts and skills to learners. There are various methods in the process of teaching and learning. These methods centre on the teacher as the focus of any activity performed in imparting the lesson; as stated by Bush and Bell (2002), the teacher knows best. In addition, the traditional teacher centred approach allows teachers to play their roles in transferring facts, opinions, rules and other important material directly to the students. The main theme of this approach is what is taught rather than what the student has learnt.

However, the main objective of education is to enable learners to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, an objective that is achieved through a range of methods. At different times, different methods of learning have been investigated and have remained dominant for a certain period of time, such as teacher centred methods, (Bethel, 2011).

Aggarwal, (2010), stated that education enables us to lead a better life in dynamic world. In this respect, education has passed through continuous change. Given the multiple weaknesses of the traditional teacher-centred approach, the active learning method was identified and supported by many scholars for use in the classroom. According to the constructivists learning theory, active learning is known by the name discovery learning. Learning begins with the experience of the student. Moreover, constructivist learning theory is based on the principle that, through involvement in various activities, students discover their own way of learning.

According to Snowman and McCown, (2011) constructivism is based on the idea that meaningful learning occurs when people actively try to make sense of the world. This strategy does not allow students to do nothing but allows them to engage actively in the process of teaching and learning.

This does not mean that teachers are automatically out of the process, instead' they facilitate and guide the student to the target teaching and learning. This method assumes that learners play an active role in the teaching-learning process rather than being passive. Thomas (2016) affirms that to survive in a new, globally competitive world, today's children will need creativity, problem-solving abilities, and a passion for learning, a dedicated work ethic and lifelong learning opportunities. Students can develop these abilities through instruction based on best practice teaching strategies. Therefore, researcher with this information is encouraged to conduct research focusing on the investigation of secondary school teachers' perception, practice and challenges in active learning strategies utilization in Yilmana district secondary school.

The education and training policy (1994) and the existing curriculum in Ethiopia call for active learning. The curriculum reforms initiated imply a shift from passive learning to more active education (Lue, 2000). There have been continuous revisions in the instructional approaches to offer quality training and make active learning more practical.

Abo, (2013) and Ayele (2014) formed their hypothesis around the same issue, and their findings revealed that active learning failed in school practice because of a lack of time to cover the subject, students' attention on exam-oriented topics' and a lack of adequate materials. However, neither of these studies was intended to investigate teachers' perceptions and practices or the challenges they encountered in the implementation of active learning strategies in secondary schools, and no investigation had previously done in the selected district.

A Framework for Organizing Active Learning

The study was modelled by a conceptual framework depicting a representation of dependent and independent variables and the relationships between them, as shown by arrows. In this conceptual framework, the teaching method and students' conceptual understanding are the two main variables.

It is supposed that the dependent variable (the students' conceptual understanding about water) might be affected by the independent variables (the traditional teaching method and the 5E instructional cycle approach) and would improve after the treatment by developing an appropriate or effective teaching method. In other words, if the teacher is to take an effective teaching strategy, then the students must improve their conceptual understanding. This study claims that the implementation of 5E leaning cycle models significantly improves the conceptual understanding of students in comparison to the traditional teaching method.

It is not possible to provide universally accepted definitions for all the terminology of active learning, since different authors in the field have interpreted some terms differently. However, it is possible to provide some generally accepted definitions and to highlight distinctions in how common terms are used.

To achieve the aims of the study, specific objectives were designed:

Purpose of the study

- To examine the perception of teachers towards the use of active learning strategies.
- To explore whether active learning strategies are being practiced by teachers in secondary schools.
- To identify factors that hinders teachers in implementing active learning strategies in secondary schools.

Research question

1. In line with the above objectives of the study, research questions were developed:
2. What are the perceptions of teachers towards active learning strategies in secondary schools?
3. To what extent is the active learning strategy being implemented in secondary schools?
4. What are the major challenges encountered in practicing active learning strategies?

Methods

The descriptive survey research method was employed to carry out the present study. Thus, mixed method research was organized by including the characteristics, features or facts about the given population. To make the results more feasible and suitable, to investigate the current situation of perceptions, practices and challenges of teachers in implementing active learning strategies in secondary schools, the researchers used a mixed approach.

Source of data
Primary source data was used in the study. Yilmana district secondary school teachers, principals, vice principals and supervisors were used as the primary sources of data in the study.

Research model
The target populations of the study are secondary school teachers, principals, vice principals and supervisors. Accordingly, in Yilmana district educational office, there were 109 (87 male and 22 female) teachers. A total of 109 secondary schools teachers were included from five schools. Five principals, five vice principals and two schools supervisors were included in the interviews. To determine the composition of the sample, a proportional sampling technique was used to select the number of participants from the proposed study of the sample school. First, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the district. Second, a comprehensive sampling technique was used to select the schools. Third, a proportional sampling technique was used to select the numbers of teacher participants from the sample schools, and then a systematic random sampling technique was used to select teachers from each school. For principals, vice principals and supervisors, a comprehensive sampling technique was used.

Data collection tool
To obtain data from teachers, principals, vice principals and supervisors, questionnaires and interviews were used as data gathering instruments.

Questionnaire
A questionnaire was one of the instruments developed based on the reviewed literature to collect relevant data from teachers to answer the basic questions raised.

The questionnaire was employed to collect data from teachers. The questionnaire item consists of both close-ended and open-ended items in English. Based on information obtained from the literature, the researchers prepared both open-ended question and closed-ended items.

Interview

Interviews were among the data gathering instruments used to collect information. Supporting this idea (Best and Kahan, 1989) stated that interviews constitute the major way in which a qualitative evaluator seeks to understand people's perceptions. A semi-structured interview was designed to gather the qualitative data from school principals, vice principals and supervisors because semi structured interview items have the advantage of flexibility; in which new questions could be posed during the interview based on the responses of the interviewee.

The interview guide question set for all groups of respondents had one part aimed at obtaining information related to the basic research questions, and the researcher needs their opinions to strengthen their responses on the questionnaire part. In addition, data obtained through interviews with five school principals (male), five vice principals (male) and two supervisors (male) has the advantage of identifying what was happening in the classroom. Moreover, it helps the researcher to crosscheck or triangulate the data obtained from the questionnaire response items.

Data collection process

The researcher adopted three steps in collecting the data for the study. First, relevant literature was reviewed to get adequate information on the topic. Second, the objectives and research question were designed to show the direction of the study. Third, data gathering tools were developed. In the process of data collection for the study, the researchers used a procedure. The questionnaire was prepared in English, and the interviews with principals, vice principals and supervisors were conducted in the selected schools.

Methods of data analysis

The descriptive survey method with both quantitative and qualitative data analysis was used to answer the research questions and to attain the objectives. The quantitative data were collected, coded, tabulated, analysed, described and interpreted in such a manner as to facilitate findings being obtained from the study.

First, the data was gathered through the lose-ended questionnaire part I (Perceptions of teachers in implementing active Learning strategies in Classrooms) by using a five-point Likert scales (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree). Data processing and analysis were done by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 computer manual to analyse the quantitative data. Then, the qualitative data gathered through interviews and open-ended questionnaire analysis was done by organizing, summarizing and interpreting narrative description.

Results

Characteristics of the Respondents
Table 1 show that 109 teachers were included in the study, 79.8% of whom were males, while the remaining 21.2% were females. Compared with male teachers, the numbers of female teachers in secondary schools was low.

Table 1: Teachers' sex, qualifications, and the average number of students per class

No.	Variables	Characteristics	(frequency=109) teachers' response	
			Frequenc	**Percent (%)**
1	Sex	Male	87	79.8
		Female	22	20.2
		Total	109	100
2	Qualifications	Degree	93	85.3
		Master	16	14.7
3	Average number of students per class	41-50	1	20
		61-70	4	80

With respect to educational background or qualifications, 85.3% and 14.7% of participants were holders of first degrees and second degrees in academic subjects, respectively. As to the average number of students per class, 20% of the classes had an average of 41-50 students. The majority, 80%, of the classes had 61-70 students.

Presentation and Analysis of Data obtained through questionnaires
In analysing the perceptions of teachers about active learning strategies, a questionnaire titled "Perceptions of Teachers in Implementing Active Learning Strategies in Classrooms, Practice of Active Leaning Strategies and Factors Affecting the Implementation of Active Learning Srategies" served as the primary source of information.

In Table 2, the items related to assumptions about active learning, and advantages of active learning were presented properly to establish participants' perceptions. Item 1 aims to assess if students' lack of interest and motivation has affected the implementation of active learning. As can be seen in Table 2, 105 participants (96.3%) responded and the mean value of their responses (4.62) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree." Hence, most of the teachers agreed on the idea.

Item 2 shows that, 66 (60.6%) of the sample respondents were strongly agreed on the idea that Active learning is a suitable method to change student beliefs and attitudes, 33 (30.3%) of them also agree with it, and the others respondents, 7 (6.4%) and 3 (2.8 %) were respectively undecided or in disagreement, and the mean value of their response (4.49) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree." The results imply that most of the teachers assume active learning strategies to be suitable to change student's beliefs and attitudes.

Table 2: Perceptions of Teachers in Implementing Active Learning in Classrooms

Items	1=S. Disagree		2= Disagree		3= Undecided		4= Agree		5=S. Agree		$\sum vxf$	$X=\sum \frac{Vxf}{N}$
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	-	-	3	2.8	1	0.9	30	27.5	75	68.8	504	4.62
2	-	-	3	2.8	7	6.4	33	30.3	66	60.6	489	4.49
3	11	10.1	8	7.3	13	11.9	24	22	53	48.6	427	3.92
4	-	-	2	1.8	10	9.2	40	36.7	57	52.3	479	4.39
5	8	7.3	13	11.9	11	10.1	31	28.4	46	42.2	421	3.86
6	10	9.2	34	31.2	15	13.8	37	33.9	13	11.9	336	3.08
7	15	13.8	27	24.8	5	4.6	29	26.6	33	30.3	365	3.35
8	-	-	6	5.5	16	14.7	32	29.4	55	50.5	463	4.25
9	-	-	4	3.7	3	2.8	35	32.1	67	61.5	492	4.51
10	4	3.7	7	6.4	13	11.9	39	35.8	46	42.2	443	4.06
11	3	2.8	5	4.6	10	9.2	47	43.1	44	40.4	451	4.14
12	-	-	6	3.7	7	6.4	49	45	47	43.1	464	4.26
13	-	-	4	3.7	6	5.5	28	25.7	71	65.1	493	4.52
14	-	-	6	5.5	7	6.4	40	36.7	56	51.4	473	4.34
15	-	-	5	4.6	6	5.5	49	45	49	45	469	4.30
16	-	-	7	6.4	7	6.4	56	51.4	39	35.8	454	4.17
17	11	10.1	44	40.4	44	40.4	10	9.2	-	-	271	2.49
18	13	11.9	58	53.2	10	9.2	21	19.3	7	6.4	278	2.55
19	18	16.5	33	30.3	16	14.7	30	27.5	12	11	312	2.86
20	3	2.8	41	37.6	31	28.4	25	22.9	9	8.3	323	2.96
21	-	-	6	5.5	5	4.6	53	48.6	45	41.3	464	4.26
22	-	-	5	4.6	3	2.8	38	34.9	63	57.8	486	4.46
23	-	-	3	2.8	2	1.8	34	31.2	70	64.2	498	4.57
24	-	-	2	1.8	4	3.7	48	44	55	50.5	483	4.43
G mean												3.95

Item 3 shows, teachers' lack of interest in and motivation towards the teaching profession have affected the implementation of active learning. Consequently, 48.6% of them were strongly agreed, and 22% of them agreed on the idea. However, 7.3% of the sample respondents disagreed that their teachers' lack of interest in and motivation towards the teaching profession has affected the implementation of active learning, and 10.1% of them strongly disagreed with the statement. Finally, 11.9% of the sample respondents were "undecided" and the mean value (3.92). From the table, most sample teachers felt that their teachers' lack of interest and motivation towards the teaching profession has affected the implementation of active learning.

For items 4, the mean values of the responses were 4.39. This indicates that teachers strongly agreed with the idea that teachers must prepare students to communicate effectively. Item 9 says "active learning creates opportunities to share experiences and encourage friendship among students."

On this item, (61.5%) of the respondents showed strong agreement with the issue. Furthermore, the mean value of the responses (4.51) strengthens support for the assumption raised. Item 11 says "Active learning creates a democratic relationship between the teachers and the students (40.4%) and (43.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statement, respectively, and the mean value of their response (4.14) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree." The results imply that most of the teachers felt positive about the concepts.

For items 12, and 21, the mean value of the responses was (4.26). This shows that teachers agree or strongly agree that active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and that students have a chance to reflect on the teaching learning process. Item 13 says, students learn best when they are actively involved and when they practice 'learning by doing'; on this item, (65.1%) of respondents expressed strong agreement with the issue, and the mean value of the response is (4.52). That means most of the teachers agreed with the statement. Supporting this idea, 'learning by doing' is a theme that many educators have stressed since John Dewey's convincing argument that students must be engaged in an active quest to learn new ideas. Students should be presented with real life problems and then helped to discover information required to solve the problems.

On the other hand, item 14 assesses if active learning enhances students' level of understanding and involves them in problem solving. The percentages for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were 56 (51.4%), 40 (36.7%), respectively, and the mean value for this response was (4.34). This means teachers repored strong agreement. This implies that most teachers believe that active learning strategies can enhance students' level of understanding and enables them to solve problems independently. Item 15 assesses if active learning methods make a major contribution to scaling up the quality of education. As can be seen in Table 2, (90% of participants) strongly agree, or agree, and the mean value of their responses (4.30) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree. The item indicates that most teachers have positive attitudes towards active learning strategies.

According to Table 2, item 18, provoked disagreement formed most teachers 58(53.2%) and the mean value is (2.55). This means teaching as the sole responsibility of teachers is not the way to students. In addition, they were asked to give their views on whether teaching is enough to prepare students to understand their environment which is the aim of item 17. Consequently, among the teachers, all but ten respondents said "agree", but the rest reported view that were mostly neutral or disagreement 44 (40.4%):

Even respondents (10.1%) recorded strong disagreement and the mean value is (2.49). Item 20 "The teacher holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students," The mean value for this response is 2.96 between 2 and 3, i.e., the teachers reflected their disagreement. This implies that the teachers believe that students can also be sources of knowledge/information. Item 22 shows that, 63 (57.8%) of the sample respondents strongly agrees with the idea that active learning enhances self-confidence and independent learning among students; 38 (34.9%) of them also agree on this, and of the remaining respondents, 3(6.4%) and 5(4.6%) were, respectively, undecided or disagreement, and the mean value of their response (4.46) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree." the result implies that most of the teachers have a positive attitude towards the questions. Item 23 says, "I believe that active learning prepares for participation." This issue was supported by the majority (64.2%) of respondents. The mean value of the responses is (4.57) between "Agree" and "strongly agree". The general analysis of all the items indicates that most teachers have a positive attitude towards active learning. The grand mean value (3.95) of all responses comes close to supporting the values for agreement. Hence, one can assume that these teachers perceived active learning strategies positively.

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Table 3: Frequency, Percentage and Mean Values of Teachers' Use of Active Learning Strategies

Items	1= Not at all		2= rarely		3= some Times		4= frequently		5= Always		∑vxf	X=∑Vxf N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1.Group work	-	-	2	1.8	64	58.7	25	22.9	18	16.5	386	3.54
2.problem solving method	10	9.2	29	26.6	33	30.3	27	24.8	10	9.2	325	2.98
3.role playing	21	19.3	36	33.0	32	29.4	13	11.9	7	6.4	276	2.53
4.brain storming	4	3.7	23	21.1	33	30.3	28	25.7	21	19.3	366	3.36
5.group discussion	1	0.9	2	1.8	35	32.1	45	41.3	26	23.9	420	3.85
6.project method	23	21.1	36	33	40	36.7	5	4.6	5	4.6	260	2.39
7.peer teaching	5	4.6	22	20.2	56	51.4	21	19.3	5	4.6	326	2.99
8.demonstration	-	-	2	1.8	47	43.1	34	31.2	26	23.9	411	3.77
9.debating	28	25.7	34	31.2	34	31.2	8	7.3	5	4.6	255	2.34
10.lecture method	-	-	-	-	10	9.2	41	37.6	58	53.2	486	4.44
11.question and answer	1	0.9	6	5.5	25	22.9	38	34.9	39	35.8	435	3.99
12.cooperative learning	12	11.0	22	20.2	44	40.4	24	22	7	6.4	319	2.93
13.fied trip	73	67	21	19.3	10	9.2	1	0.9	4	3.7	169	1.55
14.discovery method	38	34.9	41	37.6	18	16.5	10	9.2	2	1.8	224	2.06
15.student independent work by giving homework/ assignments	1	0.9	10	9.2	31	28.4	31	28.4	36	33	418	3.83
G mean												3.10

As can be seen from Table 3, different active learning strategies were provided as examples. Accordingly, the frequency distribution for the use of these strategies by respondents is presented as follows:

The first one is a teacher focused method, the "lecture" method. It was reported by almost (53.2% of) the teachers, as it has always been used. The mean value of the responses (4.44) indicates frequent use. In response to the item, teachers claimed to use the lecture method frequently.

On the other hand, among common active learning strategies presented in Table-3, 'Group work' was reported by 58.7% of the respondents. This method is employed 'sometimes'. The mean value for group work is (3.54). This value indicates occasional use of group work in the secondary schools under study.

The other active learning strategy used by the teachers was 'Questioning and Answering'. The mean value (3.99) indicates that the teachers use 'Questioning and answering' nearly as much as values for 'sometimes'. The mean value for 'Discussion' (3.85) is also close to the values for 'sometimes'. This value indicates that the teachers employ this strategy in their classrooms sometimes. On the other hand, student independent work in the form of homework/assignments was reported by 33%, 28.4% and 28.4% of the teachers as being used always, frequently and sometimes, respectively. The mean value of the response, (3.83) indicates that this strategy is sometimes used by the teachers.

Another commonly used active learning strategy, 'Demonstration', is indicated by the mean value of (3.77). The mean value shows that this active learning strategy is used by the teachers sometimes. Similarly, 'Brainstorming' shows mean value of (3.36 and is thus) sometimes employed by the teachers. The overall mean (3.10) is approaching 3, which is equal to the value for 'sometimes'. From the teachers' responses, therefore, one can say that active learning is sometimes employed in the secondary schools.

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Table 4: Frequency, Percentage and Mean Values of Factors Affecting Teachers' Implementation of Active Learning

Items	1=Not Serious		2= Undecided		3= Serious		4=Most Serious		(∑vxf)	$X=\frac{\sum Vxf}{N}$	M. Ranking
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
1.Lack of commitment	8	7.3	4	3.7	58	53.2	39	35.8	346	3.17	4
2.Shortage of time to practice active learning	8	7.3	7	6.4	45	41.3	49	45	353	3.24	3
3.Communication problems	15	13.8	5	4.6	54	49.5	35	32.1	327	3.00	7
4.Lack of students interest in active learning	6	5.5	1	0.9	46	42.2	56	51.4	370	3.39	2
5.Students' beliefs and perceptions	5	4.6	7	6.4	65	59.6	32	29.4	342	3.14	5
6.Teachers'lack of interest	13	11.9	21	19.3	45	41.3	30	27.5	310	2.84	10
7.Teachers' beliefs and perceptions	20	18.3	18	16.5	46	42.2	25	22.9	294	2.70	11
8.Large class size	2	1.8	-	-	31	28.4	76	69.7	399	3.66	1
9.Diversity of teachers interest	11	10.1	3	2.8	60	55	35	32.1	337	3.09	6
10.Lack of instructional materials	16	14.7	8	7.3	51	46.8	34	31.2	321	2.94	9
11.Design of curriculum materials (text-book, teacher guide, syllabus)	21	19.3	8	7.3	34	31.2	46	42.2	323	2.96	8

Table 4 shows factors affecting teachers' implementation of active learning. In this part there were eleven factors assumed to be operative in the implementation of active learning. Among these factors, the researcher has selected six for further discussion. These factors have been selected because they were identified by respondents as significantly affecting the implementation of active learning. There is no question that interest, beliefs, and perceptions are crucial factors in implementing active learning in the classrooms. As can be seen from Table 4, one of the factors hindering the implementation of active learning is a lack of students' interest in active learning. This factor is proposed by 51.4% of the teachers as the most serious one. Another negative factor in the implementation of active learning as proposed by the teachers is students' belief and perception, which 59.6% find to be serious. According to the principals', vice principals' and supervisors' interviews, students do not like to be taught by active learning strategies. Hence, teachers found it difficult to implement active learning. It is also challenging to apply active learning in large classes and in situations where there is a lack of teachers' commitment. In line with this, 69.7% of the teachers identified large class size the teachers' lack of commitment (53.2%) is the most serious factors affecting the implementation of active learning strategies. Like any other educational issues in the teaching-learning process, it is also possible to think that active learning may have limitations during its implementation under real classroom conditions.

Presentations and analysis of Data Obtained through Interview
School principals, vice principals and supervisors can be considered prominent figures in the school system since they are assigned to lead all activities in the school environment. It is common for a school principal, vice principal or supervisor to be responsible for both academic and administrative affairs in the school. So, on this basis, the researchers conducted interviews with five school principals, five vice principals and two supervisors. Accordingly, after polite introductions, the researchers conducted the interviews. All these school principals, vice principals and supervisors were holders of second degrees. On the question asking them to explain their understanding of active learning strategies, all of them explained that they had some awareness of active learning and how to judge the implementation of active learning strategies; on this question; their responses can be summarized as indicating their belief that traditional teacher-centred methods yield great focus than active learning strategies.

In this case the teacher does a lot in the classroom by lecturing; whereas students are passive learners; in teacher-centred methods, more focus is on memorizing facts than on applying what has been learn and on enhancing the quality of education.

Some questions enquire whether the school environment is conducive to implementation of active learning strategies. Whether there are sufficient instructional resources? And if teachers utilize the allocated instructional time properly? In this case all principals, vice principals and supervisors say that there is no conducive learning environment to implement active learning strategies. Concerning the availability of educational facilities, almost all school principals, vice principals and supervisors admit shortage of instructional materials, especially for practical activities, which may affect implementation of active learning; nevertheless, they assert that in the near future, they are on the way to solving those problems. The last question aimed at the school principals, vice principals and supervisors involved the major factors influencing the implementation of active learning strategies. Their responses were as follows; teachers' and students' attitudes towards active learning is not positive; large class sizes; text-book content is very broad (for instance history text-books), and the period is not balanced to cover the text throughout the academic year; lack of confidence and a knowledge gap for some teachers; lack of adequate training on teaching methodologies; and a shortage of instructional materials/recourses.

Discussion

A discussion of the results is supported by the review of literature that included the views of scholars and other research findings.

Perception of Teachers in Active Learning

Various research findings have confirmed a strong link between teachers' attitudes towards active learning and their efforts to implement it. Sguazzin and Graan (1999) showed that teachers' attitudes have significant influence on the effective implementation of Active Learning. In line with these ideas, twenty-four statements were included in the questionnaires with the intention of assessing teachers' knowledge or perception of Active Learning strategies. Hence, it appeared that almost all the teachers expressed agreement or strong agreement with the assumptions about active learning strategies raised in the questionnaires, and the overall mean is (3.95). This indicates that teachers have positive attitudes towards Active Learning strategies.

The level of their agreement with the assumptions of active learning shows us that the teachers perceive Active Learning positively. Nevertheless, their positive perception doesn't lead their using Active Learning strategies in their classroom. This was also obtained through interview.

Practice of Active Learning strategies

To assess the extent to which Active Learning strategies has been practically implemented in secondary schools, teachers reported via questionnaire and principals, vice principals and supervisors reacted through interviews. To validate the data, an observation checklist was also made. Accordingly, the teachers identified the frequency with which they implement Active Learning in their responses to the questionnaire. These data indicate that the teachers implement active learning strategies occasionally/sometimes in their classroom.

The most frequently practiced Active Learning strategy reported by the teachers was traditional lecture method. This method was employed widely because most probably, the teachers were familiar with the methods. However, these strategies can help to develop only lower levels of the cognitive domain. On the other hand, other active learning strategies related to a higher level of cognitive domain and believed to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving ability of the students were not widely practiced. Most of the teachers revealed that these strategies were employed rarely.

In their research, Chickening and Gamson, 1987 and Lue, 2000 noticed that students do not learn much just sitting in the class listening to teachers, memorizing packaged assignments and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they learn, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experience and apply it to their daily life. They must engage in solving problems. As with the previous one, role play, panel discussion, project work and problem solving had been practiced sometimes or not at all, in the schools' as shown in the finding.

Factors affecting the implementation of Active Learning strategies

In this study, shortage of time is among these factors. With respect to this problem, the teacher respondents agreed that the timetable was the third major problem negatively affecting the implementation of active learning strategies. Supporting this fact, Farant (1980) explains the effect of time. The author stresses that shortage of time limits these teachers and students in the implementation of active learning strategies in the classroom.

Capel et al. (1995), for example, explain some teachers even discourage active learning simply because it means an extra burden in planning, preparation and evaluation. They believe that active learning is problematized by limited time and over-crowed subject matter.

As a result, some even conclude that participatory, activity-based learning is best in theory but unrealistic in practice. This may arise from inadequate knowledge of the area and inappropriate utilization.

Major Findings of the study

Analysis of the data shows that almost all of the respondents in the study perceived active learning strategies positively. Moreover, the data indicated the following:

- The participants assert that when teachers use active learning, students learn more effectively and develop the ability to express their feelings confidently, while getting chance to reflect on the teaching and learning process.
- The teachers view active learning as playing an important role in developing self-confidence and independent learning among students.
- Peer teaching, cooperative learning, the project method, debating, the discovery method and problem-solving methods are all active learning strategies, but, they are seldom employed. Finally, field trips are not employed in secondary schools.
- Large class size is indicated as a major problem in implementing active learning strategies.
- Students' lack of interest in active learning is another dominant factor in implementing active learning.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data indicates that most participants in the study perceived active learning strategies positively. However, the degree of positivity varied from teacher to teacher. Moreover, it was indicated that the teachers felt certain that when they used active learning, students would learn more effectively develop the ability to express their feelings confidently and succeed in solving problems; they believe that active learning plays an important role in developing self-confidence and enhances the development of a sense of commitment. Thus, it can be concluded that the teachers perceived active learning strategies positively. The analysis of the data revealed that the extent of the practices of active learning in secondary school was low.

The teachers confirmed that they deployed active learning in their classrooms "sometimes", which leads to the conclusion that the usage of active learning was infrequent. On the other hand, the practices of active learning varied, as indicated in the analysis of the data.

Recommendations

- The stakeholders should be aware of the implementation of active leaning strategies in the classroom in collaboration with school principals, vice principals and supervisors.
- School principals should be equipped with the attitudes necessary to enable them to play a crucial role in facilitating the teaching/learning process in general and the implementation of active learning strategies, in particular.
- To enhance the effective implementation of active learning strategies, educational experts such as supervisors and principals should, provide well-organized training work-shops for teachers in each cluster.

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Author

Asrat Dagnew Kelkay, PhD

Instructor, Department of Teacher Education and curriculum studies, College of educational and behavioral science, Bahir Dar University, P.O.Box: 79, 6000 Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, e-mail: asratboza@yahoo.com

Asistent, Oddelek za izobraževanje učiteljev in kurikularne študije, Fakulteta za izobraževalne in vedenjske znanosti, Univerza Bahir Dar, P.O.Box: 79, 6000 Bahir Dar, Etiopija, e-naslov: asratboza@yahoo.com