

Pedagogical Challenges in Teaching Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia

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Abstract: *This study sought to establish the pedagogical challenges in the teaching of Civic Education in secondary schools in Zambia with a focus on the development and consolidation of education for democratic citizenship among the learners. This study took a qualitative approach and used a descriptive case study design. Data was collected using interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and observations. Purposive sampling procedure was used to target seventy-three participants. Data collected was analysed using themes that emerged from the literature review and objectives of the study. The main findings among others were that teachers of Civic Education in secondary schools in Zambia used non-reflective strategies during teaching, that, Civic Education lessons were theoretically based and did not follow emancipatory approaches that are key in the development and consolidation of education for democratic citizenship. The learning environment in secondary schools did not give opportunities to learners to fully express themselves. Based on these findings, this study recommends that the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) should take a deliberate move to provide workshops/short courses aimed at supporting the teachers of Civic Education in applying appropriate approaches whenever, there are teaching Civic Education in schools.*

Keywords: Pedagogical Challenges; Civic Education; Education for Democratic Citizenship

1. Background and Context

It is undeniable fact that Civic Education and/or Citizenship Education as it is called elsewhere is becoming pronounced in the school curricula in different countries. This point is well supported by scholars such as Muleya (2019), Muleya (2018), Muleya (2017a), Muleya (2017b), Muleya (2015); Muleya et al (2019) Cohen (2013); Van Deth (2013); Kennedy and Brunold (2016); Kerr (1999); Kennedy (2008); McCowan (2009); Biesta (2012); Peterson (2011) among others. The focus on Civic Education across different curricula is based on the understanding that as a subject, it promotes active participation of citizens or learners with the view to manage themselves in society and ensure that everyone who needs help is supported (Muleya, 2016). While this may be the case with regard to what Civic Education does to the citizens, the manner in which the teachers of Civic Education teach the subject to these citizens or learners is without pedagogical challenges. The question one would pose is how can the teaching of Civic Education enhance active participation in the learners?

This kind of understanding about Civic Education is important in that it creates opportunities and possibilities among the general citizenry to learn how they ought to relate with one another as well as respecting divergent views and supporting each other whenever need arises in the community.

Despite the concept of Civic Education being highly contested, Gibson & Levine (2003) in Cohen (2013), gives an understanding that Civic Education is in fact composed of three main factors: The transmission of relevant knowledge, instilling of values and the development of dispositions. In this vein, teachers of Civic Education, through appropriate teaching strategies should transmit relevant knowledge which is substantial and not procedural. Through the process

of learning, the learners must learn the values of democracy since Civic Education is informed by the values and norms of democracy. Furthermore, the learners need to develop qualities of mind and character in line with democratic values and norms through appropriate teaching strategies. This is a call that has been emphasized in the Zambia Educational Curriculum Framework (ZECF) of 2013 where teachers and teacher educators should as much as possible “use methods that promote active learners’ participation and interaction (MoGE, 2013: 56).” In addition, learners should use methods that encourage learners to reflect, think and do rather than reproduce from rote learning.

The rationale behind the introduction of Civic Education in Zambia was that:

- 1) Civics taught at junior level had created a gap between the upper secondary and tertiary levels and that there was an urgent need to bridge up this gap. This gap had an impact on senior secondary school leavers who in most cases graduated with little or no experience of Civic Education with regards to their roles, rights and obligations. Hence, this major development in the curriculum was identified as an important contribution to Zambia’s educational system that is based on democratic principles and values.
- 2) The content at junior level was too loaded and detailed to be grasped by the level making learning difficulty for the learners at this stage of the school system.
- 3) The skills and values in the content were also limited to enable the learners understand and practice their civic rights and obligations (Irish Aid Report, 2002 in Muleya, 2015).

It is clear that the re- introduction of Civic Education in Zambia was a response to societal needs in a liberal democratic society. Therefore, citizens are supposed to be engaged with political, legal, social, economic and cultural dimensions of the community and the country at large. The

narrow approach of Civics denied the school leavers to engage with societal affairs. Arguably, the re- introduction of Civic Education in the secondary school curriculum was a call in the right direction. In this regard, this study supports the move by the Zambian Government in making Civic Education a compulsory subject in secondary schools.

In this sense, Civic Education was initially piloted in three (3) provinces. In each province, five secondary schools were selected, three from the urban setting and two from the rural setting. Table 1: shows the names of Provinces and Schools where Civic Education was first piloted. The first Grade 12 examination in Civic Education was written in 2006.

Table 1: Civic Education Pilot Schools in 2004 (Phase 1)

Lusaka Province	Central Province	Northern Province
Arakan High	Chibombo High	Kasama Girls High
Chongwe High	Kabwe High	Luwingu High
Kafue Boys Secondary	Ibolelo High	Mbala High
Libala High	Mkushi High	Mpika High
Luangwa High	Mumbwa High	Mwenzu Girls High

(Source: Irish Aid Report, 2002).

By 2007, the pilot phase was rolled out to other provinces and in selected secondary schools. All the provinces were catered for in this phase. Table 2 below shows the provinces and selected secondary schools where Civic Education was rolled out after the first phase.

Table 2: Second Phase of Civic Educ. pilot phase (2007)

Copperbelt	Eastern	Luapula	N/Western	Southern
Chikola High	Chadiza High	Kawambwa Tech.	Kabompo High	Choma High
Chililabombwe High	Katete High	Mansa High	Mukinge Girls High	Mazabuka High
Kansenshi High	Lundazi High	Mwense High	Solwezi Day High	Monze High
Luanshya Girls High	Petauke High	Nchelenge High	Mwinilunga High	St. Mary's Sec.
Ndeke High	St. Monica's High	St. Clements Sec.	Zambezi High	Njase Girls High
				St. Edmunds Sec.

(Source: Irish Aid Report, 2007).

Today, Civic Education is taught in all secondary schools in Zambia and the re- introduction of the subject in the school curricula resonates very well with the focus of the policy document of 1996 on education provision in Zambia (M.o.E, 1996). It is argued that through the teaching and learning of Civic Education, learners will at least acquire relevant knowledge and have a deeper understanding of issues affecting society, but also skills for reflective and responsible action. This argument is also supported by Bergersen and Muleya (2019: 1-17) who contend that Civic Education creates as a matter of fact opportunities and possibilities among the general citizenry to learn how they ought to relate with one another as well as respecting divergent views and supporting each other whenever need arises in the community. This means that Civic Education in secondary schools in Zambia is anchored on the desire to have an emphasis on education that positively impacts on the learners in order to advance national interests in a fair manner. Additionally, Kasenge and Muleya (2020: 37-45) notes that with this, there is a possibility of fostering deep democracy which allows for free and open inquiry and critiques, recognition of interdependence in working for the common good.

Given the importance of Civic Education to the Zambian society, it is imperative that teachers of Civic Education should apply reflective strategies that will enhance democratic values and competences in the learners. This requires that teachers of Civic Education should be well versed with the subject matter and use appropriate teaching techniques to develop critical thinking in the minds of the learners. This view is in line with the revised curriculum of 2013 which aims at making the education system relevant and more responsive to the needs of individuals and society

(MoGE, 2013). It is from this background that the study has been done to establish the pedagogical challenges in the teaching of Civic Education in secondary schools in Zambia.

2. Methodology and Design

This study took a qualitative approach and employed a descriptive case study design. The study was conducted in Lusaka Province and 5 secondary schools were selected. This study had 73 participants which included officials from the Ministry of General Education pupils, teachers, university lecturers among others Purposive sampling techniques were used to identify the participants. Interview guide, observation checklist and FGDs were used to gather data. Data from interviews and FGDs was transcribed having read text files and listened to the tape recorders thoroughly for the purposes of getting the common themes. Common themes were then identified and clustered to categorise the main issues coming out of the data. Codes related to the objectives were identified and a thematic analysis was done. Throughout this process of categorising pattern, similarities and contrasting viewpoints were highlighted and critically interpreted on the basis of the theoretical framework.

3. Presentation of Findings

3.1 Challenges in the teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia

When the participants were asked to state the challenges faced by teachers of Civic Education in Civic Education lessons responses were varied as shown in figure 1 below:

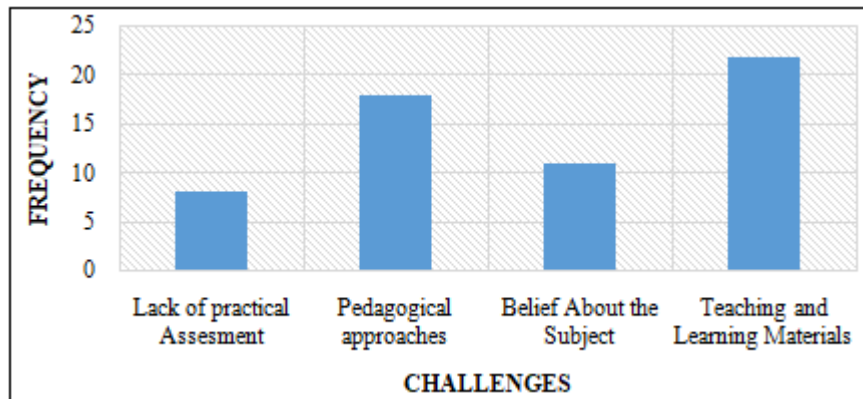


Figure 1: Challenges in the Teaching of Civic Education

Source: Field Data

3.2 Lack of Practical Assessment in the teaching of Civic Education

When the participants were asked to state the challenges faced in the teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia, one lecturer stated that the practical nature of Civic Education was not clearly identified in schools. If this was to be the case, then Civic Education would have been helping the learning's in engaging with the community on many issues. An official from the M.o.G.E had this to say:

"The biggest problem with Civic Education sir is trying to find a connection between what is learnt in class and involving learners in practical strategies. There is lack of hands on approach combining theory and practice in our education system. That link seems to be missing in Civic Education lessons."

This was seen as a challenge and in so doing affected the effective transmission of democratic citizenship ideals to the learners. Similar views were echoed by other participants among them, one lecturer had this to say:

"I think time was a challenge as well because there was limited time to take pupils out to apply what they learnt in the classroom."

From such views the study observed that Civic Education was not taught from a practical perspective and yet the idea behind the re-introduction of it in schools in Zambia was meant to bring out the practical nature of the subject to the learners.

3.3 Use of Traditional Strategies by Teachers

Lecturers interviewed indicated that Civic Education demanded active and participatory strategies. Additionally, the participants indicated that the teaching of Civic Education required teachers who were reflective to develop critical minds. Critical thinking was vital in Civic Education because it helped the learners in problem solving. As aptly noted by one of the teachers in the study:

"We fail to use practical and active methods because there is no time for practical activities because the time-tables were overloaded and have the bulky syllabus to finish."

Clearly from such findings and observations, by the participating teachers in the study, teacher training institutions need to train teachers of Civic Education in different approaches that will enable them once in schools to teach the subject effectively.

Additionally, a participant from the M.o.G.E stated that:

"The teaching we see in secondary schools today is a reflection of how teachers were trained. You don't expect teachers to use methodologies which they were not taught at colleges or universities. Teachers needed to be trained to use reflective methods which they are going to use in class. These methods should be outcome based."

It was also noted from the findings that there was need to harmonise the University/College curriculum with the secondary school curriculum to avoid a mismatch. This was seen as a way in which effective teaching could be actualized in secondary schools with regards to the transmission of democratic citizenship ideals.

3.4 Lack of Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials

Pupils in FGDs were asked to mention the challenges which they faced as they learn Civic Education and their response was that learning and teaching materials in Civic Education were inadequate. This was seen as a challenge in transmission of relevant knowledge, skills and values needed to enhance democratic citizenship.

3.5 Learning Environment

When the pupils were asked whether schools provided a secure environment which encouraged them to express their opinions, to debate, to practice decision making and or to bring up current political events for discussion in class, they indicated that they were not given space to discuss anything of political nature.

"Sometimes even teachers fear to teach controversial issues or topics especially those bordering on political, social issues affecting citizens."

This revelation by the learners could be interpreted to mean that some teachers of Civic Education had challenges in handling controversial issues in Civic Education lessons. However, some participants from M.o.G.E observed that a

secure political and social environment in school was a key to actualizing an ideal democratic society

A follow-up to establish whether pupils were adequately prepared in secondary schools to speak in public, debate and question authorities, teachers interviewed explained that debate, discussions, quiz and mock trials could greatly contribute and increase pupils' efficacy in public speaking, questioning and defending positions.

"It is important that we do more to prepare school children for their life beyond the classroom and for the role that they will have to play as citizens of this country."

4. Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Challenges in the teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia

The development of learners' creativity has been an area of discussion from the time Dewey coined the subject of learning by doing in the field of education. Learners need to be provided with relevant learning experiences and opportunities in order to learn how to observe the world from a variety of perspectives and to analyse, categorize and really delve into the problems they encounter in learning as well as in lives (Sifuniso, 2016). In doing so, this study identified the following as the challenges which affect the teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia;

- a) Lack of practical assessment
- b) Pedagogical strategies
- c) Learning environment
- d) Belief about the subject
- e) Teaching and learning materials

4.2 Lack of Practical Assessment

In this study, most of the participants viewed lack of practical assessment as the main factor affecting the effective teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia. It was established from the findings that since Civic Education was practical in nature, the learners needed to be assessed that way. This is because learners in a democratic society need to be active, informed and responsible citizens. Engagement in community affairs is considered to be a vital component in the effective transmission of democratic ideals. The findings suggest that lack of practical assessment denied learners an opportunity to engage with community affairs. Sim & Chow (2018) observe that active participation of citizens is crucial to the sustenance of a healthy democratic society. This means that Civic Education should equip the learners with relevant knowledge, skills and values required to participate fully in the community. In this regard, opportunities for learners' involvement in tangible experiences to facilitate their development as active, committed, responsible, social and political individuals were lacking.

4.3 Belief about the Subject

The findings revealed that Civic Education teachers took the subject simply as a passing subject. The emphasis by the teachers was on passing tests and examinations. These findings were consistent with Chola (2016) who observed that student teachers and graduate teachers did not have sound understanding of the subject matter they were just teaching to make them learners pass the examinations and beyond that.

4.4 Pedagogical strategies

As discussed in theme one, most of the teachers in secondary schools in Zambia still used the traditional approach methods which were teacher-centred. van-Manen (1977) notes that teaching and learning function is a very complex process, involving three inseparable and mutually supporting components. These include the teacher-cum-facilitator, the learner to whom the teaching and learning activities are intended and instructional resources or teaching aids. The three components were crucial for the acquisition of the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher usually serves as a bridge, linking the learner and the resources, including the subject matter. In order for the intended learning to occur, competent facilitators, effective strategies, delivery methods and appropriate instructional resources are required. Meaningful teaching of Civic Education requires clear strategies, methods and resources taking into account specific requirements and contexts of the groups of people to which the teaching and learning process is intended.

Therefore, the best pedagogy in the teaching of Civic Education should include a combination of classroom instruction through which learners gained the necessary foundational and professional skills, and experience and action on genuine community needs (Eyler, et al, 2001). Through this combined approach, learners are able to take their knowledge bases and apply them to address an array of societal problems. The application of this pedagogy includes the offering of structured time for learners to step back and reflect on their hands-on experience in the community setting and consider their roles and responsibilities as citizens of a society.

Learning environment

From the emerging themes, it was revealed through observations that schools did not give learners enough space to allow them to express themselves on public matters that affected them. It is on this premise that Civic Education should build a positive school climate, which in turn has a positive impact on a wide array of outcomes for learners, ranging from academic achievement to personal character. Both academic content and process; civic knowledge, virtues and skills must be taught and learned together to fulfil the mission of civic education, which is the development of individuals with the capacity to establish, maintain and improve democratic governance and citizenship in their country and throughout the world (Mihai, 2014). This can be accomplished by using participatory methods and active

learning so that learners experience participation in a real democracy.

4.5 Teaching and learning materials

The findings of this study have revealed that issues of teaching and learning materials in Civic Education were far from being resolved in secondary schools in Zambia. The teaching and learning materials were not adequate in some cases which posed a challenge in the transmission of right knowledge, skill and values needed for democratic citizenship.

Furthermore, pupils argued that the school libraries lacked Civic Education materials and this frustrated the learning of good and democratic citizenship in Civic Education. The findings of the study are in agreement with the findings of Oats (2009:56) who reiterated that “schools have an acute shortage of instructional material suitable for citizenship education and that this condition worked against the curriculum goal of effective citizenship education transmission.” Adeyemi, Boikhutso and Moffat (2003) noted that this condition needed to be addressed if Civic Education was to achieve its intended goal of preparing responsible citizens. For this reason, the government needed to equip secondary schools with adequate teaching and learning materials to support all various content areas in Civic Education.

While it is true that there was a shortage of educational material, teachers of Civic Education were encouraged through the Zambia Educational Curriculum Framework of 2013 to be resourceful. Teachers of Civic Education are supposed to be creative and innovative in the delivery of the subject so that it could have an impact on the learners. Additionally, Ball (2009) notes that for teachers to become reflective in their teaching practice, they must be motivated to change their teaching strategies when called to do so.

5. Conclusion

In this study, an attempt has been made to establish the challenges in teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia. The teaching of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia is marred with a number of challenges and teachers of Civic Education therefore are required to be resourceful and innovative during their teaching and learning sessions.

6. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, recommendations are hereby suggested;

- Since Civic Education is practical in nature, there is need for the training institutions to make this aspect a must in their curricula.
- There is need for secondary schools to strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPDs) activities as a response to enhancing reflective teaching strategies in subjects such as Civic Education.

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