

**EXPLORING THE USE OF CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING IN
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES IN MALAWI PRIMARY
SCHOOLS**

MASTER OF EDUCATION-PRIMARY (SOCIAL STUDIES) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

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Master of Education-Primary (Social Studies) Thesis

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis/dissertation is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Acknowledgements have been made where other people's work has been used.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Andreck Jonathan Chiheni Munthali who died prematurely. Father, I wish you were around to see the fruits of fatherhood. I also dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, Mrs Eflina Juliah Munthali, who laboured to get me educated under tough socio-economic circumstances. Yunkhwa, I thank God for giving me a mother like you. May the Almighty God bless you greatly as you see your dream being realised.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools in Malawi using a theoretical framework of contextual teaching and learning. This study used a qualitative multiple-case study design involving three teachers as cases. Data were generated through lesson observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews with the head teachers and the teachers, and focus group discussions with learners. Data were analysed using thematic data analysis procedure. The findings indicate that although, to a larger extent, teachers adopted learner-centered methods in teaching, there was limited use of principles of contextual teaching and learning. Particularly, teachers displayed limited knowledge on how to use teaching and learning resources to promote contextual teaching and learning. Another finding is that teachers faced several challenges in teaching which limits learners' understanding of issues in Social and Environmental Sciences. The main argument of this study is that there was limited teaching of issues in Social and Environmental Sciences to take learners beyond knowledge level to the development of skills, positive values and attitudes on social and environmental issues. One major recommendation is that Teacher Training Colleges should orient student-teachers on how to use principles of contextual teaching and learning.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASESP	African Social and Environmental Studies Programme
BTP	Block Teaching Practice
CA	Continuous Assessment
CL	Contextual Learning
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CTL	Contextual Teaching and Learning
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
DEM	District Education Manager
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPE	Free Primary Education
GAS	Grant Aided Schools
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
INSET	In-service Education and Training
InWent	International Weiterbildung und Entwicklung
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
ITP	Internal Teaching Practice
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
LCA	Learner Centred Approaches
LCE	Learner Centred Education

LEA	Local Education Authority
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSCE	Malawi Schools Certificate of Education
NCSEA	National Committee on Science Education and Assessment
NCSS	National Council for the Social Studies
NED	Northern Education Division
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PCR	Primary Student to Classroom Ratio
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
SES	Social and Environmental Sciences
SHN	School Health and Nutrition
TALULAR	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TTC	Teachers' Training College
NCSESA	National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study on the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences (SES) in primary schools in Malawi. SES constitute a learning area focusing on social and environmental issues. In other countries, this learning area is simply called Social Studies as a subject. In Malawi, it is described as a learning area because it combines two components: one on social issues and another on environmental issues. This chapter has seven sections. The first section presents the background of the study. The second section indicates the statement of the problem. This is followed by a section on the purpose of the study which unveils what the study intended to explore. This is followed by research questions, significance of the study, structure of the thesis, and chapter summary.

1.1 Background of the Study

Arguably, education in most democratic countries is aimed at preparing young people for their roles in the society. Education is the key to individual and national development. Public schools, in particular, follow the national curriculum which aims at preparing learners to become active participatory citizenry in the democratic interdependent society. Generally, it has been agreed throughout history that the principle obligation of public schools is citizenship education (Kristjansson, 2004; Mhango, 2008).

In addition to that, MOE(2009, p. 1) states that the provision of formal education is the main contributing factor to economic growth, and as such it is a useful tool in facilitating the industrial and socio-economic development of a country. Education becomes meaningful if individuals are able to understand and make informed decisions on social and environmental issues. Educated citizens can assist in solving problems in countries through application of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they have gained in school (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011). Therefore, content that is taught in school should be usable in a range of contexts in learners' everyday life. However, most countries in the world face challenges in their school curriculum which affect classroom practices. Chiarelott (2006, p. 3) argues that:

Educators are currently struggling to maintain control over curriculum and instructional decisions that are increasingly being dictated by national and state standards, proficiency tests and packaged, scripted textbooks programs and instructional materials.

Therefore, teaching in some schools aims at making learners pass examinations. Mhango (2008, p. 167), reports that recitations and note taking are some of the major activities that dominate classroom practices.

Looking at the primary school curriculum in Malawi, it can be argued that SES is one of the learning areas that can help in transforming the society. Freire (1992) indicates that education is conceived as a process of social development and transformation. Young people help in the development of the society in many ways when the approaches for teaching SES are capable of making learners gain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in class and put these into practice outside school life.

This reflects the intended purpose of the outcome-based education (OBE) curriculum in Malawi. MoEST (2009a, p. vii) reports that:

The outcome is what the learner is expected to achieve in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which are stated before teaching and learning begins and learners are expected to transfer these outcomes to life beyond school life.

However, it can be argued that having already set outcomes at the beginning of the lesson only makes learners to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be used for what Cockburn (1995) calls ‘learning in classrooms’. Having outcomes for lessons does not make learners to transfer what they learn in class to experiences beyond school life. When learners discover what they perceive their teacher wants, many will attempt to produce it (Cockburn, 1995). Such an approach does not help learners to learn for active participation in the society. Outcomes which are set at the beginning of lessons only produce an immediate and obvious product rather than striving for longer-term, less obvious goals and appreciation of concepts. Cockburn (1995) ascertain that despite this, learning does take place, but there is almost certainly much effort and potential wasted.

Teachers can prepare learners for their roles in the society if they use teaching approaches that make learners view the content being relevant to the context in which it is going to be used in real life situations. Promoting an active knowledge base in teaching SES involves getting learners to see the connectedness of ideas and concepts on one hand, and the context in which they apply, on the other hand. Learners who acquire knowledge, skills, positive values and attitudes through active participation in class are able to assist in decision making and problem solving in their countries (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011).

Therefore, teachers of SES should use teaching approaches that actively make learners participate in class activities so that they put content learned into real life context. Teaching approaches should give learners a chance to put theory into practice in the course of learning SES in primary schools. Desforges (1995) calls this approach as 'learning out of school'. Desforges (1995, p. 94) further explains that an obvious starting point in drawing the links between learning and out of school is the recognition that a central objective of schooling is to prepare children for their lives after school. Teachers of SES can prepare learners for their roles in the society if they relate what they teach to real life situations. Desforges (1995, p. 94) argues that any serious attempts to teach knowledge utilization is more likely to be successful if the teacher understands the contexts in which that knowledge is likely to be applied. Teachers can achieve this if they use contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approaches which help learners view the relevance of the content.

The curriculum for SES should aim at assisting learners to apply knowledge, skills, appropriate values and attitudes in their everyday life. In this way, education will act as a catalyst for national development and a way of promoting national consciousness (MOE, 2009; Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011). Therefore, teachers are expected to teach content in SES in the context in which it can be applied in everyday life.

Teachers need to appreciate that Social Studies provides opportunities to learners for citizenship education (Winkle, 2009; Dube 2009). However, Social Studies has been categorized among other school subjects as boring, irrelevant, and not interesting to most learners (Shaver, 1987; Garcia & Michaelis, 2011; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006).

Consequently, learners lose interest in Social Studies because the content is said to be not relevant to their lives and it is not in context of real life situations (Balderas & White, 2000; Brum, Bouldin & White, 2000; Dube, 2009). For instance, Dube (2009) reports that many teachers in primary schools are still very far from making the subject as relevant and meaningful to the learners who often view it as boring, uninteresting and irrelevant to their daily experiences. These teachers fail to teach Social Studies so that they make it relevant to learners.

1.2 Social Studies in Primary School Curriculum in Malawi

During the British colonial period in Malawi, formal education was concerned with history and culture of British Colonial Empire (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Content focused on the glorification of colonial power, ignoring Malawian practises. In British colonies, the entire school curricula were tailored to produce obedient subjects of the British Monarchy (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Colonial education programme for citizenship education focused on separate social science subjects namely; history, geography, and civics. Merryfield and Tlou (1995, p. 263) report that Social Studies was still as geography in standards one to six, history in standards three to six, and civics in standards five to six.

Even after independence, the programme adopted by the new government in Malawi centered on teaching about citizenship education such as introduction of national symbols and national history. Hauya (1991) states that in 1964 Malawi still inherited a foreign type of education that was not suitable to the indigenous people's needs. Post-independence curriculum showed no significant curriculum reform in Social Studies.

In 1980s and 1990s, Malawi, as a subscribing member of African Social and Environmental Studies Programme (ASESP), introduced the new Social Studies curriculum in its education systems (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). However, even in the 1980s Social Studies in Malawi retained much of the structure and content of the British education primary school syllabus (Geography, History and Civics). For instance, Merryfeild and Tlou (1995, p. 264) state that in the history syllabus, the topics of European colonial era covered 60 percent of the content, ancient and medieval history covered 25 percent, while the remainder focused on independence of Malawi.

Up until 1990s, Social Studies syllabi in Malawi still included many of Western civilization courses like Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, Mesopotamia and Renaissance. Africanization content was included to glorify John Chilembwe and Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Environmental issues such as landforms, climate and conservation covering Malawi and other parts of Africa were also covered. Primary Social Studies syllabi was re-conceptualized by integrating History, Geography and Civics for the first time in standards 5 to 8. In standards 1 to 4 it was named General Studies. The History part emphasised on history of Malawi. Content on European and Ancient civilization was reduced and focused on world history and African civilization. However, the major attention and focus was on behaviour of good citizens and protecting the environment and conservation measures (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). One striking aspect is that all through this period, teachers used teacher-centered approaches in teaching Social Studies. Mkwezalamba-Ngalande (2011, p. 5) indicates that teacher-centered methods are called ‘banking methods’ because the learners are silent listeners.

In such approaches, students are not given room to construct their own knowledge from their experiences. Teachers are considered as ‘fountains of wisdom’ while students are considered as ‘empty vessels’ expected to be filled with knowledge.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education embarked on a curriculum reform known as the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011) abbreviated as PCAR. This reform led to a curriculum that was designed to revitalise Malawian culture across all subjects at primary school level. It is a curriculum that reflects knowledge, skills, values and attitudes suitable for the needs of the Malawian society. This curriculum emphasises on the teaching that makes learners acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary to improve the human condition in the society. The curriculum changed from an objective-based type to an out-come based one (MoEST & MIE, 2003; MOE, 2009; MoEST, 2010). In an objective-based curriculum, the teacher aims at achieving the prepared objectives and also to cover the content. On the other hand, the outcome-based curriculum is aimed at making students achieve something by the end of the teaching-learning process. As such, one of the major facets of the outcome-based curriculum is continuous assessment which is done in order to check what students have achieved by the end of the teaching-learning process (MoEST & MIE, 2003; MOE, 2009; MoEST, 2010). The outcome-based curriculum puts emphasis on engaging learners through participatory teaching and learning methods (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011). For instance, outcome-based education (OBE) uses teaching and learning methods such as discussion method, role play, discovery method, observation method, question and answer method, just to mention but a few.

Besides teaching and learning approaches, the introduction of PCAR brought a change in the names of some subjects. The coming of PCAR led Social Studies to be changed into Social and Environmental Sciences (MoEST, 2001). In this case, the subject now covers social issues and environmental issues which is similar to Social Studies in the sense that Social Studies also deals with the interaction of people and the environment. However, teachers are expected to use scientific approaches when teaching social and environmental issues unlike the traditional didactic methods. Environmental sciences have a stronger emphasis on the scientific aspects of the environment than Social Studies (Thompson, Baily & Hawes, 1997). Hence the name of the subject changed to Social and Environmental Sciences (SES).

Despite the fact that the name of the subject changed to SES, in this study the subject will still be referred to as Social Studies when using literature by previous educators. This is simply because what is covered in SES befits the definition of Social Studies which was adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1992 that Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence (Zarrillo, 2008). Besides, Malawi as a signatory of the African Social and Environmental Studies Programme (ASESP), has to maintain what was agreed upon at the Mombasa Conference in 1968. It was not until the Mombasa Conference of 1968 that Social Studies became a school subject in the continent (Tlou & Kabwila, 2000). Therefore, in this study much literature refers to the subject as Social Studies despite that the name in PCAR changed to Social and Environmental Sciences. This study will still use Social Studies because it is the name agreed by a lot of nations although coined outside Africa (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011; ASEP, 1993).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The paradigm shift that occurred in primary school classrooms in Malawi following the introduction of primary curriculum and assessment reform (PCAR) constituted a problem that require a thorough investigation. Education systems nowadays put emphasis on offering examination oriented education instead of offering education for life. Education systems emphasize on making learners pass examinations (DuBey, Coe DuBey & Ndagi, 1985). This leads to a 'schooled society' (DuBey, Coe DuBey & Ndagi, 1985). In this case, teaching aims at making learners memorise information in order to pass examinations. Therefore, it is worth exploring if teachers of SES use contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approaches which make learning go beyond knowledge level.

Secondly, teachers are expected to use CTL approaches in primary schools at the time when there are a lot of challenges in the education sector due to the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Malawi in 1994. InWent (2009, p. 5) reports that:

Teachers often argue that resources, class sizes, and workload limit their range of approaches toward a more learner-oriented teaching and it appears that existing learning cultures are often very far from internationally favoured ...approaches.

However, the teaching of SES is supposed to actively engage learners so as to prepare them for their roles in the society. Therefore, teachers are expected to use CTL approaches in teaching SES.

Since the introduction of SES in 2001 in primary schools in Malawi, no study has been done to explore how principles of contextual teaching and learning are used. Previous studies have emphasized on the approaches of teaching Social Studies that promote

acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes so as to meet the national standards of education. This study explored how primary school teachers teach beyond knowledge so as to make learners develop skills, positive values and attitudes for action taking in the society during and after the primary school life.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of contextual teaching and learning in Social and Environmental Sciences in Malawi primary schools in order to understand whether or not teachers use principles of contextual teaching and learning.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the main question: How do teachers in primary schools in Malawi use contextual teaching and learning in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences? The following sub-questions were used in this study:

1. What methods do teachers in primary schools in Malawi use in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences to achieve contextual teaching and learning?
2. What challenges do teachers face when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences in order to achieve contextual teaching and learning in primary schools in Malawi?
3. How can the challenges that teachers face when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences to achieve contextual teaching and learning in primary schools in Malawi be overcome?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge on the teaching of SES by filling the gap on how primary school teachers use principles of contextual teaching and learning when teaching social and environmental issues from the Malawian context. This may be used by education policy-makers to appreciate that contextual teaching and learning can be used to enhance effective teaching with the aim of preparing learners for their roles as active and productive citizens in the society.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis is presented in five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the whole thesis. This is followed by a chapter that presents a review of related literature and discusses the theoretical framework for the study. The third chapter outlines the methodology of the study and its justification. Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the research. Finally, in the fifth chapter the researcher draws conclusions and provides recommendations for the study.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explained the motivation for the study and the background to the study. The background has highlighted the importance of SES in the primary school curriculum. The chapter has also outlined challenges that currently affect the education system. This has been followed by the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The introductory chapter has also stated the research questions which guided the study. Besides, there is also a section that outlined the structure of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a review of both international and local literature on the teaching of Social Studies as a subject. The aim is to locate this study on the teaching of SES in primary schools in Malawi within that general body of literature that can help to give a better understanding of the study. It is the gap in this literature on the teaching of SES from the context of Malawi that has helped to shape the position of this study. There are six sections in this chapter that discuss different aspects related to the teaching of SES. The first section is about the conceptualisation of Social Studies. In this section, the researcher discusses the definition of Social Studies as a school subject. The section that follows discusses the purpose for teaching Social Studies as reflected in literature. The third section focuses on the approaches for teaching Social Studies. This is followed by a discussion of the challenges that are faced in the teaching of Social Studies. The section that follows discusses the background of SES in the primary school curriculum in Malawi. The last section describes and justifies the theoretical frame work that has been used to discuss and interpret the findings of the study.

2.1 Conceptualization of Social Studies

Social Studies is one of the subjects that has caused a lot of controversy amongst scholars in terms of its definition as well as its content. Scholars differ on whether Social Studies should be viewed as one subject; or as an integrated subject; or as a subject offered as separate entities—subjects taught as stand-alone entities. The question, “is Social Studies a single, integrated field or a series of related disciplines” (Zevin, 1992) has been not yet been resolved. Different scholars have come up with different definitions for the same term. Some scholars define Social Studies as a program of study which a society uses to instil in learners the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions it considers important concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their world and themselves (Kissock, 1981). Parker and Jarolimek (1997, p. 10) report that the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) define Social Studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1992. p. 16) agreed on the following comprehensive definition:

The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence, within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and the natural sciences.

The NCSS definition states the topics covered in Social Studies and clarifies the purposes of Social Studies teaching and learning (Zarrillo, 2008). This definition indicates that Social Studies is an integrated discipline that draws its content from various other disciplines.

Social Studies can be viewed as the study of people in their physical and social environments, and it facilitates what is learnt in school to the out-of-school lives of learners (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011).

However, other scholars define Social Studies as an integration of experience and knowledge concerning human relations for the purpose of citizenship education (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977). Therefore, this definition stresses the importance of applying content that is learned in Social Studies at school to learners' every day context in the real world.

2.2 The Purpose of Social Studies: A Global Perspective

Despite the many different definitions of Social Studies that exist in literature, the primary purpose of the subject is one. The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (NCSS, 1992; Parker & Jarolimek, 1997; Martorella & Beal, 2002). An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a fundamental purpose of the Social Studies (NCSS, 1992; NCSS, 1994). Therefore, the primary goal of Social Studies is citizenship or civic education (Akhan & Altikulac, 2014; Martorella and Beal, 2002; Parker & Jarolimek, 1997).

Social Studies educators largely agree that citizenship education should be the major focus of the Social Studies curriculum (Martorella & Beal, 2002; Parker, 2001). Effective citizenship means having necessary knowledge, values and skills required by citizenship of individuals through Social Studies (NCSS, 1994; Akhan & Altikulac, 2014). Effective citizenship is achieved through citizenship education which is a set of qualities that need to be nurtured through an educational program (Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011). Therefore, teachers of Social Studies are expected to use teaching approaches that promote learning for action taking. According to Longstreet (1985), citizenship ought to be the core of the school curriculum in order to have informed and active participatory citizens in the society. Learning for action promotes citizenship education in young people.

Citizenship education is vital for the preparation of young people to become active and responsible members in the society. Parker and Jarolimek (1997, p. 10) conquer that the aim of Social Studies is the promotion of civic competence—the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life. Therefore, Mehlinger (1981, p. 36) indicates that:

A good Social Studies curriculum is one which helps young individuals to develop into fully human adults by relating them to their society by means of appropriate knowledge and experience selected from the social sciences and other disciplines.

Citizenship education is a tool for citizens to improve human condition in the society. Therefore, Social Studies curriculum should help learners put content into context in which the content is going to be used in real life situations. This can help learners to effectively participate in social and environmental issues.

2.3 Pedagogy of Social Studies: A Global Perspective

Teachers of Social Studies can effectively prepare learners for their roles in the society if they teach beyond knowledge acquisition level. Children should learn SES in class and also get actively engaged in some activities within the school and in their societies. Therefore, the teaching of Social Studies should focus on engagement of learners in actions, skills and value-building for continued civic participation (Finley, 2011; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). This is achieved through the use of participatory teaching methods that provide learners with skills, positive values and attitudes needed to actively participate in and positively influence civic life (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003; Boyte, 2008; Smith, 2010; Finley, 2011; Thomas, 2011).

Children can learn beyond knowledge acquisition level if teachers engage them in community activities such as food drives during floods, construction of bridges and others--not just through LCE approaches in the classroom. Effective teaching of Social Studies can be achieved if learners are involved in taking practical action to remove negative effects of social and environmental issues. Such approaches help learners to understand that development can come in a society if they are actively involved. The solution to social and environmental issues that currently affect societies in Malawi cannot be solved by just 'integrating' children into the structure of the oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves (Freire, 2007). Social Studies can give a chance to learners to get involved in social services and be part of solution to social and environmental problems besides learning in class (Brent, 1978; Akhan & Altikulac, 2014).

A good citizen is the one who fulfils responsibilities and duties of his or her country (Akhan & Altikulac, 2014). Therefore, Social Studies should help learners to develop a desire for continued civic participation.

2.3.1 Teaching of Social Studies Through Learner-Centred Methods

Effective teaching of Social Studies is achieved when teachers actively engage learners in lesson activities through learner-centered methods (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Finley, 2011). Teachers of Social Studies are expected to use learner-centered methods that engage learners in minds-on and hands-on experiences (MoEST, 2010). Learners develop various skills as they actively get engaged in lesson activities in Social Studies. Susuwele-Banda (2005) argues that a teacher who cannot engage learners in activities assumes that their job is to put knowledge in a child's head. However, knowledge cannot be placed inside learners' heads; rather learners construct their own knowledge by selectively using experiences around them (Althouse, 1994; Berns & Erickson, 2001; Cathcart, Pithier, Vance & Bezuk, 2001; Von Glaserfeld, 1995). Teachers of Social Studies should consider learners as intellectual beings who should take an active role in their own learning (Greene, 1996; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996). Children effectively learn Social Studies if they are actively engaged in lesson activities (Carderhead & Shorrock, 1997). The use of learner-centered approaches in teaching Social Studies promote self-directed learning in learners.

Some educators observe that Social Studies stands out as one the appropriate subjects in primary school curriculum for the preparation of competent citizenry in the society because of multidisciplinary nature of its content, and a wide range of pedagogical teaching and learning methods (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Thornton, 2005; Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Mhango, 2008). Teachers of Social Studies help children develop democratic mindset when learner-centered methods are used. For instance, MIE (2008, p. 35) indicate that group discussion, which is a method where teachers and learners are involved in a discussion, provides training in democratic process.

Using learner-centered methods in teaching Social Studies help children develop knowledge, skills and values that they will need to understand modern life and participate effectively as prosocial group and responsible citizens (Brophy & Alleman, 1991). For instance, group discussion method promotes citizenship education because it encourages sharing knowledge, values as well as mutual participation in the group decisions (Chigeda, 2016). Group discussion method therefore hones learners' listening skills, the ability to appreciate another person's view even if one does not agree with them. Group discussion method also promotes an appreciation of turn-taking in conversations and debates among learners (MIE, 2008). The ultimate result of group discussions is tolerance, an indispensable character trait in a liberal democratic dispensation, the sort that Malawi is struggling to develop and nurture. Therefore, children develop citizenship skills when learner-centered methods are used in the teaching of Social Studies.

2.3.2 Teaching of Social Studies beyond Knowledge Level

Teachers of Social Studies in primary schools have a duty to develop skills, positive values and attitudes in learners besides making learners gain knowledge. Social Studies is the subject in the school curriculum that can equip the learners with all the knowledge, skills and attitudes to live democratically (Dube, 2009; Murat, 2014). Effective teaching of Social Studies makes learners to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that help them to effectively deal with social and environmental issues in the society (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Garcia & Michaelis, 2011; Abu-Hamdan & Khader, 2014).

The primary school curriculum has a major purpose of promotion of civic competence- which is the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of learners to be able to assume their roles in the society (NCSS, 1992; NCSS, 1994; Martorella & Beal, 2002). Teaching of Social Studies should not only prioritise knowledge acquisition in learners, but also social, ethical, and emotional competencies. Ethical and social emotional competences provide an essential foundation for learners to love and actively participate in social and environmental issues. Teachers of Social Studies should provide opportunities for development of positive attitudes through various kinds of group discussions, such as pair work, conversation circles, panel discussions, and cooperative learning which are important in a democratic society (Barton & Levstik, 2011; Awan, 2014).

2.4 Challenges Faced in the Teaching of Social Studies

One of the challenges being faced by the teaching of Social Studies is lack of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) for teaching the subject effectively among some teachers. Shulman (1991, p. 9) defines content knowledge as the amount and organisation of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher. Therefore, content knowledge translates how much information about the subject matter the teacher has. Teachers of Social Studies teach the subject effectively if they have knowledge of the subject matter at their fingertips.

Furthermore, teachers of Social Studies can effectively teach for knowledge and development of skills, positive values and attitudes in learners if they have competence in PCK. These competences include content competence; competence in transmitting the content to the learners and competence in the use of a variety of instructional strategies, and competence in evaluating instruction (Odekunle, 2015). Shulman (1991, p. 9) argues that PCK is the knowledge that goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching. Therefore, the teaching of Social Studies, to some extent, depends on the competence of the teacher. Chibwana (1999) argues that the teaching of Social Studies is largely affected by the ‘teacher factor’ which includes teacher experience, academic and professional qualification and their relationship to teacher effectiveness. Among other factors, the teaching of Social Studies is affected by teachers’ lack of content knowledge, failure to effectively use some teaching methods, teaching and learning resources (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985; Shaver, 1987; Odekunle, 2015; Dube, 2009).

Although there are many factors that can negatively affect the teaching of Social Studies, the teacher variable, remains critical and, as the teacher is, in effect, the key to learners' attitude and to what Social Studies will be for the student (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985). Therefore, proper teacher education and teachers' professional development are vital for teachers of Social Studies. Teachers with good pedagogical content knowledge can be very effective as they know their subject; they are able to teach it, manage the learning environment, and assess and record their students' progress (Grawley & Stephens, 1994; Jotia & Matlale, 2011).

Effective teaching of Social Studies among other factors, calls for a competent teacher to teach not only for knowledge acquisition but also development of skills, positive values and attitudes in learners. Therefore, teaching of Social Studies should be in the context of learners' real life experiences. Some teachers fail to effectively use teaching methods and resources in Social Studies either due to poor teacher education or lack of professional development. Initial training courses are important in equipping teachers with the necessary competence and skills for teaching social and environmental issues (Yeager & Wilson, 1997; Passe, 2006; Robbins, Francis & Elliot, 2003). Besides, teachers require professional development in order to effectively teach Social Studies. Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft (2009, p. 135) state that, "well organised and regular CPDs can have a significant impact on teaching and learning because it is tailored to the needs of both teachers and schools." Teachers need to have appropriate knowledge and skills in teaching Social Studies in order to develop skills, positive values and attitudes in learners necessary for their roles in the society.

Furthermore, teaching of Social Studies faces a challenge of lack of and/or inadequate teaching and learning resources (Mautle, 2000; Mhango, 2008; Mhlauli, 2010; Mhlauli, 2014; Murat, 2014). Teachers face difficulties to bring reality in Social Studies lessons when there are no teaching and learning resources. Therefore, teaching becomes abstract to learners. It is argued that primary school teachers of Social Studies continue to struggle with the challenges of providing teaching and learning resources (Survey, 1981; Jarolimek, 1982; Jotia & Matlale, 2011). This challenge is very common in most developing countries in the world (UNESCO, 2000). For instance, it is noted that primary schools in Botswana face serious challenges of inadequate teaching and learning resources (Mhlauli, 2014). Malawi, being amongst developing countries, also faces various challenges related to resources which affect the effective teaching of Social Studies (Chimombo, 2005; EMAS, 2005; Nsapato, 2005; Mhango, 2008).

Inadequate teaching and learning resources forces teachers to largely use teacher-centered methods such as lecturing and explanation methods most of their classroom time (Chapin & Messick, 2002; Hooghoff, 1993). Lack of and/or inadequate teaching and learning resources make teachers fail to relate content in Social Studies to real life situations. Therefore, teachers of Social Studies fail to teach learners beyond knowledge level.

In addition, teachers of Social Studies face a challenge of teaching according to the demands of mandated written national examinations. Some states in the world regard mandated examinations with high esteem although there is no comprehensive research evidence that these promote effective teaching and learning of Social Studies (Grant, 2003).

Some scholars argue that mandated written examinations influence teachers to use teaching methods that make learners to acquire knowledge in order to pass during examinations (Grant, 2003; Myers & Savage, 2005; Mhango, 2008). Mandated written examinations make teachers largely rely on textbooks to make learners acquire knowledge to be memorized and regurgitated during tests (Griffith, 1999; Kornblith & Lasser, 2004; Myers & Savage, 2005). This contradicts the effective teaching of Social Studies which actively engages learners not only to gain knowledge but also develop skills, positive values and attitudes for informed and participatory citizenry.

Another challenge that faces the teaching of Social Studies is using a language that is not in learners' context as a medium of instruction. For instance, some scholars indicate that the use of English as a medium of classroom instruction in Malawi reduces learners' participation during lessons (Kaphesi, 2001; Mkandawire, 2004; Mhango, 2008). The studies that were done in Malawi found that learners' participation greatly increased when teachers used local language in teaching (Kaphesi, 2001; Mhango, 2008). On the other hand, learners' participation decreased when teachers used English language in teaching (Mkandawire, 2004). Children effectively learn Social Studies if the language used for instruction is in their context.

Furthermore, the teaching of Social Studies faces a challenge of teaching large classes (Murat, 2014; Adeyemi, 2015; Mhango, 2008). In the Malawian context, a large or crowded class is where there are more learners in one class than the guidelines stipulated in the Policy and Investment Framework (IFP) which indicates that the teacher/pupil ratio should be 1:60 (Beni, 2009; MoEST, 2008).

Although the teacher/pupil ratio of 1:60 is the official policy in Malawi, a class of 60 is still too large for one teacher. A teachers can not actively engage learners through individual assistance in such a large class. Therefore, more often than not, because of large class size, it is difficult for teachers to effectively teach social and environmental issues in learners' context through teacher-learner interaction (Adeyemi, 2015, pp. 23 and 24). Many teachers prefer to use lecture and demonstration methods rather than discussion method—neither small group discussion nor whole class discussion when there are too many learners in a class (Beni, 2009). Thus, large classes compromise the use of teaching methods that promote active participation for acquisition of knowledge and development of skills, positive values and attitudes in learners.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework informing this study is based on the theory of contextual teaching and learning theory (Berns & Erickson, 2001). This theory explains that learners learn well by connecting the content of the lessons to their real life or contextual experiences. Berns and Erickson (2001) argue that contextual teaching and learning (CTL) helps learners connect the content they are learning to the life contexts in which that content can be used.

Furthermore, Hudson and Whisler (2008, p. 4) define CTL as:

A conception of teaching and learning that helps teachers relate subject matter content to real world situations; and motivates students to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers; and engage in the hard work that learning requires.

Contextual teaching and learning theory was chosen because of its strong potential to describe and explain the teaching of SES in primary schools. It was employed in this study to understand how teachers assist learners to put into practice and context what they learn in class through real life situations. The theory is applicable to the teaching of SES because this learning area seeks to prepare learners for active citizenship in the society. SES also aims at contributing to the development of the learners' full potential as social beings so that they act responsibly on the environment for its sustainable use (MIE, 2008). It can be argued that to achieve this, there is a need for teaching and learning approaches that make learners appreciate the value of the content they learn with reference to their context.

Learners' interests and achievements improve intensely when they are helped to make connections between new knowledge and experiences they have had (Shea & Morgan, 1979) within their context. Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 6) further explain that this theory has the following characteristics or principles:

Connecting content to learners' experiences; engaging students in active learning; enabling students to have some opportunities to direct their own learning; encouraging the construction of personal meanings from individual experiences; assessing the attainment of outcomes within an authentic situation and allowing for the interpretation; and identifying contexts that are appropriate developmentally to the learner.

These principles have been used in this study to describe and explain how the teaching of SES in primary schools is being conducted. Therefore, the subsequent paragraphs describe these principles of CTL theory.

One of the principles of CTL theory explains that children learn by connecting content to their experience (Berns and Erickson, 2001; Davtyan, 2014). According to Davtyan (2014) learning occurs when learners process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense in their frame of reference. In CTL the teacher acts as a facilitator who helps children to achieve learning goals. Smith (2010, p. 24) indicates that in CTL, there is less direct instruction on the part of the teacher, yet learners are provided with a clear set of learning objectives. Therefore, learners must be made aware of how the work they are doing relies on the skills they already have (Berns and Erickson, 2001; Hudson & Whistler, 2008). Children learn by reflecting on their previous experience and connect it with the content that they learn.

Hudson and Whistler (2008, p. 55) indicate that as children strive to attain learning goals, they draw upon their previous experiences and build upon existing knowledge. Through reflection on their learning experiences, children use their cognitive structures that eventually become part of the knowledge learnt. Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 3) call this '*self-regulated*' learning. Through self-regulated learning, teachers create an environment in which students reflect on how they learn, how they approach school work, how they could deal with obstacles, and work in harmony (Berns and Erickson, 2001). For instance, children learn by using the skills they already have such as reading, writing, logic and others.

Secondly, CTL theory explains that learning takes place when children are engaged in active learning. Chickering and Gamson (1999, p. 5) indicate that to be active, children must be doing more than listening. In this case, children learn about and practice new concepts (Hudson and Whisler, 2008). For instance, CTL takes place when the teacher makes learners actively get involved in different lesson activities whether individually or in groups. According to Hudson and Whisler (2008, p. 55) active learning is also called 'incidental learning' which helps children to learn from mistakes, learn by doing, learn through networking, and learn from a series of interpersonal experiences.

Another principle of CTL is enabling learners to have some opportunities to direct their own learning through inquiry-based learning. Learners process and manage new information to become their own understanding and save it (Davtyan, 2014). In CTL, learners are not 'spoon fed' with the content by the teacher (Berns & Erickson, 2001). Instead, the teacher uses teaching approaches that help learners to discover new knowledge on their own by asking questions. According to Llewellyn (2001, p. 29) inquiry is an approach to teaching that involves a process of exploring the natural or material world that leads to asking questions and making discoveries in the search of new understandings.

According to Smith (2010, p. 29), the inquiry process begins by the learner noticing something that intrigues, surprises, or stimulates a question. Children become critical thinkers rather than just listening from the teacher. According to Smith (2010, p. 24), the learner in contextual teaching and learning classroom plays active role in his or her own learning.

Learners become problem solvers and in this way they incorporate problem-solving skills throughout the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the teacher's role in a contextual teaching and learning classroom is to teach learners to monitor and direct their own learning so that they become self-directed learners (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Chiarelott, 2006; Hudson & Whistler, 2008). Teachers should help children to seek meaning in context by searching for relationships that make sense and appear useful to them.

In addition, another principle of CTL theory is encouraging the construction of personal meanings from individual experiences. Davtyan (2014) states that CTL helps in constructing new knowledge in students' cognitive structure based on experience and previous knowledge they have. According to Hudson and Whisler (2008, p. 55) this concept of constructing knowledge is different from the view of learning as knowledge acquisition, where the learner passively absorbs information presented by the expert. In CTL, it entails that a learner possesses and uses a variety of cognitive processes during the teaching and learning process. According to Mayer (1999, p. 4) the major cognitive processes include paying attention to relevant information, organizing that information into coherent representations, and integrating the representations with existing knowledge. In contextual teaching and learning, learners make observations of what they are learning and they are able to interpret their observations.

Another principle of CTL theory is assessing attainment of outcomes in authentic situation and allowing for multiple meanings from a single experience (Berns & Erickson, 2001). Therefore, authentic assessment is used in CTL.

According to Cleverian (2008) authentic assessment is a process of collecting data which gives information about the student's learning development. In authentic assessment, teachers observe the learners as they perform the assigned activities. Authentic assessment is the process where the teachers gather information about the students learning progress (Davtyan, 2014). This assessment helps teachers to determine whether students are actually learning or not. The teacher assesses whether the learner's knowledge has positive impact to both intellectual and mental development in their lives.

According to Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 4) authentic assessment evaluates students' application of knowledge and complex thinking, rather than rote recall of factual information. Learners will be able to perform positively in tasks that have a bearing in their lives. Cleverian (2008) indicates that authentic assessment involves real world experience, allows access to information, engages the student by relevance, uses open-ended format, includes self-assessment and reflection and warrants effort and practice. The teacher assesses learners by observing them as they perform the assigned activities.

Smith (2010) suggests that to assess students' progress in CTL classroom, teachers may need to use alternative methods of assessment. Smith (2010) argues that teachers sometimes use assessment *of* learning in which case they focus on products of learning and demonstration of understanding. However, contextual teaching and learning calls for assessment *for* learning which promotes further learning in learners. Berns and Erickson (2001) call this authentic assessment. Authentic assessment evaluates a learner's application of knowledge rather than rote recall of factual information (Berns and Erickson, 2001).

Another principle of CTL theory is identifying contexts that are appropriate developmentally to the learner. According to Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 4), it is argued that when using CTL approaches, the ways particular learners in the class learn best need to be considered. In this case, teachers use the CTL approaches that help to meet each learner's distinct needs (Hudson & Whisler, 2008). Therefore, diversity of learners in a class has to be taken into consideration (Berns and Errickson, 2001).

All in all, CTL theory provides the sort of active participatory and interactive learning expected in SES classroom that aims at preparing learners to become informed and active participatory citizenry in the society. This theory assisted in this study to understand how teachers teach SES in primary schools in Malawi. Zevin (2000) indicates that there is a link between theory and practice. The use of principles of CTL has the potential of enabling learners to practise what they learn in class regarding social and environmental issues. As such the teaching of SES needs to engage learners in practicing what they have learned in theory in order to achieve the goal of Social Studies beyond knowledge level.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed literature related to the teaching of SES in primary schools in Malawi. It has highlighted the conception of Social Studies, the purpose of Social Studies and pedagogy of Social Studies from a global perspective. The teaching of Social Studies through participatory approaches has also been discussed as well as the teaching of Social Studies beyond knowledge acquisition level. In addition, challenges that face the teaching of Social Studies have been highlighted. Lastly, a theoretical framework based on the theory of contextual teaching and learning has been described.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology employed in this study on the teaching of SES in primary schools in Malawi. The chapter begins with a discussion of the design of the research. This is followed by a discussion of the setting and population of interest, sample and sampling procedures that were used, the data generation methods, data analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations that were made. The last section discusses the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 28) define a research design as a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and method of collecting empirical material. It locates researchers in the practical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups or whatever materials for interpretations of the study are available. In this study, data was generated and analysed using a qualitative research approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2004, p. 3) define qualitative research as the study of things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The findings in this study were arrived at by means of different methods which are not of statistical in nature or other means of quantification. In this study, I used measures and techniques that produced non-statistical data. This data was generated in the form of words and other non-numerical records.

In this study, multiple-case study design was used because I wanted to have an in-depth understanding of how teachers in primary schools in Malawi teach SES. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the borders between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Buchanan, Boddy & McCalman, 1988; Yin, 1984). This was done using three teachers from one school as the cases of the study. Briggs and Coleman (2007) agree that case study research entails being where the action is, taking testimony from and observing the actors first hand.

A case study was used because the researcher wanted to explore the teaching of SES in its natural context. Malim and Birch (1997, p. 38) indicate that case study is essentially idiographic in that it involves making a detailed study of single individuals or instances of something, a family, for example. In this vein, a case study can be defined as a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Bromley, 1990; Nieuwenhuis, 2009). It was necessary for the researcher to use a multiple-case study methodology so as to explore how teachers use contextual teaching and learning approaches in the teaching of SES in primary schools in Malawi.

The methods of generating data in this case study also provided opportunities for observing the conduct of the participants. Malim and Birch (1997, p. 39) indicate that when case study is used, there is greater chance that insights might be gained into the nature of behaviour, which might well be missed in other methods of study.

This kind of data was useful for describing, creating understanding for subjective interpretation, as well as for critically analysing the subjects under study (Ngure, Begi, Kimani, & Mweru, 2014). This was achieved through the use of multiple sources of evidence for the findings of the study.

3.2 Sampling Procedure

According to Nieuwenhuis (2009), sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of population under study. For the purpose of this study, I used purposive sampling. Symon and Cassell (2012, p. 41) define purposive sampling as a technique where participants are chosen on the basis of judgement of the researcher. The choice of the participants was solely based on my own judgment according to the criteria that I had. Miller (1983), concurs that in purposive sampling a researcher uses his or her own judgement to look at a sub-group that is typical of the population as a whole. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006, p.113), purposive sampling is the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population. The sample was thought to have similar characteristics to other cases; therefore, it helped to provide relevant data. Merriam (1988, p. 48) concurs that purposive sampling involves the selection of a sample from which one can learn the most to gain understanding and insight.

In this study, three teachers of a rural primary school were used to represent other teachers in primary schools in rural setting in Malawi. The school is in the rural area, it has a mixture of male and female teachers, and it has high class enrolments just like most primary schools in Malawi. McMillan (2006) indicates that researchers select a particular element from the population that is informative about the topic.

Although the sample came from one school, I was able to generate data that maximised what I wanted to explore in this study. Symon and Cassell (2012, p. 41) indicate that purposive techniques require our judgement in choosing cases that will best enable us to answer our research question and meet our aim. Therefore, a relatively small number of participants was chosen for the study.

In this study, I wanted to generate data on the teaching of SES from qualified primary school teachers. Silverman (2006) indicates that purposive sampling enables researchers to choose a case because it possesses features that they are interested in. Therefore, the primary school that I used in this study, situated 10Km from my home, was deliberately chosen because it is the nearest primary school to where I was living that had only qualified teachers. In qualitative research, it is acceptable for the researcher to choose the sample from where they have easy access (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2007). This primary school was considered for this study because it was envisaged that its close proximity would reduce transport expenses.

In addition, this school was considered for this study because the common language that is used for communication in the area in which the school is situated is Chitumbuka of which the researcher is conversant. Cohen, Manion & Marrison (2007) argue that the ability of the researcher to understand what participants mean when they say certain terms increases chances of recording valid data. The choice of the school to be used in this study was made with this assertion in mind.

The sample of interest consisted of teachers, learners and the head teacher from one primary school. The sample comprised of one standard 3 teacher, one standard 5 teacher and one standard 7 teacher. All these teachers are those that teach SES in their respective classes at the primary school where I generated the data. Besides this, all these are qualified teachers.

In addition, the sample consisted of six learners from standard 3 (3 boys and 3 girls), six learners from standard 5 (3 boys and 3 girls) and six learners from standard 7 (3 boys and 3 girls). McMillan (2006) argues that researchers select a particular element from the population that is informative about the topic. These learners were chosen by their respective teachers basing on merit. The researcher asked the teachers to choose fast learners so that they should ably contribute during focus group discussions.

Furthermore, the sample in this study consisted of the head teacher. The head teacher was chosen because of his supervisory role by nature of his position. The head teacher helped to give rich data on the approaches that respective teachers use in teaching SES at the school. He was able to give data basing on his previous supervisions on the teaching of SES in standards 3, 5 and 7. This data assisted me to countercheck with the data that I generated through lesson observations and interviews with teachers.

The three classes involved in this study were also purposefully chosen. Standard 3 class was chosen because it is where SES is introduced in the primary school curriculum in Malawi. Besides this, standard 3 class was chosen because SES is taught in the local language that is used in the area according to the government policy on education.

In this multiple-case study, I was also interested in exploring the teaching of SES in Chitumbuka while the teacher prepares schemes of work and lesson plans in English. Standard 5 was chosen to be used in this study because the researcher was interested in exploring the teaching of SES in the advent of the government policy concerning the use of English as a medium of instruction. English in primary schools in Malawi is introduced in standard 5 as a medium of instruction for all subjects except Chichewa. Standard 5 was also chosen because it is the lowest class in the senior primary school section. It is a transitional class from junior to senior primary school section. On the other hand, standard 7 class was chosen because it is the most senior class--apart from standard 8--in public primary schools in Malawi. Besides this, standard 7 is a preparatory class for standard 8 where learners write Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations.

3.3 Description of the Site of the Study

In this study, the site for data generation was a primary school in the rural setting of Karonga District. The school for the sake of this study is known as Yunkhwa Primary School. The education zone in which the school is located has been given a pseudonym as Popopo Zone. Yunkhwa Primary School is situated about 0.5 Km along the Karonga to Mzuzu M1 road. The school is under the Local Education Authority (LEA). A school under the LEA in Malawi gets support such as infrastructure, teaching and learning materials as well as deployment of teachers from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The school has eight classes (standard 1 through standard 8). It has an enrolment of 896 learners of which 509 are boys and 387 are girls. There is a single shift at this school. Yunkhwa Primary School has five building blocks.

One building block has two rooms of which one is the head teacher's office and the other one is a staff room. The other four are classroom blocks and each has two classrooms. Most of the classrooms do not have adequate desks for learners except standard 8 which has desks for all learners. There are nine teachers at this school of which six are males and three are females. The school has one head teacher and one deputy head teacher. Both school administrators are males. All of the teachers at this school are qualified primary school teachers who got their teacher education from different public teacher training colleges (TTC) in Malawi. These teachers have varied teaching experiences that range from five years to twenty five years. All the teachers reside in institutional houses.

3.4 Description of the Participants

This section gives a brief description of the participants in this study. The participants were the head teacher, three teachers and eighteen learners. The participants have been concealed as; head teacher (Mr Mkhondo), and standard 3 (Teacher 1), standard 5 teacher (Teacher 2), and standard 7 teacher (Teacher 3). Learners have been concealed by using codes. For instance, C3-L1 for learner 1 in standard 3.

3.4.1 The Head Teacher

Mr Mkhondo was a qualified primary school teacher by profession. He was forty eight years old. He had twenty one years of teaching experience. He had been in the headship position for nine years. He taught in six different school before coming to Yunkhwa Primary School. He had been attending different Continuous Professional Development (CPD) workshops at Zonal Level.

For instance, he cited a workshop which was organised to train primary school teachers on the use of Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods. Mr Mkhondo graduated as a primary school teacher from Kasungu Teachers' Training College with a T3 teaching certificate. T3 was a certificate which holders of Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) obtained after successfully completing a teacher education course before IPTE programme was introduced in Malawi. He then upgraded to T2 grade after passing his Malawi Schools Certificate of Education (MSCE). The head teacher had a very long experience in the teaching profession. According to Margolis and Nagel (2006), educators with long teaching experience find education reforms to be in conflict with their long held education reforms. However, the experience that Mr. Mkhondo had was vital because it helped him to provide relevant and meaningful data to this study.

3.4.2 The Teachers

The three teachers involved in this study were two males and one female. They were involved in this study by virtue of being teachers in the classes that were purposively selected. These were teachers of SES in standards 3, 5 and 7. Therefore, these teachers are the cases in this study.

3.4.3 The Learners

These were boys and girls from standards 3, 5 and 7. These learners were those who were fast learners in their respective classes. Their ages ranged from ten to fifteen.

3.5 Characteristics of the Case Studies

The case studies in this study were two male and one female teachers of SES in standards 3, 5 and 7, respectively. This section gives a brief description of their characteristics.

3.5.1 Case Study 1: Teacher 1

Teacher 1 was a qualified male teacher who was teaching SES in standard 3 at the time of this study. He holds a Malawi Schools Certificate of Education. He is thirty four years old. This teacher has eight years of teaching experience behind him. He was the only teacher involved in this study who was trained through the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) programme. He indicated that at TTC he was learning using participatory methods. This was his second school as a teacher after graduating from Karonga T.T.C. Standard 3 class had an enrolment of 109 learners of which 61 were boys and 48 were girls at the time of this study. Out of the 109 learners, 87 were Nkhonde by tribe while the rest were a mixture of Tumbuka and Ndali. However, the school is located in an area where Chitumbuka is the dominant language used for communication. However, the teacher uses Chitumbuka as a medium of instruction in class for all subjects except Chichewa.

3.5.2 Case Study 2: Teacher 2

Teacher 2 was a forty two year old qualified male teacher holding an MSCE. He was teaching in standard 5 at the time of this study. He has been teaching for eleven years. Teacher 2 acknowledged to have attended different continuous professional development workshops and seminars.

For instance, he mentioned to have attended workshops and seminars on Learner Centred Education (LCE) methods, Gender Responsive Pedagogies (GRP), and School Health and Nutrition (SHN). At the time of this study, standard 5 class had an enrolment of 98 learners of which 56 were boys and 42 were girls. Out of the 98 learners, 58 were Nkhonde by tribe while the rest were a mixture of Chewa, Tumbuka and Ndali. Chitumbuka is the common language that is used for communication in this class. However, Social and Environmental Sciences is taught in English in this class.

3.5.3 Case Study 3: Teacher 3

Teacher 3 was a qualified primary school teacher aged thirty six. She was teaching in standard 7 at the time of the study. She was a holder of Malawi Schools Certificate of Education. She was studying for a Bachelors' Degree in Guidance and Counselling. She was the only female teacher who participated in this study. She has thirteen years of experience in teaching. She has taught at three different schools since she graduated from TTC. Standard 7 class had an enrolment of 87 learners of which 52 were boys and 35 were girls during the time of this study. Out of the 87 learners, 54 were Nkhonde by tribe while the rest were a mixture of Chewa, Tumbuka and Ndali. Chitumbuka is the common language that is used for communication in this class. However, SES is taught in English.

3.6 Data Generation Methods and Instruments

In this study, data were generated using lesson observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Therefore, lesson observation guide, interview guide and focus group discussion guide were the instruments that I used to generate data in this study.

Lesson observations were the main method through which data were generated. Observational techniques are methods by which an individual or individuals gather first hand data on programs, processes, or behaviours being studied (Sidhu, 2009). Observations were formulated to answer the main research question: How do teachers in primary schools in Malawi teach Social and Environmental Sciences? It is through lesson observations again that sub-questions of this study were answered.

Observation method was used in this study because I wanted to deal with the total situation in which my participants found themselves, rather than with small elements of that situation taken in isolation (Malim & Birch, 1997). In this study, I was a complete observer because I was looking at the situation from a distance as a viewer in the outsider perspective (Nieuwenhuis, 2009). I used my sense of sight and intuition to gather bits of data that happened during lessons.

Lesson observations helped me to notice different things happening in class during lessons. Best and Kahn (2003, p. 254) agree that when observation is used in qualitative research, it usually consists of detailed notion of behaviours, events and contexts surrounding the events and behaviours. Although a great deal of data can be collected through other research methods, there are many messages that are worthy to note through observation as the teacher interacts with learners in the classroom. These communications can be in form of nonverbal which includes gestures, body language, posture, movement, eye contact and facial expression (Wragg, 1999). As a researcher, some of the gestures and body language observed during the interaction between the teachers and learners had meaning in the study.

Malim & Birch (1997, p. 34) argue that studies done through observation are advantageous because they tend to deal with the total situation in which the participants find themselves, rather than with small elements of that situation taken in isolation. Lesson observations helped me to notice actual events and processes of how SES is taught. I was able to observe the activities that teachers and learners were engaged in during lessons. I also observed the use of various teaching and learning methods and teachers' assessment of students' learning. Lesson observations also helped me to notice how teachers use teaching and learning resources in teaching SES. In addition, special attention was on observing how teachers make learning related to 'real world,' how teachers encourage students to become active participants in the improvement of the society, and how they appreciate learners' diverse life contexts and prior experiences. These are fundamental aspects to contextual teaching and learning.

I used a vignette strategy in carrying out this method of data generation. I was taking down notes on paper on every action done by the teacher and learners in class. I also tape recorded all the oral voices on my phone. The phone complemented what I manually captured on paper. Throughout lesson observations, I preferred sitting at the back of the classroom. I discovered that this was a good idea because it meant that my presence did not distract learners during lessons. This sitting arrangement helped me to observe various aspects during the lessons. For instance, I was able to observe the setting or physical environment, physical activities, non-verbal communications, social interactions, planned and unplanned activities and interactions (Best & Kahn, 2003). Lesson observations helped me to have an insight of the approaches that teachers use in teaching SES in primary schools.

In this study, I used lesson observation guide (see Appendix 4) to generate data on how the teacher interacted with learners and also how learners interacted among themselves. In each class, I took notes on how the teachers used the teaching methods, the teaching and learning resources, and how teachers engaged learners following the observation guide. Souders (1999) indicates that the teacher's role in class is to guide, discuss, question, listen, and clarify.

In addition, I used semi-structured interviews in generating data. An interview is a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the research participants questions in order to generate data (Nieuwenhuis, 2009). Interviews were used because I wanted to have an in-depth understanding of the approaches that teachers use when teaching SES in primary schools. Best and Kahn (2003, p. 255), indicate that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in or on someone else's mind. Nieuwenhuis (2009, p. 87) states that the aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participant, and they can be a valuable sources of information, provided they are used correctly.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe my participants in order to get further explanations on what I was interested in. In social sciences, interviews have long been a central technique of knowing, and [Social and Environmental Sciences] is no exception (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012, p. 239). I used semi-structured interviews with the head teacher and three teachers in order to solicit their insights on the teaching of SES in primary schools. These interviews helped me to uncover those areas which could not be noticed through observations. Therefore, these interviews were treated as secondary data.

In case of interviews with teachers, I used post-lesson interviews which needed me to build a rapport with them. In my observation, I noticed that teachers were not comfortable to be interviewed after lesson observations because they thought I was there to give feedback on their lesson. I made it clear to them that the interviews were not aimed at grading or giving feedback but only to solicit further data that I might have missed during lesson observations. I used semi-structured interview method to generate data from the participants.

As observed by Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, p. 239), scientific interviews are a mode apart and that they yield higher quality knowledge-systematic rather than haphazard, more objective than partial, comprehensive instead of selective, standardized and methodological as opposed to journalistic and sensational interviews. The study used in-person interviews in order to improve interpersonal contact with the respondents. Sidhu (2009, p. 50) argues that an in-person rather than a paper and pencil survey is selected when interpersonal contact is important and when opportunities for follow-up of interesting comments are desired.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. These interviews were used to encourage free and open responses from the participants. In-depth interviews also encouraged capturing participants' perceptions in their own words, a very desirable strategy in qualitative data collection (Sidhu, 2009). Above all, interviews are a hallmark of qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Besides, interviews were used because of their convenience. Through interviews, I was able to ask some important issues that I noticed during classroom observations. Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, p. 240) conquer that after all, interviewing tends to be more convenient, accessible and economical than other qualitative methods, such as participant observation. Above all, interviews were useful in this study because they provided me with detailed information on the approaches that are used in teaching SES in primary schools.

In this study, I used an interview guide to generate data from teachers (see Appendix 2). This interview guide allowed flexibility in interacting with teachers in generating relevant data required to answer the research questions. Frey and Fontana (1993) argue that in structured interviews, all respondents receive the same set of questions. All the three teachers (two males and one female) responded to the same questions as indicated in the interview guide. However, where necessary, follow-up questions were being asked. A separate interview guide (see Appendix 1) was used to generate information on how the head teacher supervises SES teachers who were involved in this study. Besides, the interview with the head teacher was aimed at unveiling the assistance that teachers of SES get from the school administration. The information generated using the interview guide helped the researcher in understanding how teachers in primary schools in Malawi teach SES.

The third method that I used to generate data was Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) method. FDGs are organised group discussions led by a moderator, who is a researcher (Salant and Dillman, 1994).

FGDs were conducted with learners rather than one to one interviews in order to make the learners feel comfortable in a natural setting. This method helped me to explore the learners' feelings and experiences on how they learn SES in more depth than could be explored using other methods of research. Symon and Cassell (2012, p. 260) indicate that FGDs can help to determine the mood or climate regarding a particular topic and can also help in providing ideas for future actions that can be taken. In this study, I used open-ended questions in order to get in-depth insights on the approaches that their teacher uses when teaching SES.

In this study, I used FGDs because my focus was to get learners' views on the approaches that teachers use when teaching SES in their respective classes. Kandola (2012, p. 260) agrees that the first step towards having focus group requires researchers to know why they are being used. FGDs were used to counter check with the data that I generated through lesson observations and interviews with teachers. FGDs were used in order to increase credibility and trustworthiness of the findings of the study. Morgan (1988) indicates that when combined with observations, focus groups are especially useful for gaining access and checking tentative conclusions. The researcher conducted one FGD with learners from each of the three classes. I explored more on the approaches that teachers use in teaching SES through the use of FGDS. Learners were free to express themselves because they were in a relaxed mood. In the FGDS, settings were more realistic way to generate data as it was easy to capture how peers think and talk about an issue than the isolated one-to-one interview. Learners were given a chance to express themselves freely. Sometimes learners fail to speak their minds because of the environment in which the research is conducted.

According to Kandola (2012, p. 260), running focus groups successfully requires much more than just facilitating sessions: there is a lot of planning, communication and persuasion involved. Furthermore, FGDs were used because I expected to have quick findings as I was generating data from more people at same time. I anticipated to have as many answers as possible from the learners at the same time. This method was suitable for me to explore more on the approaches of teaching SES in primary school. Kandola (2012, p. 260) indicates that focus groups work particularly well when researches are trying to explore people's feelings and experiences in more depth than can be obtained from a survey, for example. This method was appropriate because it provided for a lot of flexibility for follow up and modification of questions during the discussion process.

In this study, I used an FGD guide (see Appendix 3) when discussing with learners. Learners provided information on how they learn SES in their respective classes. I used semi-structured questions in order to unveil unanticipated issues as they emerged during the discussions. Although I used structured questions, a lot of flexibility was allowed for follow up and modifications of questions were made during discussion process. I used to probe to get more ideas on the questions. I had one focus group discussion with learners (three boys and three girls) in each of the three classes that were involved in this study.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

After generating data, I organised the data in an orderly manner according to different data sets as interview data set, FGD data set and observation data set. As Dey (2005) argues, the relative value of anything is measured by quality, based on the general characteristics or understanding of what one is assessing.

Enormous data that was generated through interviews, lesson observations and FGDs was organised in order to make meaning out of it. Nieuwenhuis (2009, p. 104) indicates that in order to keep a clear mind and not to become overwhelmed by the sheer amount of data, you need to approach your data analysis in a highly organised manner. This ensures that the activity is focused and prevents the researcher from being overwhelmed with voluminous data generated.

Data was organised into different sets such as interviews, lesson observations and focus group discussion data. Then I put the heaps of papers in folders in different data sets according to their categories such as interviews, FGDs, and lesson observations separate from each other. Each bit of data was marked clearly in terms of its identifying characteristics such as when and how the data was generated. The method of organising data largely followed a process of cutting and sorting (Nieuwenhuis, 2009). After that, the data was labelled according to their categories. Nieuwenhuis (2009, p.104) states that a careful method of labelling the material in the folders or files facilitates easy retrieval, checking back and examination of the broader context in which that data occurred. Each participant was then given an identifying number. After Organisation of the data, there was need to immediately analyse the data so as to interpret it into meaningful information. Walting and James (2007, p. 350) state that analysis is the researcher's equivalent of alchemy-the elusive process by which you hope you can turn your raw data into nuggets of gold. Therefore, data analysis involved the transformation of data in its raw form into meaningful information. Weiss (1998) argues that data analysis is done with an aim of converting a mass of raw data into coherent meaningful account.

The processes of analysing data was going back and forth. Data analysis in qualitative research is an on-going process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Nieuwenhuis (2009, p. 99) concurs that qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative...process in which data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting are intertwined and not merely a number of successive steps. Throughout this study I went through formal systems for the analysis of qualitative data in order to get the meaning of the data. This was done in recognition that analysis encompasses each and every aspect of qualitative inquiry--may even lead, in extreme cases, to the termination of an entire research project (Gummesson, 2000; Watling & James, 2007).

In this study, I used thematic data analysis method. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 6) state that thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Thematic data analysis was used because it was relatively easy and quick method to summarise the enormous data that was generated. According to Braun and Clark (2006, p. 36), thematic data analysis can usefully summarise key features for a large body of data, and/or offer a 'thick description' of data set.

Thematic analysis also interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). I used thematic analysis because I was interested in the common ideas which were found in the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). I used a theoretical or deductive thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) because I was interested in the aspects that were identified by the previous researchers in related studies. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 12) indicate that this form of thematic analysis tends to provide less a rich description of the data overall, and more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data.

In this case, I was interested in the way tolerance plays out across the data, and focus on that particular feature in coding the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that thematic analysis can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.

In this study, I followed six stages of analysing data as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). In each of these stages there was data reduction and interpretation in order to bring meaning and insight to the words and some acts of the participants. The first stage of analysing data was that I familiarised myself with content of data in terms of their meanings and patterns. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 35) indicate that familiarising with the data involves transcribing data (if necessary), reading and reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial codes.

The data from interviews (see Appendix 5), lesson observations and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim, typed and saved in a computer and flash disks. After wards, the data that was transcribed was read over and over again for me to be familiar with it. I immersed myself in the data in order to be familiar with the complexity and scope of the content. Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 16) state that immersion usually involves ‘repeated reading’ of the data, and reading the data in an active way--searching for meanings, patterns and so on. At this stage, the voice recordings on my phone were played over and over again while checking against the interview notes, observation notes and focus group discussion notes for accuracy. Besides, I took simple notes and marked some ideas which I deemed important for me to use in generating codes.

After familiarising myself with the data, I started identifying important and interesting features of the data. These important ideas were those that I deemed relevant to answer the research questions (Robson, 2011). At this juncture, I produced initial codes from the data. Coding was done by marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names (Nieuwenhuis, 2009; Punch, 2009). Each data item was given equal attention in this process.

In this study, I used what Nieuwenhuis (2009, p. 105) calls ‘open coding’ which enabled me to quickly retrieve and collect together all the data that was associated with some thematic idea so that the sorted bits could be examined together and different case compared in that respect. Codes were used to attach meaning to the pieces of data. Coding was also necessary in order to make the data rearranged in such a manner that I could easily retrieve it. Coding assisted me in breaking down the original data to conceptualise it and to rearrange it in new ways (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Having generated initial codes, I was able to pick out categories.

The process of generating categories involved assigning the data that shared similar characteristics into a broader category. Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit that broader categories have the power to explain and predict phenomenon. Categorising the data according to the aspect they were addressing helped in coming up with a pattern in which the data started to unfold. Through this process, I connected threads of the categories for the generation of broader meanings of what occurred in the three classrooms.

In this way, themes (see Appendix 6) emerged as I interpreted the broader meanings to draw lessons of how teachers use principles of contextual teaching and learning in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences.

However, it was necessary for me to come up with the themes that were essential in answering the research question: How do teachers in primary schools in Malawi use contextual teaching and learning in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences? Therefore, I compared and categorized the themes. Using this process, I came up with main themes and sub-themes. There were some themes which appeared to be irrelevant to my study; therefore, I discarded them. Silverman (2006, p.291) argues that looking at an object from more than one standpoint, it is possible to produce a more, true and certain representation of the object.

The next stage was that I was reviewing the themes. In this phase, I was interested in refining the main themes and sub-themes. According to Braun and Clark (2006, p. 20), during this phase, it will become evident that some candidate themes are not really themes..., while others might collapse into each other. I cross-checked the themes in order to see if they were really representing what was in the data that were generated through interviews, lesson observations and focus group discussions. I also re-read the entire data to ensure that the themes work in relation to the data set. In the end, some themes were combined while others were discarded. Afterwards, I began to define the themes and also I refined these themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 22), defining and refining the themes means identifying the essence of what each theme is about...and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures.

After analysing data, I produced this scholarly report. This stage involved selection of vivid, convincing examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research questions and literature, and finally, producing a scholarly report to the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In writing this report, I made it a point that the report makes an attempt to solve some intellectual problem and contribute to the solution of a problem and add to the body of knowledge of both myself as a researcher, and the reader (Kothari, 2004).

3.8 Credibility and Trustworthiness

The need to ensure that the study is credible and trustworthy was one of the central considerations throughout the period that the study will take. In qualitative research, the emergent reality is not a result of measuring as it is the case with quantitative research (Maree & van Der Westhuizen, 2009). Credibility and trustworthiness were done through following the recommended procedure of qualitative research. This was done in four levels, namely: the use of different methods of generating data, development of data generating instruments, generation of data, and analysis and interpretation of data.

The process of choosing methods to be used in generating data was done to ensure that the methods were effective in exploring the teaching of SES in primary schools. Nieuwenhuis (2009, p. 80) states that it is generally accepted that engaging multiple methods of data collection...lead to trustworthiness. I used in-depth interviews, FGDs and observations in the study so as to typically explore the approaches used in teaching SES.

In addition, credibility and trustworthiness were achieved through the development of data generating instruments. The in-depth interview guides and observation guides were validated by the supervisor, co-supervisor and some colleagues in the Social Studies programme. These instruments were piloted at a school which was purposefully selected in order to identify areas that needed modifications and corrections. This process ensured that the instruments used in the study gather the desired information.

During the process of generating data, credibility and trustworthiness were done by making sure that selected participants take part in the research. I made an effort not to coerce the participants but rather give them a chance to willingly participate in the study. According to Symon and Cassell (2012, p. 38), ethical considerations rightly emphasise that we should not use coercion to ensure that participants take part. Participants were informed of the right to withdraw at any stage of the study. I ensured that there is what Bryman (2008) calls *respondent validation* by sharing what my participants said using my interpretation in order to verify if it corresponds with their own meanings. This approach helped to ensure that I correctly captured the views of my participants.

Above all, credibility and trustworthiness were achieved by what other researchers call *triangulation* as a means of achieving validity and reliability. In this study, I used the views of Richardson (2000, p. 934) who proposes the concept of *crystallisation* that enabled to shift from viewing something as a fixed, rigid, two-dimensional object towards the idea of crystal, which allows for an infinite variety of shapes, substance, transmutations, dimensions and angles.

Crystallisation takes a constructivist perspective which holds that reality is changing whether the observer wishes it or not, and that there are multiple realities that people have in their minds (Nieuwenhuis, 2009, p.81). Therefore, the emergent credibility and trustworthiness through crystallisation was not as a result of some form of measuring. In this case, what I describe as findings are those which I crystalized from data. Crystallisation emerges from the various data gathering techniques and data analyses employed and represents our reinterpreted understanding of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2009, p. 81). In this study, interview guides, observation guides and FGD guides were used in a manner that they clearly crystallised data to give a true picture of the approaches that teachers use in teaching SES in primary schools.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research, it involved gathering data from people where ethical issues inevitably arise (Punch, 2009). These issues may lead to stress, harm or anxiety to the participants. Maree and van der Westhuizen (2009, p. 41) indicate that it is important to highlight the ethical considerations in regard to the research. I gave due attention to ethical considerations so that the study brings no harm, stress or anxiety to the participants (Robson, 2011).

One of the important aspects that was taken into consideration in this study was to gain access to the school where data were generated. Creswell (1998, p. 117) state that gaining access through the gatekeeper and establishing rapport with a case is critical when conducting a case study.

I considered this aspect because conducting research in some cultures can present difficult if not overwhelming problems regarding access for even the most experienced academic researcher, let alone the postgraduate student (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Knowing that sometimes I would face challenges to negotiate for access to the potential school, I used what Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988, p. 53) refer to as 'opportunistic approach' both in gaining access and generating data. Briggs and Coleman (2007, p. 37) report that sometimes access to the organizational gatekeepers is usually brokered by friends and colleagues.

The first step that I followed was to seek permission from the Karonga District Education Manager (DEM) for me to conduct an educational research in the district. I presented a letter of introduction from Chancellor College (see Appendix 7) and my request letter. Permission was granted by the DEM through an endorsement on the letter of request that I wrote (see Appendix 8). Afterwards, I sought permission from the head teacher of demonstration primary school to conduct pilot study in order to test my data generation instruments. Then I sought permission from the head teacher of the school where I conducted this study. However, simply obtaining physical access to the school and expecting its members to take part on basis of this is hardly adequate (Okumus, Altinay & Roper, 2007). Although physical access was formally granted, it was still necessary for me to gain acceptance and consent from the intended participants (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Therefore, I had discussions of the research with participants to gain their trust. All teachers and learners who were involved in this study gave their consent to participate by signing on the consent form (see Appendix 9). Then I generated data from the head teacher, three teachers and eighteen learners.

In addition, respondents in this study were informed in advance that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they felt it was not in the best interest to continue participating. This was done in order to avoid compromising the quality of the results of the study. Punch (2009) states that the freedom to withdraw from the study must be clearly explained to avoid compromising the quality of the results.

Furthermore, participants were assured of anonymity through an assurance that the information that they will give shall in no way reveal their identities. Briggs and Coleman (2007, p. 231) describe anonymity as a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondent. The essence of anonymity in this research was to assure participants that the information they will provide shall in no way reveal their identities (Punch, 2009). This assurance made the participants feel free to share their views, experiences and ideas concerning the approaches used in teaching SES. Maree and van der Westhuizen (2009, p. 41) indicate that an essential ethical aspect is the issue of the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and the protection of the participants identities.

The participants were disguised by the use of pseudo names such as Mr Mkhondo, Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3. Anonymity for places was done through the use of pseudo names, such as Yunkhwa and Popopo to represent the school and the education zone, respectively. Learners were identified using letters and numbers such as C3-L2 for 'learner number two in standard 3'. These letters and numbers were used to avoid unnecessary speculation therefore they did not correspond with anything.

Lastly, special consideration was taken on avoiding causing harm to the participants. As a researcher, an effort was put in defending the character of the participants during and after data generation. In a qualitative research it is recommended that researchers should not harm the respondents (Makore-Rukuni, 2001; Urombo, 2000). I observed the ethics of research throughout the data generation process in order to uphold the dignity of the participants.

In a qualitative research the harm to respondents may include: anger, emotional, stress, loss of self-esteem, embarrassment, sleep deprivation, irritation, negative labelling, invasion of privacy and damage to personal dignity (Urombo, 2000; Babbie, 1992). During data generation process, I avoided asking personal or private information from participants in order to avoid causing harm to participants. Respondents may experience the above psychological harm if they are asked to provide information on private and sensitive issues (Piliyesi, 2011).

In this study, I made it a point that only relevant issues were discussed during data generation. It was important for me not to inflict harm or damage on those involved in an investigation so as to get the much needed data. In any study, if the researcher is not careful, it is possible to harm participants not only by exposing information about individuals but also by discussing them as a group, in a publication in a way which they may find harmful or which actually disadvantages them (Flick, Von Kordorff &Steinke, 2004). In this study, I adhered to issues of anonymity and confidentiality as discussed above in order not to harm the participants.

The study focused on the contextual teaching and learning approaches that teachers use in teaching SES in primary schools in Malawi. It employed a multiple-case study research design involving three primary school teachers as cases. The study focused on teachers from one primary school. Teachers of standards 1 and 2 were not involved in this study because SES is not taught in these classes. The cases represented one teacher from a junior primary school class (standard 3) and two teachers from the senior level (standard 5 & 7). Thus, it did not involve standard 4 teachers because it is also a junior primary school class just like standard 3 where the study was conducted. Standard 6 was not involved because it is a lower class in senior primary school just like standard 5 where the study was conducted. The researcher did not involve standard 8 class for the reason that teaching in this class is examination driven with the aim of preparing learners for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE).

3.10 Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on the contextual teaching and learning approaches that teachers use in teaching SES in primary schools in Malawi. It employed a multiple-case study research design involving three primary school teachers as cases. The study focused on teachers from one primary school. Teachers of standards 1 and 2 were not involved in this study because SES is not taught in these classes. The cases represented one teacher from a junior primary school class (standard 3) and two teachers from the senior level (standard 5 & 7). Thus, it did not involve standard 4 teachers because it is also a junior primary school class just like standard 3 where the study was conducted. Standard 6 was not involved because it is a lower class in senior primary school just like standard 5 where the study was conducted.

Standard 8 class was not involved for the reason that teaching in this class is examination driven with the aim of preparing learners for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE).

3.11 Limitations of the Study

In this study, there were some challenges that the researcher encountered. However, much of the proposed activities in the study went as per plan. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 42) indicate that no proposed research project is without limitations; there is no such thing as a perfectly designed study. However, these limitations did not affect the results of the study.

Firstly, the study took place at a school which is situated in the rural setting of Karonga District. This indicates that the school had different characteristics from other schools found in the rural as well as urban setting of the district and country as a whole. Therefore, since the study was done only at one primary school, the results may not be generalised to the entire nation. However, there are possibilities of applying the findings from this study to other cases in the country. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 43) state that although no qualitative studies are generalizable in the statistical sense, their findings may be transferable. The rural school that was chosen for the study obviously has some similar characteristics with other rural schools in the country. Therefore, the findings from this study can be applicable to other cases.

In addition, since the study followed purposive sampling, I had to look for a primary school which had only qualified teachers--in contrast to those which have student teacher as well. As a result, the school where the study was conducted was far from where I was residing. This was a challenge because sometimes I happened to reach the school after SES has been taught. In such cases, the teacher had to arrange for make-up lessons. This could have affected the results as make-up classes do not usually portray a true picture of classroom practices. This was like an inconvenience to the teacher as well as the learners. All the same, data was generated from such lessons and has been used in this study.

Lastly, to the best of my knowledge, there is lack of literature as pertaining to contextual teaching and learning in Malawi. I did not find books and/or articles which have focused on contextual teaching and learning in Malawi. This made it difficult for me to review what has already been done in this area in Malawian context.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the design and methodology that was used in this study. The chapter particularly discussed the overall approach for the study in terms of method and the justification for using the method. The chapter discussed the setting and population of interest, sample and sampling procedures that were used, the data generation methods, organisation and data analysis procedures, credibility and trustworthiness, as well as ethical considerations that were made. The other section discussed delimitations of the study. The last section discussed the limitations that the study faced.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The findings from the three cases are presented following an integrated approach built round each theme. In all, there are nine themes namely; methods used in teaching SES, assessment used in the teaching of SES, teachers' lack of knowledge in using teaching methods to promote CTL in SES, teachers' lack of knowledge in using teaching and learning resources to promote CTL in SES, government policy on the use of English as a medium of classroom instruction, government policy on mandatory written primary school leaving certificate examinations, influence of large classes, lack of relevant teaching and learning resources for teaching SES, and possible solutions to the challenges facing the teaching of SES.

4.1 Methods Used in Teaching SES

From the interviews with the three teachers and through FGDs with the learners, it was claimed that teachers largely adopted learner-centered methods and to a lesser extent teacher-centered methods were used. Learner-centered methods are methods that engage learners in minds-on and hands-on experiences (MoEST, 2010). On the other hand, teacher-centered methods are methods dominated by the teacher where the teacher imparts knowledge and learners receive it (Hudson & Whisler, 2008).

When asked to mention the teaching methods that are often used in teaching SES in standard 3, Teacher 1 had this to say:

I engage learners through the use of learner-centered methods. These methods are like group work, question and answer, discussions and others. But this means the methods such as role plays, simulations and others are some of teaching and learning approaches that I use to engage learners. Sometimes I just explain concepts to the learners (Interview, February, 2016).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Teacher 3 who was teaching SES in standard 7 when she was responding to the same question. For instance, Teacher 3 explained that:

The methods that I use in teaching SES are like group work, question and answer, role play, group discussion and others. In case of group work, I use it because it gives learners a chance to teach each other, because if sometimes a teacher just says “let me explain” it appears as if you are lecturing yet it may happen that learners have something they want to explain so in group work they tend to explain themselves and for question and answer, you tend to check where learners do not understand, and in discussion it happens that sometimes there is something that they already know so you have to discuss with them because sometimes you hear from learners the misconceptions that they had....so from those answers you correct something wrong (Interview, February, 2016).

The extracts above indicate that Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 used learner-centered methods in teaching SES. However, it was noted that these teachers lacked knowledge of using the methods for contextual teaching and learning. Teaching SES at primary school level can be an interesting and rewarding activity only when teachers know what content and methodologies they can employ (Dube, 2009). For instance, Teacher 3 assumed that learners easily understood concepts when she used learner-centered methods. Chickering and Gamson (1999) argue that to be active, learners must be more than listening and contextual teaching and learning means more than that.

In response to the same question on the methods of teaching that he used in teaching SES, Teacher 2 explained that:

According to PCAR, it recommends that we teach using learner centered teaching methods. This is what OBE requires. Therefore, most of the times I use group method, question and answer method, role plays and sometimes, eee if I have too much work to teach, I use lecturing method (Oral Interviews, February, 2016).

The head teacher, Mr. Mkhondo, also indicated that teachers use learner centered methods. For instance, the head teacher said:

Teachers use participatory approaches. Mostly, teachers rely on group work and questions and answer methods. Teachers also use role plays and drama methods (Oral Interviews, February, 2016).

Learners who were involved in this study expressed similar sentiments as those expressed by the teachers. For instance, C3-L1 said:

The teacher asks us questions. Sometimes we discuss concepts as a class and sometimes we role play what we have been learning in that lesson [*Asambizi wakutifumbanga mafumbo kweniso nyengo zinyake tikukambirananga mukalasi nakupanga tumasewero pa ivo tasambira*] (FGD, February, 2016).

The extracts above indicate that the teachers as well as learners claimed that learner-centered methods were largely used in teaching SES. Use of learner centered methods during lessons in a class enhances active participation of learners. Smith (2010, p. 24) states that the learner in contextual teaching and learning classroom plays an active role in his or her own learning. Some learner-centered approaches can promote contextual teaching and learning if they are used appropriately.

However, during lesson observations it was noted that learner-centered methods that teachers claimed to be using did not promote contextual learning. For instance, during a lesson on ‘The factors that influence the development of tourism in Southern Africa,’ this is what I observed in standard 7: Learners were assigned to discuss the factors that influence tourism in their groups and then reported their findings. Some groups had 9 learners while others had 11 learners. Discussions in the groups were dominated by a few learners. In addition to that, most of the responses that learners gave were not correct. The teacher consolidated the learners work and finally she gave them an individual activity to be done in writing (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

In that lesson, the teacher did not actively engage learners to relate the content to their everyday experiences. In some instances, Teachers 3 opted for a class discussion, but did not involve non volunteers in most of the activities. Learners who failed to give correct answers were not assisted, instead the teacher just chose another learner to give the correct answer and one learner dominated the whole lesson.

The findings indicated that Teacher 3 the use of learner-centeredness associated methods in teaching SES. However, it was noted that she lacked knowledge of using the methods for contextual learning because learners were not given opportunity to participate actively in lessons. For instance, learners were working in very large groups hence some learners were not participating in the discussions.

Group work gives an opportunity for learners to participate actively in a lesson if it is well organised (MIE, 2008). Teaching SES at primary school level can be an interesting and rewarding activity only when teachers know what content and methodologies they can employ (Dube, 2009). Teacher 3 assumed that learners easily understood concepts when she used learner-centered methods. Chickering and Gamson (1999) argue that to be active, learners must be more than listening and contextual teaching and learning means more than that.

According to Primary Curriculum and Assessment (PCAR) reforms, teachers are supposed to use learner-centered methods. Learner-centered methods can promote further learning in learners if they assist learners to see the purpose in schooling (Smith, 2010). However, it can be argued that the three teachers used learner-centeredness methods which did not actively engage learners to promote contextual teaching and learning. Learner-centered methods promote CTL if learners are actively engaged during lesson activities.

All in all, during lesson observations, it was noted that the teachers mostly adopted learner-centeredness associated teaching methods such as question and answer, group discussion and to some extent, explanation method. However, these teaching methods were not used in such a way that they actively engaged learners during the lesson. For example, when using question and answer method, the teachers asked questions which learners were answering. However, learners were not given a chance to ask questions to the teacher or amongst themselves.

This indicates that question and answer method in these classes was used in a very teacher-centered manner. This authenticates what other researchers in the world found in their studies (Carderhead & Sharrock, 1997; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Mhango, 2008). For instance, Kahne and Westheimer (2006), report that most teachers assume that learning takes place as long as teachers engage learners using learner-centered methods. Engaging learners in a dialogue sometimes is mistaken for learner-centered methods.

There are a couple of elements from the way teachers used learner-centered methods during lesson activities that indicate that the teachers had limited understanding of the concept. The first element is that the teachers seemed to imply that the mere involvement of learners in lesson activities was using learner-centered methods. For example, Teacher 3 shows that her understanding of using learner-centered methods was the mere involvement of learners in lesson activities regardless of the purpose for such activities. The second element that comes clearly from Teacher 2 description is that she understood learner-centered methods as involving learners in activities like answering oral questions to find out if they were still remembering what they had learned in the previous lessons. In contextual teaching and learning classroom the learner's role is not just discussing in a group but also to explore, investigate and validate their findings (Souders, 1999). Learner-centered methods promote contextual teaching and learning if they are used appropriately.

Learner-centered methods promote CTL if learners are actively engaged during lesson activities. However, the teachers that were involved in this study apparently adopted learner-centered methods of teaching which were not actively engaging learners. For instance, the teacher used question and answer method. However, low level questions were being asked during lessons. Such questions did not engage learners in critical thinking and make them construct their own knowledge. This is contrary to what happens in countries such as the United States of America where learners construct their own knowledge by being guided through scenarios where they actively explore the content in order to reach a goal, solve a problem, complete a project, or answer a question (Hudson & Whisler, 2008). In these classes, learners were not actively engaged to construct their own knowledge and connect the content to real life experiences.

Learner-centered methods can promote contextual teaching and learning if there is what Lankard (1995) calls 'incidental learning.' According to Lankard (1995, p.1) incidental learning, also known as a spontaneous learning or transaction, is intended at task accomplishment, but also serendipitously increases particular knowledge skills, or understanding. Therefore, learners should be engaged in activities that promote learning for taking action. For instance, learners can benefit from a role play if the teacher asks 'how' they can use what has been role played rather than asking 'what' type of questions which promote rote learning. Berge (2007) indicates that participatory methods which promote contextual learning are those that encourage independent learners to take action of what they have learned and apply it.

Teachers should use teaching methods which promote the purpose of SES in primary schools of preparing young people for their roles in the society (NCSS, 1993; Martorella & Beal, 2002). Just engaging learners in group activities does not always guarantee active learner participation. Mhango (2008) indicates that some teachers display limited understanding of the concept of participatory learning that was suggested to them in the curriculum documents and delivery of lessons become largely teacher-centered, which they think is participatory learning. Poorly organized group work, role plays, and question and answer methods were observed in this class. These teaching methods did not promote contextual teaching and learning. In contextual teaching and learning, the teacher helps learners to transfer knowledge and problem solving skills learned in school to other life contexts as well as help them prepare for future careers, citizenship, or continued learning (Lynch, Padilla, Harnish & Distephano, 2001).

In contextual teaching and learning, the teacher helps learners to transfer knowledge and problem solving skills learned in school to other life contexts as well as help them prepare for future careers, citizenship, or continued learning (Lynch, Padilla, Harnish & Distephano, 2001). This is achieved if the teacher uses teaching methods that actively engage learners during lesson activities.

4.2 Assessment Used in the Teaching of SES

This section presents and discusses how the three teachers assessed learners in SES in their classes. The findings in this study showed that these teachers used assessment to evaluate learners understanding of concepts.

For instance, during lesson observations, it was noted that the teachers involved in this study largely used questions that demanded memorization of content rather than other domains such as skills, attitudes and values. These teachers frequently used the ‘What’ type of questions at the expense of the ‘Why’ and ‘How’ questions.

For example, in a lesson on ‘classifying social relationships in their village,’ in standard 3 Teacher 1 asked the following questions to learners:

1. What are the two forms of social relationships?
2. What are the three types of social relationships?

Such questions only promote memorisation in learners. During an interview, responding to a question on assessment Teacher 1 said:

Usually, I assess learners by asking some questions. If it is during a lesson, I ask them oral questions as the lesson progresses. However, in most cases, I also end my lesson by asking learners some questions for them to answer orally. I look at two things that tell me whether I have achieved my success criteria or not. First thing, I look at the number of learners who participate in answering questions. Secondly, I look at the percentage by estimation, of the questions that are answered correctly. Being in standard 3, learners are not good at writing. As a result, I assess the learners by asking oral questions. (Interview, February, 2016).

Similar sentiments were expressed by learners during FGD when they were asked how their teacher assesses them in SES. For instance, C3-L4 said:

Our teacher tells us to stand up. He then asks us questions. You sit down only when you answer correctly [*Asambizi wakutiphilirira kuti tiyimilire mbwenu wakutifumbanga mafumbo. Uyo wazgola mwaunenesko mbwenu wakukhala pasi*] (FGD, February, 2016).

In support of what the standard 3 teacher and learners had said that assessment was done to measure knowledge in learners, Teacher 2 had similar sentiments. In responding to a question on how Teacher 2 assesses learners in his class, he said:

I assess my learners in two ways. When it is during the lesson, I use oral questions. At other times, I ask oral questions at the end of the lesson. I rarely them written exercises. You know, they are very many such that I find it a challenge marking their work. These assessments help me to see if learners understand what they learn (Interview, February, 2016).

The above excerpt indicates that Teacher 2 largely used oral and written assessments in SES. During the FGD, learners also indicated that the teacher used oral and written assessment methods in SES. For instance, C5-L4 had this to say:

We answer oral questions during the lesson or at the end of the lesson....At the end of last term we wrote a test [*Tikuzgolanga mafumbo pala tikusambira panji pumaliro wa period...Tiakalemba matesiti paumaliro wa term yamala*] (FGD, February, 2016).

The above extract indicates that learners were assessed through the use of oral and written questions. However, the lessons that I observed in standard 5 class lacked assessment activities that could engage learners in critical thinking and promote further learning. Teacher 2 used to ask oral questions during and/or after the lesson. Sometimes he used to give learners a written exercise to be done in groups or individually. In either case, it was observed that the purpose of assessment in standard 5 class was to check learners' understanding of concepts. For instance, in a lesson on "Effects of Gender inequality in the community" Teacher 2 assessed learners with oral questions such as:

1. What is gender inequality?
2. Mention any two effects of gender inequality.

Teacher 2 used these questions to assess learners' acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, it can be argued that the findings of this study agree with other studies which were conducted in Malawi (Nkunika, 2004; Mhango, 2008; Mkwezalamba-Ngalande, 2011; Nkunika, 2004). For instance, Mhango (2008, p. 168) indicates that grade eight examinations emphasize the knowledge domain at the expense of the skills and attitudes domains. Teaching of SES can be effective if teachers use a variety of assessment methods so that different traits of learners are identified.

Teachers should use what Berns and Erickson (2001) call "authentic assessment" which evaluates a learner's application of knowledge rather than rote recall of factual information (Berns & Erickson, 2001, p. 4). Teachers of SES are expected to use questions that are of different levels in order to stimulate learners to think. Berns and Erickson (2001) state that for CTL to achieve its goals, appropriate types and levels of questions must be asked. Berns and Erickson (2001) further indicate that teachers should include questioning techniques that enhance student learning and the development of problem solving and other higher order thinking skills.

Similarly, Teacher 3 used assessment to measure learners' understanding on what has been covered during classroom instruction. The assessment merely demanded learners to regurgitate and reproduce what they had learnt. For instance, assessment of acquisition of knowledge in learners in Standard 7 was observed during SES lesson on the topic "HIV and Aids".

The lesson was on the impact of HIV and Aids on the family. At the end of the lesson, Teacher 3 told the learners to answer the following questions:

1. Give any two signs of HIV and Aids.
2. Give any two impacts of HIV and Aids on the family.
3. Two ways of preventing HIV and Aids are.....and.....

(Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

Generally, throughout this study it was observed that Teacher 3 used to ask oral questions during or at the end of SES lessons. The findings in this study indicate that teachers used simple recall questions to assess learners' understanding of concepts. This assessment addressed the lowest level in Bloom's Taxonomy—the knowledge level. For instance, Griffith (1999, p. ix) reports that teachers put more emphasis on the knowledge—recall questions and low-level cognitive objectives, with only superficial attention paid to testing for values and higher order thinking.

Teachers in this study were assessing how much knowledge the learners gained during the teaching and learning process. This authenticates what other researchers in Malawi and other parts of the world found on how teachers assess learners in Social Studies that teachers assess learners for knowledge domain at the expense of skill, values and attitudes. For instance, Mhango (2008) reports that as a result of teachers' emphasis on the knowledge domain, the teachers' organization of interactive classroom practices was generally weak. This type of assessment does not engage learners in critical thinking. Thus, assessing learners only for knowledge acquisition does not promote contextual learning in learners.

Although the teachers assessed learners, the effectiveness of the assessments that were being used compromised contextual teaching and learning. Teaching of SES can be effective if teachers use a variety of assessment methods so that different traits of learners are identified. Teachers should use what Berns and Erickson (2001) call “authentic assessment” which evaluates a learner’s application of knowledge rather than rote recall of factual information (Berns & Erickson, 2001, p. 4). Teachers of SES are expected to use questions that are of different levels in order to stimulate learners to think.

Berns and Erickson (2001) state that for CTL to achieve its goals, appropriate types and levels of questions must be asked. Berns and Erickson (2001) further indicate that teachers should include questioning techniques that enhance student learning and the development of problem solving and other higher order thinking skills. Contextual teaching and learning occurs when teachers address multiple intelligences (Berns & Erickson, 2001). This is achieved through the use of authentic assessment. The interdisciplinary nature of CTL requires assessment that measures knowledge and skills in more than one discipline and in multiple ways (Ananda, 2001). Effective assessment methods enhance learners’ learning and the development of problem solving and other higher order thinking skills (Berns & Erickson, 2001).

Authentic assessment helps to assess citizenship learning which is about making connections between classroom lessons and the real world in which the learners will be expected to display competent skills in active participatory life (Barton & Levstik, 2011; Cogan et al., 2000; Giroux & McLaren, 1999).

In fact, this kind of connection is what Cogan et al. (2000), and Giroux and McLaren (1999) contended that it is important for providing students with the skills in critical thinking and development of positive attitudes about the real world.

In authentic assessment, different assessment methods are used to determine learners' achievement of skills, attitudes and values besides knowledge. Ananda (2001) indicates that the interdisciplinary nature of CTL requires assessment that measures knowledge and skills in more than one discipline and in multiple ways. Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 4) state that:

To achieve authentic assessment in contextual teaching and learning, teachers should include questioning techniques that enhance students learning and the development of problem solving and other higher order thinking skills.

Teachers of SES are supposed to use authentic assessment, which is one component of contextual teaching and learning, so that they prepare learners for their roles in the society. Cleverian (2008) states that authentic assessment is the process of collecting data which gives information about the student learning development. Teachers assess other aspects in the learners besides knowledge acquisition when authentic assessment is used. Therefore, as Smith (2010) suggests, to assess students' progress in a contextual teaching and learning SES classroom teachers may need to use alternative methods of evaluation. Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 4) state that authentic assessment evaluates a student's application of knowledge rather than rote recall of factual information.

When using CTL approach, the ways particular learners in the class learn best need to be considered (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Bryars-Winston & Fouad, 2008). Therefore, teachers should use other forms of assessment apart from the use of written tests. A variety of assessment methods have to be used to achieve CTL. For instance, as teachers focus on process and products and demonstration of understanding, they may also rely on portfolios, journal entries, self-evaluations, and rubrics in addition to objective-type questions (Llewellyn, 2001). Teachers should assess learners in a variety of ways. Quashigah, Dake, Bekoe, Eshun and Bordoh (2015, p. 4) indicate that teachers should also realize that the inclusion of affective and psychomotor assessments, as distinctive features of assessment is a step at getting the truest picture of the learner. For instance, teachers can involve assessment of learners' real world experiences, use open-ended format of assessment, self-assessment and reflection, and other forms of assessments.

4.3 Teachers' Lack of Knowledge in Using Teaching Methods to Promote CTL

One challenge that faced the teaching of SES in the classes involved in this study is that teachers lacked knowledge in using teaching methods to promote CTL. These teachers faced challenges in using learner-centered methods due to their limited knowledge on how to use these methods, their misconceptions about these methods and others factors. For instance, Teacher 1 acknowledged that he had limited knowledge in using learner-centered methods that could actively engage learners and promote learning. For instance, during interview Teacher 1 said:

Some teaching methods that we learnt in college are somehow difficult to use. For example, jig saw, bus stop, and others...that is why I usually use group discussion, question and answer and group work methods. It is a long time when I learnt these methods. (Interview, February, 2016).

Teacher 1 indicated that he failed to effectively teach SES because of lack of professional development programs. The views of Teacher 1 in the excerpt can be explained by the conceptual framework in this study. CTL should be considered as an instructional process. For instance, in the United States of America, it is increasingly being used by schools within their school reform efforts (Berns & Erickson, 2001).

Similarly, it was noted that Teacher 2 largely adopted learner-centeredness associated methods which did not make learners connect content to the context in real life situations. For instance, in a lesson on “advantages of transport and communication in the district,” Teacher 2 used a variety of teaching methods such as question and answer, discussion and lecture method. In that lesson, Teacher 2 used lecture method in such a way that learners became passive recipients of knowledge. Learners were not given a chance to construct their own knowledge. Hudson and Whisler (2008) indicate that knowledge acquisition in learners is a process of continuous self-construction. Teachers influence how children learn in class. Chibwana (1999) calls the influence that a teacher has in the teaching and learning process as the ‘teacher factor.’ The competence of teachers is one factor that determines the quality of the teaching and learning. Chisamba (2014) agrees that teachers’ competence is very crucial when it comes to teaching.

During post-lesson interview when Teacher 2 was asked about the methods that he used in the lesson, he said:

In that lesson, I used a variety of methods. I used question and answer method. In much of the lesson I used lecture method. I tried to explain to learners the advantages of transport and communication in Karonga. I used lecture method because I discovered that there was too much work to be covered in that lesson (Interview, February, 2016).

The above excerpt indicates that Teacher 2 had challenges on how to use lecture method and explanation method, respectively. Most of the teaching methods that Teacher 2 used did not help learners to construct their own knowledge. Using lecture method helps the teacher to cover more subject matter within a short period of time as eluded by Teacher 2. Besides this, MIE (2008) states that lecture method can be used with large class as it was the case with standard 5 class. However, to some extent the way lecture method was used in this class did not permit feedback from learners. Learners were not given a chance to correct errors and misconceptions that they had in the lesson.

On the other hand, Teacher 3 indicated that she had some knowledge about learner-centered methods. However, Teacher 3 had some challenges to effectively use some of these methods in teaching SES due to her misconceptions. For instance, this is what I observed in her lesson on ‘democracy’ in activity 1 on the topic Democratic Government (MoEST, 2009d). There were 97 learners present of which 51 were boys and were 46 girls. The lesson was introduced by the teacher asking oral questions such as: What is a bill? In development of the lesson, Teacher 3 asked, “What is a democratic government?” No learner raised up a hand to respond to the question. Then the teacher told the learners the meaning of the term “democratic government.” Then she narrated stages for a bill to become a law (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

The observation above indicates that Teacher 3 was not aware of the difference between lecturing and explanation methods. For instance, responding to a question on the type of method she used in the lesson, Teacher 3 said:

I used an explanation approach. I was only explaining the stages that are there for a bill to become a law (Interview, February, 2016).

Teacher 3 was able to use different methods during the lesson. In this lesson, question and answer and lecturing methods were used. However, she had a challenge in differentiating between lecture method and explanation approaches. Lecture method involves transmission of knowledge through telling the learners whether the learners have some prior knowledge of the topic or not (Mhango, 2008). On the other hand, Mhango (2008, p. 113) indicates that explanation is done to help students understand a particular element they fail to figure out on their own as they perform activities. Teacher 3 had challenges to effectively use the learner-centered methods.

Teaching of SES requires teachers to properly use active participatory teaching methods as per the requirements of PCAR. MIE (2006) indicates that it is advisable that a teacher should use learner-centered methods as they ensure that learners are involved in the learning process. These active participatory teaching methods help learners to connect content to real-world situations, master the subject matter, and improve achievement (Smith, 2010). According to Berns and Erickson (2001, p. 4), CTL can serve as the pedagogical component of the reforms in all subjects and at all grade levels for all students. CTL provides a means for teaching to be improved within the varying innovative initiatives designed to produce increased learning by all learners.

4.4 Teachers' Lack of Knowledge in Using Teaching and Learning Resources to

Promote CTL

Teachers involved in this study indicated that they had limited knowledge on how to use a variety of teaching and learning resources in teaching SES. These teachers relied on what was suggested in the teachers' guide. However, the teachers' guide was just followed without suiting the context. For instance, in the lesson that Teacher 1 taught on the topic "Animals and insects found around the home and school," the teacher used an illustration on page 31 for the learners to study, discuss and answer questions (MIE, 2008). During post-lesson interview on the use of teaching and learning resources Teacher 1 said:

I used the illustration in the book because it is what the teachers' guide indicated. Also, I thought time was not adequate for me to take learners outside the classroom into the local environment. However, some learners were able to identify the insects in the illustration (Interviews, February, 2016).

The views of Teacher 1 indicated his limited knowledge in preparing and using teaching and learning resources. The teacher used teaching and learning resources that were suggested in the teachers' guide. In this instance, Teacher 1 did not actively engage learners in the teaching of SES because of lack of creativity. Contextual teaching and learning was compromised due to inadequate learners' books. . In addition, the teacher did not make use of the school surrounding in which some insects could have been identified. This deprived learners an opportunity to connect content to the context in which that content would be used in their everyday lives.

Similarly, it was noted that Teacher 2 had limited capability of using teaching and learning resources in teaching SES in standard 5. For instance, in a lesson on “gender inequality at school and within the community,” this is what I observed: Teacher 2 distributed two learners’ books to each group. Some groups had nine learners while others had ten. Then he told learners to read a story from learners’ book on page 35 carefully and answer the questions that followed individually. After learners had written the exercise, Teacher 2 told the learners to put their exercise books together. After that, the teacher revised the questions together with learners. Teacher 2 used to translate the answers in Chitumbuka. Finally he thanked the learners (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

As already indicated, standard 5 class did not have adequate learners’ books for all learners to use during that lesson. During an interview, Teacher 2 indicated that he had a problem in using teaching and learning resources. For instance on the use of teaching and learning resources Teacher 2 had this to say:

Generally I use teaching and learning resources that have been suggested in the teachers’ guide (Interview, February, 2016).

The excerpt above indicates that Teacher 2 was just following what had been suggested in the teachers’ guide. Chibwana (1999, p. 18), states that some teachers fail to prepare let alone use teaching and learning resources because they had not been given relevant skills to enable them improvise and produce some of the materials.

Challenges in the limited knowledge on the use of teaching and learning resources were also noted in standard 7. In this class, it was noted that Teacher 3 lacked knowledge in preparing, let alone, using teaching and learning resources in teaching of SES. For instance, this is what I observed in a lesson on Tourism: Teacher 3 distributed learners' books in the groups. Each group received two copies of the learners' books. Some of these groups had eight learners while others had ten. Then Teacher 3 told learners to open their books on page 81 and study the map of Southern Africa on that page. Teacher 3 told learners to identify the tourist centres shown in that map (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

The observation above indicates that Teacher 3 mainly relied on learners' books in teaching SES. In this activity, one copy of the learners' books was shared by four learners or more. Some learners in the groups were observed not to be accessing the books. Most learners were not given an opportunity to construct knowledge by relating content into context in which it could be used despite using the few learners' books.

However, Teacher 3 assumed that learners benefited since she used learners' books. For instance, she had this to say:

I think some learners benefited because they were able to study the map in the book. However, some did not benefit. The books were not enough. I have been reporting to the office but there is nothing happening. What else could I do? I use the books that are available (Interview, February, 2016).

In this excerpt, Teacher 3 indicated that she would have done better by engaging all learners if she had adequate learners' books. However, Teacher 3 lacked creativity in that lesson. Consequently, she banked on the teaching and learning resources that were suggested in the teachers' guide.

Teachers can ably assist learners in SES if they use teaching and learning resources made from things in the local environment (Mhango, 2008; MIE, 2008). Teaching and learning resources help learners to construct knowledge. This concept of constructing knowledge is different from the view of learning as knowledge acquisition, where the learner passively absorbs information presented by the teacher (Hudson & Whisler, 2008). Learners construct knowledge in their frames of reference if they actively interact with teaching and learning resources.

Odekunle (2015), suggests that learning can be less tedious and more functional if efforts are made to identify and make extensive use of available instructional resources, both material and human. For instance, Teacher 3 could have used TALULAR by drawing the map of Southern Africa on a white sack if chart papers were not available. MIE (2008) indicates that locally-available resources are usually cheap and sometimes one can get them for no cost at all. Learning becomes meaningful to learners if teachers properly use teaching and learning resources during their lessons. Hudson and Whisler (2008) concur that incorporating the principles of contextual teaching helps to promote authentic learning and increases students' success by allowing them to make connections as they construct knowledge. Using teaching and learning resources makes children learn SES through applying knowledge in real-life contexts and situations.

4.5 Government Policies on the Use of English as a Medium of Classroom

Instruction

Another challenge that faced the teaching of SES in the three classes was related to the government policy on the use of English as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Malawi. In Malawi, English is a medium of instruction for all subjects for standards 5 to 8 except Chichewa. On the other hand, a local language or vernacular that is commonly used in an area is used as a medium of instruction for standards 1 to 4 for all subjects except English. Chauma (2013, p. 15) defines medium of instructions as a language used as a means of communication in a teaching and learning situation or the language used by the teacher to teach. A medium of instruction may be the official language of the country or not.

Malawi uses bilingual education in the primary school cycle. Bilingual or multilingual education is a situation where education may involve the use of more than one language of instruction (Collins English Dictionary, 2000). Chauma, (2013) argues that it is the Malawi Government Policy on the use of language in primary schools to enhance pupils' understanding of what they are taught as opposed to learning in a foreign language. The following is an extract of the language of instruction policy directive by the Ministry of Education which was made in 1996:

... with immediate effect all standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 children in our schools be taught in their mother tongue or vernacular as a medium of instruction. English and Chichewa will however, continue to be offered as subjects in the primary curricula. In the past Chichewa was used as both, medium of instruction and subject, making it very difficult for beginners to grasp ideas. However, English will be used as a medium of instruction beginning in standard 5... (Secretary for Education's letter, Ref. No. IN/2/14 Dated March, 1996).

This directive was repeated by the government when Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) was introduced in Malawi. The Ministry of Education in Malawi indicated that, according to PCAR curriculum, English should be introduced as a medium of instruction from standard 3 with the common local language still used as a support language in standards 3 and 4 (MoEST, 2009a).

However, it was noted that the use of English in teaching of SES by the teachers involved in this study limited the use of contextual teaching and learning. For instance, it was noted that Teacher 1 had limited capability of teaching SES in local language while lesson preparation was done in English. This made Teacher 1 and his learners to borrow words from English as a coping strategy to make learners participate actively in the lesson. Word borrowing, which is also known as transliteration, is where English words are phonetically translated into Chitumbuka or are Chitumbukalized (Chauma, 2013).

For instance, in the lesson on “Animals and insects found around the home and school,” In this lesson, borrowing of words from English was inevitable. There were some English terminologies such as ‘page,’ ‘insect,’ ‘cockroach,’ ‘lesson,’ and others that were a challenge to the teacher as well as learners to find direct translations in Chitumbuka. These English words were Chitumbukalized as ‘peji,’ ‘inisekiti,’ ‘kokuloshi,’ ‘lesoni,’ and so on. During an interview, Teacher 1 said:

Of course I am a Tumbuka by tribe but there are some English words that I fail to translate into Chitumbuka. The problem is that the policy [of the government] states that we should teach in vernacular language yet the teachers’ guide is written in English and the learners’ book is written in Chichewa. I find this confusing. (Interview, February, 2016).

Teacher 1 and his learners used to borrow English words and use them in form of Chitumbuka. When this teacher was asked how he prepares for SES lessons, he said:

Preparation for SES lessons is not easy. Teachers' guides are written in English, learners' books are written in Chichewa and I write my lesson plan in English. Yet I have to think that I will teach the lesson in Chitumbuka, it is a big challenge. This means three things happening at the same time. (Interviews, February, 2016).

Teacher 1 had a challenge in teaching SES because the teachers' guide was written in English and he prepared for his lesson in English yet he was teaching in Chitumbuka. Teacher 1 had challenges in using language to be in context of learners. Communication between the teacher and learners, and among learners themselves is vital in promoting contextual teaching and learning. For contextual teaching and learning to be effective, Smith (2010, p. 24) argues that there is need to have less direct instruction on the part of the teacher, yet learners are supposed to be provided with clear set of learning objectives.

Reflecting on the way teachers are trained in Malawi, it was inevitable for Teacher 1 to have challenges in communicating with learners. Teacher 1 was not trained to teach in Chitumbuka and he did not have an opportunity to learn the translation of English words in SES into Chitumbuka. Goodlad (1999, p. 693), observes that an ill-prepared beginning teacher is likely to be the ill-prepared experienced teacher. (Chauma, 2013, p. 135) indicates that missing initial teacher training in mother tongue may make it hard to correct the situation at a later date. Limited communication between the teacher and the learners compromised contextual teaching and learning in teaching SES in standard 3.

Similarly, the Malawi Government directive on the use of English as a medium of classroom instruction in primary schools had negatively affected the teaching of SES in standard 5 class. For instance, in a lesson that I observed on 10th February, 2016, on “Functions of traditional leaders, politicians and professionals in the district,” Teacher 2 also used to translate what has been said in English into Chitumbuka. For instance, Teacher 2 said: Traditional leaders settle disputes among people in the area,” then he said in Chitumbuka [Enyana asi tikuwona mafumu ghakuyeruzganga milandu] (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

This lesson gives a picture of how Teacher 2 generally conducted his lessons. Teacher 2 used code-switching as a strategy of coping with the challenge of breakdown of communication between him and learners. According to Chauma (2013, p. 14), code-switching means shifting from one code (that is language, dialect or language variety) to another between utterances. The teacher used to say a sentence or a concept in English and then translate in Chitumbuka. Code-switching can involve a word, a phrase, a sentence or several sentences (Setati, 1998). Besides that, Teacher 2 used to tell learners to repeat what he had said. In this class, learners were “parroting” what their teacher said. Parroting leads to rote memory. When Teacher 2 was asked on the use of English as a medium of instruction in teaching SES, he said:

Learners in my class do not really understand English. You know, these learners were learning SES in standard 3 and 4 in Chitumbuka. ... It is a government policy that is there in primary schools. Now it is difficult for them to understand or speak English at this stage (Interview, February, 2016).

Learners in standard 5 expressed similar sentiments. For instance, C5-L1 said:

There are some concepts which the teacher says in English which some of us do not really understand but others, like us do understand. Most learners do not know how to answer questions in English (FGD, February, 2016).

The extract above indicates that there was limited participation of learners in lesson activities due to use of English as a medium of instruction in teaching SES. These findings confirm what other researchers found in their studies in Malawi. Previous studies found that learners' participation was reduced whenever the teacher used English instead of a local language (Chilora, 2000; Kaphesi, 2001; Mkandawire, 2004; Mhango, 2008). For instance, Kaphesi (2001) found that learners' participation in lesson activities in standard five mathematics class greatly increased when the teacher used mother tongue in lessons. Mhango (2008) reports that there is little, but significant research findings that suggest that the use of English as a medium of class instruction in Malawi primary school classrooms reduces students' active participation. Proper use of language for communication in class promotes action learning based on the evidence that learning requires action and action requires learning (Hudson & Whisler, 2008). Use of English in standard 5 class, to some extent, negatively affected contextual teaching and learning.

Similarly, it was also noted that most learners in standard 7 had limited capability of using English during SES lessons. For instance, this is what I observed in a lesson on the relationship between government and political parties in that class:

Teacher 3: "Political parties form the government, they form what?"

Learners: "Form the government."

Teacher 3: "Political parties develop government policies, develop what?"

Learners: “Develop government policies.”

Teacher 3: “Political parties provide checks and balances, provide what?”

Learners: “Checks and balances.”

In the extract above, Teacher 3 was using repetition as a coping strategy to the challenge on use of English language as a medium of classroom instruction.

In that lesson, learners were just repeating what the teacher had said in order to understand the concepts. During the post-lesson interview, Teacher 3 said:

Most learners do not really understand when I teach in English. I make them repeat what I have said so that they understand the concepts. I want them to gain enough knowledge as you know, these learners will be writing examinations next year (Oral Interviews, February, 2016).

Teacher 3 indicated that she made her learners repeat what she had said in order to make them understand concepts in the lesson. Learners who were involved in this study expressed similar sentiments to those of their teacher. For instance, C7-L2 said:

Most of us do not know how to answer questions in English. Yes! Most learners do not understand what some concepts mean when they are said in English and also some are playful in class such that they miss some of the things that are being taught. (FGDs, February, 2016).

Use of English as a medium of instruction in standard 7 made the teacher to use coping strategies which promoted rote memorization among learners. For instance, Teacher 3 used to translate English concepts into Chitumbuka. There was also use of recitation of concepts by learners. The teacher also made learners to repeat what she had just said. Parroting leads learners to gain knowledge for short term memory. However, teachers are expected to use language in such a way that it makes learners gain knowledge for long term memory (Cleverian, 2008).

Therefore, parroting and code-switching did not help learners to process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames of reference (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Cleverian, 2008; Davtyan, 2014).

Effective teaching of SES is achieved when learners' individual differences are taken into consideration. Berns and Erickson (2001) state that considerations include learners' racial and ethnic backgrounds, their socioeconomic status, their primary household language, and any disabilities they may have. Therefore, the government policy on the use English language as a medium of instruction does not consider language diversity amongst learners in Malawi. In this connection, this study also found that Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) evidently made teachers use teaching approaches that promote memorization of content in learners.

4.6 Government Policy on Use of Mandatory Written Primary School Leaving

Certificate Examinations

In addition, the findings showed that the teachers involved in this study had challenges in teaching SES due to the demands of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE). This situation is compounded with the fact that the grade eight written examinations are the only gate-keeping tool for entrance into secondary school education (Chakwera, Khebo & Siraci, 2004; Mhango, 2008). Learners who fail in these examinations either repeat or drop out of school. Mhango (2008, p. 168) argues that while teachers emphasize on making learners pass standard eight examinations, the intended curriculum emphasizes students' acquisition of knowledge, and development of skills, values, and attitudes that are required for active civil life.

Although standard 3 is a lower class in the primary school in Malawi, the teaching of SES was according to the demands of PSLCE because the teacher aimed at making learners get used to memorising content. For instance, in a lesson on “identifying insects around the home and school” Teacher 1 used to borrow words from English in order to make learners understand the concepts. For example, Teacher 1 used to borrow words such as “gilasihopa” for Grasshopper, “inisekiti” for insect, “kokulochi” for cockroach and others (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

During post-lesson interview, Teacher 1 acknowledged that he teaches for knowledge acquisition and to prepare learners for PSLCE. For instance, responding to the question on how his teaching of SES is influenced by standard eight examinations, Teacher 1 said:

In my class, eee... not really. In fact, standard eight examinations do not contain questions from standard three work. However, I teach so that learners understand the concepts. They have to be used to know some of concepts in SES which may be necessary when they reach standard 8. If they don't answer questions correctly during lessons, I get concerned. I sometimes arrange for make-up lessons (Interview, February, 2016).

Similar sentiments were said by standard 3 learners during focus group discussions. For instance, C3-L6 said:

The teacher makes us stand and only those who answer the questions correctly sit down. We even recite the content that we learn in class when we go home (FGD, February, 2016).

In the same way, it was noted that the teaching of SES in standard 5 was also influenced by the demands of PSLCE. It was observed that Teacher 2 was teaching SES in order to prepare learners for PSLCE.

For instance, in a lesson on “Functions of traditional leaders” Teacher 2 used to translate concepts or sentences from English to Chitumbuka in order to make learners understand what was being taught. At the end of the lesson, Teacher 2 told learners to answer questions such as:

1. Mention any two traditional leaders that you know.
2. Give any two functions of the village headman.

Explaining on how PSLCE influenced the teaching of SES in his class Teacher 2 said:

Standard eight examinations come from the work that is covered in all classes from standard five to eight...In standard eight teachers do not have time to revise all the work from standard five to eight (Interview, February, 2016).

Teacher 2 indicated that he teaches SES so that learners memorise content to be used during PSLCE. Learners in standard 5 also had the similar views as their teacher. For instance, C5-L2 said:

The teacher gives us assignments to write at home. He also gives us notes to copy in our books for us to study during our free time....He gives us a test and makes us sit far from each other to avoid cheating (FGD, February, 2016).

The excerpt above indicates that Teacher 2 used assessment methods that aimed at measuring knowledge acquisition in learners. Teaching as well as assessment in standard 5 was being influenced by the demands of PSLCE.

Just like the other two classes, Teacher 3 had challenges in teaching SES in standard 7 due to the influence of PSLCE. It was noted that PSLCE influenced Teacher 3 to use teaching methods that promoted memorisation in learners.

For instance, on how PSLCE influenced the teaching of SES Teacher 3 said:

According to experience, standard eight examination come from anywhere. The examination contains some questions which are on what learners in the previous classes. Sometimes they go as far as standard five...That is why I

teach to finish the whole [SES] syllabus in my class. I want to prepare these learners for their examination next year (Oral Interviews, February 2016).

The above extract indicates that Teacher 3 was teaching in order to make learners acquire knowledge so that they pass PSLCE when they reach Standard 8 class. Similar sentiments were said by learners during focus group discussions. For instance C7-L5 said:

The teacher makes us to copy down notes so that when we go home we study from the books when we do not have anything to do after getting our meals. We study the notes to pass...We write an exercise at the end of every week. We also write a test at the end of the term (FGD, February, 2016).

PSLCE made the teacher to use teaching and assessment methods that could prepare learners for the examinations. For instance, Teacher 3 made learners to copy down notes for them to read and memorize the content which could be used during examinations. Even during lessons, it was observed that Teacher 3 used to ask questions that called for rote memorization of facts. Therefore, it can be concluded that Teacher 3 did not use authentic assessments in SES.

Generally, teachers who were involved in this study were teaching in order to prepare learners for PSLCE. This authenticates the findings of studies done elsewhere in the world where studies on how mandated examination affect the teaching of Social Studies indicated that teachers largely relied on textbooks to make learners acquire knowledge to be used during tests (Griffith, 1999; Kornblith & Lasser, 2004; Myers & Savage, 2005).

The findings in this case authenticate what other researchers elsewhere in the world have argued that standardised testing makes teachers to emphasize on rote learning practices (Grant, 2003; Kornblith & Lasser, 2004; Passe, 2006; Mhango, 2008).

For instance, Mhango (2008) indicates that the grade eight examinations emphasise the knowledge domain at the expense of the skills and attitudes domain. Putting too much emphasis on examinations makes teachers drift away from teaching approaches that prepare learners for their roles as active and participatory citizenry in the society (Brophy & Alleman, 1991; Mhango, 2008). Teachers, therefore, teach SES using rote learning classroom practices (Brophy & Alleman, 1991; Whelan, 1997; Grant, 2003; Kornblith & Lasser, 2004; Myers & Savege, 2005; Passe, 2006). Teachers emphasize on making learners memorize facts for the sake of passing in examinations.

Byars-Winston and Fouad (2008, p. 28) argue that contextual approaches distinguish that learning is a complex and multifaceted process that goes far beyond drill-oriented, stimulus-and-response methodologies. Teachers must realise individual differences of their learners in teaching as well as assessing learners in SES. Berns and Erickson (2001) suggest that teachers should use contextual teaching and learning approaches by addressing multiple intelligences.

4.7 Influence of Large Classes

Furthermore, the teachers of SES in this study faced a challenge of teaching large classes. In this study, large class is discussed on the basis of pupil to teacher ratio in a class. The issue of large classes is contextual in that what is seen as a large class in one country is not a large class in another country. For instance, Villoutreix (2012) indicates that some countries like Finland favour smaller class sizes (20 students or fewer)...however, other countries like Korea have much bigger classes (34 students and over) but also feature at the top of the PISA ranking.

In the Malawian context, a large or crowded classroom is where there are more learners in one class than the guidelines stipulated in the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) which indicates that the teacher/pupil ratio should be 1:60 (MoEST, 2008; Beni, 2009). In this study, it was noted that classes which were involved had more learners than the number recommended by the government. For instance, this is what I observed in Standard 3 class on 16th February, 2016: There were 107 learners present of these 59 were boys and 48 were girls. They were all sitting on the floor. Learners were seated in circles representing groups. There were nine groups in the classroom with each group having learners between 9 and 12 (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

From this observation, it is seen that standard 3 class was by way too large for contextual teaching and learning. Explaining about how high enrolment affects the teaching of SES in his class, Teacher 1 observed that:

In all I have 109 learners in my class. I have 61 boys and 48 girls....There is usually a problem when I want to use group discussion method. Also, when I want to use learners books, eee it becomes a problem. I have only 21 learners' books for the whole class. Any way, we do with what we have (Interview, February, 2016).

It was seen that standard 3 class had more learners than the learner/pupil ratio recommended by the government in Malawi. The large number of learners made the available learners' books be inadequate for use in SES. Lack of desks had its own negative effect in this class. Sitting on the floor was not conducive for the learners especially the girls. It was observed during lessons that girls were taking too long to stand up to respond to a question.

Similarly, the findings of this study indicated that Teacher 2 had a challenge of teaching a large class. For instance, in a lesson on “Administrative structure of the government,” This is what I observed: There were 101 learners present (54 boys and 47 girls). All the learners were sitting on the floor. Mobility of both the teacher and learners was also a challenge because learners were compacted in the classroom. There was little individual assistance by the teacher to learners. Teacher 2 mostly used lecture method (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

During an interview, Teacher 2 said:

I have 101 learners in my class, 54 boys and 47 girls. This puts a lot of pressure on me when it comes to sharing of resources during group activities. In addition, paying individual assistance also becomes a challenge (Interviews, February, 2016).

The extracts above indicate that large number of learners compromised active participation of learners in lesson activities.

The findings revealed that the large class to some extent compromised the interaction between the teacher and learners and also amongst the learners themselves. High class enrolment made the teacher to shift away from learner-centered and even self-directed methods towards the traditional, or classical, classroom learning where the teacher imparts knowledge and students receive it (Hudson and Whisler, 2008). The teacher found it difficult to effectively use active participatory methods such as group work, pair work, jig-saw methods and others.

Beni (2009, p. 23) reports that many teachers prefer to use lecture and demonstration methods rather than discussion method—neither small group discussion nor whole class discussion. Thus, large classes in Malawi make the enacted curriculum in teaching SES deviate from the planned outcome-based curriculum which uses interactive approaches (Mhango, 2008). Large classes, therefore, do not support contextual teaching and learning. Shea and Morgan (1979, p. 221) indicate that students interest and achievement improve drastically when they are helped to make connections between new knowledge and experiences they have had, or with other knowledge they have already mastered.

In addition, it was noted that large number of learners posed as a challenge to the teacher on the use of teaching and learning resources as well as giving individual assistance to learners when teaching SES. For instance, on how class enrolment affects the teaching of SES in standard 7, Teacher 3 had this to say

In my class I have 97 learners. I have 51 boys and 46 girls. I have 20 books to use during group work with this number of learners. Group work and question and answer methods are used in this class just to meet PCAR demands. Sometimes I find it difficult to mark an exercise for this large number of learners (Interview, February, 2016).

High enrolment in standard 7 made the teacher fail to provide adequate teaching and learning resources for the learners in standard 7. Besides, marking of learners' work was also a challenge to Teacher 3. Mr Mkhondo expressed similar views to those of Teacher 3. For instance, on how class enrolment affects teaching in respective classes at this school, Mr. Mkhondo said:

We have very many learners in each of the classes here which greatly affects teaching.... We were of the view that we split some of the classes, but the problem is that we don't have enough teachers. Just imagine, as of now there are only nine teachers at this school and one is on study leave. This gives a challenge on use of resources for teaching (Interview, February, 2016).

The findings indicated that Teacher 3 had a challenge to effectively use learner-centered methods such as group work, pair work, jig-saw methods and others due to large class. These findings authenticate what others studies on the effect of large classes found (Mhango, 2008; Murat, 2014; Adeyemi, M.B. 2015). For instance, Adeyemi (2015, p. 48) reports that [in Botswana] the teacher-students ratio is as high as 1:250 in some Social Studies classes and therefore, teacher –student interaction is difficult. Consequently, Beni (2009, p. 23) argues that many teachers prefer to use lecture and demonstration methods rather than discussion method—neither small group discussion nor whole class discussion.

Mhango (2008) reports that large classes in Malawi make the enacted curriculum in teaching [SES] deviate from the planned outcome-based curriculum which uses interactive approaches. Teacher 3 did not give individual assistance to learners for them to actively participate in problem solving and critical thinking during SES lessons. Shea and Morgan (1979, p. 221), indicate that students’ interest and achievement improve drastically when they are helped to make connections between new knowledge and experiences they have had, or with other knowledge they have already mastered. Therefore, large classes compromised the use of contextual teaching and learning.

4.8 Limited Teaching and Learning Resources for SES

Furthermore, teachers who were involved in this study had a challenge of teaching SES due to limited teaching and learning resources. There were few text books, no desks, no nature tables, and no charts on walls of the classroom.

For instance, in standard 3 I observed a lesson on “Identifying safety precautions in the home,” two copies of learners’ books were distributed in groups of nine or twelve learners. Then Teacher 1 told learners to discuss in their groups, measures for preventing the accidents which they saw in the illustration in their books on page 53 (MoEST, 2009b) (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

Generally, this was how learners’ books were used during SES lessons in Standard 3. It was also noted through lesson observations that standard 3 had inadequate text books. In a post-lesson interview, I was interested in knowing why he used the illustration in the book. Teacher 1 said:

In fact, I know that it was difficult for all learners to see the illustration from the book.... Well, I may add to say, I would have used diagrams but I do not have chart paper and petal pens (Interview, February, 2016).

The findings indicated that there was limited use of contextual teaching of SES in standard 3 due to inadequate teaching and learning resources. Learners also expressed that there were inadequate teaching and learning resources in their class. For instance, C3-L2 said:

We use learners’ books. However, the learners’ books are not enough for all of us. Two are given per group (FGD, February, 2016).

The findings showed that the limited number of learners’ books in standard 3 class compromised the use of contextual teaching and learning in SES.

Books promote contextual teaching and learning because they make children learn through inquiry method. Inquiry-based learning is a multi-faceted activity that involves making observations; examining books and other sources of information to see what is already known in light of experimental evidence (National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, 1996). However, in this class it was noted that some learners were not benefiting from books during lessons because learners' books were inadequate. Some learners were not able to access learners' books during SES lessons.

Similarly, Teacher 2 had a challenge in teaching SES in standard 5 due to limited teaching and learning resources. However, Teacher 2 was able to use his long experience in the teaching profession to use other resources apart from those that were indicated in the teachers' guide. For instance, in a lesson on "District Administrative Structures," this is what I observed: Teacher 2 told learners to discuss the importance of interdependence of administrative structures by studying an illustration on page 29 in the learners' book (MoEST, 2009c). He then drew on the chalkboard a diagram similar to the illustration in the learners' books. Later on, three girls and four boys did a role play on the interdependence of administrative structures (Lesson Observation, February, 2016).

In post-lesson interview, Teacher 2 indicated that he used a diagram that was drawn on the chalk board because he had inadequate learners' books in his class. Teacher 2 said:

I knew that learners' books were not adequate enough for all learners to see the diagram. The diagram on the chalkboard made everyone to see. However, I would have drawn the diagram on a chart paper if I had some. Unfortunately, we don't have chart paper at this school (Interview, February, 2016).

The findings indicate that standard 5 class had inadequate teaching and learning resources such as learners' books. Besides this, the teacher did not have chart paper and petal pens. The findings in this study authenticate what other researchers elsewhere in the world found that teachers in primary schools face challenges of finding teaching and learning resources (Survey, 1981; Jarolimek, 1982; Passe, 2006; Jotia & Matlale, 2011). Therefore, Teacher 2 used a diagram drawn on chalk board. MIE (2008) states that such visual aids help learners to learn through seeing. However, the absence of chart paper made the teacher to take a lot of time drawing a diagram that would have been drawn in advance on a chart paper. No wonder it was observed that this lesson was concluded in a haste. On the other hand, using learners in a simulation activity helped learners in the class to connect what they learnt to what happens in real life situations. Hudson and Whisler (2008, p. 55) indicate that the connection process in contextual teaching and learning makes learners tie what they have learned to real-life scenario.

Similarly, the findings indicated that Teacher 3 also had limited, in some cases, no teaching and learning resources such as text books, chart papers and learners' desks. The absence of some teaching and learning resources negatively affected the teaching of SES in this class. For instance, during one lesson, Teacher 3 was teaching on the relationship between government and political parties. In that lesson, she used a diagram which she took long time drawing on the chalkboard.

The following diagram was used to explain the structure of most political parties:

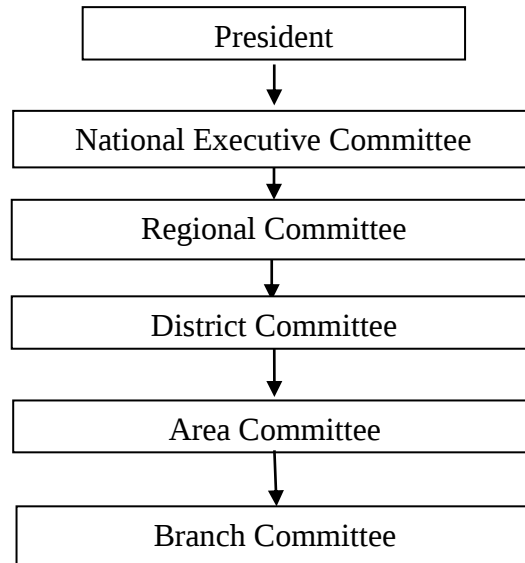


Figure 1: Structure of political parties

The inadequacy of learners' books made Teacher 3 to take too much time drawing a diagram on the chalkboard yet the same diagram was in learners' books. Explaining why she drew the diagram on the chalk board while it was already in the learners' book Teacher 3 said:

I don't have enough learners' books for the class. In fact, I wanted to use a chart paper to help me explain what I prepared to teach. Of course, the school does not buy chart paper. I had to make draw on the chalkboard for every learner to see. Sir, if you have some chart paper at school, please help us [In a joking manner] (Interview, February, 2016).

The findings indicate that shortage and lack of teaching and learning resources reduced active participation of learners during SES lessons in standard 7. These findings authenticate the findings of other studies in some parts of the Africa (Asimeng-Boahane, 2000; Mautle, 2000).

For instance, Asimeng-Boahane (2000) indicates that there is a serious lack of instructional materials for teaching Social Studies such as conventional materials like textbooks, audio, audio-visual and other resources that are technologically related in Africa in general. Shortage and/or lack of teaching and learning resources reduced inquiry-based learning in SES in standard 7. Inquiry-based learning is a multi-faceted activity that involves making observations; examining books and other sources of information to see what is already known in light of experimental evidence (National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, 1996). However, in standard 7 class some learners were not benefiting from books during SES lessons because learners' books were inadequate. This is in contrast to the Malawi Government policy on the availability of teaching and learning resources. MoEST (2008) indicates that a vital prerequisite to improved learning is the availability of sufficient teaching and learning materials and so a pupil-textbook ratio of 1:1 is still targeted.

Lack of teaching and learning resources in these classes validates what observers in Malawi have indicated that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology lacks commitment in the implementation of the planned curriculum. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has shown little commitment to tackle problems that affect the quality of education in Malawi (Kaambakadzanja, 2001; Nsapato; 2005; Mhango, 2008). Teachers involved in this study did not adequately use teaching and learning resources in teaching SES. Contextual teaching and learning approaches require the use of teaching and learning resources during lessons.

Building upon this understanding, contextual teaching and learning theory focuses on the multiple aspects of any learning environment, whether a classroom, a playground, a worksite, or even in a society (Davtyan, 2014). MIE (2008, p. 43) indicates that teaching and learning resources help learners to learn through inquiry, observing, touching and evaluating. Lack of and inadequate teaching and learning resources compromised the use of CTL in these classes.

4.9 Possible Solutions to the Challenges Facing the Teaching of SES

This chapter discusses the solutions that the teachers involved in this study suggested in order to overcome the challenges that face the teaching of SES. Firstly, these teachers suggested that teaching of SES can improve if teachers are involved in professional development activities. For instance, Teacher 1 said:

It is a long time when I learnt some teaching methods such as jig saw, and others. I personally feel the Ministry should organise refresher courses for us (Interview, February, 2016).

From the above excerpt, Teacher 1 suggested that some challenges can be solved if teachers get involved in professional development programmes. Such programmes can help to improve classroom management in the teaching of SES. According to MIE (2008, p. 41), classroom management refers to a number of activities that teachers normally use in order to maintain classroom conditions that facilitate and promote effective and efficient teaching and learning environment. Teacher 1 suggested that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should be organising continuous professional development (CPD) seminars and workshops for teachers.

Similarly, Teacher 2 suggested that the challenges that he faced in the teaching of SES can be overcome by continuous professional development (CPD) activities. For instance, Teacher 2 said:

With new innovations in the Ministry of Education, some of the teaching approaches are challenging even to the head teacher as well. I think we need professional support from the ministry (Interview, February, 2016).

From the excerpt above, Teacher 2 suggested that he can effectively teach SES if he gets involved in professional development seminars or workshops. Sometimes teachers fail to prepare, let alone use teaching and learning resources, because they had not been given relevant skills to enable them improvise and produce some of the materials (Chibwana, 1999, p. 18). Some primary school teachers were not oriented on the use of learner-centered methods when PCAR was introduced in Malawi. Chulu and Chiziwa (2012, p. 15) report that:

While there are some evidence that students are exposed to the new OBE curriculum and that teachers are using the interactive group activities, teachers are finding it hard to implement the assessment reform because the orientation did not adequately prepare them for the tasks

The excerpt above indicates that Teacher 2 needed orientation on proper use of learner-centered methods. Learner-centered methods promote contextual learning if they are used to make learners connect content to the context in which it will be used in everyday life. Dijkstra (1998) indicates that although contextual teaching and learning is a relatively new concept in the field of education, its principles and practices have been around for centuries. Therefore, teachers are supposed to be made aware of how to use such approaches in the teaching of SES.

One of the suggestions that Teacher 3 made was that teachers should be involved in professional development if the teaching of SES has to improve in primary schools.

For instance, Teacher 3 had this to say:

Most of us have been teaching for so many years without refresher courses. We do not know some of the innovations that come in the education system (Interviews, February, 2016).

Although PCAR advocates for the use of learner-centered methods, the teacher's role in classroom cannot be neglected at all costs. Souders (1999) states that the teachers role is to guide, discuss, question, listen, and clarify. From the excerpt above, it is noted that Teacher 3 suggests that teaching of SES in primary schools can improve if teachers are involved in continuous professional development (CPD) seminars or workshops. Such activities help in the professional growth of teachers. It is important that CPD be rejuvenated to support teachers (Chulu & Chiziwa, 2012, p. 14). Schools can organize CPDs to help teachers on the new changes on the use of teaching methodologies. Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft (2009, p. 135) state that well-organised and regular CPDs can have a significant impact on teaching and learning because it is tailored to the needs of both teachers and schools. Through these CPDs teachers can learn how to actively engage learners during lesson activities. Teaching SES at primary school can be interesting and rewarding activity only when teachers know what content and methodologies they can employ (Dube, 2009).

It can be argued that the teacher is the central figure in solving most of the challenges that affect the teaching of SES. Effective education occurs as a result of development of teachers in content-knowledge, pedagogical skills, and high standards for themselves and their learners (Benner, Bell & Broemmel, 2011). Good classroom management makes learners to derive maximum benefit from the given instruction. If effective teaching of SES is to be achieved then the teacher should be the central focus (Chisamba, 2014). Teacher 1 suggested that continuous professional development workshops or seminars can help to improve the teaching of SES in primary schools.

Furthermore, Teacher 1 suggested that the school administration can help to improve the teaching of SES in primary schools. For instance, Teacher 1 had this to say:

Sometimes I use teaching methods that I feel are learner-centered methods. However, I later realize that the methods that I was using in a particular lesson were not really actively engaging learners. I think it is better that the head teacher or his deputy makes frequent supervisions to assist us in the way we teach (Interview, February, 2016).

Considering what Teacher 1 said, the school administration may assist the teacher on the use of teaching methods. School administrators conduct internal supervisions at the school therefore, they may advise teachers on the use of teaching methods as well as preparation and use of teaching and learning resources.

In addition, Teacher 2 indicated that the school administration should help in professional development of teachers through supervisions. For instance, Teacher 2 had this to say:

The head teacher and his deputy need to make frequent supervisions which is not the case at the moment. Besides, the administration should help in provision of teaching and learning resources (Interview, February, 2016).

The findings show that the school administrators have a role to play in the improvement of teaching of SES in primary schools. According to Mhango (2008, p. 175), one way of tapping and exploiting teachers' practical knowledge could be organizing seminars for teachers at various levels of the existing education structure. School administrators should organise in-house workshops where teachers can share experiences in teaching methods as well as in preparation and use of teaching and learning resources. Besides, the school administration can help in providing teaching and learning resources. All these can help to promote active learner participation during lessons.

In addition, Teacher 3 suggested that the school administration can help to solve the challenges that face the teaching of SES in her class. For instance, Teacher 3 had this to say:

The school administration can help us if the class can be split into two. Besides, the school administration should find a way of finding funds to purchase some teaching and learning materials (Interview, February, 2016).

The above excerpt indicates that the school administration can help to solve some challenges that affected the teaching of SES in standard 7 such as large class, inadequate teaching and learning resources and others. Teacher 3 suggested that the large class needed to be split. However, the head teacher had contradictory views to those of Teacher 3. For instance, Mr. Mkhondo said:

You know, being in an area where fishing industry takes place, the population is high. We thought of splitting the classes but stills it is a challenge. We don't have enough teachers as well as classrooms. We live it to the teachers to know how best they can use what they have at moment. Probably in-service courses would help these teachers in this respect (Interview, February, 2016).

From the extract overleaf, it is noted that the head teacher suggested that teachers need to be competent in classroom management in order to effectively teach their learners. Teacher should know how to teach in case of challenges such as large classes. According to DuBey, Coe DuBey and Ndagi (1985, p. 138) children can actively participate in class activities if they have developed enough self-control to concentrate on their group activity despite the fact that there are four or five other groups working on different activities around them. This can be debatable considering that there are also individual differences among learners.

To some extent, it depends upon the teacher to create a conducive class environment if learning is to take place. DuBey, Coe DuBey and Ndagi (1985, p. 139) suggest that the teacher is to turn a most difficult classroom environment into a learning environment. In looking at the classroom environment, consideration should be focused on the pupils, the classroom, materials and the teachers themselves. Teachers should attempt to produce adequate teaching and learning resources to cater for the large classes. However, it can be argued that sometimes the school administration can initiate other means of finding teaching and learning resources rather than depending on commercial teaching and learning resources. For instance, the school can organise in-house workshops where teachers can help each other on ways of producing teaching and learning resources by using locally available resources.

In addition, the teachers involved in this study suggested that the Directorate of Basic Education should publish text books in a language suiting the context in which they will be used. In an interview on what ought to be done so that he teaches SES effectively, Teacher 1 said:

I personally feel it can be good if text books are written in Chitumbuka if teaching is taught in Chitumbuka. At least this is supposed to be considered by the authorities (Interview, February, 2016).

Similar sentiments were expressed by the head teacher, Mr. Mkhondo who said:

The policy on the use of English somehow puts pressure on teachers as well as learners. Probably, it is better if there are Chitumbuka books for all schools in the north [Northern Education Division of Malawi]. Just translate Chichewa books into Chitumbuka. (Interview, February, 2016).

For the teacher to be effective, there must be clear communication between the teacher and the learners. DuBey, Coe DuBey and Ndagi (1985, p. 159) state that if a teacher cannot communicate with the pupils properly, they will not understand him and will find learning his lesson difficult. Teacher 1 agreed that if teaching of SES is to improve in primary schools in Malawi, then use of English as a medium of classroom instruction should be one issue of focus. Teacher 1 indicated that he would use text books with great ease if they were written in local language. DuBey, Coe DuBey and Ndagi (1985) indicate that for communication between the teacher and the learner to be effective, the teacher's language must be simple, clear and to the point. However this is debatable because in Malawi there are so many languages or dialects such that the government cannot be able to publish text books to meet all the different languages used in different parts of the country.

Furthermore, Teacher 2 indicated that some of the challenges faced in the teaching of SES can be overcome if the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, through the Directorate of Basic Education can be involved in one way or the other. For instance, Teacher 2 said:

The Ministry of Education should make SES either to be taught in English right from standard 3 or it has to be taught in Chitumbuka right from that class. In addition, I have been in this profession for so long but we do not get updated on the new approaches of teaching (Interviews, February, 2016).

From this excerpt, Teacher 2 suggested that the Department of Basic Education should be organising CPDs for teachers. Davtyan, (2014) suggests that teachers can learn how to implement contextual learning through professional development. CPDs can help to equip teachers with necessary teaching and learning resources and also help them to use the theory of contextual teaching and learning and use it in classroom activities. A teacher of SES has to be abreast of the innovations in teaching methods (Odekunle, 2015). However, CPDs can as well be organised at school level under the school administration. Teachers of SES in primary schools can help each other in skill development through conducting in-house workshops. These can be organised at no cost.

Furthermore, Teacher 3 suggested that the Directorate of Basic Education (DBE) can help to improve the teaching of SES if it can be involving teachers in some stages of curriculum development and implementation.

For instance, Teacher 3 said:

There are some innovations that come but teachers do not get refresher courses. In addition, the Directorate of Basic Education does not involve teachers when coming up with new innovations and policies. At least they need our suggestions, you know (Interview, February, 2010).

Teacher 3 suggested that the DBE should be engaging teachers when coming up with policies. In addition, she suggested that the DBE should provide capacity building through in-service training.

These findings are similar to what other researchers in Malawi found in their studies. For instance, Chisamba (2013) indicates that teachers' involvement will enable to bring to light what is really on the ground. However, consideration should be made on the calibre of teachers to be involved in making policies in education. Mhango (2008) indicates that an important element that the SES curriculum organizers need to consider critically is the inclusion of teachers who can offer better insights about forms of classroom practical knowledge.

On the challenge that comes due to demands of PSLCE, the teachers in this study indicated that MANEB should change the mode of assessing learners if the teaching of SES has to improve. For instance, during an interview Teacher 1 said:

I teach to finish the SES syllabus. At the end of the third term I will have to ask learners everything that they learnt from the first term. Learners should be ready to answer questions during terminal tests. We shall always teach to make learners understand concepts as long as learners are assessed through written tests in primary school (Interview, February, 2016).

During lesson observations, it was noted that Teacher 1 used to assess learners in the acquisition of knowledge rather than assessing learners to promote further learning. For instance, he frequently used the "What...?" questions. Written examinations promote rote memorization in learners. MANEB can help to promote contextual teaching and learning of SES in primary schools in Malawi if it uses authentic assessment methods.

Authentic assessment is a process of collecting data which gives information about the learners' learning development (Cleverian, 2008). MANEB should use continuous assessment which assesses learners in other aspects such as skills, values and attitudes. Mhango (2008) states that as regard to the Social Studies citizenship curriculum, activities involving project studies and field studies offer best opportunities for assessment of learners.

On the influence that PSLCE has in teaching SES, Teacher 2 suggested that MANEB should change the mode of assessing learners. Teacher 2 said:

Teaching of SES, and indeed other subjects, will always aim at making learners gain knowledge for examinations sake unless MANEB changes the way of assessing learners in primary schools (Interview, February, 2016).

Similar sentiments were expressed by the head teacher, Mkhondo. Mkhondo said:

The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination results in the past four years have been somehow good...Unless MANEB uses other methods of assessing standard eight learners, teachers will always teach to make learners pass examinations. Sometimes it can be helpful if continuous assessments can be used instead of mandatory standard eight written examinations (Interview, February, 2016).

From the extracts above, Teacher 2 suggested that MANEB should use other forms of assessing learners. For instance, MANEB can use continuous assessments or assessing learners in school-based or community-based projects. These projects can be characterized as assignments in which an individual or a group of learners can create some useful, authentic finished product or service that is community-based or school-based in nature (Smith, 2010). This type of assessment can help to assess learners in other domains such as skills, values and attitudes.

For instance, (Mhango, 2008) suggests that schools can organise their standard eight students to carry out such various projects based on their relevance and practicability of the projects to the schools' social and physical settings. Such projects can help learners to have hands-on experience in dealing with social and environmental issues in their society. Besides, when learners can get engaged in such projects, it would create an opportunity for them to interact with elders and experts in social, economic and political settings.

Furthermore, just like the other teachers in this study, Teacher 3 suggested that MANEB should modify assessment methods if the teaching of SES is to improve. Teacher 3 had this to say:

Learners in standard eight examinations are assessed through written examinations that is why I teach my learners to understand the content so that they do not face challenges when they go in standard eight. I cannot waste time with other things when I know that my learners will write an examination in standard eight. If anything, MANEB should use alternative ways of assessing learners, say continuous assessments (Interviews, February, 2016).

Teacher 3 suggested that continuous assessments (CA), unlike mandatory standard 8 written examinations, can help to improve the teaching of SES in her class. However, the main challenge at present is that standard eight examinations pose as a bottle neck to further education levels. For instance, out of the 249, 031 candidates who sat for the 2015 examinations 168, 221 qualified for the award of the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education representing a 67. 6 pass rate (Face of Malawi, 2015).

In Malawi, some of the learners who qualify for PSLCE get selected either to Boarding Secondary Schools or to Community Day Secondary Schools. Learners who do not get selected enrol with the Open Day Secondary Schools. Those who do not qualify either repeat in standard eight or drop out of school. Learners who drop out of school can benefit a lot if they have skills, values and positive attitudes for them to be active and participatory citizens in the society. Unless MANEB uses CA to assess other domains such as skills, values and attitudes, teachers will still teach for knowledge domain. Mhango (2008) states that as regard to the Social Studies citizenship curriculum, activities involving project studies and field studies offer best opportunities for assessment of learners.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. The findings indicated that to some extent, teachers had challenges to use contextual teaching and learning in the teaching of SES. Teachers did not actively engage learners in activities so as to help them relate content to real life contexts in which that content could be used. In the process, challenges that the teachers faced in teaching SES in the three classes, which in turn affected were exposed. Therefore, an exploration on possible solutions to the challenges for future development of contextual teaching and learning was made.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.0 Chapter Overview

This study aimed at exploring how teachers in primary schools in Malawi use contextual teaching and learning in SES. This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations of the study. The last part of the chapter suggests some areas for further research in the teaching of SES in primary schools Malawi.

5.1 Conclusions

The main research question guiding the study was: How do teachers in primary schools in Malawi use contextual teaching and learning in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences? This question was expanded by three sub-questions. One conclusion is that the findings of the study have shown that teachers largely adopted the use of learner-centered methods such as group discussions, question and answer, group work and role play. However, these teaching methods were used in a very teacher-centered manner. Teaching of SES was aimed at making learners acquire knowledge at the expense of other domains such as skill, attitude and values. Therefore, it can be concluded that grade eight examinations forced teachers to adopt learner-centered classroom approaches which were used in teacher-centered manner. This reduced active learners' participation in lesson activities. Therefore, there was limited use of contextual teaching and learning.

Effective teaching of SES entails that learners are given opportunities to actively participate in activities during lessons. Teachers should use approaches that are context driven (Howey, 1998, p. 19) and see learning environments as existing both within and outside the school setting (Chiarelott, 2006). Smith (2010) indicates that active strategies are viewed as methods that help students connect the content to real-world situations, master subject matter, and improve achievement. It can be concluded that to a larger extent, the teaching of SES in this study did not help learners to relate content to real life situations.

CTL assumes that the mind naturally seeks meaning in the context and does so by searching for relationships that make sense and appear useful to learners (Hull, 1995; Schell, 2001). Teachers did not engage learners either in school-based projects or community-based projects as well. This contradicts contextual teaching and learning approaches that create scenarios where learners actively explore the content in order to reach a goal, solve a problem, complete a project, or answer a question (Hudson & Whisler, 2008).

Another conclusion that can be drawn in this study is that there were some challenges that teachers faced which affected the teaching of SES. Teachers had challenges in using some teaching methods that actively engage learners such as group work and discussion methods. They also had challenges in preparing and using teaching and learning resources in teaching SES. Teachers' failure to use teaching methods and resources effectively was to some extent due to incompetence of the teachers themselves.

Teachers also had challenges to effectively teach SES due to government policies on use of English as a medium of classroom instruction and mandatory PSLCE. Consequently, these teachers did not use the instructional methods that help learners to connect the content they were learning to the life contexts in which that content could be used. For instance, use of English as a medium of instruction made teachers to use coping strategies to make learners understand concepts. Contextual teaching and learning takes place when learners use a language that is in their context (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Hudson & Whisler, 2008). Teachers had challenges to relate what was being taught into the context of real world in order to make learners answer the question of “why do we have to learn this.” Teachers used learner-centered methods that promoted knowledge acquisition.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of this study is that teachers failed to actively engage learners in SES lesson activities due to large classes. MoEST (2008, p. 22) reports that the average primary student to classroom ratio (PCR) increased from 105:1 in 2011/2012 to 124:1 in 2012/2013 school year. This was the situation at Yunkhwa Primary School where the PCR of the classes which were involved in this study was 98:1. In addition, teachers failed to actively engage learners during lessons due to inadequate teaching and learning resources. Contextual teaching and learning occurs when teaching and learning resources are available. However, it is the responsibility of the teacher to prepare teaching and learning resources for lessons. In some cases, the school administration did not provide required teaching and learning resources to teachers of SES.

Furthermore, on the question regarding how the challenges facing the teaching of SES be overcome for future development of contextual teaching and learning, some suggestions have been put forward. The findings in this study revealed that teaching of SES in primary schools can improve if teachers and other stake holders work hand in hand in solving the problems that are currently affecting the teaching of this learning area. Teachers' views indicated that, among other things, effective teaching comes as a result of effective teacher education and teacher development. On this one, the findings indicated that teachers' competence in teaching SES can improve if teachers can be involved in professional development or workshops seminars.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of the study is that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should review the policy on use of English as a medium of classroom instruction. For instance, teachers used code-switching, translation and recitation to overcome the challenge posed by use of English as a medium of classroom instruction. This compromised the teaching of SES in this study. It can be argued that effective teaching of SES requires that English should be used as a medium of instruction for all subjects/learning areas, except Chichewa, from standard 1 through standard 8.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that the teaching of SES can improve if MANEB uses other forms of assessing standard 8 learners. For example, it was concluded that it is better if MANEB uses authentic assessment which evaluates a student's application of knowledge and complex thinking, rather than rote recall of factual information (Berns & Erickson, 2001).

5.2 Recommendations

This section makes some recommendations based on the findings of the study. These are recommendations can promote the use of contextual teaching and learning in SES in primary schools in Malawi.

One recommendation is that the MoEST should provide teachers with incentives. Teachers need to be motivated through good salaries and promotions. The MoEST should provide teachers of SES with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for professional growth. These CPDs can range from working with colleagues through short INSET courses to longer seminars or workshops for them to gain further qualifications. Teachers of SES can learn how to use principles of contextual teaching and learning through such CPDs. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through the Department of Basic Education and school administrators, has a role to play by organising CPDs for teachers.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the school administration, in collaboration with the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), should assist teachers through frequent supervisions and offer professional support to teachers. Besides, the school administration should be there to organise in-service workshops and seminars. CPD programmes are very important otherwise teachers may never change the habits they developed in their first year. Teachers can be offered a rare opportunity to share skills on teaching methods and teaching and learning resources during such workshops and seminars so that they actively engage learners during lessons.

On the teaching and learning resources, there is need for the Malawi Government to provide these teaching and learning materials such as SES textbooks, atlases, globes, and other relevant teaching resources to schools. The schools should in turn take care of the teaching materials once provided by the government. Teachers should also take an initiative to write some hand-outs that can be used in the teaching of SES. Parents should also take an active role to provide some teaching and learning resources for their children. In this way, children will find SES relevant to their lives.

In addition, it is recommended that Teacher Training Colleges should orient student-teachers on how to use principles of CTL. Lecturers themselves should apply principles of CTL when training student-teachers in colleges. This in turn, will make student-teachers apply the principles of CTL in teaching SES in primary schools after graduating from TTCs.

Finally, it is recommended that the MANEB should find better modes of assessing learners in standard eight. Teachers will continue using teaching approaches that promote rote memorization of information in as long as MANEB continues using written examinations for assessing standard eight learners. Therefore, the recommendation to MANEB is that it should find alternative methods of assessing values, skills, and positive attitudes besides knowledge domain. For instance, continuous assessment can be used to make teachers engage learners in project-based learning. MANEB could come up with a rubric for assessing knowledge, skills, attitudes, values in such projects by children.

5.3 Areas for Further Research

1. Investigating the perception of teachers towards the teaching of SES in primary schools and their impact on learners' performance.
2. Exploring alternative methods of assessing learners in primary schools in Malawi which can promote contextual teaching and learning in SES.
3. Exploring the impact of double shift on the use of contextual teaching and learning in SES.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. It has also highlighted the areas for further study in order to develop further the body of knowledge on the teaching of SES using contextual teaching and learning approaches. Its main argument is that teachers largely adopted learner-centered methods of teaching which were used in more teacher-centeredness. These teaching methods did not actively engage learners to promote contextual teaching and learning due to some challenges. Recommendations have been made on how the teaching of SES can be improved to promote contextual teaching and learning in primary schools in Malawi. There is a need to improve the teaching of SES using principles of contextual teaching and learning. This will help the teaching-learning process to go beyond knowledge level by also promoting the development of skills, positive values and attitudes on social and environmental issues among learners in primary schools in Malawi.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for the Head Teacher

A. Background Information

1. What are your educational qualifications?
2. Where did you go for school?
3. When did you join the teaching profession?
4. How long have you been in this position?

B. Lesson Supervisions

5. How many times do you supervise the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences in each class in a term?
6. What challenges do teachers face when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences lessons?
7. How do you help the teachers to overcome these challenges?
8. What methods of teaching are often used in teaching Social and environmental Sciences?
9. What type of assessment do teachers often use in Social and Environmental Sciences?

D. Assistance to Teachers

10. What type of assistance do you give to teachers of Social and Environmental Sciences?

Thank you so much for accepting to attend this interview.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Teachers

A. Methods of teaching

1. What are the teaching methods that you mostly use in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences?
2. What challenges, if any, do you face when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences using the teaching methods that you have mentioned?
3. What do you do to overcome these challenges?

B. Teaching and Learning Resources

4. What teaching, learning and assessment resources do you often use when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences?
5. How do these teaching resources help in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences?

C. Engaging Learners in Activities

6. In what activities do you engage your learners when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences:
(a).in class? (b). outside class? (c). in the society?

D. Assessment Used in Social and Environmental Sciences

7. What type of assessment do you often use in Social and Environmental Sciences in your class?
8. How does the type of assessment you use often help your learners?

E. Support from the School Administration

9. What kind of support do you get from the school in preparing for teaching Social and Environmental Sciences in your class?

Thank You for Participating in this Study.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners

A. Methods of Teaching

1. What teaching methods does your teacher often use in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences?*(Kasi ni nthowa uli zakusambizgira izo asambizi winu wakutemwa kugwiriska ntchito mu chisambizgo cha SES?)*
2. How do these teaching methods help you when learning Social and Environmental Sciences?*(Kasi nthowa izi mwazunula apa zikumuwovwirani uli pakusambira SES?)*

B. Teaching and Learning Resources

What type of teaching resources does your teacher often use when teaching Social and Environmental Sciences? *(Kasi ni vinthuu uli vakusambizgira ivo asambizi winu wakutemwa kugwiriska ntchito mu chisambizgo cha SES?)*

How do these resources help you in learning Social and Environmental Sciences? *(Kasi nthowa izi mwazunula apa zikumuwovwirani uli pakusambira SES?)*

C. Learner Involvement in Activities

3. Give examples of the activities that your teacher engages you in during Social and Environmental Sciences lessons:
 - (a). in class(b). at school but outside the class(c). in the community. *(Pelekani viyezgelero va ntcito izo mukupanga pakusambira SES mu (a) kilasi (b) pa sukulu (c) ku mizi kwinu.*
4. What benefits do you get when the teacher engages you in these activities in Social and Environmental Sciences?*(Kasi ni phindu uli ilo mukusanga pala mukupanga ntchito izo mwayowoya pa kasambiliro ka SES?)*

D. Methods of Assessment

5. What type of assessment does your teacher often use in Social and Environmental Sciences? *(Kasi ni nthowa uli yakulingira kakwelero iyo asambizi winu wakutemwa kugiriska ntchito mu SES?)*
6. What challenges do you face when your teacher uses this type of assessment? *(Kasi ni suzgo uli ilo mukusanga pala asambizi wakugwiriska nthowa iyi yakulingira kakwelero?)*

Thank you so much for accepting to attend this interview. There are a lot of things that we have shared in this interview.

Appendix 4: Lesson Observation Guide

Name of teacher:.....		Date :.....
Class :.....		Time :.....
Subject :.....		Enrolment :.....
Topic :.....		Attendance:.....
Criteria to Observe	Comments	
Lesson Preparation • Richness of the success criteria. • Richness of the suggested resources. • Adequacy and richness of the activities. • Relevance of the planned methods.		
Lesson Delivery • Relevance and adequacy of methods. • Learner engagement in activities. • Relevance and adequacy of resources. • Connection to real life contexts.		
Conclusion • Use of authentic assessment. • Promotion of further learning.		
General Remarks		

Lesson observed by:.....

Appendix 5: Sample Interview Transcript with a Teacher

School :..... Date:.....

Name of Teacher :..... Time:.....

Class :.....

BM: Good morning madam. My name is Baxter Chilango Chisavu Munthali. I am a 2nd year Master of Education (Social Studies) student at Chancellor College. The purpose of this study is to explore the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools in Malawi. Before we proceed, let me thank you so much that you accepted to participate in this study and that you have made yourself available to be interviewed in this area. I would also like to assure you that all your responses will be treated with confidentiality and will be strictly used for academic purposes. I will analyse the data and I hope you will have an opportunity to look at the information which you will provide in this interview and certify that it is true. Corrections will be made where necessary. I would like you to feel free because our interactions here are only for academic purposes.

T3: I am Ms. Mkhondo(*pseudonym*) and I teach here at Yunkhwa(*pseudonym*) Primary School. I teach SES in Standards 6 and 7. I also teach Life skills in Standard 8. I have taught in primary schools for nine years. This is my third school since I started teaching. Currently I am studying for a Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counselling with the University of Mzuzu as an Open and Distance Education student.

BM: Ok. So when did you come to this school?

T3: I joined this school last year. Eee that was towards the end of 2014. I think it was in October because I wanted to be at this school as I do my studies at Mzuzu University.

BM: That was good thinking, anyway. Now let's come to the teaching of SES especially we will be looking at standard 7.

(NB: The section above was translated from Chitumbuka to English. The Chitumbuka version of this section has not been included in order to save space)

BM: What are the teaching methods that you mostly use in teaching SES in standard 7?

(Ok napulikiska ilo ni suzgo yayi. Kasi ni nthowa wuli zakusambizgira, panji titi teaching methods izo mukugwiriska tchito kanandi pakussambizga SES mu standard 7)

T3: The teaching methods that I used most of the times are question and answer, explanation, group work, and discussion.

(Kanandi khugwiriska ntchito question and answer, explanation, group work na discussion)

BM: Why do you prefer using these teaching methods when teaching SES?

T3: In case of group work, I use it because it gives learners a chance to teach each other, because if sometimes a teacher just says "let me explain" it appears as if you are lecturing yet it may happen that learners have something they want to explain so in group work they tend to explain themselves and for question and answer, you tend to check where learners do not understand, and in discussion it happens that sometimes there is something that they already know so you have to discuss with them because sometimes you hear from learners the misconceptions that they had....so from those answers you correct something wrong.

(mmm ngati group work vikuchitika kuti ma learners ghala wekha wakusambizgana, they have something in their minds so they have got answers so sometimes ma answer ghawo ghala ghakuwanga nyengo zinyake kuti iwe ungafikira waka kuti let us explain kukhala

ngati you are lecturing in the end wana wala panyake iwo wakuwanga kuti wanachawo icho iwo wakukhumba kupanga explain so in group work they try to express themselves soo pa question and answer kukuwa kuti ukuwona kuti kasi apa wana wakuleka kupulika ni mphani? Pa madiscussion ghala nyengo zinyake still more they have something to kuti wakumanya so you have to discuss with them chifukwa you sometimes hear from learners “ine nkhatunge wakuti....” So from those answers you correct something wrong).

BM: What challenges, if any, do you face when teaching SES using the teaching methods that you have mentioned?

T3: Mmmm yes there are some challenges because the learners face language problem because English language becomes difficult for learners *sono kuti wapange express chinthu* within the English language it becomes difficult).

BM: Ok. So what do you do to overcome these challenges?

(Ok. Sono mukuchita wuli kuti muchepeske masuzgo agha?)

T3: Sometimes they do answer but when they ask, I do help them on that word.

(Sometimes they do answer kweni akafunsa I help them out that word in English).

BM: Alright, mmm what teaching and learning resources do you often use when teaching SES?

T3: Mmm I use question and answer, on assessment, papers. But during teaching and learning process, I use mmm pictures, learner’s books, and then local environment.

(Mmm Question and answer, pa assessment ma papers. Kweni pala tili nga pakusambizga I use mmm pictures, ma books ghawo ghala, then local environment, learners experience).

BM: How do these teaching resources help in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences?

T3: They are helpful because let us say you are using pictures, there are some concepts that are not available in Malawi but you still teach about them so it gives a picture of how that item looks like.

(Vikuwovwira chifukwa ngeti let's say you are using ma picture, pali vinthu vinyake ivo muno mu Malawi mulije, we are still teaching them kweni va kuwalo so wana wala they have a picture kuti ichi wakuyowoya apa chikuwoneka nthena.

BM: What challenges do you face when using these teaching resources in SES?

T3: Sometimes teaching resources are not available, such as chart paper. It happens that when I want to draw a map then there is no chart paper. There is also a shortage of books.

(Eee vakusambizgira nyengo zinyakevikusowa, panyake pa sukulu pakusangika kuti ma chart paper paliye, kuti yayi nyengo zinyake nipange draw map mbwenu ma chart paper paliye. Mabu than ku ngachoko. Tiyeni tisambizge mbwenu mabuku ngachoko.

BM: Now when the resource that you wanted to use is not available, what do you do to overcome such challenges?

T3: Mmm we try to use the most available resource that can be similar to the resource that we wanted to use.

(Mmm we try the most available resource icho chingakozganako na icho tingasambizgira).

BM: In what activities do you engage your learners when teaching SES in class?

T3: *Mmm the most available children activity tina ya group work.*

BM: Now what about outside class, how do you engage your learners?

T3:Then it is field trip.

BM: Well, about in the society? How do you engage them?

T3:Mmm we do nothing.

BM:How do these learners' activities help in teaching SES?

T3:Learners easily remember what they learnt because they were involved in the activity.

(Wakukumbukira luwiro chifukwa they were doing it themselves panthazi wakuzakakumbuka kuti dazi ili tikapanganga chakuti nthena we were doing it like this, oh nichira wangufumbapo chira so it is easier for them to recall what they have learnt).

BM:What challenges do you face when organizing these activities when teaching SES?

T3:In most cases I feel time is a challenge.

(Kanandi nkhuwona ngati nyengo ndiyo yikuwanga ngeti yikuchepa).

BM: How is time posing as a challenge in this case?

T3: The content seems to be too much to be by taught following all the teaching methods. You know, one cannot finish the syllabus that way.

BM:How do you overcome the challenges that you have stated?

T3: Any way, we try to teach using the other methods.

(Mbweni tikupanganga nthena).

BM:Ok, What kind of support do you get from the school in preparing for teaching SES in standard 7?

T3:Sometimes the school provides assistance in things such as books, atlases, chart papers, petal markers. Sometimes they even take one person to be a resource person in a class.

(Nyengo zinyake wakuperekanga wowwiri ngati wa mabuku, ma atlas, the charts, ma petal markers. Sometimes they even take one person to be a resource person in a class).

BM:How does this support help you to effectively teach SES so that learners are prepared for their future roles in the society?

T3:Eee *(then phone calls and attends to it)* Sorry for interruption. When you receive that help it simplifies the work because in most cases SES is one of the difficult subject to learners.

(Eee wowwiri uwo pala mwapokera vikuwako makola because it simplifies the subject chifukwa SES nyengo zinyake ni subject yimoza iyo wana yikuwasuzga).

BM:Standard 7 learners are going to write national examinations (standard 8 examinations) next year? Does this play a role in affecting the way you teach SES in standard 7?

T3:It affects us but sometimes you teach just to make learners understand the concepts or subject matter because if we teach bearing in mind that they will write examinations the coming year you may end up teaching those areas that you think will come during exams only. But when we teach, we teach for the learners to master and use the content.

(Vikutikhwaska, kweni sometimes you teach kuti wana they have to know the concept of the subject or concept of the content chifukwa nyengo zinyake pala tisambizgilenge kuti wazamukulemba mayeso chaka chikwiza then tipangenge waka target on areas agho panyake tikumanya kuti ndivo vizenge pa mayeso).

BM:What type of assessment do you often use in SES in your class?

T3:I use group work, I use question and answers.

(Nima group work na ma question and answers).

BM:Why do you prefer this type of assessment to the other types?

T3:Because they are... you can assess them if they have understood the concepts. Sometimes from the group work learners assist each other because from a group a learner may be encouraged to work hard by looking at how others are answering questions.

(Chifukwa they are...you can assess them kuti wapulika, nyengo zinyake from nthe group work wakuwovwirana wekha so munyake can be encouraged the way pa group pala wanyake na umo wakuzgolera so yekha wakumanyanga kuti aaa ine pala panyake nane ningalimbikira ngeti wanyane awa umo wakuzgolera, what methods are they using kuti wazakafike apa so sometimes it encourages them.

Thank you so much for taking your time responding to my questions. I do not take it for granted.

Appendix 6: Process of Analysing Qualitative Data for Themes

Theme	Category	Evidence	Instrument and Participant Code
Methods used in Teaching SES in Primary Schools	Teaching methods that limit learner participation.	Mostly I use question and answer, group work, role plays and whole class discussion methods. Teacher makes us discuss in class, answer questions and do work in our groups. Teachers largely use group discussion, whole class discussion and question and answer methods. Lecture method and explanation somehow used.	Interview 1: T1 FGD: C5-L2 Lesson observations: Teachers 1, 2 and 3 Lesson observation: Teachers 1, 2 and 3 Interview 3: T2 Interview: Mr. Mkhondo
Assessment in Teaching SES	Assessment that promote rote memorisation in learners. Oral and written assessment was used	We stand up and answer questions. Teacher gives us an exercise to write. I ask question for learners to answer orally. Teachers mostly make learners answer knowledge level questions.	FGD: C3-L5 FGD: C5-L1 Interview 2: Teacher 3 Lesson observation: Teachers 1, 2 and 3
Teachers' lack of knowledge in using teaching methods	Teaching methods that did not promote learner participation.	I fail to use some methods like jig saw puzzle, futures wheel. I have forgotten how we learnt in college.	Interview 1:T 3
Teachers lack of knowledge in using teaching and	Resources reduced learner participation.	I use pictures, learners' books and local environment.	FGD: C7-L4

learning resources to promote CTL		The teacher uses learners' books, at times, atlases, and maps in our books. Learners' books mostly used. Learners' books are mostly used although they are not enough in respective classes.	Lesson observation: Teachers 1,2 and 3 Interview: Mr Mkhondo
Government policy on language use	Code switching, parroting, translation	Teachers translate concepts.	Lesson observation: Teachers 1,2 and 3
Government policy on use of mandatory examinations	Oral and written questions used	I want my learners to understand the concepts so that they do well in standard 8.	Interview: T2
Suggested Solutions to the Challenges	School administration need to be involved, MANEB should use alternative methods of assessments, teachers be involved in curriculum planning and development	We need CPDs at this school. I will always teach to make my learners pass standard 8 examinations unless MANEB changes how to assess learners. I think continuous assessment can help. The Ministry just make us teach the curriculum that has been presented to us. At least teachers need to be involved during planning as well.	Interview: Teacher 2. Interview: Teacher 3. Interview: Mr. Mkhondo

Appendix 7: Introductory Letter


CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi
B.A (Pub Admin), BPA(Hons) MPA, PhD

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 524 221
Telex: 41742 CHANCOL MI
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Email: deaned@cc.ac.mw
rchulu@cc.ac.mw

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF EDUCATION

17th December, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

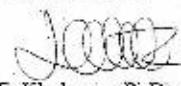
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION (MASTER OF EDUCATION)

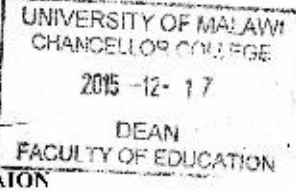
The Faculty of Education would like to introduce to you Mr Baxter C.C. Muthadi, Registration no. MEDP/SS/10/14, Chancellor College M.Ed Student who is supposed to do research in area of his interest.

This letter serves to request you to assist him with data collection in your zone.

The Faculty of Education will appreciate your support in this very important aspect of our students' training.

Yours faithfully,


F. Khulwani, (PhD)
DEAN OF EDUCATION


UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
2015-12-17
DEAN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

cc: Supervisor

Appendix 8: Request Letter

3

18th January, 2016.

From: Baxter Chilango Chisavu Munthali,

Chancellor College,

P.O. Box 280,

Zomba.

To : The District Education Manager,

P.O. Box 37,

Karonga.

27/01/16
Seen and Approved
(Dem)

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KARONGA DISTRICT.

I, **Baxter Chilango Chisavu Munthali**, write with reference to the above underlined subject. I would like to do an academic research as part of my study. I am interested in exploring how teachers use contextual teaching and learning approaches in the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools in the district. The information from this study will help us understand how teachers use contextual teaching and learning approaches in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools. The findings will assist in promoting the use of teaching approaches that make primary school teachers of Social and Environmental Sciences in Malawi teach learners beyond knowledge, skills, values and attitudes acquisition level.

Attached is a letter of introduction from The Dean of Education at Chancellor College.

Your favourable consideration is highly appreciated in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Baxter Chilango Chilango Chisavu Munthali,

Baxter Chilango

(BAXTER CHILANGO CHISAVU MUNTALI).

(MED/PR/SS/10/14)

Appendix 9: Consent Form

I am **Baxter Chilango Chisavu Munthali**, a Master of Education student at University of Malawi—Chancellor College. I am doing a research as part of my studies. I am interested in exploring how teachers use contextual teaching and learning in the teaching of Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools. The data that will be collected will only be used for the purpose of this study. Be assured that there is going to be total confidentiality and that your name and that of your school will be concealed during the whole process. Video and audio recorders may be used during observations and interviews, respectively. These will, however, be deleted as soon as the project is completed. I will assign codes to your responses and observations, and I will be the only one who will have access to these codes.

The information from this study will help us understand how teachers use contextual teaching and learning approaches in teaching Social and Environmental Sciences in primary schools. The findings will assist in promoting the use of teaching approaches that make primary school teachers of Social and Environmental Sciences in Malawi teach learners beyond knowledge, skills, values and attitudes acquisition level. I therefore invite you to participate in this study because you have the data that I am eagerly looking for. However, you may choose not to participate or withdraw voluntarily at any time without giving reasons.

Participant:

I choose to voluntarily to participate in this research project

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date