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Lesson Observations as a Measure of Learner Centred Pedagogy in Meru, Laikipia and Mombasa Counties in Kenya: The Example of Girls' Education

Abstracts

EN

There are many barriers to girls' learning that revolve around socio-cultural issues, poverty and low quality of education. Increased quality of education that includes learner centred pedagogy has been shown to motivate girls to stay in school and achieve more learning.

This article summarises findings from a baseline study of the Girls' Education Challenge Transition Jielimishe Project conducted in Meru, Laikipia and Mombasa counties in Kenya in 2018. The study used a mixed methods approach. A classroom observation schedule was used to determine whether teachers were using learner centred pedagogy. This was measured by using a composite indicator that included whether teachers asked questions to learners and whether learners asked questions in return. A total of 408 lessons (from grade 7, 8 and Secondary Form 1-4) were observed. Descriptive statistics record that teachers used learner centred pedagogy in 74% of lessons observed in Laikipia, 67% of lessons observed in Meru and in 64% of all lessons observed in Mombasa.

In this article, specific possibilities and problems concerning "Lesson observation" will be discussed. Here, the focus will shift to the research findings and to recommendations on how Lesson Study can further the development of teaching.

DE

Es gibt viele Hindernisse für das Lernen von Mädchen, die sich um sozio-kulturelle Fragen, Armut und eine geringe Qualität der Bildung drehen. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass eine höhere Qualität der Bildung, die lernerzentrierte

Pädagogik beinhaltet, Mädchen dazu motiviert, in der Schule zu bleiben und bessere Lernergebnisse zu erzielen.

Dieser Artikel fasst die Ergebnisse einer Baseline-Studie des Projekts „Girls' Education Challenge Transition Jielimishe“ zusammen, die 2018 in den Bezirken Meru, Laikipia und Mombasa in Kenia durchgeführt wurde. Die Studie verwendete einen Mixed Methods-Ansatz. Anhand eines Beobachtungsschemas für den Unterricht wurde ermittelt, ob die Lehrkräfte eine lernerzentrierte Pädagogik anwenden. Dies wurde anhand eines kombinierten Indikators gemessen, der beinhaltete, ob die Lehrkräfte Fragen an die Lernenden stellten und ob die Lernenden im Gegenzug Fragen stellten. Insgesamt wurden 408 Unterrichtsstunden (aus den Klassen 7, 8 und den Klassen 1-4 der Sekundarstufe) beobachtet. Die deskriptiven Statistiken zeigen, dass die Lehrpersonen in 74 % der beobachteten Unterrichtsstunden in Laikipia, in 67 % der beobachteten Unterrichtsstunden in Meru und in 64 % aller beobachteten Unterrichtsstunden in Mombasa eine lernerzentrierte Pädagogik einsetzten.

In diesem Artikel werden spezifische Möglichkeiten und Probleme im Zusammenhang mit der „Unterrichtsbeobachtung“ erörtert. Der Schwerpunkt liegt dabei auf den Forschungsergebnissen sowie auf Empfehlungen, wie die Unterrichtsbeobachtung die Entwicklung des Unterrichts fördern kann.

PT

Existem muitos obstáculos à aprendizagem de raparigas que se relacionam com questões socioculturais, pobreza e baixa qualidade do ensino. Foi demonstrado que uma educação de maior qualidade que incorpora uma pedagogia centrada no aluno motiva as raparigas a permanecer na escola e a obter melhores resultados de aprendizagem.

Este artigo resume os resultados de um estudo de base do projeto Girls' Education Challenge Transition Jielimishe, que foi realizado em 2018 nos distritos de Meru, Laikipia e Mombasa, no Quênia. O estudo utilizou uma abordagem de metodologia mista. Foi utilizado um dispositivo de observação de aulas para determinar se os professores estavam a utilizar uma pedagogia centrada no aluno. Esta foi medida utilizando um indicador combinado que incluía se os professores faziam perguntas aos alunos e se os alunos faziam perguntas em troca. Foi observado um total de 408 aulas (dos 7º, 8º e 1º-4º anos do ensino secundário). As estatísticas descritivas mostram que os professores usaram a pedagogia centrada no aluno em 74% das aulas observadas em Laikipia, 67% das aulas observadas em Meru e 64% de todas as aulas observadas em Mombaça.

Este artigo discute oportunidades e problemas específicos associados à “observação de aulas”. A atenção centra-se nos resultados da investigação e

nas recomendações sobre a forma como a observação da sala de aula pode melhorar o desenvolvimento do ensino.

JA

女子の学習には多くの障壁があり、社会文化的問題、貧困、教育の質の低さがつきまといている。学習者中心の教育をはじめ教育の質が向上するに伴い、学校にとどまってより多くの学習を達成するよう女子への動機づけが進んだ。

本稿では、2018年にケニアのメル、ライキピア、モンバサの各郡でおこなわれた基礎研究の知見をまとめる。この研究は、女子教育の課題と移行に関するジェリミシエ・プロジェクトとして実施され、混合研究法アプローチを用いた。教室での参与観察では、教師が学習者中心の教育をおこなっているかどうかを検討した。これは、教師が学習者に質問するかどうか、また学習者の側が逆に質問をするかどうかを含んだ複合的な指標を用いて測定された。全部で408の授業（初等学校第7・8学年、中等学校1－4年）を観察し、教師が学習者中心の教育を活用したのは、ライキピアで観察した授業の74%、メルでは67%、モンバサでは64%であった。

本稿では、「授業観察」に関してつきまとう可能性や問題を議論する。ここでは、研究の知見と、授業研究によって教授の開発をどのように進めることができるかを示唆する。

1 Background information

There are many barriers to girls' learning that revolve around gender, financial resources, parents' – especially the mothers' – education level, political, geographical aspects, including distance to schools and economic factors, e.g., the way of life, for example, pastoralism, few institutions especially at secondary and tertiary level, low quality of education and lack of intrinsic motivation to transit to higher levels of education. Increased quality of education, which includes learner centred pedagogy¹ has been shown to motivate girls to stay in school and achieve more learning. This is because poor quality education is associated with low pupils' scores, which is one of the barriers to transition and cause of dropping out of school. Learner centred pedagogy has been shown to motivate girls to stay in school and learn well. In order to improve

1 In order to equip learners with the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes, the Kenyan Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), proposes that teachers use learner centred pedagogies. Some of the learner-centred approaches include: case studies, research, demonstration, brainstorming, simulations, questions and answers. This is captured under the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (KICD 2017).

girls' education, the Kenyan Ministry of Education has partnered with the Department for International Development (DfID) to implement several projects dubbed Girls Education Challenge Transition (GEC-T).

Particular conditions of girls' education in the selected counties

The following insights into the learning situation of girls in the selected counties focus in particular on conditions that exclude them from higher educational processes.

In *Meru County*, men and boys are held with high regard compared to women. In parts of the county, female genital mutilation and early marriage are practiced. Most parents believe that educating a girl is investing in another household, as the girl will be married and thus take the investment to her new home. The value and benefits of education among the Ameru is low due to the easy cash making with Khat plant that grows in parts of Meru. This lures boys out of school into Khat farming. Few succeed and resort to motorbike and taxi business, and with the easy disposable income, they entice young girls of local peasant farmers by provision of basic items, such as sanitary towels, fare to school, school fees and the promise of a better life. Once hooked, girls elope with the boys hence dropping out of school either due to the promise of better life or through pregnancy.

Laikipia is a semi-arid pastoral county with few secondary schools compared to a high number of primary schools (377 primary schools against 127 secondary schools). Distances to school are vast, making learners walk for over 15 km to school. Women in these areas are not given equal opportunities as men due to the nomadic nature of the communities. Female genital mutilation is widely and/or secretly practiced as a rite of passage which subjects girls to early forced marriage. Once circumcised, girls are eligible for marriage to any suitor, hence, early marriage is common. Women and girls are perceived as a means to quick wealth through dowry, hence, education for girls has low value. Beading is also widely practiced, booking young girls for early marriage. Once beaded, the girl is considered betrothed, and the man can actually have sexual intercourse with the girl who may end up pregnant and/or married off. This is a serious child rights violation in the name of culture. The same girls are also tasked with herding roles at the expense of school.

Mombasa County, on the other hand, is a cosmopolitan county bringing with itself the city challenges. In addition, it is a coastal town with a big port. Young people in Mombasa face the risks of being hooked to drug abuse, sex tourism, and the parents of some of the beneficiary girls are addicted to drugs. The county has been largely influenced by the Swahili culture. Once girls attain the adolescent ages, they are counselled and under the tutelage of grandmothers

and aunties. During these times, girls are often socialised and, hence, conditioned to be dependent on men with chastity and marriage talking being the focus. The value and benefits of education are never taught to girls, hence, the school dropout rates among girls are high. The culture (Swahili) upholds honour and respect to family so much that young mothers are relocated to distant relatives or married off, hence, never given second chance to re-enter school.

The project's aims

Jielimishe GEC-T Project is a five-year project funded by the DfID and implemented by the consortium of 'I Choose Life Africa' and 'SoS Children's Villages' in 59 selected schools (both primary and secondary) in the counties of Mombasa, Meru and Laikipia. Jielimishe GEC-T Project is working to improve the life chances of 10123 (2390 in primary school; aged 12 – 16 years and 7733 in secondary school; aged 14 – 22 years) marginalised² girls. One way of achieving this is by ensuring that girls remain in school and learn well. The assumption is that if the quality of teaching is improved, then curriculum delivery will be enhanced, and girls' learning outcomes will improve (for further information see UK Aid – Girls' Education Challenge 2022).

Subsequently, one of the project's key components is teacher professional development through in-service training. Teachers' pedagogical skills are enhanced through a system of training and coaching. The following areas are covered:

1. Lesson preparation and planning,
2. Teaching methods for mathematics,
3. Teaching methods for English,
4. Integrating Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning,
5. Gender responsive/sensitive pedagogy. This is the practice of equipping teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes to empower them to respond

2 Under Article 260, the Constitution states that a "marginalised community" is (a) A community that, because of its relatively small population or for any other reason, has been unable to fully participate in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole; (b) A traditional community that, out of a need or desire to preserve its unique culture and identity from assimilation, has remained outside the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole; (c) An indigenous community that has retained and maintained a traditional lifestyle and livelihood based on a hunter or gatherer economy; or (d) Pastoral persons and communities, whether they are— (i) Nomadic; or (ii) a settled community that, because of its relative geographic isolation, has experienced only marginal participation in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole. Laikipia, Mombasa and Meru have sections that are regarded as marginalised due to retrogressive socio-cultural practices.

adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys through using gender-aware classroom processes and practices (FAWE 2018).

6. Classroom management.

Lesson or classroom observation is one of the ways of assessing whether teachers are demonstrating learner centred pedagogy that have been deemed as critical for improved learning outcomes.

2 Methodology

The study was carried out mostly through survey research design because of its ability to capture the complexities of the issues under study using only a small sample of the population. A mixed method approach was applied where both quantitative (numerical data) and qualitative data (non-numerical data) was collected. To capture interactions between the teachers and the learners during the lesson, a semi-structured observation schedule was used.

Sampling

The Jielimishe GEC-T project is being implemented in 59 treatment schools (19 in Mombasa, 20 in Meru and 20 in Laikipia) and 21 control schools, 7 in each county. Lesson observations³ were done in Grade 7 at primary level and in Secondary Form 2 and 3. English and mathematics lessons were observed. A total of 408 lessons (from grade 7, 8 and Secondary Form 1-4) were observed.

Data collection tool

The aim of the classroom observation was to determine whether or not pedagogy was learner centred. This was measured by using a composite indicator that included whether teachers asked questions to learners and whether learners asked questions in return. The tool for classroom observation was piloted and revisions were made based on the findings. Thereafter, it was scripted into KoboCollect Tool, a tool that is based on the open source ODK Collect app and is used for primary data collection in humanitarian emergencies and other challenging fields. This electronic data collection was preferred due to its easy accessibility and its ability to minimise errors during data collection.

3 Lesson observation is a mandatory requirement in the new Teacher Professional Appraisal and Development system by the Teachers Service Commission. All teachers must undergo lesson observation while delivering in class. It involves carrying out a formal scrutiny of teaching/ learning while it is taking place in a classroom or other learning environment.

Although the tool had a section for enumerators to note things that were not captured in the tool, the tool mainly collected quantitative data.

The main themes in the classroom observation tool included:

1. Lesson preparation and planning. Among other things, attention was paid to whether the teacher was able to link the (observed) lesson with the previous lesson, and whether they explicitly stated the lesson objectives and how.

2. Learner centred pedagogy. In order to assess whether the teacher was using learner centred pedagogy, the following interactions between teachers and learners were expected to take place:

2.1 Observations of the teacher

- Teacher picks out inactive students and engages them to participate.
- Teacher asks questions to the learners.
- Teacher calls learners by name.
- Teacher checks on the learners' work.
- Teacher spends less than 20% of the lesson time delivering content.

2.2 Observation of the learner

- Students use 80% of the lesson time exploring/discussing the content.
- Learners participate in small group discussions.
- Learners read aloud.
- Learners give examples.
- Learners ask the teacher questions.
- Learners respond to the teacher's questions.
- Learners write on the chalkboard.
- Learners read silently.
- Learners make specific demonstrations.
- Learners are involved in lesson-specific projects.

3. Integrating ICT in teaching and learning

- Teacher uses ICT kits (interactive white board, laptop/computer or projector) while teaching.
- Learners use ICT in the classroom.

4. Gender responsive/sensitive pedagogy

- Teacher uses both female and male examples while teaching.
- Teacher encourages class participation of both boys and girls (e.g., picking out both genders while answering questions).

- Teacher picks out on both boys and girls to answer questions on the blackboard (mostly with mathematics classes, e.g., solving sums).
- Teacher encourages sharing of learning materials, e.g., books, pencils, rubber etc. between boys and girls.
- Teacher using examples of gender blind, abusive, biased language directed at either gender.
- Only boys answer questions in class, e.g., by raising their hands or solving sums on the blackboard.
- Only girls answer questions in class, e.g., by raising their hands or solving sums on the blackboard.
- Both boys and girls actively participate in class by answering questions in class, e.g., by raising their hands or solving sums on the blackboard.
- Boys share learning materials, e.g., books, pencils, rubber etc., with boys only.
- Girls share learning materials, e.g., books, pencils, rubber etc., with girls only.
- Both boys and girls share learning materials amongst themselves.

Training of data collectors

County Coordinators were trained in Nairobi by ziziAfrique for 2 days. Data collectors were also trained centrally at County level by the County Coordinators. A lot of role play was used to ensure that data collectors were equipped for data collection.

Protocols followed when collecting the data to ensure ethical and child protection standards

ziziAfrique programmes encompass working with children especially from all backgrounds. Children from all races and cultures are subject to abuse and neglect, but research shows that children from mainly marginalised communities and more specifically those from minority ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in the child protection system. Concern for the safety and well-being of children is an important part of ziziAfrique, and as part of this concern, it is essential that everyone recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation.

All the enumerators were taken through the ziziAfrique Child Protection Policy that clearly outlines conduct towards children in school and also outside the work context. Emphasis was placed on the reporting mechanism and response to children who may be in danger of abuse or have suffered abuse,

or where any member of the research team may be suspected of any form of abuse. Enumerators were also meant to adhere to the following:

1. Not to interview children before getting the consent of the head teacher/or their caregiver (verbal).
2. Ensure that they explain the exercise to the child or household and ask for consent before commencing. The children had a right to refuse even after an adult had agreed.
3. Not to take any photographs of the school or children without written consent from the caregiver.
4. Respect the children's right to refuse to answer any question and not to be coerced or threatened into answering all questions.
5. Respect the confidentiality of the respondents at all the times (before, during and after) the exercise.
6. In case of any abuse by any member of the research team, report immediately

All the enumerators coming into contact with children signed a statement of commitment to the standards and guidelines outlined in the Child Protection Policy.

3 Research findings

Gender Responsive Pedagogy

Section 2 above has listed project indicators for measuring gender responsive pedagogy. However, since the surveys have been designed to collect data at various points of the project, it becomes impossible to try and identify these indicators during one lesson of 40 minutes. It is with this regard that the project agreed to use the following two indicators to measure gender responsive pedagogy.

A total of 69% of teachers observed were using gender responsive pedagogy, which was determined by observing teachers demonstrating any two of the following skills: Teacher uses examples of both male and female personalities while teaching; teacher encourages class participation of both boys and girls (e.g., picking out both genders while answering questions) and teacher picks out on both boys and girls to answer questions on the blackboard (mostly with mathematics classes, e.g., solving sums).

Learner Centred Pedagogy

In Laikipia County, 74% of the teachers used learner centred pedagogy, while in Meru it was 67% of the teachers. Mombasa had the least number of teachers at 64.3% who were using learner centred pedagogy. However, it is worth noting that while teachers gave learners opportunities to answer questions, the learners seldom asked/answered questions.

4 Advantages and limitations of using lesson observation to measure use of learner centred pedagogy by teachers

The main advantage of lesson observation is its ability to facilitate valuable discussions on lesson delivery. If done well, teachers become more reflective of their practice, and this allows them to continuously improve. However, there are some challenges in lesson observation, the main one being the fact that a teacher cannot demonstrate all their skills within one lesson of about 30 or 40 minutes. The following are the advantages and disadvantages based on this longitudinal study:

Advantages

1. If well designed, a lesson observation tool is easy to use. Data collectors do not require very intense training.
2. The methodology allows the researcher to observe what is going on in the classroom and make their own judgements and reach conclusions. More importantly, researchers are able to observe the teachers' and learners' body language. The importance of body language lies in the fact that the researcher is able to acquire an in-depth understanding of how interactions between the teachers and learners are supporting learner centred pedagogy.
3. It can be argued that the researcher is more likely to be open-minded than the teacher may be, as they're an outsider looking in. This reduces bias.
4. Lesson observation is a useful tool in supporting teachers' acquisition of desired skills. Both the teacher and the researcher/trainer can use the filled in lesson observation tool to reflect on the lesson and design strategies for improvement.

Limitations

1. A lesson observation tool oversimplifies the very complex processes of teaching and learning. Use of learner centred pedagogy is the best approach to ensure that children learn well. However, this may not always be achieved. A teacher may need to use different methodologies to ensure that all children learn.
2. If lesson observation is done overtly, ethical issues concerning the observation of teachers do not arise, as the teachers are aware that they are being observed. However, when teachers are aware that they will be observed, they prepare their classes and warn students to be on their best behaviour. The setting may, therefore, not be natural and may not be a true reflection of what usually takes place in the class when the teacher is not being observed. This brings about the issue of Hawthorne effect.
3. The "Hawthorne effect" is often mentioned as a possible explanation for positive results in intervention studies. It is used to cover many phenomena, not only unwitting confounding of variables under study by the study itself, but also behavioural change due to an awareness of being observed, active compliance with the supposed wishes of researchers because of special attention received, or positive response to the stimulus being introduced (Wickstrom and Bendix, 2000).
4. Classroom interactions between teachers and students are dependent on many things, for example, topic and learning activities. It is, therefore, not mandatory that each lesson must have questions and answers or that a particular phenomenon must be observed. This greatly challenges the idea that a few indicators can be selected to determine whether a teacher used learner centred pedagogy or not.
5. Accuracy – Most lesson observations do not provide a full and clear picture of a teacher's practice and classroom dynamics, and yet accuracy is key for providing relevant and actionable feedback. Teachers often pick topics they are familiar with or those that students have already mastered.
6. Data collectors may not have the skills to accurately assess and interpret the interactions in a class despite the fact that the lesson observation tool is easy to use. The best placed people to carry out lesson observation would be teachers even though there is the risk of bias, as teachers would observe the lesson through their own prejudices on what learner centred pedagogy is.
7. Lesson observations for projects as a measure of improved classroom observation may do more harm than good, as teachers are often not given feedback.

8. As a methodology, lesson observation is time-consuming, as the researchers must stay and observe the entire lesson. This also makes it costly.
9. If the lesson observation tool becomes too structured, it can be reduced to a checklist. Inclusion of additional notes is, therefore, desirable.
10. There exists tension between carrying out research purely for the sake of generating knowledge and research for improving pedagogy. If lesson observation is done purely for generating knowledge, it may do more harm than good. Feedback must, therefore, be a component of lesson observation as a research methodology. The following questions can be used to facilitate feedback sessions:
 - a What went well?
 - b What did not go well?
 - c Why did you choose those strategies?
 - d Do you think these strategies were effective in ensuring there was learning?
 - e What could you have done differently?
11. Jielimishe project has adopted a longitudinal study approach to measure progression of learning over time. This means that teachers and learners are tracked over time. While learners are assessed in literacy and numeracy, teachers are observed in teaching over time. Jielimishe is implemented in marginalised communities where tracking girls is difficult, as some of them drop out before transition to secondary or tertiary levels. Due to the level of social and economic hardships found in the project areas, many teachers transfer to move to more comfortable areas. In addition, the government is implementing the 'Delocalisation Policy', where the government is enforcing mass transfers of headteachers.

The above issues raise the question of whether using lesson observation in a longitudinal study is reliable because it is expected that some respondents, in this case both teachers and students, will drop off the survey at some point. Even though the teachers observed during the lesson observation have all been trained on the same things, classroom dynamics vary as the learners and teachers in a class may change over time.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

Lesson observation is a tool that can be used to measure teachers' continuing professional growth in a quest to improve classroom performance at primary and secondary schools. However, for it to be effective, teachers must be ob-

served over a long period of time, as it is not possible to use many strategies or approaches that can be referred to as learner centred. For this to happen, the practice of using lesson observation as a tool for teachers' continuing professional development should be institutionalised. Involvement of headteachers is, therefore, critical.

The teaching and learning process is a very complex process, which makes lesson observation a challenge. With regards to learner centred pedagogy, there are many strategies and approaches that teachers can use. For a study like this one, the selection of activities that are deemed to constitute learner centred pedagogy is a challenge. In addition, the ones selected may not contribute the most to improved learning outcomes.

Once indicators that measure learner centred pedagogy are selected, there is the risk that the so-called best practices may be overprescribed and used to control teachers. If this was to happen, teachers' individuality and creativity would be negatively affected. In addition, learners would not be given room to say how they wish to learn and what works for them.

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