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Students' Perceptions of the Utility of Pedagogical Approaches Used by Lecturers in Selected Faculties at a Zimbabwean University

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ABSTRACT This study sought to establish students' perceptions of the usefulness of teaching approaches employed by lecturers in one university in Zimbabwe. The study was informed by the constructivist theory of learning. The study adopted a descriptive survey approach which utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Data were collected from students in five Faculties in the selected university. A random sample of one hundred and ten students, comprising of sixty-five male and forty-five female students participated in the study. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed with the aid of the SPSS statistical software package version 21. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis method and presented through verbatim quotations of the respondents. The study found that students held different perceptions on what they deemed effective teaching approaches. The study concludes that exposure to traditional approaches to teaching made students view them as effective. Recommendations were made that a shift from traditional lecture approaches would ensure the use of more student-centred approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has documented a number of teaching approaches associated with the education of students at tertiary institutions. However, while some pedagogical approaches have been classified as effective, others have been queried for a variety of reasons. Thus methods seem to have been placed on a continuum. Despite being critiqued, some of these approaches are documented as being popular with lecturers in colleges and universities. An example of such a method is the lecture. An important question then concerns how students as consumers of such methods rate them.

It is argued in current discourse in teaching and learning that successful teaching involves much more than the transmission of content and skills (Maphosa and Kalenga 2012). The traditional approaches of transmitting knowledge and skills that reduce students to passive recipients whose role is to internalize the transmitted matter and reproduce it in assessment have received a fair share of criticism (Kukla 2000). Effective learning does not happen in instances where students are passive listeners (Richmond 2003). Instead, it is most effective, when students are encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning (Cannon and Newble 2002).

A thorough understanding of useful approaches is therefore of critical importance because such knowledge has a bearing on how educators transmit knowledge and assist students to have worthwhile experiences and concepts for achievement of expected learning outcomes. Makgala (2011) has shown that the outcomes of students' learning are associated with the approaches which they use. Scholars (Makgakala 2011; Ramsden 1992; Ditche 2001; Parpala et al 2010) have classified learning approaches into two main categories namely the surface and the deep approaches to learning.

Surface Approach: Makgakga (2011) explains that this approach is about quantity without quality. The focus is on remembering as much content as possible hence the student tends to memorise information for assessment requirements. Fyrenius et al. (2005) add that in

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this approach the student's intention is to complete the task and in the process the student distorts the structure of the task, may focus on the formula needed to solve a task unthinkingly, may not reflect on facts and concepts hence they may fail to distinguish principles from examples.

Makgakga (2011) is of the view that although knowing facts is part of understanding and interpreting the world, in the surface approach it ends at knowing the facts and skills without changing understanding hence a teacher can be fooled into thinking that the students have learned something when in actual fact they would not have learnt anything. He further comments that rote learning, scientific formulae is popular with scientists but it is not the way scientists think.

Deep Approaches to Learning: According to Ramsden (in Ditcher 2001) students with higher conceptions of learning are more likely to use deep approaches and they view learning as an internal process which requires them to engage with the material so as to give it some meaning themselves. Such type of learning is in line with the socio-constructivist theory which encourages construction of knowledge by learners through making meaning of the experiences by relating information to the known, reflecting on new experiences and integrating new information to what they already know (Ditcher 2001). Makgakga (2011) recommends this approach on the premise that a student who adopts it retains more information for longer periods and finds learning more satisfying.

Teaching that promotes deep approaches to learning are basically student centered and include methods such as seminars, the project method, workshops, conferencing, brain storming and group learning whereby learners discuss and engage in active participation, feedback and reflection (McKimm and Jollie 2003). Such approaches can be used to promote problem based learning where students can be encouraged to work collaboratively to solve a particular problem and to take full responsibility for their learning (Ditcher 2001).

On the other hand, Richardson (2005) has also identified the above approaches and has added a third dimension namely a strategic approach in which students focus mostly on achievement of highest grades. He argues that no student will use one particular approach throughout but that a student can vary learning approaches depending on the situation, the content, demands of the task and the quality of teaching exhibited by the educator.

Demerits of Teacher-centred/Transmission Approaches: As evidenced in the previous section, although a number of teaching and learning approaches are available in higher education, teacher-centred approaches also known as the traditional approaches (Ditcher 2001) seem to be the most popular method of teaching in most subjects in institutions (Ramsden 1992). This method of teaching which dates back to the times when books were not available (Fyrenius et al. 2005) has been on the increase because educators tend to use methods they experienced as learners (Bourner and Flowers 1997). However, it does not mean that the method is the best.

Radical pedagogies have challenged the conventional teacher-based approach especially the lecture method on the premise that the student is the recipient to new knowledge and the teacher is the knower (Banning 2005). This method is similar to the jug and mug method which Paulo Freire criticises on the basis that it colonises the mind and dehumanises the individual. Such an approach denies the students an opportunity for emancipatory literacy (Freire in Seligmann 2012). In the lecturing method, "information is a product 'sold' by the producer to the consumer and the producer is the source of wisdom" (Ramsden 1992: 153). Fyrenius et al. (2005: 61) describe the same approach as representing a scenario where "knowledge is seen as a quantity that can be transferred from one individual to another".

The goal of teaching is no longer seen as that of imparting knowledge and doing things to the student, but is re-defined as facilitation of self-directed learning (Tight in Banning 2005:2). McKimm and Jollie (2007) have criticised the passivity of the dependency syndrome associated with the lecture method arguing that it leads to surface learning. They comment that there is no guarantee that effective or meaningful learning occurs during a lecture because students could be busy taking down notes but may have very little time to reflect or question the material not to mention clarification of misunderstandings. As such, they classify the method as an autocratic approach which provides little feedback to the speaker about the effectiveness of

the presentation and a method which may lead to poor retention of information.

Fyrenius et al. (2005: 62) argue that the lecture method does not develop problem-processing skills, self-directed learning skills and group competence and comment that "the traditional lecture pre-supposes that the audience consists of relatively "passive learners" who are implicitly assumed to have more or less the same learning needs. Individual learning needs are not catered for because there is no processing of pre-knowledge which is important for learning and for grasping of concepts (McKimm and Jollie 2007; Fyrenius et al. 2005).

Another disadvantage of the lecture method is that the lecturer chooses what s/he considers to be the core of the course content and focuses lessons around this content. As a result, students do not focus on their own understanding but instead search for clues of what the lecturer considers as crucial. Cue searching is based on the notion that the subsequent examinations and tests are based on the lecturer's conception of what is relevant knowledge (Fyrenius et al. 2005). When the lecturer takes over and decides on what knowledge is necessary, that limits the development of self-directed learning and the ability to view knowledge in relation to other areas of application. Being able to make choices is important for learning (Silen 2001 in Fyrenius et al. 2005).

Merits of Learner-centred/ Transformation Approaches: Learner-centered approaches are now increasingly encouraged in Higher Education (HE) the world over (Pendersen and Liu 2003), such that one of the main themes running throughout the recent changes in Higher Education is a paradigm shift towards more of them (McKimm and Jollie 2007). This is because of research findings that bring out the learner-centered approaches' greater effectiveness and efficiency in teaching-learning processes (Bourner and Flowers 1997). Learner centered approaches do not employ a single teaching method, but is an umbrella term for a variety of teaching methods that shift the role of instruction from the "givers of information" to the "facilitation of student learning" (Weimer 2002), from "teacher as expert" to "teacher as facilitator of learning" (McKimm and Jollie 2007: 6).

Research into teaching and learning in Higher Education over the recent years has yielded a wide range of merits of learner-focused approaches. The research has revealed that learner-centered approaches among many things, allow "students to take an active role and see learning as something that they do themselves rather than 'something that just happens to them" (Richardson 2005:676). As opposed to instructor centred approaches which only aim at transmission of information to the students, learner centred-approaches aim at bringing about conceptual change in the student, what Marton et al. (1993) in Richardson (2005: 677) calls "Changing a person". Thus student focused approaches are transformational, from student as recipient, listener and consumer of information, to student as an active learner. Student centred approaches thus keep students more busy, more engaged, more participating, more active and more motivated to learn, hence make learning experiences more productive, informative, satisfying and worthwhile (Sajjad 2010). In a nutshell, the greatest merit of learner focused approaches is therefore, not only to have knowledge disseminated to the students, but development of student capacity to use ideas and information, generate ideas and in turn facilitate personal development and capacity to plan and manage own learning (Bourner and Flowers 1997).

With all its placing students' needs at the centre of activities, it does not mean that instructors do not have a role to play in the teaching-learning processes. Indeed, the learner-centred approaches have benign consequences for instructors. The learner-centred approach demands that the teacher create engaging and supportive learning environment. The teacher has to create a learning environment that motivates students to accept responsibility for learning. The instructor is thus, demanded to be a skilful guide who is altered by the dynamics of the classroom (Reynold 2006).

Findings in Related Studies of Teaching Approaches in Universities: In a study to establish students' views on the effectiveness of teaching approaches namely direct instruction, problem-based learning, video-based tutorial learning, cooperative/collaborative learning and book/written script tutorial learning, Wright et al. (2012) found that students ranked book/script tutorial learning as more effective teaching and learning approach when compared to other approaches yet a number of respondents still found direct instruction an effective method suggesting that students held different views in what

really constituted an effective teaching approach. Wright et al. (2012) also found that direct instruction was the most common teaching method used by teachers.

Though no teaching-learning approach is absolutely efficient, research on teaching and learning in Higher Education tend to point to more merits for the learner-centred approaches than for the instructor-focused approaches. A study by Alexander and Murphy (2000) in Pedersen and Liu (2003) points to a high correlation between learner-centred approaches and increased intrinsic motivation for learning as well as higher achievement in school, than is the case with instructor-based approaches. Prosser and Trigwell (1993) in their study to measure approaches to teaching, established a direct link between student-focused approaches and adoption of a deep approach to learning such as comprehension and understanding of their academic work.

Prosser and Trigwell (1997), investigating 'relations between perceptions of the teaching environment and approaches to learning', found that teachers who adopted student focused approaches reported that their departments valued teaching more than those who adopted teacher-centred approaches. Thus, student focused approaches do not only benefit students in their learning, but add value and flavour to the teaching profession (Banning 2005).

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by the social constructivist theory of learning. To social constructivists, knowledge is also a human product, and is socially and culturally constructed (Gredler 1997). Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in. Instructional models based on the social constructivist perspective stress the need for collaboration among learners and with practitioners in the society (Lave and Wenger 1991; McMahon 1997).

Social constructivists view learning as a social process. It does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours that are shaped by external forces (McMahon 1997). A constructivist teacher creates a context for learning in which students can become engaged in interesting activities that encourage and facilitate learning. The teacher does not simply stand by, however, and watch children explore and discover. Instead, the teacher may often guide students as they approach problems, may encourage them to work in groups to think about issues and questions, and support them with encouragement and advice as they tackle problems, adventures, and challenges that are rooted in real life situations that are both interesting to the students and satisfying in terms of the result of their work. Teachers thus facilitate cognitive growth and learning as do peers and other members of the child's community.

According to the aforementioned approach, meaningful learning occurs when there are real-world-related authentic tasks and by means of interaction and collaboration between experts and peers. Authentic tasks are described as "Anything students are expected to do, beyond getting input through reading or listening, in order to learn, practice, apply, evaluate, or in any other way respond to curricular content" (Brophy and Alleman 1991). With these tasks, learners learn to solve the problems that are similar to real world problems (Steffe and Nesher 1996; Glatthorn 1994; Murphy 1997).

Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. Constructivism views learning as a process in which the learner actively constructs new ideas or concepts based on his current and past experiences. Learning, therefore, is a personal endeavour. Knowledge is not received from outside but rather constructed or interpreted by the learner when this engages on reflecting on his/her own experiences, perceptions, mental structures and beliefs. Knowledge is a personal construct and hence not absolute. The proposition contemplates that we all share broad common realities/concepts and by individually and internally elaborating on them we construct our own knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design which is partly quantitative and partly qualitative. The descriptive survey typically allows the researchers to explain and measure the characteristics of a population, either at a fixed point in time or comparatively over time

(Gray 2009:219). The researchers found the descriptive survey suitable owing to its flexibility in gathering data that could be analysed both thematically and statistically. Researches that combine qualitative and quantitative are emphasised for their thoroughness (Blunkett in Hammersley 2006: 84). In this case, students' perceptions of the usefulness of teaching approaches employed by lecturers in one state university in Zimbabwe were established on the basis of both statistical and thematical evidence. Apart from being flexible, this design permitted the researchers to generalise the finding to the entire population which in this case pertained to all students in their final year in one state university in Zimbabwe.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of 582 students from five faculties at the selected university which included Science, Education, Social Sciences, Commerce and Arts. One hundred and ten students constituted the sample for this research and this sample constituted about 19% of the population, which made the sample representative. Probability sampling technique namely random sampling was used to select 20 students from each of the five aforementioned faculties. The population was divided into five gender sensitive homogenous groups. The groups were faculties. The lottery method was used to select 20 participants from each faculty.

Instrumentation

Data collection was a crucial step in this study and as such, the appropriateness and adequacy of the data collection instrument was considered critical. The instrument used to collect the data was a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was in three (3) distinct sections. The first section collected personal data of the respondents including faculty, gender, year in college, resident status and age range. The second section was an opinion pool of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of each of the thirteen (13) pedagogical approaches used by their lecturers. This section made use of a five (5) point rating scale from very effective (5) to very ineffective (1). The third section supported the second through eliciting comments on the issues raised on the rating scale. Unlike the other two sections, this section was open ended.

The merit of using this instrument was that it was a written record of students' responses so could be referred to over and over again. The other advantage of the instrument enjoyed was its enabling collection of a diverse range of responses from the large student community (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Potter 2003). Yet another advantage was elimination of variations in questioning as would probably have been the case had it had been a semi-structured interview.

Validity and Reliability

Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are key issues which need to be addressed by any researcher. According to Merriam (2009) research studies must be rigorously conducted such that they present insights and conclusions that ring true to the readers, practitioners and other researchers. In other words, the aspect of quality control, also known as authenticity in research, has to be paid special attention to. Shank (2002) says validity is always about truth. Merriam (2009) advises that if a study is authentic, it should be credible such that it enables one to construct social policy or legislation based on it. Creswell (2012) says that validation of a research study can be ensured through ensuring that data collection and analysis of findings and interpretations are accurate.

To enhance validity and reliability in our study, we collected data across the five major faculties at the university so that we could have representative views and avoid bias. Creswell (2012) says that corroborating evidence from different individuals ensure that the study will be accurate because the information draws from multiple sources. The researchers also tried to have an authentic portrait of what we were looking for by having investigator triangulation. In this case all the four researchers were involved in validating the research questions, aims, and questionnaire items after which the researchers analysed the data using the SPSS; a reliable package for analyzing quantitative data. Each one of the researchers interpreted the findings and had to come up with a shared view concerning our findings. Merriam (2009) says that triangulation is a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed statistically through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Data were presented through descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages and means. Content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data collected through the semi structured questionnaire. An interrogation of the respondents' discourse assisted in grouping data according to themes.

Ethical Issues

The researchers were wary of ethical considerations consistent with social science research and numerous measures were employed to address these. Informed consent was sought from the participants and after the purpose of the study was explained to them the participants gave written consent to participate in the study. The researchers informed participants of voluntary participation and withdrawal, confidentiality and anonymity. Permission to conduct the study was sought and granted by the authorities of the university in which the study was carried out.

RESULTS

Biographical Details

Table 1 shows the biographical details of the participants in the study and it shows that data for the study was drawn from students of diverse backgrounds in the participating university. The majority of the respondents was from Social Sciences Faculty, was staying off campus and was in final year in college. Gathering data from mostly final year students was deemed important as such students were experienced learners who could give informed opinions in teaching and learning issues.

Table1: Students' biographical details (N=110)

Variable	*Variable description*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Gender	Male	65	59.1
	Female	45	40.9
Age	16-18	0	0
	19-21	9	8.2
	22 and over	101	91.8
Faculty	Arts	16	14.5
	Commerce	22	20.0
	Education	11	10.0
	Natural Resource Management and Agriculture	8	7.3
	Social Sciences	53	48.2
Year in College	Second	7	6.4
	Third	0	0
	Fourth	103	93.6
Residence Status	Resident	31	28.2
	Non resident	79	71.8

Students' Perceptions of Effectiveness of Different Pedagogical Approaches

The study sought to establish students' perceptions of the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches and Table 2 gives a summa-

Table 2: Students' perceptions of effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches used by lecturers (N=110)

Pedagogical approach	*Very effective*				*Very ineffective*	*Mean*
	5	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	
Lecture	32 (29.1)	40(36.4)	33(30.0)	3 (2.7)	2 (1.8)	3.9
Seminar presentation	26 (23.6)	26 (23.6)	39 (35.5)	14(12.7)	5 (4.4)	3.5
Tutorial groups	17(15.5)	31(28.2)	43(39.1)	13(11.8)	6(5.5)	3.4
Lecture with discussions	43(39.1)	34(30.9)	17(15.5)	12(10.9)	4(3.6)	3.9
Question and answer	24(21.8)	33(30.0)	32(29.1)	17(15.5)	4(3.6)	3.5
Class discussion	29(26.4)	28(25.5)	29(26.4)	18(16.4)	6(5.5)	3.5
Small group discussion	29(26.4)	37(33.6)	33(30.0)	9(8.2)	2(1.8)	3.7
Panel of experts	24(21.8)	20(18.2)	35(31.8)	21(19.1)	10(9.1)	3.2
Brainstorming	17(15.5)	23(20.9)	45(40.9)	16(14.5)	9(8.2)	3.2
Guest speakers	11(10.0)	22(20.0)	32(29.1)	26(23.6)	19(17.3)	2.8
Fieldwork	30(27.3)	19(17.3)	33(30.0)	16(14.5)	12(10.9)	3.3
Practicals/attachments	39(35.5)	26(23.6)	20(18.2)	13(11.8)	12(10.9)	3.6
Laboratory work	16(14.5)	21(19.1)	36(32.7)	13(11.8)	24(21.8)	2.9

ry of the perceptions. The results on Table 2 show that students perceived the following pedagogical approaches to be effective: lecture with discussions 77(70%), lecture 72(65.5%), small group discussion 66(60%), practical/attachment 65(59.1%), question and answer 57(51.8%), class discussion 57(51.8%), seminar presentation 52(42.3%), field work 49(44.5%), tutorial groups 48(43.6%), panel of experts 44(40%) and brain storming 40(36.4%) in their descending order. Forty-five (40.9%) indicated that the guest speaker pedagogical approach was ineffective. Regarding the laboratory work approach, 37(33.6%) students perceived it to be effective. However, the same number of students indicated the opposite while 36(32.7%) remained undecided. Notably, the number of students who were undecided was high with the majority lying in above 30%. Regarding brainstorming and tutorial group pedagogical approaches, 45(40.9%) and 43(39.1%) students respectively were undecided. Table 2 also reveals that 20(18.2%) and 17(15.5%) students were undecided with respect to the effectiveness of practical/attachment and lecture with discussions pedagogical approaches.

The ranking of methods in the order of popularity is as follows; the lecture method with discussion, followed with practicals/attachments, the traditional lecture method, field work, class discussion, small group discussions, question and answer and panel of experts. The least popular are guest speakers, brainstorming, laboratory work and tutorials. It looks the results are confirming that students prefer deep approaches to learning and prefer methods which are activities based. Maybe the traditional lecture method is popular because students are just used to it since it is the main mode of transmission at tertiary level.

Verbatim Quotations of Students' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Pedagogical Approaches

The study sought to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected through comments made by the respondents on the questionnaire. Below are some of the verbatim quotations.

Reasons for Effectiveness

Practicals make (sic) learning easier to comprehend as they involve hands on approach.

Small group discussions are effective when group members are ready to cooperate.

Most approaches that involve students are effective when students get to understand what is expected of them.

Lecture with discussions was more effective as it opened everyone's mind by allowing them to contribute during lectures.

Generally lectures are excellent since we get information from the lecturers.

Reasons for Ineffectiveness

Lecturers don't have time for students when lecturing.

Approach to delivery of lectures by some lecturers is poor.

Fieldwork is not effective. The institutions complains of shortage of transport.

Learning activities should cater for individual abilities.

One cannot ask questions during lectures, there is no time for that.

The above quotations show some of the comments given by the respondents on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the different pedagogical approached employed by lecturers.

DISCUSSION

It emerged from the study that the participants perceived lecture and lecture with discussions as the most effective pedagogical approaches. This perception could be derived from the fact that the lecturer method is a commonly used pedagogical approach in universities despite calls for more student-centred approaches. The finding is consistent with Halperin's (1994) view that despite changes in models of teaching, the transmission model is still dominant in higher education institutions and that in this approaches students were passive recipients of knowledge from expert lecturers. Patria (2012: 188) states that;

From time to time universities are facing new challenges and are always responsively changing accordingly. However in terms of teaching and learning, it seems that universities are reluctant to change.

Students' exposure to direct instruction through lecture system denies them opportunities to learn in alternative ways and they perceive the common approaches as useful.

The finding in the study that students perceived lecture with discussion as an effective pedagogical approach confirms the importance of student involvement in learning as opposed to wholly lecturer dominated teaching sessions. Bourner and Flowers (1997) as well as McKimm and Jollie (2007) establish that more learner involvement brings effectiveness and efficient of the whole teaching and learning process. This is in sharp contrast to lecturer-dominated approaches which reduce students to dependent individuals with nothing to contribute to their learning. Brandt (2003) also talks of the importance of a school culture that encouraged social interaction among individuals which results in enhanced student achievement (Brandt 2003 cited in Bae et al. 2012).

It also emerged from the study that the participants perceived small group discussion as an effective pedagogical approach. This finding corroborates views of social constructivist approaches to learning which state that the teacher creates a context for learning in which students can become engaged in interesting activities that encourages and facilitates learning (McMahon 1997). Ditcher (2001) observes that through active engagement students work with provided material within a social context and create and make meanings out of the learning materials. Cannon and Newble (2002:16) advocates for student-centred learning which "has student responsibility and activity at its heart …" This becomes a deep learning approach which ensures that learners learn by doing.

It further emerged from the study that the participants also perceived practical activities including attachments as effective approaches to teaching. Such a finding is consistent with calls for making learning relevant by ensuring that students apply what they learn in real life situations (Makgakga 2011). McKimm and Jollie (2003) also underline the importance of practical application of what students learn and insist that learning by solving real life social problems does not only ensure relevance of what is learnt but teaches students important problem-solving skills, which should be the hallmark of any meaningful education system. Such an approach is better that an approach that teaches students to memorise content, which they may fail to apply in solving problems.

The study also established that students perceived laboratory work and guest speakers as approaches that were not very effective. This finding is consistent with Wright, et al. (2012) view that due to constant exposure to direct instruction, students do not find any other pedagogical approaches useful. It is this direct instruction that Brockbank and McGill (1998: 52) define as 'form of teaching which is primarily didactic, using one way transmission of knowledge from the expert teacher to the dependent student learner.' Von Glasersfeld (1995) state that the responsibility of learning should reside increasingly with the learner and hence the importance of a shift from teacher dominated to student-centred approaches yet, ironically students often resist approaches that involve them in learning and lecturers who use such approaches may be unpopular with students (Qualters 2001).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that students held different perceptions of what they deemed effective pedagogical approaches and such perceptions emanated from the most common teaching approaches students were exposed to. However, students also considered approaches which involved them in the teaching and learning environment as effective. Approaches that ensured students applied what they learnt were also considered effective ways of teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

- Constant and continuous professional staff development programmes on teaching and learning issues are important in universities. Such programmes allow academic staff members to reflect on their daily practice and make use of more interactive teaching methodologies.
- Teaching staff in universities should be encouraged to study for teaching qualifications. Academic staff members with teaching qualifications may enhance their facilitation of learning skills better that those without such qualifications.
- The involvement of students in the learning process should underline the teaching approaches at university level to ensure that products from the university can actively

participate in society as problem solvers. Transmission of content to students does not equip them to be problem solvers.

- Despite the resistance students may offer to approaches that involve them in knowledge search and knowledge sharing, lecturers should use such methods as they train students to be independent workers and critical thinkers. This is better than having dependent students as university graduates.
- All areas of study in the university should have a practical attachment element where students take what they would have learnt in university to the world of work. This helps students to appreciate the applicability of what they learn and enhances relevance of university curricula.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study drew participants from students in one state university in Zimbabwe. Results may not be generalized to all universities in Zimbabwe yet they provide useful insight on pedagogical approaches in use in universities. Future studies may look at more universities and also solicit views of lecturers and other stakeholders such as parents and employers.

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