

ABSTRACT

Frequent remarks by teachers of New Secondary Schools (NSS) that students' participation, particularly of grades 10 and 11 students during classroom instruction is unsatisfactory or minimal, motivated me to investigate the reasons for this problem.

This study was designed to assess the amount of verbal interaction that ensues between students and teachers during formal classroom instruction, to ascertain whether students participate or 'talk' as much or less than their teachers.

The Sample comprises two academic levels of grade 11 students (Continuing and Functional) in Language/Communication and Mathematics; a mixed group of Vocational students (Carpentry/Joinery) and their teachers from two New Secondary Schools (NSS) making a total of one hundred and sixty-five students and five teachers.

The Instrument used in the Study is Webb's (1981) modified version of Flanders' (1970) Interaction Analysis process. This involves the use of a category system, an

Observation Schedule, a tape-recorder and a stop-watch to secure relevant data.

The results of the study reveal that:

- a) Teachers in the NSS are the chief participants (speakers) during formal classroom instruction.
- b) Continuing (bright and average) students participate (talk) more than Functional (below average) students during formal classroom instruction.
- c) Teachers of Functional students interact more with students, through 'talk', than do teachers of Continuing students, during formal classroom instruction.
- d) The teacher of a mixed ability group of Continuing and Functional students interact more with students, through 'talk', than do students, during formal instruction in a vocational subject.

e) Whether in academic (Language/ Communication and Mathematics) or Vocational (Carpentry/Joinery) classes, teachers participate more than students during formal classroom instruction.

In light of these findings this thesis develops the idea that Supervision is the key to helping classroom teachers acquire pedagogical techniques which will facilitate for our students much greater impetus to actively and verbally participate during formal classroom instruction.

The Study concludes with suggestions to Officials in the Ministry of Education as to what can be done to institute instructional supervision and upgrade the supervisory skills of Senior teachers in the NSS so that the teaching techniques of classroom teachers (in-service and pre-service) who wish to develop their students in participatory learning through greater verbal interaction, can be improved.

Principals of NSS are advised of procedures they can employ to enlist the co-operation of Senior teachers entrusted with instructional supervisory duties over classroom teachers, who often solicit supervisory guidance in their

teaching e.g.

- a) Supervisors would attempt to assess the relationship between classroom activities and clearly understood teacher-objectives.

- b) Supervisors would note whether methods and techniques used by teachers are in harmony with the best that is known about child growth and development and the learning process and seek to help teachers become knowledgeable of such.

Recommendations are then made to Senior teachers as to the techniques they can employ to become efficient Supervisors of classroom teachers. Finally, hints are offered to classroom teachers as to how they can conduct their instructions to obtain more verbal participation from their students to ensure for the latter interesting, effective learning.