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HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY PRACTICE AS A TEACHER AND FACILITATOR WHILE WORKING TOGETHER WITH INSTRUCTORS/TEACHERS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS WITH THEM AND FACILITATE THEM IN INCREASING THE LEARNING OUTCOME OF THEIR STUDENTS?

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

The author of this dissertation has not been registered for any other academic award during the period of this study.

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DEDICATION

To my late Dad, Tartisio Kenyi Hamuha, who has been a source of inspiration to me; Dad was, is and will always be my guide and a source of inspiration in life.

To my Mum, Gilda Tartisio Kenyi for her continuous encouragement; I have realized the preciousness of life because of your tendered Love and Care. I will continue to cherish you always in my life Mum.

To my wife, Veronica Agostino Magas for her Total Trust, Love and accepting me the way I am. To my two daughters, Teresa and Irene plus Christopher, for their forbearance and patience in times of my continued absence.

To all mankind of different age – young, adults and old – for allowing me to voice out the necessity of transforming my life and to promote this realization to the world of knowledge.

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I am so fortunate to have a Dad and Mum who have always supported my continual growth from childhood in many ways. I began annoying my parents as a child, always asking "why?" if something goes wrong with me. Thank God their annoyance did not end in exasperation but rather led to encouragement and guidance to seek answers and solutions of who and what I wanted to be in the future/life. It is in this line that I extend my honest and humble appreciation to my Dad, Tartisio Kenyi who has been a source of inspiration in my life, may he rest in peace.

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God bless you all

Paul Tartisio Kenyi H. (MA, 2010)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BA: Bachelor of Arts

CUEA: Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DBVTC: Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre

DBC: Don Bosco College

EU: European Union

GOSS: Government of Southern Sudan

HiAk: Høgskolen I Akershus

JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

KyU: Kyambogo University in Uganda

NUCOOP: Norwegian University Cooperation Program for Sudan

NOMA: NORAD Program for Master studies

NCVER: National Centre for Vocational Educational Research

PED: Practical Pedagogical Development program

TTP: Teachers Training Program for South Sudan Technical teachers

UNIDO: United Nation Industrial Development Organization

UNU: Upper Nile University in Malakal, South Sudan

VTE: Vocational Teacher Education

VTC: Vocational Training Centre

WVTC: Wau Vocational Training Centre

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a self-study research approach into my practice as a teacher and facilitator at Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC). I examined my experiences as a teacher for 7 years, enquire the forms of my knowing and my claims that I know, through adapting a self-study research approach under the umbrella question: how can I improve my practice (Whitehead, 2009)?

Throughout my first year as a master student at Akershus University College (HiAk), I have come to acquire new knowledge about a variety of research methodology and methods. Furthermore, my second year and gaining a perspective of Whitehead & McNiff, enlightened me more and found that self-study research approach is one of the valuable methodologies which offers a way to systematically look at ways to improve the "I". The "I" is a key element of self-study research approach that distinguishes it from other types of research methodologies.

Self-study research approach places emphasis on the "I" within forms of action, and in relation to other people ideas, and events (Hamilton, 1998). My approached to self-study research approach was based on the question: how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors/teachers in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students? The purpose of this study is to look into what I encountered in my past experiences as a teacher as I moved to examine and improve my practice of it through the facilitation of instructors at WVTC.

As I traveled down the path of improving my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC, I learned so many roles of being a teacher, discovered my vulnerabilities, and found a community of support in the writings of Whitehead, McNiff and Tom Russell, and Hamilton. The improvements and understanding I gained through engaging in this study demonstrate that self-study can be beneficial for me to improve my practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

For this study I collected data from Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC). The findings are divided into two sections. The first section handled the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC, followed by the first workshop conducted for the staff of the same center by the experts from HiAk. The second section displayed my periodic meetings with the instructors at WVTC for one and half month. The same

section (2) portrayed the interviews conducted for three head of the departments, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry as well as observation in the same sections for theory class and workshop practice. It is through the methods and tools that I used e.g. photography, research dairy (log writing), and audio recordings, I documented all the activities that I engulfed in at WVTC, which are explicated in the later stages of this work.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

1.0 Personal and Research Background

1.1 Personal Background

I am a graduate teacher in Philosophy and Education, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), Don Bosco College (DBC) in Tanzania. My Vocational Skills being in Auto-mechanics obtained from Don Bosco Vocational Training Center Khartoum. I am an instructor at the Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre (DBVTC) Wau, Southern Sudan and a teacher at Upper Secondary School.

Currently, I am Studying Masters in Vocational Pedagogy, Akershus University College (HiAk), faculty of Technical and Vocational Teacher Education. I am also a Nucoop Research Team Member for TVET Bachelor's program in Southern Sudan.

As an instructor at the DBVTC, I was teaching both theoretical and practical subjects. The theoretical subjects are Mathematics (workshop calculation), English (supported language) and Practical subjects include electrical wiring of the car engine and maintenance. Unlike in Upper Secondary School, I was teaching Mathematics, English and Religion.

1.2 Research Background

1.2.1 The Zeal to Improve My Practice

I have been a teacher for the past 7 years. I spend 5 years teaching in the Vocational Training Centre and 2 years in Upper Secondary School.

My point of departure is that, I was influence and challenged by the activities I was engulfed in during the last 7 years indicated above, and more especially those of the recent two years during my Masters studies. My research (Kenyi's, P. T., 2008) at DBVTC, about how learning and teaching take place in the classroom and workshop practice was experiential and challenging. As a graduate teacher and teaching for 7 years and now studying masters in vocational pedagogy, I was very much challenged by those experiences.

As a graduate teacher and my past experiences of teaching for 7 years, I used to talk most of the time in the class. I barely listened to my students; instead control them to listen to me as a teacher. Secondly, I was concerned only about the content of

the subject matter and not the learning outcome of the students. This is the pedagogy I was taught as I graduated as a teacher. How as a teacher you managed and control the classroom and not learning of the students is what pedagogy means to most of us back home.

It was not less than a year when I started my Masters degree in Vocational Pedagogy that I grasp the concept of pedagogy, which is learning from experience. It is what Kolb (1984), called as experiential learning. Therefore, I begin to realize the gap between me as a teacher/instructor and students. That gap is what I called the traditional way of imparting knowledge and skills to the students, controlling the learning process of the students for the purpose of examination rather than listening to the students and involving them in classroom discussion based on dialogue among us. As a facilitator of the instructors/teachers at WVTC we have been discussing and improving on how we can together improve our practices based on our experiences.

Involving them (instructors) and facilitate their experiential learning (based on their individual experience and hence trying to build their understanding and competence based on their interest and personal challenges is the reason for our periodic meetings for one and a half month.

I began to wonder how the gap could be bridged. Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff (2009) noted that teachers always when they reach a position of questioning their practices, then they ask the question of this kind: how can I improve my practice? Under the umbrella question of how can I improve my practice, I slowly begun to build the understanding of my practice and how to improve it.

My personal experiences as a teacher for 7 years with the help of my mentors stimulated me to frame the question of this kind: How can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I together with instructors at Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC) in order to discuss with them and facilitate them increasing the learning outcome of the students? Therefore, I find that engaging in a research to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator is essential.

1.3 Theme, Research Questions, Objectives, Scope and Significance of the Study

1.3.1 Theme of the Thesis

The theme of the thesis is how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors/teachers in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students?

1.3.2 The Research Questions

The main question was posted earlier, as how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors/teachers in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students? Based on this the research was guided by the following questions:

- ➢ How was the preliminary workshop of PED at WVTC with instructors to have effect on the periodic meetings?
- ➢ How does the participation of the participants and group activities and discussions have an impact on my potential improvement of practice?
- ➢ In what way does participation in the group activities process encourages participants' contribution?
- ➢ How does a periodic meeting with instructors at WVTC impact the participants/instructors in terms of improvement of their practices (to be followed up when I return home).

1.3.3 Objectives of the Researc

Improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students through;

- ➢ Documenting the processes of how the preliminary workshop (Practical Pedagogical development training) was facilitated by the expert from Akershus University College (HiAk) Norway.
- ➢ Taking responsibility for facilitating the WVTC teachers in our strive to improve our practice
- ➢ Documenting the processes of our periodic meetings with the staff and the group activities, thus, share the findings with participants for the purpose of validation.

➢ Keeping regularly with my research dairy

1.3.4 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted at WVTC in Western Bahr El-Ghazal State (WBGS), Wau in South Sudan. The participants were the teaching staff at WVTC. The participants' number was 12 including me and the director of the centre. Most of the staff has had long experiences working in technical and vocational institutes in Khartoum and South Sudan.

1.4.5 Significance of the Study

The results from this study are expected to be seen as a crucial step for me as a teacher and facilitator in my effort towards:

➢ Improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator in order to increase the learning outcome of the students

➢ Experiential background for facilitation of learning process of the students at all levels, in this regard as a mentor at BA institute of TVET in South Sudan

➢ Facilitating instructors at WVTC in their effort to improve their practice at WVTC to increase the learning outcome of their students.

1.4 The Statement of the Research Problem

Judging from the perspectives and the challenges I mentioned above, section 1.2.1, I am inclined to deduce that improvement of my practice as a teacher/instructor is essential.

After 7 years working and teaching and 2 years of my Masters in vocational pedagogy, I am finally permitting myself to believe that I understand some of the essential elements in my practice that I need to improve. I also understand more what vocational pedagogy is in the evolution of my practice as a teacher and facilitator.

My personal experiences as a teacher in the classroom and workshop practice have two major challenges. One is how to talk less and listen more to my students while in the classrooms? Secondly, how to reduce the concern given to the content of the subject matter (controlling the learning process of the students) and focus on the developmental aspects of the learning process of the students? Creating and sustaining a teaching-learning relationship with my students as a fundamental goal of improvement of my practice.

Growing up with these stories is a good reason to strive for improvement of my practice. Culturally, I am not supposed to tell or write about my past experiences because it may influence my present and possibly future status. Contrarily, to write about my past experience in my research seems to me essential because it tells me about the areas to improve my life or my professional carriers. Furthermore, when I tell my past experiences as a teacher in this regard, then my ontological and epistemological perspectives/values are challenged.

My values in life were formed from my family background and my interaction with other people in the society. As a graduate teacher I was taught in such a way that "I know everything." I am the possessor of knowledge, thus I can transmit that knowledge to my students or to whoever I want to. This conception denied my ontological and epistemological values, whereby, I see myself as a part of other people's lives and they, as part of my life. More so, I do not see myself as separate entity or possessor of knowledge in this regard rather I see myself as part of the other, therefore, together we can generate our own knowledge from our different experience of living learning. Additionally, knowledge is something diverse and a living process. In order to incorporate these two concepts of ontological and epistemological perspectives in my practice, a research work was a useful feature in this.

As a master researcher student of Social Science within the field of Vocational Pedagogy, I opted for a self-study approach as a methodology because it enables me to reflect and understand the 'I' in relation to my practice as a teacher and to take action to improve it. My research in this context is rooted in my past 7 years of experience as a teacher and my recent experiences I am engulfed in during my Masters studies.

That being said, I conducted a research at WVTC based upon the question how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors/teachers at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students? In order to achieved, work and improved on the questioned mentioned above, one could then urge that the study will benefit from a self-study research approach as a methodology.

Accordingly, the role that I took during these processes (research at WVTC) was that of a facilitator. The role of a facilitator is to look into the processes and recognize the diversity of learning (Bruce McKenzie). As a facilitator, I create an atmosphere where participants can teach and learn from each other.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The research activities of my dissertation are reflected into five individual chapters as outlined below:

1.5.1 Chapter One (Personal and Research Background)

This chapter set the scene by beginning with a discussion that describes my Personal and research background, the zeal to improve my practice. Reference also is made to the theme, research questions, Objectives, Scope and Significance of the thesis. The final part of the study is the statement of the research problem.

1.5.2 Chapter Two (The Literature Review)

Chapter two is dedicated to the literature reviews and explanation of terms used throughout the study.

1.5.3 Chapter Three (Research Methodology and Research Design)

In chapter three the research methodology used in the study is described. This chapter includes also the research design and the description of the data collection, analysis and discussion along with some issues of validity. This chapter also outlines the choices of research tools that are related to the research methodology used during the study.

1.5.4 Chapter Four (Presentation of Findings, Analysis and Discussion)

Chapter four deal with presentation of the research findings, analysis and discussion. The first section which is in this chapter presents the findings from the preliminary meetings with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop facilitated by the expert from Hiak for the staff of WVTC. The second section presented the periodical meetings with the staff at WVTC during one and half months. Each of these sections is represented in sub-chapters, followed by analyzes and discussed in detail. The chapter also included the interview with three heads of the departments, namely, Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry; plus observations conducted in the same departments. At the end of the chapter the summary was drawn and orientation to the next chapter.

1.5.5 Chapter Five (Conclusion, Recommendation and Way forward)

Finally, chapter five includes a summary of the research findings. The final part of this chapter gives a conclusion, recommendation and closing comments for the future.

1.6 Summary

As I mentioned earlier this study is about how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator while working together with instructors/teachers at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students? To learn from this question, a self-study research approach was employed.

What drives me in this chapter is the zeal I set to improve my practice as a teacher. As highlighted earlier, that as a teacher I used to talk most of the time and the students just listen to me and do whatever, I tell them to do. Furthermore, I was not very much concern with the learning process of the students but was concern with the content of the subject matter. How to fill in my students with the bookish knowledge and examination oriented system of education. The traditional way of transmitting information to the students was central to my teaching practice. More so, controlling the learning process of my students rather than making students responsible of their own learning process was rarely used.

Therefore, the need to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC was seen as kernel concern to this study. The means to do that was through a research work based on a self-study research approach by engaging instructors at WVTC in sharing our technical and vocation experiences and discussion in groups. The role I assumed in this process was that of a facilitator. A key concept of being a facilitator according to Bruce McKenzie (2005, 2010) is to recognize the diversity of ideas in the groups and the learning process that is taking place among them. As a facilitator, I tried to create an atmosphere that let the participants to feel free and active to share, teach and learn from each other's experience in order to improve my practices as teacher and theirs in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

That been said, I felt the need to gain the perspectives of Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff ((1989, 2000 – 2009) writings, under the umbrella question of how can I improve my practice? or rather how can I improve what I am doing? Supported by Hamilton (1998) who spoke of teachers improvement of their practices with others, will develop and increase the learning outcome of the students. As a teacher I felt in love with the writings of these authors, thus, my past experiences in this regard proved to be the ideal setting for me to evaluate and improve my practice together with instructors at WVTC. Therefore, the next chapter will shed the light to the literature review and the common terms used by the authors concern.

CHAPTER II

2.0 Literature Review:

2.1 Introduction

I enjoyed reading the article written by Jack Whitehead, Department of Education, Bath University under the question: What Counts as Evidence in Self-study of Teacher Education Practice (2005)? Based on this question in relation to my past experience as a teacher I thought it might be a good idea at the start of this thesis to give a brief review of it. Furthermore, how the article influences my understanding and research question of how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitate as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of the students?

The article addresses five main questions, namely:

➢ Is there evidence of the generation and testing of educational theories from the embodied knowledge of Self-studies of teacher education practices (S-step researchers)?

➢ Is there evidence of the transformation of the embodied values of the s-step researcher into the standards of judgment that can be used to test the validity of s-step accounts?

➢ Is there evidence of the emergence of educational research methodologies as distinct from a social science methodology in s-step enquiries?

➢ Is there evidence of logic of educational enquiry?

➢ Is there evidence of educational influence in educating oneself, in the learning of others and in the education of social formations?

The questions outlined above and the approach that Whitehead used to answer the questions was relevant in his context. My approach and the context I am using the questions is more or less related but the context is also different. One thing I am convinced of from the questions posted and answered by Whitehead despite the context differences, I referred to them (questions) in most of my discussions in this study. My focused on these questions is simple and accurate as I applied them to my context of the research activities. I have involved in my discussions the five questions while focusing on the question Whitehead posted as the over-all question: What Counts as Evidence in Self-study of Teacher Education Practice?

From the question mentioned above I based on certain concept that Whitehead had responded in relation to his context and applicable to my context as well. Mindful of the five questions posted earlier, I focused on self-study as a research methodology approach that I used to improved practice and generating knowledge from question of the kind 'how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitate as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of the students?' I also used and included some terms that Whitehead used in his context that are applicable to my context as well, namely: ontological and epistemological perspectives of the teacher/facilitation in question.

I am not concluding using the following phrase but most of us today are trying to improve practices as teachers, leaders, mentors, managers and facilitators to mention few. In my mind, Jack Whitehead (2002, 2005) article of self-study theory approach will be a sound foundation to start with or to focus on. The reason is simple.

The significance of the questions mentioned above in relation to the growth of educational knowledge has been well expressed in it (article). As I have read through the article, I thought through the concepts and ideas explicated and asserted in the article and self-study specifically are indeed an example of living educational theory in two ways. First, it is living because, as people engage in understanding it, they learn more and their theory changes as they understand more. Secondly, because they are living what they learn from the article, new knowledge emerges.

This chapter is organized in four main sections, namely: things I have learned from the article, my ontological and epistemological understanding, and lastly a self-study research approach as a methodology of this study. (Whitehead & McNiff: 2002, 2004, 2007 & 2009), followed by the Summary.

2.2 Things I have learned from the Article

The early section of this article has a clear and distinct introduction of the message Whitehead wants to put across. I also outlined my area of focused as I used some of Whitehead ideas in my research context. What is so incredible to me is how Whitehead pulls together his understanding of what counts as evidence in self-study research approach basing on the five questions mentioned above. Although the author answered the questions in a different context when he wrote the article, I find it useful and related to my context and mostly in this study.

For instance, looking back to my profession as a teacher it has not been easy to conduct a research on my practices, because of the challenges involve. As a teacher my profession was challenge in this study and my values as a professional teacher became vulnerable as well. My teaching practice and my values that I believe in was essentially challenged but the research work that I conducted pave the way to look into my practice with a critical mind. I think as a teacher and researcher in this regard, reviewing the article written by Whitehead (2005) was a handy tool in this research and it is explicated in the later stages of this work.

As a teacher and researcher in an action research field the final product of this work/study is the improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator. This idea had been supported by Tom Russell (2002), when he stated "often it is challenging enough to look critically at one's own teaching practices. While the obvious purpose of self-study is improvement, it is even more challenging to make changes and seek evidence that the changes represent improvement."

Based on my research question, I hold on to Russell idea about the focus on improvement in self-studies as a research approach. He is also right putting it clear about the challenges of making changes and in seeking evidence that the changes represent improvement.

It is through these challenging changes and my past experiences that I encountered in the classroom that I build on a new understanding of how to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator of learning outcome.

In Short, based on Whitehead, McNiff in relation to Tom Russell I will argue on the premise that teacher-researchers have the capacity to create and test their own educational theories through their self-studies research approach to improve their practices. I hold this argument to be the descriptions and explanations of my improvement of practice and learning process as I enquire into the question of the kind, 'How can I improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students?'

As I mention earlier in this study that my values were challenge as I took up this research. Since Whitehead & McNiff advocated to this concept of a teacher holding to his values as a profession, I step forward to examine my values in relation to the authors mention above.

2.2 Ontological Perspectives

According to Whitehead & McNiff (2002), ontology is refer to as seeing myself as a part of other people's lives and they, a part of my life; I do not see myself as separate being, as an observer researching on their actions.

For instance, I recalled the intention behind my decision in 1999 to become a teacher. Looking back, my experiences of education in secondary school and university studies, I recognised that many of my teachers/lecturers were confident and enthusiastic in communicating their subject knowledge/matter. What I felt that they lacked by then was educational relationships in which to relate with students. By educational relationship, I mean recognizing my capabilities as a student who can think and create my own knowledge/understanding. In addition, I felt the lack of not recognition as a student who has the capacity to think critically in the process of my learning activities. Hence, I felt left out, feeling different human being, a separated person from my teachers, having an empty mind waiting to be filled in with ideas.

Relating this statement to my own research, one can argue that as a researcher I do not offer descriptions and explanations of what I observed or what the instructors at WVTC were doing during the one and a half month of periodic meeting with them to improve our practices but on what I have done together with them (McNiff & Whitehead: 2002). Additionally, respecting and accommodating each individual instructor's views.

Furthermore, in explaining my experiences in education as a teacher/facilitator I see as significant my ontological commitment to sustaining my relationship with instructors/participants at WVTC in improving our practices. This relationship is grounded in the expression of seeing myself as part of other people's life and they part of me, people who can create their own understand and people who are born with innate knowledge (Whitehead & McNiff).

McNiff & Whitehead (2004) noted that action researchers believe that people are able to create their own identities and abilities. Furthermore, they try to find ways to live together in spite of our/their potential differences. This means that having the courage to speak and act in ways which often make them strife together to achieve something in the future. The future here is embodied in the present, realizing its (future) potentialities by improving what they are doing in relation with each other.

As a graduate teacher I did not have any idea to whether students are capable of creating their own ideas and take responsibility of their own learning process. Not until I realize my weaknesses as a teacher have I come to appreciate other people's ideas and capabilities of creating their own learning outcome. My last two years of studying masters in vocational pedagogy was a potential process that I was improving on this understanding. To improve this process, I need to take up a research work and initiative in order to improve my practice as a teacher.

McNiff & Whitehead (2007) voiced out that action researchers always take the responsibility to improve their own practice first before influencing others. This study is basically based on this understanding.

In line with what Whitehead & McNiff (2004) offers, I reflected and look critically on to my practice, recognized the good it carries and understand what needs attention in order to improve it. It has not been easy for me to study my own practice but building on my former experience, I took commitment and interest to research and find ways of how to improve my practice together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

By ontological perspective in the context of my enquiry into my practice, I mean that I create an atmosphere where each of us during the workshop/periodic meeting was equal. There is no participant who is less than the other but we value each other as people who can think as individual, create their own thought and deliver as team – improvement of our practices.

As I come to a better understanding of this concept, I see more clearly the embodied values to which I hold myself accountable for living as I enquire into my practice, to improve it in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. These values are what I hold as valuable to my practice as a teacher and facilitator. They are a source of my experience of myself as a living contradiction as I find myself working in relationships and contexts where some of my values are negated in what I am doing as a teacher/facilitator.

Although the term ontology carries various meaning in the field of educational science, the context in which I used is more clarified above. As I clarify my values, in the course of improvement of my practice in this research, I am convince that they are transformed, through this processes of my research activities into the living standards of judgment I use to test the validity of my knowledge-claims. In other words the values in my ontological perspective or commitment provide the source for my

epistemological standards of judgment. In the words of Whitehead (2004) this is such an important connection for me as a researcher, teacher and facilitator because my sense of identity includes my sense of living a productive life by extending the influence of my values that carry hope for the future of humanity, through education and knowledge-creation.

2.3 Epistemological Perspectives

Epistemology is the name given to the study of what we know and how we come to it (McNiff, 2007). More so, in the ancient period it is understood as something that exists outside human mind or in the books and databases. In this understanding, we divorced knowledge from our lives as something that we inherited and not created by us (McNiff).

According to McNiff & Whitehead (2006), action researchers see knowledge as something they do, a living process. They explain further that people can generate their own knowledge from their experience of living learning.

Drawing an understanding of these two authors in relation to this study, I thought to myself that knowledge is something diverse and not static or a finished product, it is something innate in us. Furthermore, it is a developmental process of every human person.

For instance, my former experiences as a teacher were basically based on the concept that students should reproduce what I taught them in the class during exams. Otherwise, without reproducing those statements or quotations will result into failure. I was the master, the knowledge and learning process holder and the students were empty boxes that need to be filled. This is how I was taught and graduated as a teacher. As mentioned earlier, this is the pedagogy I was taught and graduated as a teacher. The concept started changing when I resumed my masters in vocational pedagogy last two years that I begun to realized learning as a process. I hold the keys to my own learning process and not the teacher, professor or mentor. I can create my own understanding of what learning is. It is experiential learning.

My study of how to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students was basically based on this understanding. I see myself as a person who has knowledge of my profession and practice as a teacher and thus, want to improve it and create knowledge together with instructors at WVTC, who also in-turn have their own

knowledge and valuable experiences to share. The reason for improving my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC is to build on our different experience on how to facilitate learning outcome of the students.

In conducting my research at WVTC I see myself as a part of the instructors at WVTC. In sharing together our technical and vocational experiences as teachers or instructors we tent to find ways to improve our practices and thus creating new knowledge individually and together.

In short, in relation to the understanding of Whitehead & McNiff and my reflection, the proposition of improvement of practice to me is a process of asking questions that generate new potentialities. Therefore, learning in this view is rooted in the experiences of my practice as a teacher and facilitator together with instructors at WVTC. The story told of my practice as a teacher makes me to question my practice and how to improve it together with instructors at WVTC. Therefore, building on those experiences and constructing a new understanding of how to facilitate learning outcome, I use a self-study research approach.

Of significance is the fact that the context in which I used the term epistemological perspective is different that of Whitehead. Although they are related in one way or another, what epistemological perspective means in the context of my research and to me is that we are capable of creating our own knowledge, whether as teachers, facilitators or students, because knowledge is innate in us.

Therefore, as a researcher, I reflected on and improve my practice and take responsibility to identify and meet my professional development needs as a teacher and facilitator. Additionally, during the course of this research, I have to creatively and constructively create a critical approach towards innovation ways to work with the instructors at WVTC in order to facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students.

2.4 Self-study

According to Whitehead (1989), he noted that teacher-researchers have the capacity to create and test their own educational theories through their Self-studies of their teacher-education practices. I hold to this premise to be the descriptions and explanations of my learning in educational enquiry of the kind; 'how can I improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students?

For instance, growing up with my past experiences as a teacher, I found a good reason to strive for improvement of my practice using a self-study research approach. I credited Russell (2002), when he noted that often it is challenging enough to look critically at one's own practices. While the obvious purpose of self-study is improvement, it is even more challenging to make changes and seek evidence that the changes did indeed represent improvement.

My research activities that I engulfed in during the last two years and more specifically in the last one and a half month at WVTC gave me the impetus to critically examine my practice. It is not just for me to examine my practice as a teacher in order to create a better classroom ambient but it is about the 'I' of my practice.

McNiff (2006) supported this idea when she explains that action research enquiries are not just used to create better classroom activities and thus learn as one teaches. It is also meant to conduct systematic study of one's own practice using action research principles in order to improve it. Together with Hamilton & Pinnegar (1998) further explain that as one's own educational practice improves accounts of it and therefore knowledge about it is added to the knowledge base of the teaching and research community.

Reflecting upon this understanding, one can then argue that the evidence of enquiring into my own practice as a teacher indicated the need to improve it together with instructors at WVTC based on our former experiences. Those experiences help me and instructors at WVTC to construct a new concept of how to facilitate learning outcome of the students

As noted in the beginning of this chapter that, there are fundamental differences between the ontological and epistemological perspectives in relation to self-study research approach as a methodology used in this study.

Cresswell (2007) describes five qualitative research methods and gave brief explanation of their similarities and differences between them. These methods are as follows: narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research and case study research.

On the other hand Whitehead (2008) describes the similarities and differences between each of these methodologies in relation to self-study theory as a methodology. Whitehead explains that self-study theory as a methodology has similarities to each of the above methodologies.

According to Whitehead, the fundamental differences between them all is that self-study theory as methodology is a researcher's unique explanation of his/her own educational experiences as they seek to improve it together with others.

Regarding narrative research, Whitehead states that while self-study theory is narrative, not all narratives are self-study theories. According to Whitehead, the purpose of self-study theory as a methodology is not to give a description of universal essence as in phenomenological research; it is not to give abstract generalizations as in grounded theory research, it does not focus on a culture group as in ethnographic research and is not constrained by a bounded system as in case study research.

J. M. Newman (2000), in discussing action research stated that there is 'no one 'right way' of doing action research. Researchers normally engage in their research with more open minded. As he (researchers) goes on reflecting on his or her research or findings, new ways of invented methodologies arises.

Corbett, in her research of inclusion in a London school, found that she learned about the methodology of researching inclusive education and inquires as to whether it requires a new research methodology. She wrote:

> To my surprise in what I thought would be a practical case study, this theoretical challenge to research methodology became one of the integral components of the book…If we accept that inclusion is a philosophical concept which requires an examination of ethics, equity and justice, this can be supported by an emancipatory approach which has empathy at its core.
>
> (Corbett, 2001, pp 8-9)

Whitehead (2008) refers to 'methodological inventiveness' as described by Dadds and Hart whereby practitioner (not experts)-researchers develop their own unique methodologies that suit their research "No methodology is, or should be cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods of techniques" (Dadds & Hart, 2001, p 169).

This brings me to the summing up of this chapter as I orient you to my next methodology chapter.

2.5 Summary

The main body of literature review was based on four themes, namely: things I have learned, ontological perspective, epistemological perspective and Self-study research approach as a methodology employed in this study. I explained and gave a core definition and rationale for each concept based on McNiff & Whitehead conception and my reflections.

Researchers at times tend to focus their study on the practice of others and not theirs. Fewer only focus on their practice and the process of how to improve it.

Explaining my former experiences, *I aim to build on a new understanding of how to facilitate learning outcome of the students.* It is to examine what I encountered as a teacher as I moved from the role of a classroom teacher into the role of a facilitator or mentor teacher of student teachers.

This gave me to turn to the body of literature review that encompasses self-study research approach as methodology. The next chapter explains more on the methodology employed during the research and the research design.

CHAPTER III

3.0 THE METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I relate to a self-study research approach as a methodology to this study as I inquire into my question, 'how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students?' (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

In doing so, I describe and explain the methodology and the research design that I have employed and give the reasons as to why I have adopted a self-study research approach (Whitehead, 2003).

3.2 Methodology

Through adapting a self-study research approach as a methodology, teacher-researchers have the capacity to create and test their own educational theories through their self-studies to improve their practices (Whitehead, 1972). The self-study research approach is distinguished from other methodologies by its concept of the 'I' whereby the 'I' is questioned under the umbrella question of how can I improve my practice? Furthermore, it starts from the assumption that you, I, and we, experience the content of our own enquiring 'I' and can make sense of this content (Whitehead, 1989, 2003).

To explain further, the 'I' becomes a living contradiction most of the time when the values that I/we hold and aspire to are not being lived in my/our practices. The fact that when I ask the question 'How can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC?' in my mind, there is already a desire to live my values more fully in my practice. The desire to live my values of listening to my students and have concern to their (students) learning process. As a teacher for 7 years, my values are punctuated by moments when I deny or fail to live them (my values) fully in my practice. Thus, the reason of asking the question of how can I improve my practice? (Whitehead, 1989) is to improve and be accountable to the values that are negated from my practice.

My choices of a self-study research approach as a methodology is based on my desire to improve my practice (by living those values) as a teacher and facilitator together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. As a teacher I aspire to promote and develop improvement of practice in Schools, technical schools and Universities. Therefore, as I claim the improvement of my practice together with instructors at WVTC in the later stages of this study, I wish to publicly communicate my knowledge in a way that can be accredited by a Higher Education Institution as worthy of a Master's Degree.

The methodology I employed in this study is essentially influenced by my ontological and epistemological assumptions (Whitehead & McNiff, 2004, 2006). In conducting my research at WVTC, I see myself as a part of the instructors and influencing their practices at WVTC and interacting with them, thus creating new knowledge individually and together (Whitehead & McNiff, 2004).

Although I have mentioned earlier about Cresswell (2007) describing five qualitative research methods and reviews the similarities and differences between them. I would like to mention them here briefly. They are: narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research and case study research. Most of these methods are use in different research approaches and context which in one way or another I have included them in my research work.

Additionally, Whitehead (2008) describes the similarities and differences between each of these methodologies in the light of self-study research approach as a methodology. While self-study research approach has some similarities to each of the above, the fundamental differences are that self-study research approach is a researcher's unique explanation of his practice, his improvement and learning process.

Regarding narrative research, Whitehead states that while self-study research approach are narratives, not all narratives are self-study research approach methodology. Furthermore, the purpose of self-study research approach is not to give a description of universal essence as in phenomenological research; it is not to give abstract generalizations as in grounded theory research, it does not focus on a culture group as in ethnographic research and is not constrained by a bounded system as in case study research.

In line with what Newman (2000) noted, which I have outlined above as well, that there is 'no one right way' of doing action research. Because for him (Newman,

2000), researchers involving themselves in any research activities must define clearly their way of doing research (in this regard, action oriented research). Adapting this idea to my work, I used a self-study research approach.

Corbett, in her research of inclusion in a London school, found that she learned about the methodology of researching inclusive education and inquires as to whether it requires a new research methodology. She states:

> To my surprise in what I thought would be a practical case study, this theoretical challenge to research methodology became one of the integral components of the book…If we accept that inclusion is a philosophical concept which requires an examination of ethics, equity and justice, this can be supported by an emancipatory approach which has empathy at its core.

(Corbett, 2001: 8-9)

Whitehead (2008) refers to 'methodological inventiveness' as described by Dadds and Hart whereby practitioner-researchers develop their own unique methodology through their research "No methodology is, or should be cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods of technique" (Dadds and Hart, 2001:169)

3.3 The Research Design

3.3.1 Methods

It has been stated that the main emphasis of this study is how I can improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of the students?

The decision now is what research methods to choose as relevant and appropriate in this study? There are many choices about monitoring practice and gathering data and a combination of the various methods could turn out to be useful. According to McNiff & Whitehead (2005), methods may be written or live. Written methods may include field notes, keeping a journal or diary, doing surveys, record sheets of tables and charts, questionnaires. The live methods may include interviews, audio recording, observation, minutes/log writing, photographing and video recordings.

In this self-study approach, as I inquire into my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC and make my claim to educational knowledge, the processes of data gathering were based on the works by Patton (1990), Vulliamy (1990), and Yin (1994). The first part of my data which is (theme A) is in the form of narrative inquiry advocated by McNiff (2007). Narrative inquiry is linked to the action research process by practitioner-researchers telling their stories and experiences, thus through those experiences, storytelling and the knowledge vested on them (stories and experiences), the researchers (in this regard me and participants/instructors at WVTC) fought our ways to improve our practices.

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) refer to teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life history. The term life History, I mean or in this context, is refer to the stories and experiences that I/instructors at WVTC encountered during our professional teaching activities. They state that the stories or narratives of experience are social because they reflect the contexts in which teachers live, and they reflect a person's life history. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) have coined the term, 'personal practical knowledge' which refers to teachers, through their experience of the past, the present and their projections for the future, as being knowledgeable and knowing persons. They are knowers of teaching, learning and their subject matter, and knowers of their situation, their children and themselves.

This connects very much with Snow's (2001) idea of teachers, in that they possess a wealth of knowledge about teaching, based on their personal knowledge and personal experience, as I expressed previously.

Through my inquiry in improving my practice together with instructors at WVTC, I have used qualitative methods. To me it was important to develop a research design for this thesis. Such a design is understood by Yin (1994) as an action plan for getting from here to there, in this regard the plan of improving my practice together with instructors at WVTC.

Yin (1994) defines research design as a blueprint of the research, which deals with four questions: a) what question to study? b) What data is relevant? C) What data to collect? d) How to analyze the results? A research design is viewed as necessary in order to avoid collecting data that are not relevant to the research question. Therefore, the actual field study took one and a half months which included the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop with the staff of the same institute.

While the study pertains on how I can improve my practice as a teacher, it is also concerned with the individual instructor at WVTC to improve his practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. As a result the study focused on documentation of the processes during the participatory dialogue in the form of sharing our technical vocational experiences and group discussion. Other processes consisted of interviews of selected informants from the three departments, namely; Electrical, Carpentry, and Masonry. The way the informants were selected was based on the long experiences that they (selected informants) had working in the technical vocational training centers (both in Khartoum in the North and Southern Sudan). Secondly, the departments that are running the training during this time are the ones mentioned above. As a facilitator, I asked the participants to appoint some people among for the interview and the three were selected. However, other methods also used included observation, research dairy and document analysis.

3.3.1 Interviews

A semi-structured interview with key informants or head of the departments was conducted (appendix 1). The interview guide was open and oral. As I mentioned earlier, the informants were having long experiences working at VTCs (both in the North and South Sudan). The departments that were offering training to the students by then were Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry and thus, the reason of using this method (interview).

3.3.2 Observation

Halla H. (2007) cites that the role of observations is crucial to note some of the issues related to our sharing/dialogue during the meetings. Similarly, observations offer an excellent way to discover how improvement is occurring in the classroom/workshop.

To me observation is a tool that helps researchers in assessing individual participants in their improvement of practice or teaching skills. I used it in all the three departments and at the end of the class theory or workshop practice, I provide the instructors concern with my findings and the pedagogical improvement of his practice. Furthermore, observation is an informal process that focused more on the idea of a researcher observing and share the data with teachers/participants, helping them to improve the areas that needs attention and in this way increasing the learning outcome of the students. Mary C. Perrot (1982) indicates that an effective teacher who

wants to improve his practice is best identified through observing him/her teaching. It can be used with participants who are not able to expressed themselves, offsetting my fears of a language barrier wherever, I gather data from Arabic speaking teachers/instructors. Observation would therefore enrich the validity of my research data/findings, as a supplement tool.

On the other hand, observation has a disadvantage that I realized during the process of observing instructors at classroom theory or workshop practice. For instance, during one of my classroom observation, I observed the instructor felt uncomfortable because of my present in the classroom and the same in the workshop practice. In this regard, sometimes instructors/teachers act temporarily and perform their teaching activities/job correctly when they are being observed, to impress the researcher or the one observing meanwhile, they might actually do the opposite in the absent of the researcher/observer. Furthermore, observation sometimes may result into destruction of the students or even instructor in the classroom or workshop practice. For example, I asked the teacher/instructor in charge of the classroom and workshop practice to join his class. So that when I have his consent to join during the theory class or workshop practice then it may not destruct the classroom or workshop practice ambient.

3.3.3 Document Analysis

Yin (1994) argued that the point of using documents is to collaborate and argue evidence from other sources.

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) noted that the use of document analysis along with field observation, interviews, and questionnaires is the chief methods for research.

Holmarsdottir (2007) also indicate that applied rigorously, documentary analysis is a tool for studying and analyzing documents.

Thus in this study documents; e.g. articles, international journals and reviews were used together with other sources of information from the web and literatures to help strengthen the quality of the research/study.

3.3.4 Research Diary

Throughout my inquiry, I have kept a research dairy whereby I have reflected on processes during the sharing and discussion and kept a record of my evolving thinking. I draw on extracts from my research dairy, identifying crucial experiences in

the practice, critical incidents, and my learning and progress to improve my practice. The research dairy in this context is my log writing, which was essential to me because I keep on recording every activities or reflections of the day. At the end of the day or every meeting with the participants, I will read through my research dairy, draw some crucial concepts/experiences and write my reflections from it.

3.4 Sampling Technique

In this study the issue of sampling concerns with the interview conducted with three heads of the departments, namely: Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. With reference to interview sample, I chose a purposeful approach in order to achieve a rich and reliable, diverse collection of information. Patton (1990) argues that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for the study in depth. Furthermore, information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. The purpose of purposeful sampling however is to select information rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under the study.

Three head of the sections were purposefully selected in order to obtain a rich and diverse data about the actual improvement of my/their practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. Thus, purposeful sampling was chosen in an attempt to achieve a rich and in-depth understanding of my practice together with the individuals selected instructors. In addition, I made some observation in the theory class and workshop practice. The observations were unstructured and were conducted so as to serve as another source of evidence in the study. Yin (1994) noted that observations are normally used to verify information given through interviews. Furthermore, it was seen as imperative to the study that the realities of the classroom or workshop practice were observed, that is what happens in practice.

3.4.1 Validity of the Findings

This is a self- study of my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students. Assuming the role of a facilitator, I invited the participants (instructors at WVTC) to be directly involved in the research process, while the focus is improvement of my practice. It concerns my practice as a

teacher, whereby I reflected on how to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC.

McNiff (2002) argues that in action research, practitioners, not 'the experts' set their own criteria as they take responsibility to validate their findings. Therefore, in conducting my research I used three techniques, namely getting feedback from the participants, validation group/critical friends and triangulation to validate my findings.

Patton (1990) noted that the primary purpose of triangulation is to validate the collected data. Furthermore, Patton explains that multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on the program. Triangulation was used in this study to validate the data along with improving the quality and accuracy of the findings, which was not possible through the use of one method.

Using feedback form (see appendix 3) was another technique used to validate my findings with the participants. Each week when we meet I presented the findings from the former meetings to the participants to get their feedback and validate my findings.

The validation group or critical friends (as I called them) here I mean our learning group. We (Paul, Aidah and Daniel) are research students under the Norwegian Scheme Program Pursuing a Master's degree in Vocational Pedagogy at Høgskolen i Akershus (HiAk) 2008 – 2010. I am a graduate teacher in Philosophy and Education of Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), Kenya. Aidah is a graduate teacher whose vocational knowledge and skills are linked to home economics (foods and nutrition of Kyambogo University in Uganda). Daniel is a graduate of Mechanical Engineering from Sudan University of Science and Technology. We are participants in the "English speaking learning group."[1]

We have been having our learning group meetings for about two years now. We used to meet sometimes in the morning or afternoon four to five times a week. Trond Smistad and Johan Houge-Thiis our mentors, Høgskolen i Akershus, joins us sometimes.

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[1] The "International English Learning Group" is a part of the Masters of Vocational Pedagogy class (2008-2010). We are three members in this group by choice since we were the only English speaking and full time students among many part time students for the same program. In this group, we are as "critical friends" in developing our reports.

Normally when we meet, we begin by telling the group our experiences both as teachers and research practitioners in the research field work. Frequently, we take along our writings, show it to the group, and they comment and act as critical friends and that validate my claims for knowledge.

I have made a note of relevant quotations made during our conversations and have included some in my dissertation. At times, when I have been stuck with my inquiry or writings, I discussed my problem with the group and they have offered suggestions as to how I should proceed. Sometimes, my critical friends have written about me and how they perceive me in my practice or research. Their writings have helped me move through difficult times in my inquiry. I quote from their accounts in my dissertation as well.

3.4.2 Participants in the Study

McNiff and Whitehead (2009) noted that as a researcher, you invite participants to be directly involved in the research, as people whose learning I am trying to influence. Furthermore they explained that the participants can be teachers, colleagues or students.

Mindful of my research question of how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of the students, the research focuses on me and improvement of my practice in relation to the instructors at WVTC. As such we are equal to each other.

3.4.3 Ethical Considerations

A key element of my methodology taking the role of being a facilitator was to observe the participants like and dislikes. Mindful of my concern in improving my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC, I invited the participants' to plan on how we want to proceed with our meetings. The purpose of doing that is to create a safe environment for open discussion, teaching and learning from each other's experiences. That in one way may open up our minds and desire to improve our practices in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. Furthermore, we also draw on some guiding rules (which are not compulsory) for our periodic meetings (see appendix 4).

3.4.4 Data Presentation

I have presented all my data in tables under two themes A and B. During tabulation; I sorted and categorized the data into various indicators to ease analysis. I developed the indicators from the related literatures and reflections from my research dairy.

Theme A includes:

➢ The preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop for the staff of the same center by the expert from HiAk

The data for the above theme is presented and discussed in the first part of chapter four. The data for theme B is presented and discussed in the second phase of chapter four which include:

➢ The periodic meetings with instructors for one and half month at WVTC
➢ Interviews with key informance of three departments namely, Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry, plus observations conducted in theory class and workshop practice in the same departments.

3.5 Summary

I started by introducing the approach I used in this research in relation to my theme. Adopting a self-study research approach as a methodology, described and explained by Whitehead (2003, 2006), I described how it's related to my question of the study. The methods I used explicate how I wanted to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

The validation of my findings by participants, validation group/critical friends and triangulation stand out to be the experience and knowledge I claim to have improved my practice as a teacher and facilitator.

As orientation to the next chapter of my findings, I describe what I have done and how this has led to the improvement of my practice and those of the instructors at WVTC. I describe and explain how reflecting together on sharing our technical and vocational experiences and group discussion leads to improvement of my practice and new ways of learning.

CHAPTER IV

4.0 THE PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS FROM WVTC

4.1 Introduction

The following sections constitute the findings of the research conducted at WVTC. In an effort to answer the research question spelled out in section 1.3.1, I described and gave an account of the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop conducted at WVTC. Accordingly, the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop for the instructors is handled in section 4.2 as well as my discussion and reflection of the results.

As a researcher in this process I did not pretended to describe the situation as simple and accurate. I have attempted to provide an account that respects the participants' voices and my understanding of the context in which they occurred. I have probably misrepresented people, places and events but where possible I tried to engage those people represented in order to ease my analysis and correct my errors related to their views, and in this way improving my practice as a practitioner or teacher researcher.

In my account of the preliminary meeting, first workshop and the periodic meetings with instructors at WVTC, I have chosen which events to describe. The choice involved judgments about which events were deemed important or less important for the study. This requires my reasoning and critical understanding about what qualified those events as important and even censored.

To mention briefly, the purpose of the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC is to involve the whole institute as a learning organization in improving my practice as well as theirs. In today's understanding, organization is taken as learning arenas where one can improve his or her practice. According to Stephen Billett (2001) learning could be defined as the participation and practice of everyday life of an organization. Furthermore, the improvement of one's own practice and the continuous development of new knowledge must be integrated in learning processes within the organizations. Thus, the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC was essential in the beginning to pave the way for the workshop and the periodic meeting

with instructors for the purpose of improving my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC.

The second part of this chapter (which is Theme B) presents the findings in our periodic meeting with instructors at WVTC for over one and half month. My analysis, discussion and reflection of the findings will be supported by the following:

➢ The reflections I made during the discussion (meetings) based upon my research dairy (field note or my log)

➢ Related Literatures as mentioned from the writers and practitioners/scholars who have carried their research and studies in support of the innovative ways of improving my practices together with instructors at WVTC.

4.2 Presentation of the Findings

4.2.1 Preliminary Meeting with the Leadership of WVTC

The preliminary meeting took place on 22nd Oct. 2009 at 5:45 pm at River Lodge Hotel Wau. Four of us attended the meeting; the facilitator, Mr. Mustafa Trond, Paul Tartisio, assistant facilitator, Mr. Gabriel Simon, the deputy director of WVTC and Mr. Anter Abdul Wahab, **UNIDO**[2] representative. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the forth coming workshop and meeting of all the instructors at WVTC. The reason for the workshop is to facilitate the instructors with concept of student-centered learning. Although in the later stages of this chapter, the concept of student centered learning will change to how we/staff increase the learning outcome of the students at WVTC.

The meeting at River Lodge gave an introductory part and the purpose of the workshop at WVTC. The deputy director on his part appreciated a lot the concern and the initiative taken by the facilitator to conduct a workshop at the center. He assured the facilitator of their willingness, cooperation and availability of all the instructors. He appealed if the workshop can be conducted for one week. Furthermore, he mentioned the importance of facilitation in the classroom and workshop; in this case, how can we enable a student to take responsibility of his or her learning process. The instructors at the center need such kind of workshops (capacity building) since the WVTC is about to reopen, he added. The deputy director invited the facilitator, Mr. Mustafa Trond to the center to conduct a preliminary workshop with instructors. The

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[2] UNIDO, United Nation Industrial Development Organization, The Agency is rehabilitating the Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC) since 2008

major concern of his was how to revitalize the technical vocational experiences of the instructors. It is long since they last stand before the students in the classroom. He appealed to the facilitator to focus more on how to facilitate students learning process.

The meeting (in this case the workshop) with instructors was schedule for 23rd Oct. 2009 at WVTC compass. We ended the meeting at the hotel at 6:50 pm.

4.2.2 Workshop with Staff of WVTC

On the 23rd Oct. 2009, at 3:00 pm, we arrived at Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC). We were welcome by the deputy director of the center and other instructors. We started by befriending the center meanwhile the instructors were preparing for the meeting. At 3:50 pm, the preliminary meeting with instructors started at the director's office. The director of the center was not around due to the meeting for the curriculum in Juba. Present in the meeting was Mr. Mustafa Trond, the facilitator, Paul Tartisio Kenyi, assistant facilitator, 9 instructors from WVTC and one UNIDO representative. The deputy director welcomes the guest (facilitator) to the center. On behalf of the director, he asked the facilitator to feel at home and impart to the instructors the knowledge that is required. He further continues that the instructors are willing to take active participation to the meeting.

At the beginning we started by introductory phase of all the instructors. The reason for starting with introduction is to know each other and our technical profession. The introduction phase to me shows that most of the instructors have experience of 7 to 15 years in the technical field. It was experiential learning both for me (assistant facilitator) and the facilitator. I have also noted that there different experiences has importance to the workshop; because the workshop is base on the facilitation of learning process of the students. Furthermore, the center has close for a long period and now they are about to re-open. Therefore, the workshop of how to facilitate learning process is important at the start. Observing the instructors (participants) expressions, most of them were kin to hear more about the meeting from the facilitator. In other words the participants long to know about what facilitation of learning process means.

At this juncture, the facilitator was given opportunity to start the facilitation of the instructors. At first the facilitator started by asking the instructors (participants) the first question: *what is the main purpose of WVTC?*

In order to get some ideas and contributions from the participants' base on the question, the members were divided in two groups with 5 members each. I was one of the participants in group **B** with other members. We had a discussion on the question posted by the facilitator and the following reports were from the two groups.
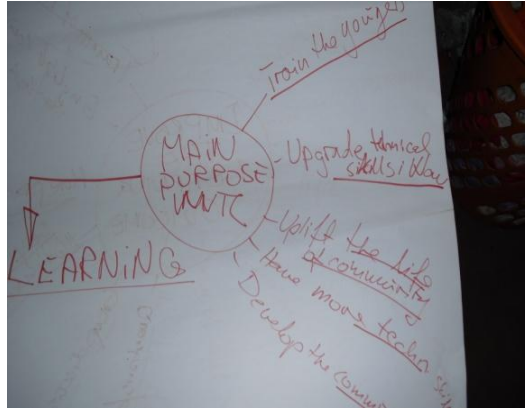
From left is Mr. Trond Smistad (facilitator) and instructors of WVTC during the first workshop and on the right is the result of the group discussion on the main purpose of WVTC

Group A

➢ To train youngsters

➢ To upgrade the skills of laborers and the technicians around Wau town

➢ Learning
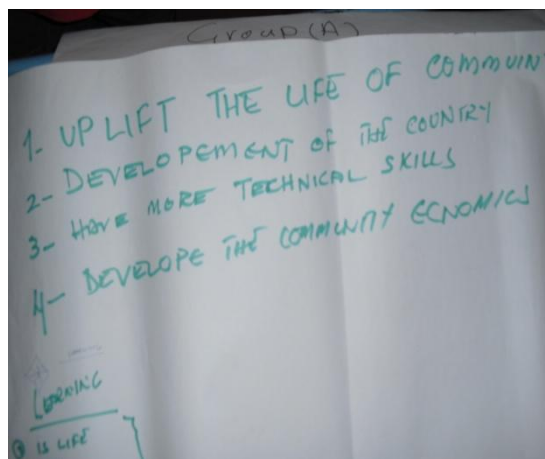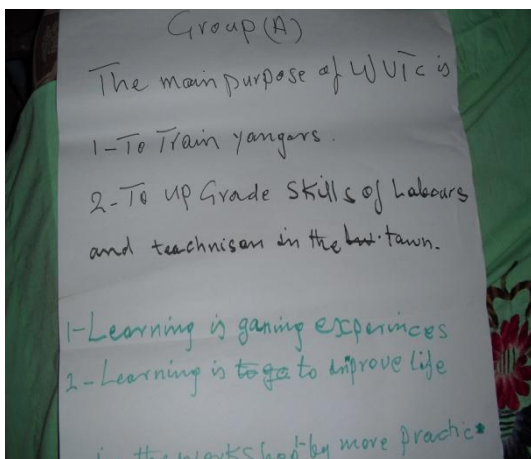
The posters manifest the discussion in the two groups A and B

Group B

➢ To uplift the life of the local community

➢ To development of the country/State

- ➢ To have more technicians' with vocational skills
- ➢ To develop the community/State economy

After submission of all the report, the facilitator asked the members if there is any additional contribution. The participants all were silent and one of the members responded that the reports indicate the contributions. The facilitator asked the participants to describe each sentence from the report. For instance, what Group A mean by *Training Young people*. One of the members contributed saying: "the existence of WVTC is to train both men and women around Wau and South Sudan. The WVTC is intended to be a Center of Excellency in Wau and South Sudan as a whole." We took sometimes discussing and contributing to the rest of the phrases. There was contribution from different members of the groups. It was so lively and encouraging to note the eagerness of the participants contributing ideas.

At the end of our discussion, the facilitator gave an over-all comment on the contribution. Therefore, if that is what partially the main purpose of WVTC as mentioned above; which one can deduce as a center for learning vocational skills, then *what learning means to each group as well as individual?*

For discussion, we break in groups again to further reflect upon what learning means. Since the question itself was challenging, we had to think back the etymological meaning of learning. One of the members contributed that learning is a process. Since it is a process, the following report was from the different groups.

Group A

This is Group A in their serious discussion before the common report

- ➢ Gaining experience
- ➢ To improve life
- ➢ By doing more practice

> ➢ By group discussion in the classroom
> ➢ By asking students questions and verse versa
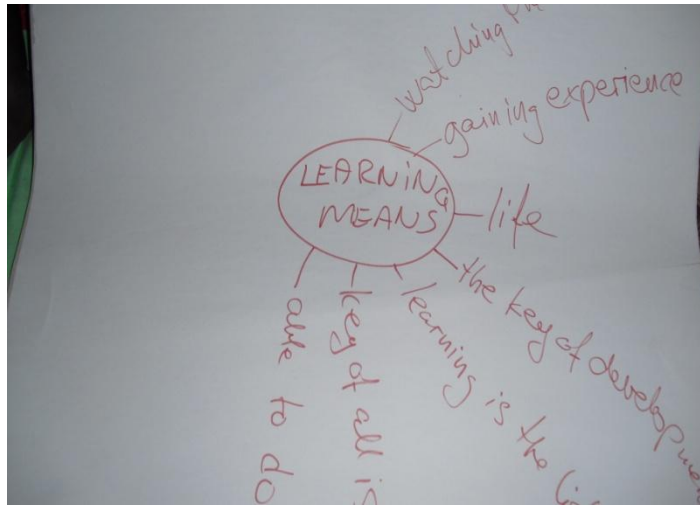
What Learning means at WVTC workshop. Group A has the report of what learning means in their group discussion as well as B. Group A report is outlined above and B is below

Group B

This is Group B in their discussion of the same question in group A

> ➢ It is life
> ➢ Gaining knowledge
> ➢ Light of the world
> ➢ Key to development
> ➢ Key of all issues
> ➢ Dreaming

The definition of learning by the participants means "process." To the ability of their understanding learning means what is mentioned above. Although what is outlined above does not absolutely means learning because learning is a vast field. In

the combined discussion, most of the participants agreed that learning does not end after one has obtained a degree or vocational knowledge and skills. Hence, the reason of defining learning as a process is crucial. The facilitator commented at the end of our discussion that it is important to bear in mind both individually and as a group the concept of what learning means.

Therefore, before we conclude our session, Paul Tartisio (assistant facilitator) will continue working with you in the coming days. As we prepare to reopen the center in two weeks time and start training, '***how can we as instructors improve our practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students?'***

The question was posted by the facilitator (Mr. Trond Smistad) to the two groups for discussion and personal reflection. The groups went for discussion and both groups together came up with the following points/report:

- ➢ Training the trainers
- ➢ English courses (text books, PCs etc)
- ➢ By having more practice
- ➢ Self motivation
- ➢ Group discussion
- ➢ Questions or dialogue
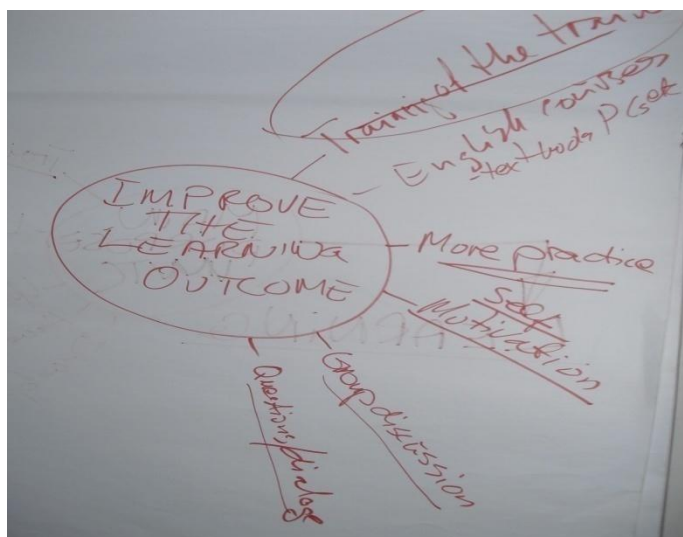
Improving one's practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students is clearly indicated above and on this picture

The charter picture above indicated the group discussion and the report of how one can improve his practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

Some topics were selected to discuss in depth about them. This was done during the periodic meetings with instructors at WVTC.

The facilitator further asked the participants (one or two) to share their technical and vocational experiences, because sharing experiences was one way one can improve his/her own practice and increasing the learning outcome of the students.

One of the instructors by name Peter Joseph opted to share his teaching experiences with the prisoners and how he learnt from that experience. The sharing experience goes as follows:

> *The first assignment given to him after his graduation was to teach prisoners. He was having 20 prisoners in his classroom and only 4 know how to write and read. The rest were not able to write or read and they were not paying attention to him. When he is teaching or writing on the blackboard they are busy talking and making noise. As a newly elected candidate in charge of prisoners, he was frustrated. He was unable to handle the situation; he went to the deputy director seeking advice. The D. director didn't give him a solution as well. Over the night he got an insight and the next day he implemented it in the classroom. The insight was dividing the 16 boys who don't know how to read and write in four (4) groups. The other four who know how to read and write were distributed in the four (4) groups. The four became facilitators among the rest. It took them three to four weeks to pronounce some words and write them as well. The classroom became participative and after one year all graduated with advance certificates.[3]*

This experience provoked most of the participants. Everyone was interpreting the experience and relating it to improving one's practice and increasing the learning process of the students. The facilitator commented on the experience and asked the other members to do the same as Paul (assist. Facilitator) will be continuing with the facilitation. It is important to discussed and comment after every sharing experience. This is the way we can improve our own practice and increasing the learning outcome

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[3] Mr. Peter Joseph, an Instructor at Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC) sharing experience from his former place of work

of the students. The facilitator asked the participants to agree on the coming days to meet with assistant facilitator. The participants agreed with assistant facilitator to meet twice a week and the days for meeting every Tuesday and Friday.

4.3 Discussion, Analysis and Reflections of the Findings

The first narrative of the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop with the staff, which I describe briefly in this chapter, pave the way for our periodic meetings with instructors for one and half month.

Firstly, I describe the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC, namely; the deputy director, UNIDO representative, the facilitator and myself. Secondly, I describe a creativity workshop conducted by expert from HiAk for the instructors of WVTC, which I assisted in animating. Thirdly, I explicated the active participation of the instructors during the workshop in their groups' discussion using pictures that conveys a lot of meaning.

In the first phase of this chapter, I described briefly and gave a summary of each meeting that was conducted prior to my periodic meeting with the staff at WVTC. The preliminary meeting with the leadership of the center took place on the 23rd of October 2009 and the first workshop conducted by the expert from HiAk for one was on the 24th Oct. 2009 at WVTC.

To be more specific, let me focus on these three narratives which gave a foundation to the one and half month of our periodic meetings describe in the second phase of this chapter. Throughout these narratives, I show some pictures and describe what I am seeing as I look at the pictures. I quoted extracts from my research dairy and comments made by the validation group/critical friends meeting and my mentors.

I described and interpreted the preliminary meeting with leadership of WVTC as an invitation to take an active role in the process of improvement of instructors' practices at WVTC. The center had been closed since the civil war broke in 1989. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) UNIDO rehabilitated the center to start training students. The center was to re-open in December 2009. The purpose of the preliminary meeting however, was invitation to take an active role in the process of improvement of instructors' practices at WVTC. Furthermore, the leadership should take an active role in the process of instructors' improvement of practices, because it is the organizational improvement of their practices.

The aim of the workshop was to start the facilitation process of improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator together with the instructors at WVTC discussing student-centered learning as a means of improving and increasing learning outcome under the question of how can I improve my own practice and we as team improve our practices?

In chapter one, I described and explained the zeal to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator and how I want to improve it together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

Based on the experiences from the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop conducted by expert from HiAk, one can argue that improvement of my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC will contribute to my developmental process of becoming a good teacher and facilitator. As I reflected on this narrative, I deduced that for me to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC, we need to be:

➢ Receptive to the needs of others and enable them to explore and develop their skills and knowledge

➢ Working collaboratively with our fellow teachers/colleagues is the key concept in improving my practice and those of instructors at WVTC.

➢ Being able to reflect and value the experience or opinion of others as we work towards improvement of practice is crucial.

➢ Team learning and appreciation of each other in the group is essential in self-study approach.

With this in mind, I now turn to the second phase of this chapter, which is theme B on the periodic meeting with the instructors at WVTC (Staff facilitation at WVTC). The findings in this part are collected during our periodic meetings with instructors at WVTC for one and half month. The focus of our periodic meeting was sharing our technical and vocational experiences, and how these experiences can act as a means to improve our practices as teachers. The major aim of this study as mentioned above is for me to improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

During this process (periodic meetings) I assumed the role of a facilitator. As a facilitator, I help the instructors in the processes of sharing our technical and vocational experiences to recognize the diversity of those experiences and what each

of us can learn from them. By doing that I was in a way creating an atmosphere where participants/instructors can teach and learn from each other technical and vocational experiences, thus improving our practices in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

This phase (theme B) also displayed the interviews with three head of the departments, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry at WVTC and observation conducted in classroom (during theory lesson) and workshop practice. Below I draw attention to the summary of the data presented in theme B in a form of a graphic table. The graphic table below indicated the summary of the research activities for one and a half month at WVTC. I used this graphic to show how I conducted my research together with instructors/teachers at WVTC in order not to confuse it with the former data of the preliminary meeting with the leadership of the center and the first workshop for the staff of the same institution.

4.3.1 Data Summary of the Staff Facilitation at WVTC

Data Summary of our Periodic Meeting with Instructors at WVTC

Interview and Observations

Periodic Meetings with Instructors at WVTC

Informal Discussion with Participants

Semi-structure questions with three head of the department, namely Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry

Contextual observation in theory class and workshop practice

Sharing our technical and vocational experiences and discussions in groups

Meeting experiences, Social events, Break/lunch conversation, impressions

Transcribed text document from interviews, observation in theory class and workshop practice conducted in three sections

Documentation of all the processes during the meetings with the staff at WVTC

Discussions, analysis and related literatures are used during the study

The top layer represents processes (interview/observations, meetings and informal discussion events). The middle layer represents different kinds of data collected and the bottom layer displays the final documents/results as presented in the chapter.

4.4 Presentation, Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

On the 30th Oct. 2009, we had our group meeting at 9:30 am. The participants were all present. By then, the *Competency Based Training* (CBT) was about to start and that was the re-opening of the institute after 21 years.

As a facilitator I commented and appreciated the attendance of the participants which was encouraging.

From left are the instructors in the beginning of our periodic meetings and on the right is one sharing his opinion on how we should continue with our periodic meetings

To start with, the facilitator (I) together with participants brainstorms on the former workshop. The brainstorming was based on the questions: *what have we learned from the former workshop and where do we need to improve as we continue with our meetings?* The reports from the brainstorming are as follows:

➢ Dialogue
➢ Active participation of members in the group
➢ Team learning
➢ The facilitator was encouraging (expert from HiAk)

As a result, the decision for how to improve and proceed with the meeting was to build on the former workshop. So that ideas, improvement of practice and knowledge creation will be based on different experiences shared and not individualistic contributions/participation.

Meanwhile, as a facilitator I asked the participants to break in groups and discussed the experience shared by Mr. Peter John (Head of the Carpentry section). Furthermore, I asked the participants to bear in mind, while discussing they should bear in mind the question:

how can I as instructor improve my practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students? The story of the experience shared by Mr. Peter goes on as follows:

> *Peter was a student at St. Joseph VTC Khartoum and graduated in 1997. The first assignment given to him after his graduation was to teach prisoners. He was having 20 prisoners in his classroom and only 4 knew how to write and read. The rest were not able to write or read and they were not paying attention to him. When he is teaching or writing on the blackboard they are busy talking and making noise. As a newly elected candidate in charge of prisoners, he was frustrated. He was unable to handle the situation; he went to the deputy director seeking advice. The D. director didn't give him a solution. Over the night he got an insight and the next day he implemented it in the classroom. The insight was dividing the 16 boys who don't know how to read and write in four (4) groups. The other four who know how to read and write were distributed in the four (4) groups. The four became facilitators among the rest. It took them three to four weeks to pronounce some words and write them as well. The classroom became participative and after one year all graduated with advanced certificates.*

Based on Peter's sharing experience and the above question, the groups break in their usual group discussion. The following discussion and contributions were from the two groups.
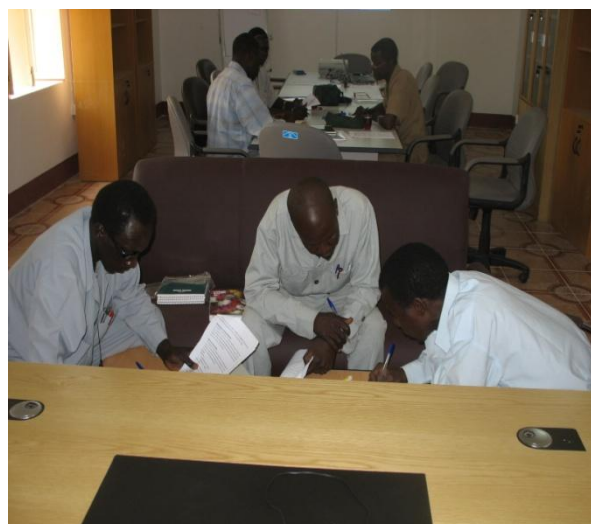
These are the two groups of instructors at WVTC in their discussion after sharing our experiences

4.4.1 Responses from the Groups Discussion

Table A (theme B). Response from the Groups Discussion

Responses from the Group	Learning Experience from the Group discussion	Line of Action
Teacher/instructor should divide the students, so that the slow learners may learn from their colleagues. The slow learner term is most of the time misunderstood by most of us. Slow learning does imply that the student does not know anything or underachiever nor do they (slow learners students) fall under the category of students attending special education. Some teachers because the student does not perform well in his subject, they consider him or her as a slow learner. To me, such students need extra time to complete their task or understand the subject.	As instructors we have learnt how to make other students (slow learners or weak) can learn from their colleagues or friends	Used the same or different experience in the nearest training program at WVTC
The teacher or instructor can teach orally for those who does read or write. For instance, pronouncing some technical terms and measurements using wood	Creativity is crucial as instructors both in classroom and workshop.	Reading updated books on technical studies will help one develop creative ways of teaching
Usage of simple technical	The language that is used at the	Visiting some local

language will boost the learning process of the students	local industries should be made known to the students and not only what is written in the books	workshops/local industries will help students develop and know some terms use outside the school campus
Technical schools has impart to the students the knowledge of how to be smart when operating the machine or so	As teachers/instructors, we should not hurry or carry away by the concept of time. Teach the students how to be smart	Inform the students not to operate any machine when he or she has some personal problem for the sake of safety
When teaching or facilitating students in class or workshop, we should involve them more. For example, the facilitator of this program gives us more chance to talk than him, thus, the students should Participate more than the teacher	The instructor should always question the students in theory or workshop for better participation of every student	Ask the students questions and divide them in groups for discussion and then read the report together with them (students)
The instructor should prepare himself before entering the classroom or theory class or workshop practical	Punctuality is crucial as a teacher or instructor, by preparing teaching materials	Planning mentality is the way forward for better facilitation of the students
Using the intelligent or the fast learners (those who understand better than the others) students to discuss with their fellow students who are weak in understanding a concept.	Peer learning among the students is important	In every group of the students form for discussion, one of the intelligent students will be present
Always as teachers or instructor we should give reasons for everything we teach or facilitate students	Giving students every possible techniques of working in the class or workshop practice	Teaching different kinds of techniques will encourage students to develop variety of

with.		methods as technicians

In table 4.4.1, displays the data collected through participatory dialogue and group discussion. The participatory dialogue here is referring to our listening to one person sharing his experiences and questions posted by the participants assisted by the facilitator before the group discussion. During the participatory dialogue, we raise questions for instance, what can we learn from the experience shared by our fellow participant? How can we integrate this experience into our present situation? What we need to improve on in our practices? With these questions in mind, we then break in group for discussion and the responses/data from the group discussions are presented in the tables below. The results from the group discussion are presented in the table above. Table 4.4.2 present experience shared by the director of the center and the story goes like this:

> *In 1983, he was an instructor at Tonj technical school. He was given the responsibility of teaching theoretical class to first year students. The first year were 25 in number and are all mature people. As a teacher or instructor, he has lectures with students for 45 minutes every day. After lectures, he gives the students exercises or home work without giving chance to students to ask questions or clarification (teacher-centered learning). Mid-term exams, the students' performance was not up to his expectation. After a break of 7 days, 18 students came back to school and 7 left. As a young teacher or instructor it was a shock for him. During the lesson or lectures, he asked the other students the reasons about why the 7 left. The first reply given to him was obvious "teacher you don't give us chance to asked you questions or clarification." He left the classroom and went to the office feeling desperate. He asked one of his colleagues and explained to him about the incident in the classroom. The colleague advice him to prepare evaluation form and distribute to the students to evaluate his method of teaching. He did as he was told and all he got in common from the students was, "give us chance to learn among ourselves and ask for clarification."*
>
> *Since that time he started changing his methodology of instructing theoretical class. He developed a methodology of forming groups in the classroom during the lectures. Write the question on the blackboard and asked the groups to discuss and each group give their report or what they think might be the answer. Since that time the students felt that they are part of the discussion in*

the classroom and workshop. Sometimes the students challenge me both in theory class and practical and I (instructor) post back the question to them for discussion.[4]

4.4.2 Responses from Groups Discussion

The experience shared by the director was challenging to all the participants. The table 4.4.2 below shows the responses from the participatory dialogue and group discussion.

Table B (theme B). Responses from the Groups Discussion

Responses from the Group	Learning Experience from the Group discussion	Line of Action
The teacher or instructor should share his own vocational experience with students	Sharing experience with students will provoke discussion in the class or workshop practice	Using practical examples and sharing experience with students is crucial
The instructor should be sensitive on gender balance. The gender balance was actually discussed as well but how to handle it was challenging due to the situation that South Sudan had undergone in the last 22 years of civil war	Balancing ladies among men in time of discussion is important	In times registration or recruitment ladies should be encourage
Conducting extra-curriculum activities once or twice a month	Visiting local workshops add more experience to the students	Extra-curriculum activities should be included in the general timetable
As instructors, we should facilitate learning and not pumping knowledge and skills to our students because of examination	Guiding students through their learning process is important.	Facilitating learning encourages participation of the students in class or workshop practice

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[4] Mr. Martin Maker, The Director of Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC), sharing one of his experiences as an instructor in the early 80s.

The second phase of this chapter (theme B) describes how the periodic meetings with instructors at WVTC were conducted. During this process, I assumed the role of been a facilitator. My role as a facilitator was to help and enable the groups (of instructors) to work cooperatively and effectively. Because most of the instructors have diverse backgrounds, interest of improving their practices, different experiences and capabilities, I thought to facilitate them in working together to improve our practices. More so, I gave the participants and groups the responsibilities to work/discussed together towards the required outcome, which is improvement of our practice to increase the learning process of the students. My responsibility was to support, encourage, and help the groups to maintain the area of focus as they learn from each other's experiences. According to Bruce McKenzie (2005, 2010) being a facilitator is to look into the processes and recognized the diversity of learning. Furthermore, a facilitator should create an atmosphere where participants can teach and learn from each other.

In the process of our periodic meetings, we shared our technical and vocational experiences. After sharing one experience at a time, we break into group discussion and share the reports from the groups. The purpose of doing that is for us to identified areas in which we wanted to improve our practices, thus increasing the learning outcome of the students.

In this section (theme B), I refer to two stories in particular, described by two of the participants. I choice and described the two stories from many others been shared by other instructors due to the concepts and learning's that the stories weight.
That choice involved judgments about why the stories were deemed important and others unimportant. This requires reasoning on my part about how the stories take our time and days of discussion, how the stories are related to our current context, what qualified as appropriately descriptive, and can impact the improvement of our practices.

It is through these two stories selected also that help me recognized my vulnerability and how to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator together with instructors at WVTC.

In both tables the participants pointed out clearly that using demonstration methods to show students perform the work well is in class or workshop practice is essential. Furthermore, as a teacher sharing technical and vocational experiences with students provoke participation and discussion among students, both in theory class and workshop practice. By sharing and demonstrating one's technical and vocational experiences and giving students to perform the task by themselves will boast the learning process. This conception was

supported by Melinda and Angliss (2005), when they noted that learning experience is social, passionate and inspiring. It was inspiring for me as a teacher and facilitator to understand and learned such a concept among the participants. It is through these learning experiences that I have learned and build a new knowledge that has improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator.

In relation to what Melinda and Anglis mentioned, I have learned another concept from the critical constructivist. This school of thoughts (critical constructivist) had in their theory that teachers/facilitators should guide and help students to continually shape and reshape their own conceptual biographies. This is done through the development of intellectual tools and attitudes about the social basis of knowledge pedagogy that enables them (students) to better understand society's official knowledge as it relates to their own indigenous knowledge, thus developing and building a new knowledge for themselves and their learning process.

4.5 Interview Conducted with Head of Departments for Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry (building) Department

I also conducted interview and observation in classroom theory and workshop practice. The interview was conducted on the 5th Jan. 2010 at WVTC for two weeks. It was for three head of the sections: Mr. Unango Joseph, head of Electrical, Mr. Dominic Deng, head of Masonry, and Mr. Peter Joseph, head of Carpentry section. The subject/questionnaires of the interview were based on our periodic meetings (see appendix 1). The intention/reason for basing my questionnaires on my facilitation of the periodic meeting was to pave the way for continuity, impact and sustainability of what we have learned from our technical and vocational experiences.

Table C displayed the interview data conducted with three head of the sections, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. Furthermore, table D handled the observation conducted in classroom theory and workshop practice in the same departments.

Electrical section has 24 students among them are 7 ladies and two instructors. Carpentry section has 10 students and 3 ladies, 4 instructors. The Masonry section has 27 students, 5 ladies and 3 instructors. I administered interview with three heads of the departments as mentioned above. The interview was oral with open ended questions (see appendix 1). The interview was to identify further areas in which practices can be improved in order to increase the learning outcome of the students.

4.5.1 Responses from the Head of Departments; Masonry, Electrical and Carpentry C

Table C (theme B). Responses from the Interviews

Teaching indicator/Methods	Theory Class for Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry Sections	Workshop Practices for Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry Sections
Display of teaching methods are teacher-centered and partially student-centered learning	**a) Electrical section:** Less discussion by the students, more notes from the teacher and classroom exercises **b) Carpentry Section:** The notes given are related to the workshop practice that the students are assign to do. **c) Masonry Section:** Focus on Measurements and workshop calculation.	**a) Electrical Section** Practical work, job-oriented and group work within the center. **b) Carpentry section** The practical work is related to the needs of the local industry/workshop and market. **c) Masonry section:** Bricks making is central to their workshop practices.
Catering for entrepreneurship learning	**a) Electrical section:** Visiting South Sudan Electrical Cooperation and electrical local shops with available electrical materials. **b) Carpentry section:** Visiting local enterprises workshops and placement for two weeks.	**a) Electrical section:** The teacher elaborate and discussed together with students the meaning of entrepreneurship and use the period of workshop practice to visit some local industries **b) Carpentry**

	c) Masonry section: Visiting constructing companies around Wau town and bricks making	**section:** Students are to document their experiences from the local industries visits and share with the rest of the class **c) Masonry section:** Twice a week the bricks making are use to construct walls and foundation of the building/house
Personal work or Classroom exercises	**a) Electrical section:** Students may be doing a test or home work and exercising how to make wall connections **b) Carpentry section:** Students are discussing in group on difficult questions or having revision by themselves. **c) Masonry section:** Finishing up some assignment given the previous day and starting a new assignment.	**a) Electrical section:** Connections of the security lights around the compound, changing wires and tube lights of the workshops. **b) Carpentry section:** Preparation of wood to be use to manufacture chairs and tables of the staff room and classrooms. **c) Masonry section:** Building of toilets, ternals for water and plastering the cracks both in the workshops and

		classrooms
Providing students with business skills and guidance on how to run it smoothly	**a) Electrical section:** The teacher or instructor follow the manual given and select crucial concepts that correspond with the local needs of the community. **b) Carpentry section:** The students were given two days a week to visit the local industries/workshop and the next day to share their experiences with others in the class. **c) Masonry section:** Each student is given a tool on making local bricks and use those bricks to construct a tukul/house	**a) Electrical section:** Students are given tool boxes to do some work at the local resident and practice their knowledge and skills. **b) Carpentry section:** Students are given opportunity to prepare their own home seats, tables and also for Expo. **c) Masonry section:** The students are distributed to construct different walls and crack on the floor of the classroom.

Table C shows responses from three head of the departments, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. Two of the instructors graduated with a diploma program from

JICA[5] in Khartoum Technical School. One has his diploma from St. Joseph Technical School (run by Catholic Church under Don Bosco Society) in Khartoum. The three instructors (heads of the departments) have a long valuable experiences working in a technical and vocational institution, particularly at WVTC.

The three instructors were chosen on the basis of their valuable working experiences in technical and vocational institutes. They were also the senior most among the instructors employed at WVTC since 1980. Furthermore, their departments have started training program for about 80 students.

As a result of this, the interview was held with these instructors in their different sections. Their responses show what is indicated on the table above (see table C). During my interview with them, I have noted that they have more adequate and appropriate technical experiences. Furthermore, they are more or less having common experiences during the interview process and table C explicated that clearly.

All the three instructors indicated to me that subjects pertaining theory are all offered. In the sense, that the theory subjects are offered based on the workshop practice. In some subjects they are combined, as in technical drawing, Mathematics, Religion and English. Contrary to the common subject they have together, electrical, Masonry and Carpentry also have their own subject theory and workshop practice separately. Below I draw attention to the class and workshop observation conducted in the three departments.

4.6 Observation Conducted during Theory Class and Workshop Practice in Electrical, Masonry and Carpentry Departments

As mentioned above the observation was conducted in three departments of Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. The theory class that I observe was that of general, meaning for technical drawing, Mathematics, English and Religion. For the workshop practice I have observed it separately and Table D portrayed what I have observed from the general classroom theory and separate workshop practice in all the three departments.

Table D (theme B). Observation in Three Sections

Teaching methods	Theory Class for Electrical, Carpentry and	Workshop Practice for Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry Departments	Gender Balance

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[5] JICA, Japanese International Cooperation Agency. This Agency was running Khartoum Vocational and Technical Institute in the North when the South region broke in war.

	Masonry Departments		
Orientation of group or project works	Problem solving, groups discussion and ways of handling project work	**a) Electrical Section:** Installing security lights in the school campus, Electrification (wiring) of all the workshops, connecting the main line from the transformer to the main switch, connecting the line from the generator room to the main switch and outside the school work (project work).	For all the three departments sections almost 13 girls doing practical work.
Learning in the workplace experiences	The students share their experiences with the teacher during the theory class and the project work is discussed by the whole class	**b) Carpentry Section:** Cutting the timber wood, smoothening of the timber wood, assembling the different types of timbers (E.g. mahogany), Preparing tables both for sale and for the staff, benches work for the classrooms and tables for offices, preparing beds, chairs, tables and other materials for the expo day. The students also have external work to do	

		as a group and the income is for the center	
Personal work or Classroom exercises	The new models of handling work are taught. How to argue with customers and more advance ways of producing materials for sell	**c) Masonry Section:** The students were building the passages for water, plastering the cracks in the classrooms and workshops, building and constructing the toilets both for the staff and students, constructing the foundation for the fence of the school and building other governmental and nongovernmental offices around Wau town.	
Providing students with business skills and guidance on how to run local business smoothly	Coaching on how to business language. Experiences from the visit in the local market help students to discuss their		

	experiences as well.		

Table D shows the data collected through observations during theory class and workshop practice in three sections. The observation for theory class was general (combine theory class such as drawing, workshop calculation, English and Religion). The workshop practice observation was different and in separate departments (Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry). The observation took at least two weeks.

As an observer, I normally asked the teacher in charge if I can visit his theory or workshop practice. The intention for asking the teacher in charge is to acquire permission from him whether I should attend his class or not, because some teachers may at times feel uncomfortable having me in the class when he is teaching. After obtaining permission from the teacher on duty, I get in the class and sit together with students. When the students take notes I also write my own notes (log), which will help me in the later interpretation and reflections.

The number of the students receiving training during this time was 80 and most of them are young men and few ladies. The general theoretical subjects that I conducted observation for was normally attended by 50 to 60 students and among them 12 to 15 ladies. The training is for three to six months. It is a Competency Base Training (CBT) program.

I need to point out that a quarter of all the three sections are illiterate students. For some of them it is the first time attending the technical and vocational training school. They are not interested in theory class but practical work. So sometimes few students attend theory class.

Masonry Section in their project work under the supervision of their instructors

On the left is Electrical workshop practice with instructor demonstrating to students how to make motor wiring and on the right hand are the Carpentry students during theory class

In general, my observation, during theory and workshop practice revealed to me the fact that students are given more chance to speak than the teacher. The teaching methods used in theory class by three different instructors include demonstration, lecture, discussion, group work and at times project work. Over one week of theory class and workshop practice observations, one can deduce that there is an improvement in the method of teaching of the instructors at WVTC. This indicated to me that instructors at WVTC have in different ways grasped the concepts of how to facilitate learning process. Thus, the sustainability of the improvement of practice will keep on growing as the news instructors and students are recruited.

The most prominent method I have witnessed the instructors implementing in their practice is the demonstration method, where the instructor demonstrates to students how to work as a team in group for the project assignment.

The teacher was having working tools with him during the lesson presentation. He ask two to three students to join him while others pay attention to what they are about to demonstrate. It was Carpentry section. The instructor started the machine and places a heavy wood to cut it into two pieces. He asks the other student to hold on the other side and the second student on the left end. Finally, they manage to cut the heavy wood into two pieces.

This demonstration/example was to show to the students the effectiveness of group work. It consumes less time, responsibilities are equally distributed and safety is essential when you are three or four.

The teaching methods in the theory class observed in the three sections portray project work, lectures, group and individual problem solving (mathematics). In their understanding of learner-centeredness Melinda and Angliss confirmed all these methods as appropriate for increasing the learning outcome of the students ignoring the lecture method as limiting the learning process of the students (see picture above on theory class). Furthermore, the authors explain that using a discussion, participatory methods in classroom discussion will boast the students to take up the responsibility of their learning.

Since the theory class observation included the above mentioned methods, I am inclined to argue that the theory classes were conforming to the research question; that is the improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator to work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them in increasing the learning outcome of the students. As a researcher I have learned that the area to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator will base on the above mentioned concepts.

With this in mind, I want to display the observation conducted during workshop practice. The three workshop practice observation had students preparing for their project work. This is a typical example of giving the students responsibility of solving a task by themselves and the instructor is only to guide and help them through this task. I have mentioned earlier that the demonstration method used by most of the instructors during workshop practice was essential. In order to increase the learning outcome of the students, they were given project work within the center. The following were the project work given to the students to do in the center, so that they can learn to do it outside as entrepreneurs.

The electrical students were to install the security lights at the school compass, checking all the electrical connections between the workshops and cabling the workshops with the connection from the 25 KVA generators.

In the Masonry (building) department, the students were constructing the toilets, preparing the ternals for water flow, plastering the cracks in the classrooms/workshops; tiling the director's and staff rooms.

Carpentry students were preparing tables, chairs and cardboard for computer room as well as for the staff hall.

I have also observed group work among students in the workshop practice, collaborative learning experiences, team work and distribution of responsibilities among the students (table D). This improvement of practice in facilitating learning in order to increase

the learning outcome of the students was clearly manifested in those departments. Although there are some issues that needed attention.

Addressing the language issue used in theory class and sometimes in workshop practice was a challenge. The language issue is not the only problem that students face when it comes to attending theory class. Some of the students if not most were attending technical school for the first time. Furthermore, some are illiterate (not able to read) but with some skills to do practical work/job. Some students understand a little bit of English and others only Arabic. These are all the possible reasons according to me that might have led to many students not attending theory subjects/class. With that understanding, some instructors were able to apply different method in order to increase the learning outcome of those who are better (fast learners) and up-lift the learning process of the slow learners. Such methods like demonstrating to students what they need to do for better understanding.

To me, the instructors were trying their best to guide the students through their learning process and sometime patience for the slow learners. In a situation where some cannot speak English, the instructors demonstrate to the students on how to deal with problem solving. For instance, in Masonry, the measurement to build a four by four (4x4 house) tukul needs Mathematical calculation. Some students are not familiar with Mathematics or to calculate the distances; how many meters, adjusting the corners and the straight line etc. In such cases, the instructors use the rulers and threats (thin robe) to measure the ground, meters from one corner to the other etc. With that students are able to calculate and build a descent tukul or house.

Another issue that needed to be addressed is the gender balance and support to ladies. I saw few girls attending theory class but in workshop practice, the number increases. The total number of ladies in all the three departments is 15, and sometimes only 5 to 8 attend theory class. The possible reason I presume has to do with the interest to attend theory due to language barrier, and inferiority complex in expressing oneself in class theory discussion. On the other hand, I saw 70 ladies in the food production section and they were really participating in all the work. They prepare food for the internal and external staff. I noted that even in technical schools ladies like to be in the kitchen than in the workshop. Other on hand, food production is another section that has to do with home economics. In my mind, this can be another way of recruiting ladies in technical and vocational training centers and upgrade their skills in food production. Thus, it gives me an opportunity to reflect on how to address the gender issue in educational field.

4.7 Summary

As I reflected on this chapter, I now give the summary that I derived from the findings. Here I want to emphasize how participants (instructors at WVTC) contributed towards improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator as well as improving their practices. The participants were twelve in number including me (playing the role of a facilitator and practitioner researcher) and the director of WVTC. The periodic meetings took place over a period of one and half months. It was during this time that I built a new understanding as a practitioner researcher, facilitator at WVTC, based on my former experiences as a teacher. I wrote in my research dairy the following phrase:

> I feel it is essential that participants/instructors at WVTC through being co-reflectors' in the process are taking an active role in the workshop (periodic meetings). Because the instructors had thoughtful experiences to tell that are useful to improve my practice on.

(Research dairy, 30th Nov. 2009)

Furthermore, I intended to work together with instructors at WVTC and develop ways of how to improve our practices in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. In the beginning of our periodic meetings, we started by evaluating the significance and value of the first workshop (see theme A, which is the first phase of this chapter). After which we planned for our periodic meetings and how we wanted to continue. Participants suggested that we divide ourselves into two small groups and that is what I did as a facilitator.

In short, the participants really worked hard and were very supportive and active in the processes of how to improve our practices. Much discussion took place during the sharing of the two stories mentioned above. Reflecting on these processes, one can say that as teachers/facilitators, the key ingredients for one to improve practice is sharing our past technical and vocational experiences, find areas that need improvement with support of colleagues teachers. For instance, in each of our periodic meeting, I asked the instructors to reflect on all the points that we outlined during our group discussion and relate those points to our teaching practices. Furthermore, when we meet the next time, we have evaluation together on the previous meeting, what we have learned and what need improvement as we proceed ahead.

A significant concern was in which aspects of the stories can we draw learning and improve our practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students? While the

guidance was drawn from Whitehead (2003), about a *Self-study of Teacher Education Practice,* it was felt that we reflect on our practices for the purpose of improving it.

As noted by Hamilton (1998) in Self-study, that teachers involve reflecting on their own practice for the purpose of improving their own practice and the practice of others.

In this dissertation of Self-study research approach, I build a new understanding based on my former experiences/practices as a teacher on how to facilitate learning outcome together with instructors at WVTC on their ability to become classical facilitators/lecturer. At the end of one of the meetings, I wrote the following sentences in my research dairy:

> I am very happy with participation of the instructors and the outcome of the meeting today. One of the stories that I mentioned above have had a lot of discussion and time vested on discussing it. Different views, contributions and concepts that we have shared and learned a lot from it. It was a great impact on my practice as a teacher and facilitator and it was more than I had expected. The participants were actively involved in the group discussion and contributing during our participatory dialogue. It was exciting to me as to their active involvement. This is the value of involvement and discussions and listening to the opinion of others.
>
> (Research Dairy: 10th of Dec. 2009)

This was a significant step forward for me as I claim the knowledge that improves my practice as a practitioner researcher and teacher together with instructors at WVTC.

As the training at the center kicks off, we had a general meeting to evaluate our periodic meetings and how we want to continue with the meetings. As a facilitator and teacher researcher, I presented all what I have been writing for feedback/validation from instructors. After receiving some comments and corrections from the participants/instructors, I asked them on how they wanted to proceed with the meetings. They (participants/instructors suggested to meet once in two weeks to have evaluation on how they are improving on their teaching activities. They also suggested to me to conduct interview and observation with the departments which are training the students at that time and I did.

I started to conduct interviews and observation in three main workshops, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. Conducting interviews and observation, I wanted to know some specific areas that needed improvement in my practice and those of instructors at WVTC.

At the end of my interviews and observations, I presented the findings to the participants' for validation in form of points and tables. The evaluation was significance and valuable to me as well as to instructors at WVTC. It provokes discussion among participants and they together break in small groups and discussed each aspects. For instance, I presented my data from the interviews and observation conducted in the three departments to the participants. The feedback I received provoked a discussion among the participants particularly on how to lift the learning process of those who are not able to write or read? The language aspect the instructors faced in their respective classrooms and workshop practice was another point for discussion.

Major points some of which I outlined above were to use demonstrations method both in classroom and workshop practice. Dividing the students in groups of four to five and in each group place one or two students who can read and write, so that they can assist those who cannot read or write. Involved students more on workshop practice than keeping them in classroom/theory for one and a half hours. Additionally, the teacher has to talk less during theory class and involve students more in discussion. This was the point of discussion and it was essential observing instructors involved in serious discussion on that. At the end of the meeting, I wrote the following phrase in my research dairy:

> The evaluation of my findings by the participants was essential. It gives me to improve and correct areas of misinterpretation of ideas and discussion. I think, when they talk of work, they don't mean work but practice. This is what I witness today during the evaluation of my findings. (Research Dairy: 6th Jan. 2010)

This was a real exciting moment for me.

With this in mind, I now orient you towards my last chapter, which is chapter five. Although I have come to the close of my dissertation through chapter five, my learning continues as I keep on asking myself a question of 'how can I improve my practice as a teacher together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students?'

CHAPTER V

5.0 Conclusion, Recommendation and Way Forward

5.1 Introduction

The question was posted earlier in chapter one section 1.3.1 of how can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC) in order to discuss with them and facilitate them in increasing the learning outcome of their students? Although the main focus was on me as a teacher and facilitator to improve my practice, it also applies to the instructors at WVTC in their effort to improve their practices. In pursuit of this study, a self-study research approach was employed to achieve the intended goal, in this regard improvement of my practice together with instructors at WVTC in order to increase the learning outcome of the students. In this chapter, I draw my conclusions, recommendations and what the future holds.

5.1.1 The Research Questions Addressed During the Study

The study had two phases of data collection. The first phase encompassed the preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC and the first workshop with the staff of WVTC by the expert from HiAk. The second phase handled the periodic meetings with the instructors at WVTC for one and half month. It also covers the interview conducted with three head of the departments, namely; Electrical, Carpentry and Masonry. Observation was conducted as well in the same departments for theory class and workshop practice. The study was guided and attempted to work and improved through the following research questions outlined below.

➢ How was the preliminary workshop of PED at WVTC with instructors to have effect on the periodic meetings?

➢ How does the participation of the participants and group activities and discussions have an impact on my potential improvement of practice?

➢ In what way does participation in the group activities process encourages participants' contribution?

➢ How does a periodic meeting with instructors at WVTC impact the participants/instructors in terms of improvement of their practices (to be followed up when I am back home)?

An effort was made to work closely with these research questions to improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator. In this chapter, I draw conclusions based on the findings and what I have learned together with instructors at WVTC. This chapter also will draw my claim for improvement of my practice in the field of education.

Accordingly, sections 5.2 and 5.3 displayed conclusion, recommendations and way forward respectively.

5.2 Conclusion

The preliminary meeting with the leadership of WVTC indicated a concern for the workshop with the instructors. The first workshop for the instructors of the same institute (WVTC) poses a great challenge to me to engage into a self-study research approach. As I mentioned earlier and supported by Hamilton (2000) that a self-study research approach focuses on the researcher's improvement of practice in relation to the other participant. This gave me an impetus to take a research on improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them in increasing the learning outcome of their students.

The improvements and understanding I gained through engaging in this study demonstrate that self-study can be beneficial for both facilitators and teacher educators to inform and increase knowledge in the field of education, (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000).

In addition, employing self-study research approach helped me to become a more reflective researcher/facilitator and to comprehend what it means to be a teacher educator and effective facilitator.

The process engaged in this study was not easy. Normally, researching on oneself is a challenge due to the fact that most of our ontological and epistemological position will be challenge. More so, many times I felt lonely in my inquiry in the sense that, losing patient when the participants are not on time and when the participants were not active during the discussions.

Gradually, I came to realized and understand that I am not studying on the instructors' practices but my practice together with them. Therefore, I have to accept and convinced myself that improvement of practice and learning to facilitate teachers for their improvement of practice is often an unarticulated private struggle (Loughran & Berry, 2005). This is the claim that I put forward as one among others has improvement my practice as a teacher and

facilitator together with instructors at WVTC. The aim of my self-study research approach is to inform and illuminate those who claim to have perfect practices to face the challenges of improving their practices (Pinnegar: 2001).

As I considered my journey as a researcher for the last two years of my Masters study to date, I discovered new insights that I will take with me into the future assignments. I also believe that the instructors at WVTC have learned and benefited from the experiences of our sharing's or periodic meetings for one and half month.

More vividly, I found that using a self-study research approach helped me to work and improved my practice based on the research questions of the study.

For instance, by sharing our technical and vocational experiences of how to improve my practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students, we had to explore into demonstrations methods, dialogue with students, team learning and group project work. In addition, I together with instructors at WVTC created an atmosphere (base on the concepts outlined above) where a teacher takes and value teaching as creating contexts of productive learning. Kohn (1999) supported this idea as he highlighted that the importance of intrinsic motivation in student's learning is essential, in contrast to the heavily emphasized external motivation of grades and rewards for good grades.

As I hold on to Kohn's ideology, I can support the idea that learning is productive when students are engaged by their work and when their work leaves them wanting to learn more.

Through sharing of my past story and experiences I found that I had two main things to improve on as a teacher, namely; to talk less and listen more to my students and guiding as well as helping them (students). Trying to talk less and listen more will inspire students' views to learn more. By guiding and helping students in their learning process increases the learning outcome rather than controlling them. Therefore, using a self-study research approach as a methodology helped me to confront the two challenges of my story as a teacher, which in turn brought growth and learning.

As I was committed to improve my practice as a teacher, I had a new challenge emerging during the research. This challenge was the role I assumed as a facilitator in our periodic meetings with instructors.

Enacting an effective role as a facilitator was challenge for me. Often, I found myself involved more than the participants taking the active role. I struggled through this for two weeks after which we formed a leadership system. Each group selected leaders who will help

to animate their group activities in the absence of the facilitator. This was the time I started together with instructors exploring and defining which areas we need to improve our practices.

Furthermore, the writings of Bruce McKenzie helped me to act my role as a facilitator more effectively. It helped me to see the diversity of learning activities and help the participants to teach and learn from each other's experiences. In reality, it took me sometime to enact a successful role as a facilitator. Although there continues to be a growth in my practice as a teacher, it is not always that easy to study the practices of one self and facilitate others to improve their practices.

Using self-study research approach gives me deep insights into the feelings and experiences of my practice as a teacher and facilitator that are not easily achieved in other types of research. As a result of my daily reflections and thinking about my past experiences as a teacher and the challenge of animating/facilitating instructors at WVTC, I was able to accomplish and reach new heights that I claim have improve my practice. I know that I have learned and improve my practice; I have acquired thoughtful ideas as a teacher and facilitator because of the processes I went through during this self-study research approach.

As I continue to work and improving my practice on daily basis, I claim that the processes that I undergo in this research have improve my practice together with instructors at WVTC. As I end up here, my experience and what I have learned indicated to me the following phrase.

If teachers, facilitators, managers etc. desire to learn more about themselves and how to help them improve their practices, self-study is the greatest way to accomplish this goal.

5.4 Recommendation and Way Forward

5.4.1 Recommendations

The traditional understanding of education is that teachers know more than anyone else. They know how as well as what to provide to the students. Ultimately, the students are left with no chose than to memorize the notes for the sake of examination.

I could draw an experience from united Nation Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO: 2008-2009). During discussion on 17/6/2009 on training programs, its country representative in Sudan indicated that UNIDO has renovated six vocational training centers both in the North and South Sudan. The staffs in these institutions are taking training in their

different field of technical and vocational profession to train students in skills they need for work and self employment.

In March, 2007 was official collaboration between HiAk in Norway, Kyambogo University (KyU) in Uganda and Upper Nile University (UNU) in South Sudan. These institutions sign up a memorandum of cooperation that opens the way for staff exchange, student exchange, the development of Bachelors in UNU and Masters Program at KyU in Vocational Pedagogy. The BA in UNU and MA in KyU are all compatible with programs at HiAk, it is funded by the Government of Norway for the development of vocational pedagogy in Southern Sudan and Uganda. This collaboration has been strengthened with what the international office at HiAk termed as the Norwegian Quota Scheme; it could be used for funding research work in TVET studies. I have opportunity to be one of the quota scheme students thus invited to Norway for a two year Masters program in Vocational Pedagogy.

In the same year of 2007, the three institutions requested for funds from the **NORAD**[6] program for Masters studies, **NOMA** and Norwegian University Cooperation program for South Sudan, **NUCOOP**, to develop and conduct vocational pedagogy program at KyU for Masters level and Bachelor's level at UNU. This collaboration has supported further my first year report and strengthens my decision to take up research at Don Bosco vocational training centre (DBVTC), Wau in 2008.

The same program generated the need for decentralization of teachers training program (TTP) known as Practical Pedagogical Development (PED) training program in South Sudan. PED program focuses on providing Capacity Building for Technical, Vocational Schools, teachers and instructors in South Sudan. The aim of PED is to facilitate improvement of the teachers/instructors practice in technical and vocational schools and training centers through student-centered learning as a means of improving and increasing learning outcome under the question of how can I improve my own practice?

In February 2009, practical pedagogical development (PED) training program was conducted at Yei Vocational Training Center (also known as community development center run by Norwegian People's Aid, NPA).

April, the workshop was conducted at Multi-service Training Center (MTC) in Juba. In September, 2009 the workshop was facilitated at Juba Technical and Vocational Training Center (JVTC). In October, 24th 2009 a periodic (PED) workshop was conducted at WVTC in

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[6] NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (a donor institution) is a directorate under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose major task is to contribute in the international cooperation to fight poverty, just as much as the effective management of development funds donated by Norway.

Wau. This is as a result of the cooperation between the higher institutions, HiAk in Norway, UNU in South Sudan and KyU in Uganda.

Efforts are being made to implement the above mentioned programs despite the challenges that are faced. Although my voice will not be so loud in the political arenas, my recommendations outreach lies more in the following:

- Training methods need to be updated to reflect the purpose and the needs of the local community.
- A Unified Curriculum for all the technical and vocational institutions in South Sudan is essential
- BA curriculum for VET program need to be finalized and the same BA program should be encourage in other States of Southern Sudan
- Masters program like the one at KyU in Vocational Pedagogy can be establish in Southern Sudan.
- HiAk should open more international cooperation with other universities in Southern Sudan, such as for health and nutrition nursing to mention few.

5.4.2 Way Forward

Throughout my discussion and the active role played by participants during my research process, I noted that the teaching instructors at WVTC are currently trying to improve their practice by implementing the concepts learner-centeredness. I have also noted from the discussion with my colleagues (sharing our experiences from different areas/VTCs of our researches) that most of the teachers are trying their level best to continue improving their practices. This calls for the sustainability of the training programs like:

- The task of following up the learning groups at every technical schools in South Sudan
- Active participation of NUCOOP program for VET BA in South Sudan, in which I am a member
- The proposed VET BA program to start this year at any State or University if UNU Malakal finds it difficult to recommend.

In addition, my background as teacher trainer and now aspiring to be a mentor will strive to incorporate the above methodological recommendations.

With a master's degree in vocational pedagogy and similar capacity experiences, in the future, I intend to undertake doctoral studies in in-depth of improvement of my practice as a mentor teacher and facilitator.

5.5 Closing Comments

In this dissertation, I have described my journey as a teacher for 7 years and the 2 years of my Masters study. I have made known my personal knowledge and experiences as a teacher after working for 5 years in VTC and 2 in Upper Secondary School. In addition, I have faced the challenges of being a facilitator and improve my practice as a facilitator.

I am convinced and believe that this is a unique part of my research. In my mind and throughout my research, I have not found any other account of the work that corresponded to this research of mine. In sharing my past experiences and relating it to my journey as a teacher and facilitator and making it public, I believe that I have made a contribution to educational knowledge.

I have vividly expressed and describe the impact of my early memories and also my early experiences as a teacher or teaching and as I moved from the role of a classroom teacher into the role of a facilitator or mentor teacher of student teachers.

In voicing my claim to know and improvement of my practice, I adopted a self-study research approach and presented my findings and evidence as I inquired into my question, 'How can I improve my practice as a teacher and facilitator as I work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them in increasing the learning outcome of their students?'

As I traveled down the path of becoming a better teacher and effective facilitator or mentor teacher, I learned about facilitation roles, discovered my vulnerabilities, and forge the way to improve it.

It is with confident and without doubt that my practice as a teacher and facilitator has improved. The following points may stand as the pillars of my claim to knowledge and improvement of my practice.

First, I see myself as a teacher, working towards improvement, and recognizing the impact of that improvement in my practice. I am also convinced that the instructors at WVTC have improved their practice as they continue to do so.

Secondly, I have learned so many ways in which to work with others and the significance of my interactions and relationships with others. This has a great impact to my practice as a teacher and a facilitator.

Thirdly, I have learned how to play two roles, as a researcher and a facilitator. This has increased my confident in my ability to take responsibilities. It has also opened up possibilities for my growth as I aspire to be a mentor.

Fourthly, I have learned and understand what action research various methodologies are in relation to my self-study research approach. It has a huge impact on what we look for in

Southern Sudan where training for teachers in various schools is essential to improve their practices.

At this stage of my Masters, I feel that I have made a contribution and impact on WVTC as a learning organization as well as instructors' improvement of their practices. As per now, there is evidence of these instructors improvement of practice been implemented by most of them at WVTC, because I received feedback from them describing their development throughout the processes. Now, there are about 130 students taking their training at WVTC and soon or later getting their assessment.

In conclusion of my dissertation, the improvement of my practice as a teacher and facilitator will continue to develop, grow and improve. This will be done on daily basis as I continue to reflect, question and evaluate my daily practices and seek to live my values in my practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview guide

1. What have you benefited from the facilitation process?

2. What are the areas that you identify to improve your practice?

3. What are the Pros and Cons of the CBT training during the course of last one month and a half?

4. Why do you think dividing students in groups and doing groups work is important?

5. What are your experiences by involving students both in the Classroom and Workshop discussion?

6. What is the mode of your instruction or teaching both in Classroom and workshop?

7. How do you plan your lesson schedule to facilitate learning?

8. In brief, have the workshop facilitated help you in the process of improving your own practice?

9. What do you think will be the way forward to sustain such meetings like what we had?

Appendix 2

Questions guiding the observation Conducted in the Classroom and Workshop Practice

1. Are the students involved during the lesson?

2. Have teaching materials all available to increase the learning process of the students?

3. What is the mode of instruction both in classroom and workshop?

4. Are there other materials been used to make explanation in classroom and workshop more realistic?

5. What is the language of instruction?

6. Is the teacher confident in displaying the lesson activities?

7. Gender Balance?

8. How well do the students understand the theory lesson in its application?

9. Is the participation of the students in classroom and workshop encouraged?

Appendix 3

Guiding Questions of my Research Dairy

1. What have I learned from today's meeting?

2. What have I learned as a teacher to improve my practice?

3. What did I do well during the meeting as a facilitator?

4. What are the challenges encountered today?

5. What could I have done better?

6. What was the most rewarding during the meetings of this week?

Appendix 4

Validation Form on the performance of the Periodic Meetings and the Findings
Meeting

Name (optional):…………………………………………………………………

Days of Meetings/facilitation:………………………………………………..

Facilitator:…………………………………………………………………….

Group No. and Department:……………………………………………………

In an effort to evaluate the effective of our meeting processes, I asked the participants to fill out this form. The form was return to me after been filled by the participants. I told them clearly that the information will be used only by the facilitator to improve my practices as a facilitator. It is also to know the overall participant experiences to determine what areas I can improve my practice on.

I prepared the Rating category below for them to marked on the appropriate box and thereafter, give their comments.

1. **Facilitator ability:** a) Excellent b) Good c) Fair d) Poor
   Comment:…………………………………………………………………………………
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2. **Material used during the facilitation:** a) Excellent b)Good c) Fair d) Poor
Comment:………………………………………………………………………………………
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3. **Duration of the Meetings/facilitation:** a) Excellence b)Good c) Fair d) Poor
Comment:………………………………………………………………………………………
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4. **Punctuality/Meeting effectiveness:** a) Excellence b) Good c) Fair d) Poor
Comment:………………………………………………………………………………………
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5. Rate from 1 to 10 the group enthusiasm during the facilitation/meetings and why?...
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6. What would you suggested for a continuous meetings after the facilitator has left why?...
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Appendix 5

Ethical Consideration Charter

The Charter sample during the planning of our meeting together with the participants

Name of the Institute:	Wau Vocational Training Center (WVTC)
Participants:	The Staff/instructors of WVTC
Outcome and Deliverables:	Improving my practice as a teacher and facilitator to work together with instructors at WVTC in order to discuss with them and facilitate then in increasing the learning outcome of their students
Due Dates of the Meetings, Time and Venue:	November 2009 to January 2010 Time for meeting: 9:00am to 12:00pm (we have some break in between our discussion) Venue: Staff meeting hall
Task and Activities:	➢ Sharing our technical and vocational experiences (participatory dialogue) ➢ Break in groups for discussion ➢ Area of focus is how to improve my practice in order to increase the learning outcome of the students ➢ To practice what was discussed in the meeting/group in our various department as the training of students kick-off in Mid December
Ground Rules:	➢ The interested Staffs are invited to attend the meetings (It is not *a Must* to attend because it depend on the interest of individual staff; in this case those who want to improve their practice). ➢ All ideas and contributions are welcome and

	considered
	➤ Listen to and show respect for the opinion of others.
	➤ The only stupid question is that one which is not ask
	➤ The meeting should start on time and end on time (punctuality)
	➤ Participation of every member in the group is considered to be crucial

Appendix 6

Pictures of the Participants during our periodic Meetings at WVTC and Students group activities

The two pictures above displays the group discussion of the participants during our periodic meeting and below are the leaders of the groups presenting their reports of their group discussions

The pictures on the top right and left are the participants/instructors during the discussion of the evaluation and validation of my data collections.

From top right and left are the pictures of the Masonry sections in their project work of maintaining the broken places around the center (classrooms and workshop) and below are the Carpentry students with their teacher demonstrating to them how to cut wood.

The pictures below are the food production (home economics) sections during the expo of their items. The picture right below is their expert from Tanzania and the left are the women attending their classroom activities