

A slow march towards capacity building of teachers

S Karunaratne^{1*} and M A A S Dias²

¹ Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

² Centre for Research and Development, National Institute of Education, Maharagama

It is the responsibility of primary teachers to help developing basic competencies in children to meet the challenges in future. This study focused on how to help teachers in developing skills to be confident in presenting subject matter in multiple and interesting ways to motivate students in learning through the newly introduced subject ERA (Environment Related Activities). Twelve schools were selected from the two educational districts of the North Western province considering the convenience of the researcher to be in the classroom for about 25-30 days. The research team observed twelve grade two classrooms of the twelve schools. Guided practice approach was used in the study which consisted of three phases-observation, conversation and monitoring.

In the first phase it was observed that teaching in these classrooms was predominantly teacher-centred. The intervention of the researcher in the classroom in co-planning and co-teaching helped teachers realize their weaknesses and think of ways in overcoming them. From the observations and interviews with the teachers in the monitoring phase, ten descriptors were identified to analyze the strengths of capacity building of teachers. They were—1) Understanding and inquiry learning, 2) Students' ideas, 3) Level of students, 4) Generate student ideas, 5) Making connections, 6) Student-student interactions, 7) Groupwork, 8) Student initiated activities, 9) Gain knowledge through their own activities and 10) Assessment. However, out of twelve teachers, four were unable to change their traditional way of teaching and another four were at a transition stage in developing student-centred behaviours. The changes that they have made were not permanent and switching back to the easy teacher dominated approach was observable. There were only four teachers who were able to make a shift from traditional teacher-centred behaviours to student-centred behaviours. It is recommended that the monitoring panels in the educational zones should conduct professional development activities in collaboration with in-service advisers and experienced teachers on a regular basis for teachers to possess multiple types of knowledge and skills to enable them plan, design, present subject matter in interesting ways and to assess student abilities.

*ksunethra@hotmail.com