

**THE ROLE OF HIGHER DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN IMPROVING  
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES: PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES  
AT JIMMA UNIVERSITY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MA IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

**BY**

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**JULY, 2008  
ADDIS ABABA**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a privilege to acknowledge and thank the many people who have assisted me in the completion of this thesis.

I am deeply indebted to the scholarly and professional guidance of my advisor, Firdissa Jebessa Aga. I appreciate his words of wisdom, insightfulness and commitment in shaping and guiding me throughout the study.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the staff members of IER, I am grateful to each for their support throughout my study and I particularly want to thank my advisors for their contribution to my growth as a person, scholar, and citizen.

My appreciation also goes to Jimma University, faculty of education and HDP office as well as participants of this study who provided me the information I needed.

I am grateful to Dr. Olana Befikadu for the support he rendered me. Without his support this study could not have been accomplished on time.

I would also like to express my genuine appreciation to all of my friends who supported me in moral and material. Particularly, I don't have words to express my heart felt gratitude to Sileshi Gerbi, Ehitunesh Shemsu and my family for their determined support and words of encouragement. I would especially like to thank my mother, *Tirunesh Binegde* for raising me without any support and instilling in me the belief that education is an important part of my life.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgment.....	i
Table of contents.....	ii
List of tables.....	v
Abbreviations.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 PREFACE.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND AND THE PROBLEM.....	4
1.3 PURPOSE.....	6
1.4 BASIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	7
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE study.....	7
1.6 DELIMITATION.....	8
1.7 LIMITATION.....	8
CHAPTER TWO	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	9
2.1. THE MEANINGS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	9
2.2. IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	11
2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	12
2.4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATORS.....	15
2.5. TEACHING METHODS.....	16
2.5.1. Teacher-Centered Teaching Approach.....	18
2.5.2. Student-Centered Teaching Approach.....	21
2.6. HIGHER DIPLOMA PROGRAM.....	24
2.6.1 Module I – Reflective Instructor.....	26
2.6.2 Module II – Developing Active Learning Methods.....	26
2.6.3 Module II - Improving Assessment.....	26
2.6.4 Module IV- Action Research.....	27

CHAPTER THREE	
METHODOLOGY.....	28
3.1. STUDY DESIGN AND JUSTIFICATION.....	28
3.2. SETTING.....	29
3.3. PARTICIPANTS.....	30
3.4. DATA COLLECTION.....	32
3.4.1. Interview.....	32
3.4.2. Focus Group Discussion.....	33
3.4.3. Classroom Observation.....	33
3.5. ANALYSIS.....	34
3.6. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY.....	35
CHAPTER FOUR	
ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	36
4.1 PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE.....	37
4.1.1. Active Learning Methods.....	37
4.1.2. Continuous Assessment.....	39
4.1.3. Action Research.....	41
4.2. PERCEIVED CHANGE IN SKILL OF TEACHING.....	42
4.2.1. Use of Active Learning Methods.....	43
4.2.2. Applying Continuous Assessment.....	46
4.3. VALUED ASPECT OF THE PROGRAM.....	49
4.3.1. Mode of Training.....	50
4.4. PERCEIVED BARRIERS.....	52
4.4.1. EDUCATIONAL FACTORS.....	52
4.4.1.1. Content of the Program.....	52
4.4.1.2. Management of HDP.....	54
4.4.2. PREDISPOSING FACTORS.....	55
4.4.2.1. Attitude of Colleagues.....	55
4.4.2.2. Teacher Motivation.....	56
4.4.2.3 Lack of Devotion.....	57

4.4.3. RARE ENABLING FACTORS.....	58
4.4.3.1. Financial and Material Resources.....	59
4.4.3.2. Time and Workload.....	60
4.4.3.3. Students' Preferences.....	61
CHAPTER FIVE	
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATION.....	63
5.1. SUMMARY.....	63
5.2. CONCLUSION.....	65
5.3. IMPLICATION.....	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	72
APPENDIX A	
APPENDIX B	
APPENDIX C	
APPENDIX D	

## LIST OF TABLES

<b><u>Table</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
1. Demographic background of one-to-one interview participants.....	31
2. Demographic backgrounds of FGD participants.....	31
3. Summary of categories and themes.....	36

## ABBREVIATIONS

AR: Action Research

ALM: Active Learning Methods

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

JU: Jimma University

HDP: Higher Diploma Program

HDPLs: Higher Diploma Program Leaders

I: Informant

OC: Observer's Comment

PD: Professional Development

### ***Abstract***

*This study investigated teacher educators' perspectives of the role of Higher Diploma Program in improving instructional practices. Case study was employed mainly following qualitative approach. The specific areas of investigation were: teacher educators' perceptions of the contribution of HDP for their knowledge, skill of teaching, and factors mediating the effectiveness of professional learning. Qualitative data were collected using interviews (n=6) and focus group discussions (n=12) with educators who have taken the training, classroom observations, and informal discussions with students. The data revealed that educators perceived changes in knowledge about active learning methods, continuous assessment, and action research. Regarding the change in skills, the use of active learning methodologies and continuous assessment by few teachers in their classroom teaching was evident. Nevertheless, the program (HDP) remained merely informative for most participants; it could not alter the prevailing way of teaching. It was also learnt that factors related to the content and management of the program, predisposing and rare enabling factors diluted the effectiveness of their learning and improvement of instruction. The finding of the study implied the need to avail diversified learning opportunities to meet individuals' and departments training needs and to help them cope up with new challenges. Further more, the findings implied the need to revise and improve the program content and management through bottom-up planning process based on candidates' feedbacks for its further improvement. The study also implied the need of institutional and personal devotion to overcome barriers of professional learning and improvement of instruction.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. PREFACE**

With the start of new millennium, many societies are engaging in serious educational reforms. One of the key elements in most of these reforms is the professional development of teachers. The double role of teachers in educational reforms-being both subjects and objects of change makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area, and one that has received major attention during the past few years(Villegas-Reimers,2003). Many are implementing reforms based on constructivist, student-centered, and active-learning classroom approaches that, although excellent in their goals for students learning, are complicated to implement. These combined factors in many cases present challenges for improving education quality (Barrow and Leu, 2006; Dirribsa, 2006).

Quality of teaching is recognized as the key, the factor without which other quality inputs are unlikely to be successful. Teacher quality itself is the result of a complex process, with in-service professional development shown to have a strong impact on teacher quality. The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality. Therefore, Scholars contend that teacher quality, teacher learning, and teacher improvement, are becoming the hot issues of researchers, policy makers, program designers, implementers and evaluators (UNESCO, 2004; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Barrow & Leu, 2006).

The professional development of teacher-educators is an aspect of professional development that has been neglected despite many reports that show its importance in the improvement of the development of all teachers. Giusti and Monteiro (2005) contend that although the importance of a better pedagogical preparation has been assumed university teacher professional development are sporadic and isolated. In addition to that, it is possible to perceive that some faculty members do not believe in the efficiency of pedagogical preparation programs, being resistant to their implementation. As to Villegas-Reimers (2003) they need to acquire professional knowledge-not only of subject matter, but also of

pedagogy, and it is the latter, which is usually weak among most higher education teachers; they must develop skills and techniques for teaching; and they must develop attitudes & understanding of ethical principles that underlie teaching

The allegation that a teacher knows a lot, but doesn't know how to transmit it, how to conduct a class, neither how to deal with students, is so common that it seems to be part of the "nature", or the 'culture", of any higher education institution. In an era of quality search, demands for qualified teaching increase each day. Most of these requirements are related to professional development programs. Nevertheless, it is questionable if those programs can contribute to improving the quality of university teaching, especially in what concerns didactics. It is important to mention that prerequisites to be a university teacher have been restricted to a profound practical or theoretical knowledge of contents. This knowledge depends mainly on the professional or academic practice developed by the teacher. A little-if nothing- has been demanded in terms of pedagogical education and teaching abilities (Giusti & Monteiro, 2005).

While employers complain that graduates are poorly prepared for the workplace, the students on the other hand, point to their teachers as the defective link in the teaching-learning continuum. This can be attributed to the fact that most teachers in higher education institutions in Africa lack teaching skills, and those who have hardly updated their skills find it difficult to cope with the rapid changes in the education system. As a result, it has become necessary to seek ways of helping teachers of higher education to feel greater confidence working with the full diversity of students that they constantly have to handle in their classrooms (Ngu, 2007). Tertiary-level pedagogy, to meet the needs of today's rapidly evolving world, would need a paradigm shift from Teaching as Telling to Teaching as Guiding. However, the shift from a telling to a guiding pedagogy can succeed only if examinations and assessment procedures are able to shift from emphasis on memorization and regurgitation to analysis and creativity. There is therefore a great need for radical reforms that would give prominence to the skills that are most sought after in the wider world, and in the work place( Obanya,2007).

Teshome (2003) has mentioned about the status of higher institution graduates of Ethiopia on the keynote paper presented at a regional training conference held at Accra, Ghana. As to Teshome, the performance of university graduates in the work place, as well as their adaptability and leadership abilities, were not as much as expected and should be. Similarly in the TESO Handbook, the low competencies of teacher educators in practical areas such as student centered teaching methods has mentioned and emphasized that the greatest obstacle to improvement of quality in teacher education program is the lack of knowledge of professional areas & lack of professional development of teacher educators(TESO HANDBOOK, 2003).

HDP was established in 2003 with the hope to provide practical solution to the problem identified in teacher education and to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia through a licensing program (MOE, 2004). It was designed to develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators; lasts for one academic year and comprises sixty (60) sessions with a total of one hundred twenty (120) hours. In spite of the attempt made on teacher educators' professional development through HDP, there is doubt of whether it was considered valuable on the side of the participants and helped them to change their teaching as to the desired level.

To this end, this case study, through in-depth account of teacher educators' experiences, attempts to understand and provide description of changes that occurred as a result of their participation in the program. The study also tries to explore impeding factors to the effectiveness of the program.

## 1.2. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

One mechanism put in place by the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education is introducing a Higher Diploma Program (HDP), a licensing training program that is aimed at developing the skills and professionalism of teacher educators. As stipulated in TESO handbook, HDP emphasize the key elements of the role of teacher educator as well as ensuring competence in the learning and teaching methods and assessment mode required in the teacher education institutions. HDP is a new compulsory qualification for all teacher educators and it provides them with a practical program to support their development as effective teachers and reflective practitioners with enhanced professional status, able to model active learning and continuous assessment, manage change and make a difference in the education system (TESO HANDBOOK, 2003; MOE, 2004). In this vein HDP prepares teacher educators for their future role, i.e, implementing and being role model for the constructivist teaching model.

Research also provides evidence that high-quality professional development can help teachers deepen their knowledge & transform their instructional practices (Borko, 2004). On the other hand, Very little is known about what teachers learn through various opportunities. Little (2002) suggests that traditional in-service programs consist of outside experts with little knowledge of local conditions who present irrelevant, sometimes amusing, often boring prepackaged information. He goes on to argue that these experiences are irrelevant and teach teachers little (or at least little of worth). According to Meiers & Ingvarson (2005), among impacts PD programs, those believed to have the most immediate and direct influence can be classified in **three major categories:**

- ❖ **Content Characteristics:** referred to as the “what” of staff development. These characteristics are primarily the new knowledge, skills, and understandings that are the foundation of academic disciplines and pedagogical processes.

- ❖ **Process Variables** refers to the “how” of professional development. Process variables are the ways activities are planned, organized, and carried out, and followed up. They are the ways new learning occurs.
- ❖ **Context Characteristics** address the organization and the nature of the system in which change will occur. Context characteristics refer to the “when,” “where,” and “why” of professional development. They are the underpinnings – the system foundation – upon which professional development occurs.

Scholars of teacher learning have also long supported the view that successful school reform is best achieved through the development of teachers and schools as inquiring, collaborative organizations, rather than the imposition of state mandated curriculum from above. Top down imposition of change an essentially bureaucratic mechanism, can be seen as counter to professionalism. Bureaucratic and professional views of teaching differ in their conception of the knowledge base for teaching and in their prescriptions for the control of practice. Bureaucracy relies up on supervision and standardization through rules, role differentiation and output control. In professional setting, rigid supervision and standardization are considered to constrain the necessary use of judgment (Elmore, 1990; Weik & McDaniel, 1989 cited in Firestone & Bader, 1991). Using external standards to maximize the probability of good teaching is also doubtful. Through rewards and sanctions, externally set standards gain power and when teachers are forced to learn and teach the way they are not convinced is appropriate, motivation for teaching will necessarily be extrinsic (Porter, 1989).

Beside the above arguments, the unique philosophy of Jimma University about Community Based Training Program (CBTP) and Team and Research Based Training Program (TTP) adds burden on teachers. They are expected to go out with students for supervision in addition to their formal work of teaching the regular as well as continuing education programs. From my observation as a staff member of the university, most instructors

complain about participation in HDP. They frequently rely on their pre-service training for their reluctance of participation. There is common believe that HDP could have been given for other faculty instructors rather than for education faculty teachers who are aware of the issues in HDP. However, they are forced to take the course because it is a compulsory licensing program. Under such conditions, I doubted whether meaningful learning can take place and that is the reason why I wanted to understand teacher educators' learning experiences of HDP. In this vein, there is a lack of substantial empirical evidence about what exactly teachers learn (or do not learn) in such Professional Development activities. Through evaluation of professional development programs, it will be essential to analyze what educators have and have not learned, how they have applied this knowledge to their teaching, and related factors that affect the effectiveness of the program. Therefore, I wanted to understand the case at Jimma University.

### **1.3. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the study is to understand and provide thick-description of teacher educators' perceived improvements in the area of teaching-learning (use of active-learning, student-centered pedagogies). More specifically, the study intended to examine teacher educators' perceptions of changes in knowledge, & skill of classroom instructions as well as factors related to the effectiveness of the program. The study was guided by the following research questions.

#### **1.4. BASIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. How do the teachers perceive the contribution of HDP in terms of:
  - 1.1. Enhancing their Knowledge
  - 1.2. Changing Skill of Teaching
2. Which aspects of the program do teachers value for effective learning and improving instruction?
3. What are impeding factors of effective learning of participants and implementation of HDP into practice?

#### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Understanding teacher educators perspectives on their own experiences as they progress through the training and implementation in their classrooms and the subsequent effects on instructional practices is particularly important because they are the actors & primarily responsible to improve education quality that underlie the reform policies of Ethiopia. Thus anticipated results of the study:

- ❖ Will provide in-depth information on how a group of teachers increased their knowledge and improved their practice through participation in this program.
- ❖ Identify challenges as well as points of intervention that may help to improve the effectiveness and success of the program.
- ❖ Highlight key considerations of effective professional development programs and may assist in maximizing the understanding and effectiveness of teachers' professional learning.
- ❖ May provide information for individuals who are interested in similar area of study.

## **1.6. DELIMITATION**

The general design of a case study is best represented by a funnel; the start of the study is a wide end, from broad exploratory beginnings, researchers move to more directed data collection and analysis as they learn more about the topic of study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Likewise, the initial purpose of this study was to learn the contribution of HDP from the participants in general. The design flexibility of case study (qualitative research) permitted the researcher to adjust the direction of the study based on the ongoing experience of thinking about the data. Through discussion with my advisor, I could be able to develop a focus issues. These were the contribution of HDP in terms of: knowledge, skill, and value as well as the impeding factors. I have tried to learn every thing that comes from the key informants under these focus issues through the use of open-ended questions. Therefore the study was delimited by its focus areas.

## **1.7. LIMITATIONS**

This case study is limited to teachers in one faculty at one university. The six participants in this study were not randomly selected, but were selected because of their participation in HDP, each teacher volunteered to participate in the study and that they fulfilled the criteria of the researcher. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the findings of the study, because of a limited non-random sample in a single faculty.

The interview may have taken place during a time in the year when the teachers had prior duties that made the interviews an additional burden to them. In addition, only one female has been included in the study due to the limited number of female instructors who had taken the course.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE**

This chapter presents the review of literature and research findings related to the study under consideration. The first part deals with the meaning and concept of professional development programs as well as purpose and characteristics of effective professional development activities. The second part details the state of professional development of teacher educators. Teaching methods in general and teacher-centered/ or student-centered or the concept of constructivist instructional approaches and commonly used strategies in constructivist classroom situations are presented in the third part while the ideas, assumptions and components of HDP are the last part of this chapter.

#### **2.1. THE MEANING OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Educators of today face many challenges within the education profession. They have been asked to educate every student to the best of his/her ability, maintain high academic standards for every student, understand and perform skillful teaching, and realize the accountability implications for their teaching. These beneficial tools of teacher knowledge can be acquired through intensive, ongoing professional development (Calnin, 2006; Borko, 2004). There are numerous definitions of effective professional development. However, many of the researchers tended to arrive at the same conclusions as indicated in the following part.

Professional development in a broad sense refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). According to this author, Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, monitoring, etc) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications watching television related to an academic discipline, etc).

According to Stout (1996) staff development- sometimes called continuing education, in-service training, or professional development-as a central tool for altering teacher behaviors. In the educational profession, educators have often interchanged the terms professional development, in-service training, and staff development. Others (Borko, 2004) referred to staff development as a continuing process that changed a teacher's practice. It should involve examining assumptions about teaching and learning. Staff development should offer practices that provide new techniques, strategies, methods, and approaches with feedback in a non-threatening environment. In this view, staff development is a process in which learning opportunities are created for teachers, resulting in students receiving the benefits from the teachers' new knowledge.

Guskey (p.5) described professional development programs as "a way in which to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end". Therefore, professional development programs should bring about change in a teacher's classroom and beliefs, thus resulting in added student learning (Guskey, 1986). Staff development should be used to improve and refine teachers' knowledge and skills.

The above literature shows that professional development is an on-going, in-depth, and intensive program. It should be research- and data- driven. Designed with the teachers and students in mind, staff development should bring a significant change within the educational program resulting in teacher growth. Through this added teacher knowledge, student achievement should be evident. Despite these numerous definitions of professional development the terms staff development will be recognized as equivalent to professional development for the purpose of this study.

For years the only form of Professional development available to teachers was 'in service training', usually consisting of workshops or short term courses that would offer teachers new information on a particular aspect of their work. This was often the only type of training teachers would receive and was usually unrelated to the teachers' work. Only in the past few years has the Professional development of teachers been considered a long term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth &

development in the profession (Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In this vein, even though the traditional system is essential, it is no longer sufficient. To be effective, the opportunities are designed based on real needs identified by the teachers in their daily activities.

## 2.2. IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The significance of professional development in improving the quality of education is acknowledged in many educational contexts and at the policy level. This initiative also embraces the value of professional standards and related certification for teachers as a means of improving the quality of teaching (ETP, 1994; UNESCO/IICBA, 2005). Successful Professional development experiences have a noticeable impact on teachers' work, both in and out of the classroom, especially considering that a significant number of teachers throughout the world are under – prepared for their profession (Ball, 2000 in villegas-Reimers, 2003). Darling-Hammond (2000) summarizes similar evidence-based findings:

*The effect of poor quality teaching on student outcomes is debilitating and cumulative. The effects of quality teaching on educational outcomes are greater than those that arise from students' backgrounds. A reliance on curriculum standards and state-wide assessment strategies without paying due attention to teacher quality appears to be insufficient to gain the improvement in student outcomes sought.*

Rowe (2003) concludes that the key message to be gained from the educational effectiveness research is that **quality teachers and their professional development do make a difference**, and that it is not so much what students bring with them that really matters, but what they experience on a day-to-day basis in interaction with teachers and other students in classrooms. Another study which supports the strong relationship that links the improvement of teachers' practices & the increasing levels of students' achievement is that reported by Cohen and Hill (1997). According to this report, teachers who participated in sustained curriculum based Professional development reported changes in practice that, in turn, were associated with significantly higher student achievement scores on state

assessment. Regardless of the scope of the reform, the relationship between educational reform and teachers' Professional development is a two-way relation ship. Educational reforms that do not include teachers and their Professional development have not been successful. Professional development initiatives that have not been embedded in some form of reform of structures & policies have not been successful either. On the other hand Professional development experiences and opportunities that are not embedded in some form of major reform of structures, policies, and organizations have not been successful, as changing teachers with at changing contexts, beliefs, and structures rarely creates a significant change. Reforms such as this are common around the world (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

### **. 2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PD**

The corpus of professional literature relating to the effectiveness of professional development emphasizes teacher learning, identifies characteristic features of professional development that impact on teacher learning, and espouses principles for effective professional development. Implicit in this issue is the assumption that increased teacher knowledge will improve teaching practice, in turn improving student learning outcomes (Supovitz, 2001: in Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005)

According to Guskey (1996), there are some guidelines for success that must be followed when planning and implementing Professional development opportunities for teachers. They are: -

- To recognize change as being both an individual and organizational process;
- to work in teams to maintain support;
- to include procedures for feedback on results;
- to provide continuous follow up support and pressure;
- It must be grounded in knowledge about teaching; model constructivist teaching; provide sufficient time and follow-up.

In addition to being strong design principles for effective professional development, the strategies used in implementing programs are a significant element in teachers' opportunities to learn. An important decision for any professional developer is to choose a methodology for teacher learning appropriate to the goals and context of the professional development program (Ingvarson & Meiers, 2005). As to these authors, the quality of professional development programs is influenced by a multitude of factors. Those believed to have the most immediate and direct influence, however, can be classified in three major categories: content characteristics, process variables, and context characteristics. Putnam and Borko(2000) indicates that professional learning is most likely to improve student learning outcomes if it increases teachers' understanding of: the content they teach; how students learn the content; how to represent and convey that content in meaningful ways; and how well their students are doing in relation to how well they should be doing. In summary, the literature indicates that professional learning is more likely to improve student learning outcomes if it increases teachers' understanding of the content they teach, how students learn that content and how to represent and convey that content in meaningful ways.

Research also confirms the importance of teachers being actively engaged in their own learning. Effective professional development programs draw teachers into an analysis of their current practice in relation to professional standards for good practice. They also draw teachers into close comparison of what their students are learning in relation to what students of that age and circumstance are capable of learning (Cohen & Hill, 2000). Feedback on practice has long been recognized as a vital requirement for professional development programs that aim to help teachers develop new skills and integrate them into their practice (Joyce & Showers, 1980).

Effective professional development programs lead teachers to examine their students' work in relation to external reference points or standards. It has become clear over recent years that teachers gain a great deal of valuable learning from opportunities to examine student work in collaboration with colleagues - especially their own students' work, and in relation to standards for what students should know and be able to do. Collaborative analyses of

student work opens up many avenues for teachers to de-privatize their practice and learn from each other (Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis, 2005). On the other hand, Follow-up support to teachers during the implementation phase of change has long been identified as an important feature of more effective programs (Fullan, 1982).

As it is discussed in the above literature, the new perspective of effective professional development has several characteristics:

- It is based on constructivism rather than on a 'transmission-oriented model' as a result teachers are treated as active learners who are engaged in the concrete task of teaching assessment, observation and reflection
- It is perceived as a long term process as it acknowledges the fact that teachers learn over time. As a result, a series of related experiences (rather than one-off presentations) is seen to be the most effective as it allows teachers to relate prior knowledge to new experiences. Regular follow-up support is regarded as an indispensable catalyst of the change process
- It is perceived as a process that takes place within a particular context contrary to the traditional staff development activities that did not relate training to actual classroom experiences the most effective form of PD is that which is related to the daily activities of teachers and learners
- A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner someone who enters the profession with a certain knowledge base, and who will acquire new knowledge and experiences based on that prior knowledge. In so doing, the role of professional development is to aid teachers in building new pedagogical theories & practices, and to help them develop their expertise in the field
- PD is conceived as collaborative process. Even though there may be some opportunities for isolated work and reflection, most effective PD occurs when there are meaningful interactions.

## 2.4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Professional development of teacher educators is an aspect of Professional development that has been neglected despite many reports that show its importance in the improvement of the development of all teachers. In fact, research involving teacher educators is scarce, and little, if any, attention has been paid to their Professional development (Villeggs-Reimers, 2003). The same author asserts that

*The professional development of teacher-educators and other educators in higher-education institutions does not differ greatly from that of elementary & high schoolteachers. They need to acquire professional knowledge-not only of subject matter, but also of pedagogy, and it is the latter, which is usually weak among higher education teachers; they must develop skills and techniques for teaching; and they must develop attitudes & understanding of ethical principles that underlie teaching (Villeggs-Reimers, 2003).*

In similar way, Wayson (1974) argue that the prescription is precisely the same for the programs that will develop teachers of teachers. It teachers are to acquire professional perspicacity, those who teach teachers must exhibit it. One of the most significant changes in the way good professional development of teachers is conceptualized is the shift from a more technical, “menu” approach, including singular-session workshops, activities and techniques that focus on generic skill development. Rather, professional development is seen as a complex and intellectual *orientation*, requiring new goals, roles and pedagogical practices. Cole (1999) summarizes the features of such interventions:

- Teachers should be treated as active learners who construct their own understanding;
- Teachers should be empowered and treated as professionals;
- Teacher education must be situated in real practice;
- Teacher educators should treat teachers as they expect teachers to treat students

Hernandez (1998) cited in Villegas-Reimers (2003) lists a few principles that should guide the education of teacher educators. They are:

- As the work of teacher educators has a strong influence on the work of teachers, they should model and illustrate a variety of teaching methods, techniques, and processes; therefore, they need to be educated in pedagogy.
- Process to prepare teacher-educators must be based on practical issues related to the day-to-day work in the classroom.
- The work of teacher educators must include not only teaching but also research directly related to their area of expertise.
- Teacher – educators must know and understand the institutions where they work and where their students will work.
- Teacher educators must know the national education system in depth, and must understand the context in which it is implemented. Teacher educators must know how to work in teams and collaborate in their work.

From the above literature, it is clear that the PD of teacher educators can be accomplished with the aid of similar models to those school teachers described earlier and, all through the literature of this study, discussion of PD pertains to teachers in general.

## **2.5. TEACHING METHODS**

Method of teaching involves a body of fixed and stereo-typed modes of procedures each applicable to its appropriate subject as a kind of ritual to be followed by all teachers and in all circumstances (Aggrawal, 1997). He further explains that a method is not merely a device adopted for communicating certain items of information to students and exclusively the concern of the teacher who is supposed to be the giving end. A method must link up the teacher and his/her in to a natural relationship with constant mutual interaction. As to Kasambria (19930 cited in Firdissa (2005), teaching methods are the means by which the teacher attempts to impart the designed learning or experience in a way that the learners understand and bring behavioral changes and it includes setting the objectives, selecting the

content and procedure which will best achieve the objectives, and evaluating the whole process. While there are various methods of teaching that a teacher can use, its central focus and purpose is enhancing students' performance (Firdissa, 2005).

Every teacher in contemporary society possesses an individual teaching style. Informed by one's educational philosophy, one's teaching style is shaped by the cumulative result of interrelated experiences sustained over a period of time (Eggen and Kaucha, 1997). Teaching style represent a pattern of needs, beliefs and behaviors displayed by teachers in their classroom (Holiday, 1994). A teacher's method of instruction, type of assessment, and classroom management is contingent upon his/her individual teaching style. Teaching styles also serve as a guide to dealing with the inter-personal aspect of student-teacher relationship. The particular mood or emotional climate created in the classroom is also influenced by one's teaching style.

An educator's teaching style can be conceptualized on a continuum ranging from teacher-centered to student-centered. Some teachers adopt a more teacher-centered style of teaching relying heavily on lecture, note-taking, and formal assessments. On the opposite end of the teaching spectrum, there are teachers who adopt student-centered, progressive teaching style. They tend to focus on class discussion, hands-on activities, and collaborative learning. As a teacher they assess student performance based on group projects, presentations and participation. Of course, quite a distance separates a teacher-centered teaching approach from student-centered teaching, and many teachers would probably categorize themselves somewhere in between as they may exhibit various aspects of both teaching styles.

### **2.5.1. Teacher-Centered Teaching Approach**

Teachers are trained in a variety of educational theories and methodologies, but too many educators settle in and only adopt a few strategies. As to Joyce and Showers (1980) students learn from any teaching method, 'active' or 'passive', but may not learn the same thing. Teacher-centered teaching model assigns full responsibility to the teacher for making all decisions about what and when it will be learned; and leaving to the learner only the submissive role of following a teacher's instruction. In teacher-centered teaching approach educators are usually serious and primarily concerned with educating students on the subject matter. Their classroom instruction consists mostly of lecture where students listen, take notes, and are then given some type of formal assessment such as quiz or test. Group activities, class discussion, or any type of collaborative learning usually does not occur. Their classroom is highly structured or organized. The desks are most often in rows, and there is never very much noise. Students are rarely encouraged to disagree or debate any issue. There are established rules and clear consequences for any one who may break these rules (Arends, 1997).

Even though very little research has been conducted on the impact of teaching styles on student academic achievement, the research that is available (Esayas, 2001) suggests the need for a major change in the field of education for teachers to rely less on traditional (lecture method) of teaching. Some research even suggests traditional teaching methods may be counterproductive to the overall learning process. The centerpiece of traditional instruction for presenting information to students is the lecture. Lecture is an important means to communicate essential material that students should learn, yet is widely overused by many educators mistakenly because they feel it is the easiest and most efficient way to disseminate information.

The lecture method of teaching a long-held tradition in academia but is often criticized for being authoritarian and boring. Instruction such as this causes students to become passive

learners, absorbing pre- processed information and then regurgitating it in response to periodic exams. It encourages students to concentrate on superficial indicators rather than on fundamental underlying principles, thus neglecting active learning. Active learning refers to experiences in which students are thinking about the subject matter as they interact with their teacher and each other. It helps to enhance higher levels of thinking such as critical thinking skills. Active learning yields many more benefits when compared to passive learning. It also tends to maximize participation and motivation and gives life and immediacy to the subject matter. Passive learning does not move beyond a surface, fact-based approach to the material and can be quite intimidating (Murphy, 1997).

Education and training in Ethiopia higher education institutions have traditionally relied on the objectivist view of knowledge. This view of learning assumes that knowledge can be imported from teachers to learners through instruction, lecture and practice. It also assumes that truth can be determined by large accumulation of facts. The drawback of this approach is that the knowledge is often verbal often removed from contextual situation of the knowledge being imparted, and limited to the classroom writing board and lecture. Knowledge is neither personally constructed nor application focused (Derebssa, 2006; Thomas and Mulat, 2006; Daniel, 2004; Amare, 2000)

Researchers and educators also put similar evidence regarding the state of teacher education and the process of teaching-learning in Ethiopian higher education institutions. A teacher centered or curriculum centered teaching model is the current style of education in most colleges in Ethiopia other parts of the worked where teachers talk for most part of classroom sessions and students copy lecture notes. This style of teaching does not accommodate students' interests and abilities, fails to reach diverse students population and often tends to neglect active student participation in the classroom.

Yalew (2006) argue in the same way that there are many are many teachers in secondary school and higher institutions that teach courses without any pedagogical training and outside their field of specialization. Yalew goes on to argue that any one who has earned a first degree in a certain field could teach the course. Similarly the highly qualified teachers are also disappointed and dissatisfied in their unfairly treated and handled by the education system. As to Gizaw (2006) teachers have not developed the required profit and academic knowledge; teachers lack competency to shape students as good citizens they do not use student centered teaching strategy; they are not keen on innovation and learning form new thoughts and do not show an effort to develop their profession. In addition to this, it was underlined that during the initial training, less emphasis is given to teaching methods logy and practicum.

Research on teaching-learning process (Reda, 2001) has shown that students in higher learning institutions memorize specific facts and skills that help them to be promoted from one to another level of education. As a result, most students cannot very well practice the content they have learned in colleges to solve real-life problems. However teaching in higher education should go beyond the imparting of knowledge and skill to students. It is argued that teachers should be able to think about effective methods that encourage higher education learners actively involved in the teaching learning process rather than methods for doing lecture. Research evidence suggests that students should do more than just listen. Unlike the traditional methods of teaching such as the lecture method, constructivist teaching approaches are regarded as producing greater internalization and deeper understanding. In constructivist approaches teachers are expected to facilitate active learning by encouraging active inquiry, guiding learners to question their assumptions and coaching learners. Teacher-centered is therefore being taken as obstacle.

### **2.5.2. Student-Centered/Constructivist Teaching Approach**

The constructivist view is one of the traditions in educational psychology that rest on the views that a learner's existing ideas are all important in responding to , and making sense of stimuli. Other scholars define constructivism as a perspective of teaching and learning in which a learner constructs meaning from experience and interaction with others and the teacher's role is to provide meaningful experience for students (Arends, 1997). Constructivism is a view that emphasizes the active role of learners in building, understanding, and making sense of information (Laurizen and Jaeger, 1997). Constructivism emphasizes the role of prior knowledge in learning. Students interpret tasks and instructional activities involving new concepts in terms of their prior knowledge. Errors are characteristics of initial phases of learning because students existing knowledge is inadequate and supports only partial understandings (Murphhy, 1997).

The general goals of constructivist instruction are to provide opportunities for problem solving, reasoning, critical thinking, and the active use of knowledge in order to teach the student. Constructivist strategies require the full involvement of the learner in the activity of learning to the environment where the knowledge would be expected to be recalled or used. Constructivist instruction should also seek to foster a sense of ownership in the learning process in. The learner has to be an active participant, not simply the "target" of instruction. It needs to promote deep reflection by the learner about their ideas and the ideas of others in order to construct meaning (Driscoll, 2000). Constructivists view knowledge as personally and socially constructed rather than objective. In addition to individual constructivism, social constructivism has also become a dominant influence in education (Eggen & Kauchak, 1997).

While Objectivist instruction relies on "reliable" knowledge about the world around us, that we all understand it the same way, Constructivism, on the other hand, states that reality occurs in the mind of the learner; that the learner constructs their own reality based on their

perception of it. Objectivism concentrates on the “object” of our knowledge, or what we know, whereas constructivism is concerned with how we go about constructing or building that knowledge (Driscoll, 2000). Objectivist instruction would be more concerned with presenting the known “objective reality” to the learner with the expectation that the learner would assimilate the structure and content of “the world” and replicate that in their thinking. Constructivism, on the other hand, seeks to go deeper. It doesn’t exclude the possibility of an objective reality, but it does seek to push the learner towards creating their own interpretation of that reality. The meaning and knowledge that a learner constructs is entirely influenced by their own experiences and prior knowledge, thereby “constructing” new knowledge (Jonassen, D.H., 1996).

A constructivist teacher and a constructivist classroom exhibit a number of distinguishable qualities markedly different from traditional or direct instruction classroom. In the constructivist classroom, the focus is not on meeting objectives or mastering tests, as this does not sufficiently determine how much learning has occurred or track the process of conceptual change. The teachers create a social environment in the classroom that could be described as learning community where dialogue promotes understanding (Fosnot, 1989, Brooks & Brooks, 1993). Constructivist classroom approaches involve fundamental shifts in how teachers typically think about instruction. In addition, constructivist teacher is expected to use resources and materials such as additional books, videos, tapes, computer programs, and other locally available instructional materials. As to Brooks and Brooks (1993), teachers in constructivist classroom are expected to:

- Encouraging students to engage in dialogue both with the teacher and with one another;
- Seek and use students questions and ideas to guide lessons; allow wait time after posing question and seek elaboration of students in initial responses;
- Accept and encourage students autonomy and initiation of ideas; promote students leadership collaboration, location of information and taking actions as a result of the learning process;
- Respect and use all ideas that students generate; become one of the many resources that the students learn from, not the only source of information.

McNeil (1999) suggests three phases for constructivist learning strategy:- the preparation for learning phase, the enquiry phase and the application & integrative phase. This includes student discussion about their present knowledge and prior experiences related to the topic under consideration. In the inquiry phase, students attempt to answer their questions and clarify their views through exploration, experimentation and through comparing the new ideas with previously held concepts. The new information is summarized and criticized, a problem is solved and old ideas are contrasted with the new in the application and integration phase. This stage is characterized by judging whether the goal of learning has been met.

In general, classroom instruction from constructivist point of view should emphasize the use of students' prior experiences and should base on current knowledge of students. Activation of background knowledge can make learning of new content easier and more efficient. Good and Brophy (1997) suggest the following strategies for activation of prior knowledge: asking students related questions; helping the students to activate relevant prior knowledge by drawing analogies or suggesting examples that link the new content to familiar ideas or experience; by taking inventory of what students know ( or think they know) about the topic before instruction. Students should involve in individual investigation and also in the social interaction in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. Tools or activities usually employed during constructivist learning process includes: oral discussions, mind mapping( concept mapping, webbing) hands-on activities, paper and pencil test, reports presentations, application, experimentation, observation, field trips, films, class discussions, discovery, keeping journal, role playing, portfolios etc (Eggen & Kauchak, 1997; Novak & Gowin, 1984).

The Ethiopian education policy statement refers frequently to the employment of learner-centered, active learning and problem solving approaches in different contexts and advocates the implementation of constructivism in classroom teaching (ETP, 1994; Amare, et al. 2006; Leu and Price-Rom, 2006). HDP was then designed to professionalize and prepare teacher educators for their future role as documented in different MOE publications.

In this view, the aim of HDP is helping educators to apply constructivist teaching strategies. The main objectives of the program are to help teacher educators to:

- Develop the good qualities of effective and reflective instructor.
- Develop teaching as a skill, use active learning methods and serve as role model of good practice and have high standards of professional ethics and clear values.
- Be involved in action research to solve practical teaching problems.
- Play an active part in community and institutional development and plan their own professional development and career etc.

## **2.6. HIGHER DIPLOMA PROGRAM**

The study report on the *Quality and Effectiveness of Teacher Education in Ethiopia* in 2002 identified that teacher educators had little or no staff development either before or after assignment as a teacher educator. Their strengths are their academic knowledge and qualification of their weakness lie in their inability to employ the teaching approaches and methods (including assessment) that are set in policies (TESOHANDBOOK, 2003; MOE, 2004).

The identified problem in relation to the process of teaching learning in higher education and the declining quality of education brought about the adoption of a radical reform of the teacher education system encompassing areas from pre-service teacher education to continuing professional development of teachers, the professionalizing of teacher educators, selection for teacher education programs and organization and advancing of teacher education system itself (NESCO/IICBA, 2005; ETP, 1994; TESOHANDBOOK, 2003). Among the work of the TESO task force, the section on teacher education offers a program to increase their professionalism, which will require the adoption of a multi-faceted approach. At the heart of this is the new higher diploma, a qualification which eventually will be required of all teacher educators.

HDP was developed in 2003 and mainly focuses of on the process of assisting others to become effective teachers and is not concerned with traditional academic subject content. It

is planned to include real experience of those key aspects of the effective teacher educator that are presently absent: it is interactive models active learning requires group working promotes planning at an individual and combined level, action research, working with teachers and trying to make an effective conjunction of theory and practice. The activities (experiences) are designed to match the future roles of the teacher educators (TESOHANDBOOK, 2003).

This new conceptualizations of professional development is aimed at helping teacher educators to implement the constructivist teaching approach. One of the principles of this approach is that learners actively construct internal representations of knowledge by *interacting* with both the materials to be learned and their peers. That is to say that social interactions relate both to defining a problem and the construction of its solutions (Driscoll, 2000). One of the implications of this approach is that teacher educators adopt more of a role of facilitator of learning rather than primarily being the provider of knowledge. The learners become “generators” of knowledge rather than passive consumers of provided knowledge.

The training manual of HDP was designed on a modular basis and has four modules. In addition, the HDP is delivered through school placement and lesson observations. Each trainee is required to spend about twenty (20) or more hours in school while the school is in session and school students are present (MOE, 2004).

#### **2.6.1. Module 1- Reflective Instructor**

The reflective teacher educator aims at developing teachers’ ability to reflect on their own experience. The module focuses on educational reform in Ethiopia, time management, qualities of effective teacher, lesson planning and evaluation, students’ learning styles, accommodating individual differences, active learning methods and their applications, group interactions and common group behaviors, effective group work, reflections, etc.

### **2.6.2. Module II- Developing Active Learning Methods**

The second module aims at helping trainees look at the various ways of enabling their students to take responsibility for their own learning. The module provides knowledge and skills on developing active learning projects and applications, effective classroom observation, skills of giving and receiving feedback, role modeling, gender issues and actions, supporting the disadvantaged, in a classroom setting, etc.

### **2.6.3. Module III- Improving Assessment**

The third module, improving assessment aims at enabling trainees to accurately record students' abilities. This module is mainly about the practical application of continuous assessment methods. Topics covered in the module includes assessment types, methods, continuous assessment, peer and individual assessment techniques, requirements for effective assessments, application mechanisms, assessing groups, peer evaluation and presentation, conducting reflections as means to improve one's teaching activities, etc.

### **2.6.4. Module IV – Action Research**

The module is on action research, action research project design, practical steps, conducting action research using different instruments, writing action research reports and presentation to colleagues and the public, etc. it starts from the idea that there is a problem in the teaching learning process that needs a solution; specific action would then be taken to implement possible solutions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter details the procedures and methodology that the researcher uses in this study, including the participants, study design, instruments, procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1. STUDY DESIGN AND JUSTIFICATION**

This study was conducted following qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible. The key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting in their social worlds. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. The objective of qualitative researchers is to attain an overall understanding of the condition studied, rather than recording the “existence” of specific, easily verified dimensions of characteristics of the circumstance (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1991; Patton, 1990). Considering these ideas, I found important to use qualitative method for this study.

My choice of qualitative method was also supported by the view that using the qualitative methodology in case studies is the preferred strategy for research studies dealing with contemporary phenomena within a real life context (Yin ,1982). As an inquiry paradigm, logical positivism seeks to test theoretical generalizations through quantitative and experimental methods. Such an approach relies on pre-identified variables from tightly defined populations, attempting to fit individual experiences and perspectives into predetermined response categories. To adopt such an approach is to lose the individuality and worth of diverse life experiences with little or no context in which to understand cases on their own merit (Patton, 1990).

### 3.2. SETTING

The study was conducted at Jimma University, a public higher educational institution established in 1999 by the amalgamation of Jimma College of Agriculture (found in 1952) and Jimma Institute of Health Sciences (established in 1983). It is Ethiopia's first innovative community oriented educational institution of higher learning located 335 km south west of Addis Ababa at Jimma town. The faculty of education is a young faculty in Jimma University and the only faculty where the program is being given as well as where the researcher is a staff member. In addition to the formal teaching of regular, extension, and summer programs, teachers at the faculty of education are expected to supervise students during Practicum and CBTP each semester. There are eleven departments under the faculty; namely, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, Pedagogy, and Physical Education & Sports. Most instructors at the faculty have pedagogical backgrounds from their pre- service training programs.

More specifically the research site is selected because of the following reasons:

- It is one of the higher institutions where the program is being given
- The researcher has better access to different information for data collection and analysis as well as support of experts
- The researcher is a staff member of the university and believes that he has to contribute to and participate in any activity that promotes the success of the institution
- As a case can also be selected because of personal interest (Merriam, 1998), it is the personal interest of the researcher to study there

### **3.3. PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study were education faculty teachers who had taken HDP course. Tellis (1997) stated that the selection of participants in a case study does not have to be done through random selection, but the researcher is to handle the selection within the condition that is available. Keeping Tellis statement in mind, the participants were selected in this case study through purposive sampling. This purposive sampling increased the scope or range of data (random or representative sampling is likely to suppress more deviant cases) as well as the likely hood that the full array of multiple realities would be uncovered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Because the participants should be information rich in the area that is being studied, HDP coordinator has been informed the purpose and areas of investigation as well as criteria against which to select. The criteria were:

- Identifying teachers who were strong participants of the program and who viewed the program as a tool to make them more qualified educators. With the hope to generate various and diversified data, the coordinator would be asked to identify teachers who were the opposite of the first group and perceived the program as a chore.
- Selecting participants from different departments, different status and educational backgrounds (teaching and non-teaching). This is due to the assumption that the program might have different meanings to individuals who are from different backgrounds and who are working in different positions. Thus helped to assure the comprehensiveness of the data.
- Identifying those who have fully participated in the program because they have full image of the program
- In addition, the participants should be those who have served minimum of one year as instructor in the faculty without HDP experience and those who taught minimum of one semester after attending the program have been selected so that they would be able to recognize the impact of the program on their teaching.

The following table shows the demographic characteristics of interview and FGD participants.

Table 3.1 demographic backgrounds of one-on-one interview participants

Participants	Department	Qualification	Teaching experience	Year of HDP Participation
I-1(informant one)	Pedagogy	MA	8 years	2006
I-2(informant one)	History	MA	28 years	2004
I-3(informant one)	English	MA	10 years	2006
I-4(informant one)	Mathematics	MSc	06 years	2006
I-5(informant one)	Chemistry	MSc	06 years	2006
I-6(informant one)	Afaan Oromo	BA	03 years	2006

Table 3.2 demographic background of FGD participants

Department	Qualification	Teaching experience	Year of HDP Participation
Afaan Oromo	MA	4 + years	2005
Amharic	BA	4 + years	2006
English	MA	10 + years	2006
Mathematics	MSc	7 + years	2006
Physics	BA	3 +years	2006
Chemistry	MSc	6 +years	2006
Biology	BSc	3+ years	2006
History	MA	8+ years	2005
Geography	MA	4+ years	2006
Pedagogy	MA	7 years	2006

As indicated on the above two tables, key informants have been taken from the three academic streams and their experience ranges from three to twenty eight years of teaching.

Their educational backgrounds, qualification as well as their year of participation are also different. These different features in their backgrounds contributed to the comprehensiveness of the data

### **3.4. DATA COLLECTION**

Typically in case study research, strategies for data collection include interviewing, observation and document analysis (Merriam, 1991). In this study, different types of qualitative data were collected from interviews of participant teachers, FGDs, and classroom observations. The use of different data sources helped the researcher to validate and crosscheck findings (Patton, 1990). Instruments for interviews, FGD, & protocols for classroom observation were developed by reviewing literature, literature in the area of effective teaching and constructivist instruction, as well as consulting educators/or experts in accordance with the objectives of the study. In addition to the above instruments, I made informal discussions with instructors of the faculty who were not included in the interview and FGD, and with students. This technique helped me to gain more comprehensive data.

#### **3.4.1. Interview**

Individual in-depth interviews are often used to collect qualitative data. This technique is characterized by extensive probing and open-ended questions (Mwanje, 2001). Most qualitative researchers and authors indicate that interviews are effective tools for examining the attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values of participants. They agree with the idea that if a researcher's goal is to understand the meanings of a phenomenon and peoples' experiences, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient avenue of inquiry (Merriam, 1991; Patton, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, conducting interviews was one method the researcher used to gain an understanding of the participants' perceptions of changes in their teaching.

A total of six information-rich informants who had taken HDP course were selected for one-on-one interview in this study-two from each of the three academic streams: social science, natural science, and language streams. The interview prompts were open-ended and face-to-

face. Follow-up questions were also used when needed for clarification or to invoke further response to the questions. Before an interview begun, I informed the interviewee about the purpose and guarantee confidentiality. Each participant was given the option to remain anonymous. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by the researcher.

### **3.4.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus Group Discussion capitalizes on group dynamics and allows a small group of respondents in to increasing level of focus and depth on the key issues of the research topic. After in-depth interview, the FGD is the most used data collection technique in qualitative research (Mwanje, 2001). FGD was conducted among three small groups based on similar streams/departments as natural science, social science, and languages to facilitate more discussions among participants and for more detailed & expanded information.

### **3.4.3. Classroom Observation**

Observation is the basic technique of data collection. It is the foundation of all scientific work both in the social and physical sciences. A classroom observation was used to gather supporting evidence to the teachers' interview responses and FGDs. The observation protocol was designed to observe two main themes among instructional domains; classroom instruction/lesson delivery (how an instructor engage and support students in learning), and the assessment technique. Sub-themes were used for each of the two main themes as a guide in order to observe what the teacher did in the classroom to make students learn in line with what educators and researchers advocate as effective or constructivist teaching. In addition the observation guide was designed in a way to enable (not to restrict) the researcher take notes/record any thing observed in the classroom. I have tried to review literatures written in the area of effective teaching and constructivist instruction to enhance my understandings of the issue to be observed in addition to comments from experts.

I attempted to be as non-obvious as possible by active interaction with the participants. I conducted formal and informal observations on an average of three times per week. During this informal observations I made discussions related to/ or out of my topic of concern. I

formally observed lessons offered by ten different departments. My consistent attendance at the faculty and being a staff member of the university allowed for a more trusting relationship with the participants. This acceptance allowed for a more authentic data from the participants.

### **3.5. ANALYSIS**

Marshall & Rossman (1989) and Merriam (1988) contend that data collection and data analysis must be simultaneous process in qualitative research. The data from this case study were analyzed on an ongoing basis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This non-mathematical data analysis process was used to guide the researcher through identifying themes and patterns within individual cases and across the six cases. In similar way, Yin (1994) suggested using a case-oriented replication strategy for analyzing the results of case study data. These approaches provided the researcher with the means to analyze each individual case to identify emerging themes and patterns.

In doing so, the data collected were organized and assembled by data collection method, research question, and interview questions. This helped the researcher to identify change and growth. Taped interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim. The researcher sought to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspectives of the participants. Results from each case's interviews, FGDs, and classroom observations were combined, compared and analyzed across all six cases for emerging themes and patterns. This was done by listening to the audiotapes of the scripts for key words and phrases. Next, I read the interview transcripts according to each individual question. During each of the listening and reading steps common words and phrases and potential themes were recorded. Themes were categorized using the research questions as a framework from which to start. To help ensure the reliability of the data, themes and patterns were distinguished if they were evidenced from two different participants and sources.

### **3.6. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

The concept of triangulation is based on the assumption that any bias inherent in particular data sources, investigator and method would be neutralized when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators, and methods (Creswell, 1994). Triangulation was therefore, one of the methods of data collection and analysis and thus validated the findings of the study.

In addition, researchers Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term trustworthiness to account for credibility and dependability in qualitative research. They suggested using a variety of strategies for improving the likelihood that findings and interpretations are trustworthy. Two of these strategies are: participant review, and peer review. The member checking/participant review allowed the respondent an opportunity to assess intentions, correct errors, and volunteer additional information. In general, these checkpoints helped to ensure the credibility and accurate representation of the data.

Concerning ethical issues, participants were given the option to remain anonymous and the researcher strictly considered any ethical concern that must be addressed in any research activity.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the analysis and interpretations of the data collected for this study and to provide a description of how the participation of HDP influenced teacher educators' knowledge and instructional skills. Anderson (1998) suggested a general qualitative research approach for analysis of cases, which organizes the data in to descriptive themes. The descriptive analysis of data was from transcribed interviews and focus group discussions, classroom observations and informal discussions with students and instructors. The data were grouped and matched on the basis of themes and patterns that emerged through the analysis process.

By referring back to the original research questions, a framework is provided for this summary of findings. The findings were reported by organizing the chapter into the following main categories that reflect the essence of the research questions: Perceived Knowledge, Perceived Change in Skill of Teaching, Valued Aspect of the Program, And Perceived Barriers. The following table shows summary of the relation of categories with emerged themes.

Table 4.1 summary of the relation of categories with emerged themes

Category	Emerged themes
Perceived knowledge	Active learning methods(ALMs) Continuous assessment Action research(AR)
Perceived change in skill	Use of ALMs Applying continuous assessment
Valued aspect of the program	Mode of training
Perceived barriers	Educational factors Predisposing factors Absence of enabling factors

## **4.1. PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE**

Guskey (1986) states that a purpose of professional growth is change in individuals' knowledge, understanding, skills, behaviors, values and beliefs. The focus of HDP is on the learning process and relates directly to teaching methodology and the requirements of the pre-service program and the practicum. The focus of the program is on the processes of assisting others to become effective teachers and is not concerned with traditional subject content as such (MOE, 2003; 2004). During the process of interview and FGD, when teachers were each asked their views of what they have learned & how they had improved as a teacher educator as related to engaging in HDP, three themes emerged from the data, "Active learning Methods", "Continuous Assessment", and "Action Research (AR)".

### **4.1.1. Active Learning Methods (ALMs)**

The data revealed teachers' perceived improvement in that HDP provided them awareness & understanding of various active learning and student centered teaching methods. All of the interviewed teachers responded that HDP acquainted them and encouraged them to think about their teaching methods to maximize students' performances. Specifically, one informant said:

It definitely improved my ability specially teaching methodology. Because most of the contents are revolving around pedagogical issues, it acquainted me with important pedagogical skills to improve my classroom. Of course I do have backgrounds in a number of ways because at university level (during his pre-service training), we took certain pedagogy courses, but HDP also added certain elements on what we already know. For instance, elements like the ALMS. Different ALMS were incorporated in the program. So these were very important.

Informant-1, 21, 02, 2008

Instructors who have passed through pedagogical courses during their initial preparation also found important elements to supplement on their previous knowledge about teaching

methods. As I-2 mentioned below, there are differences with the pedagogical courses he taken so far.

I have taken some methodological courses during my first degree. Even if I have taken those courses, I was not aware of things like ALMs and continuous assessment. I only knew about the theory but during the training, we have been taught practically there in the training how to use them in the class. We used to have different groups & micro teaching where we apply what we have learned. For example, with regard to that of “jigsaw” method or “crossover” method, you will just get of a hint and then you will be invited to implement in the sessions. It focuses more on practical aspect so that it will give you a chance to exercise if you are genuine to adopt it.

Informant 2, 25, 02, 2008

Evidences from FGDs also support the above idea. A teacher from FGD-1 stated that the training provided an opportunity to think back to their former practices of classroom teaching and to relate to what they had learned through HDP.

Particularly when I consider of the social sciences aspects, I can say that lecture method is a dominant. But now when we enter the HDP, amazingly we are acquainted with a variety of active learning methods. Not only its theoretical consideration, but also we just have some practical activity. In the HDP session, as well also during the school placement or lesson observation, we just are in a position to implement and exercise variety of ALMs.

FGD-2, 18, 04, 2008

In the same way, an instructor from FGD-3 expressed his idea mentioning his initial preparation:

For me, the concepts in HDP classes were totally new. This is because of the fact that I did not take any pedagogical courses prior to attending HDP classes. Therefore, I would say taking HDP course has helped me a great deal, especially, in creating new dimension of thought and reminding me to revise my methods of teaching.

FGD-3, 01,05,2008

HDP is basically a program that is intended to improve the potential of teachers. The informants are quite sure that it resulted in quite significant role in shaping their knowledge about pedagogical issues. The data revealed that HDP have resulted in improving and expanding participants' knowledge of teaching methodology, specifically, various ALMs. In equipping with the necessary knowledge, the program served both groups of teachers who did/didn't take pedagogical courses during their initial preparation at their respective universities. Most of the pedagogical courses that they received in higher institutions are rested up on theoretical framework but here; the theoretical consideration is not as vast as the former one and was supported by practice during the training.

#### **4.1.2. Continuous Assessment**

Continuous assessment is viewed as a technique that uses different tools and activities to gather information about students and instruction in order to further improve instruction and student learning. The second theme that emerged from the data in response to question about knowledge acquired as a result of their participation was the benefit of information about the assessment method. The teachers thought that continuous assessment was a key input gained through HDP. As an instance, 1-3 stated:

In HDP module, there is a content that deals with the continuous assessment and this issue is dealt in detail. These issues are of course incorporated in certain courses at an undergraduate level, but the contents are not as deep as that of HDP. HDP is a one year program and even the contents have divided in to modules and I can say that one module can represent one course if you compare it with that of the undergraduate level.

Informant-3, 05,03,2008

Participants contended that the HDP experience kept them up-to-dated & helped them to know more about the concepts of continuous assessment. An instructor confirmed in his words saying:

The importance of continuous assessment is highly emphasized in HDP. That updated my knowledge beyond what I had previously. When you are making the teaching learning process active or student-centered, it should obviously be assessed every day, every time so that it will tell you the state of students' performance. Even though there are impediments that can stand as obstacle to apply as it is, I think that HDP gave me new ideas and kept me aware.

Informant-5, 20,03,2008

As can be understood from the above narration, it is clear that the program resulted in additional knowledge and refreshment of the pre existing idea about assessment technique. It is also clear that the implementation of continuous assessment is seen with uncertainty. Supporting this, another instructor from FGD-2 also suggested:

Continuous assessment does not mean that giving mark for the students all the times. I come to understand that in continuous assessment a teacher can understand the status of his /her students' state of understanding even by oral question. Because when you pose a question, you can see how many students are ready to participate. This tells you that they are on the way to understand the task on hand. So if you frequently practice these things every day, you may know how much your students are learning.

FGD-2, 18, 04, 2008

Teachers spoke that the purpose of continuous assessment is to inform teachers about students' understandings and that it needs to be done on a daily bases. Their responses made clear that their participation in HDP has resulted in increased awareness and refinement of their knowledge of assessment.

#### **4.1.3. Action Research (AR)**

The action research process is collaborative and investigative where educators work together to design and implement research works on practical problems in their classrooms. One module of the HDP focuses on the concepts and methods of doing action research.

As a requirement, HDP candidates are expected to conduct action research (in group) on educational problems in their own context that might result in providing solution to their pressing professional problems.

The instructors of JU reported that they hadn't known about action research prior to their participation in HDP but the program acquainted them with the issue of action research & contributed to their knowledge. It is described by I-2 as:

Prior to that of 1996 E.C; I didn't have any knowledge with regard to AR. But the HDP helped me to know more about AR. We have been involved with that of educational research and it is basically different from AR. This one is (AR) confined on the classroom situation. After identifying the problem; you will forward the solution then you implement and evaluate the whole process. So we do not have such practices, HDP expose us for AR.

Informant-2, 28,02,2008

Another instructor (I-4) confirmed the above idea that HDP was helpful in linking the classroom practice with research.

I didn't know about it before the training. But after the training I have been well introduced about, how to do it and how it can be helpful even though it is difficult to carry out action research because of different limitations. I think it is one of the important areas where you can apply HDP. It enables you to identify problems in the classroom situations, conduct the research and then you try to solve that problem.

Informant-4, 13, 03, 2008

The evidence shows that most teachers had limited knowledge and opportunity to explore common problems and possible solutions in classroom settings. That means, Action research is a new phenomenon which the participants has seen in HDP. They had taken fundamental research which showed them how to conduct a study in general. HDP provided them the opportunity to examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully using the techniques of research. Action research is an experience that encourages and

develops the skills of educators to become more reflective practitioners, more methodical problem solvers, and more thoughtful decision makers (Foster & Nixon, 1978). The participants confirmed that action research enables to revise the current practice based on new knowledge about teaching and learning.

To sum up, the above three themes are in alignment with the contents of HDP in that three of the four modules deal with concepts related to these issues. As it is clear in the literature that any professional development must result in improvement of participants, it can be said that the program was successful in creating awareness and understandings in that it led the teachers to learn more about teaching. As it is clear from their responses, the training resulted in important inputs and better understanding of teaching methods, continuous assessment, and action research. As the knowledge of these three elements is relevant to any educator who needs to improve the quality of education, it would be more helpful if supported with its practices.

## **4.2. PERCEIVED CHANGES IN SKILL OF TEACHING**

Research indicates that the most effective professional development activities are those resulted in change of practices and continuous improvement of the participants (Fullan, 1991). To this effect, questions were presented to instructors specifically about positive instructional changes resulted from their participation in HDP. Based on the responses to the questions, two themes emerged in this section, **“The Use of Active Learning Methods”**, and **“Applying Continuous Assessment”**. Regarding both themes, there are opposing perspectives; some are making effort to implement it while others found it difficult even to try.

### **4.2.1. The Use of Active Learning Methods**

Professional development programs are judged primarily by whether they change instructional practice in a way that contributes to increased student achievement. In this regard, HDP is expected to enable teacher educators to implement the student

centered/active learning teaching approach. The second module of the training program was meant to provide knowledge and skills on developing active learning projects.

The informants detailed the impact that HDP has had on their teaching performance. Some of the respondents witnessed that their instructional ability has been somewhat enhanced. They are employing active learning methods in their classrooms. For instance, I-6

I was purely using the formal lecture method. But currently, I am trying to use certain ALMs like class discussions, like ice breaker. Formerly, I can say that I didn't give much more attention for the methodological aspect. I know the contents so that I simply lecture and I come out. But now, I let students participate in a many ways as much as possible using variety of ALMs. I always consider the learning style, what type of students that I have, visual, auditory and kinesthetic. I try to select the methodologies that fit with learning styles.

Informant-6, 25, 03, 2008

I-2 went on extensively describing in detail the positive changes that have resulted from his participation in HDP. He has been more successful in incorporating best practices into his classrooms through his devotion.

After HDP classes, I always thought that "may I try this thing in my class"? And when I try, I get certain result. For that reason I continued using it. Most people are saying that it is impossible to employ ALM in the classroom, but it is possible with a number of constraints of course. I am applying some of the ALMs, not all. I can say the initiative that is created in my mind during the HDP classes and the experiences that I get from the colleagues & the leaders of HDP helped me to try certain methods in my classroom.

Informant-2, 28,02,2008

He further stated that he had been committed to acquiring and refining his instructional skills. He was looking at best practices and asking himself what is good and what's not suited for his classroom. The above informant added that "There are portions that students can simply read and understand so I prepare and give them handouts. This helped me to save time so that I could use for some other ALMs" (Informant-2, 28, 02, 2008).

His experience suggests that if the teacher prepares a head of time to provide students material in the form of handouts, he/she is not going to waste a number of time on simply giving a lecture; rather, discussions and facilitation of learning takes the place of lecture. Education and training policy of Ethiopia emphasizes new pre-service training packages which are strongly practice oriented at all levels of training so that graduating teachers attain the necessary skills and a positive attitude in the application of a variety of methods (ICDR, 1998). In bringing this ambition to practice, one of the HDP modules is about equipping the trainees with skills of ALMs. Classroom observation data also revealed that the above Teachers (I-I, I-2, &I-6) were engaging students in learning. They have been using questioning during lecture(both for individuals and groups); buzz group discussion & reporting techniques, pair works, and group presentations of assignments. They encouraged their students to take part in the learning process (O.C). Professional development activities are usually designed to help participants built and apply specific instructional skills. In this regard, the data revealed that HDP has provided some of the participants with the opportunity of learning and incorporating/practicing various active learning methods is to their teaching.

On the other hand, some other informants reported that they had made few, if any changes to their usual teaching approaches. According to one of my informants (1-4), the practice of ALMs in actual classroom is difficult. He attributed the reason to his actual classroom context:

The actual classroom sometimes does not allow you to apply the methodologies. Still now in this university, the average class size is eighty (80) and above. There is a situation where you teach about hundred (100) students in one classroom, where even you can't have a position to stand leave alone conducting group discussions and some other active learning methods. It is possible to use some of the methodologies that are good for large class sizes. But if you want to implement still some other varieties, the class size has to be to the level of 30s or 40s.

Informant -4, 13,03,2008

Some other instructors, on the other hand attributed the reason for not to using the training skills they acquired through attending HDP. As an instance, one informant indicted that “I understand what they were trying to say but I’m not sure if they knew what the problems could be. For instance, the course content is a bit broad and if you need to cover that large amount of content within short period of time, you may be forced to use lecture than other methodologies” (FGD-3, 01, 05, 2008).

I have observed some of the above instructors’ classroom teaching but what I have seen was similar in that both of them were trying to make their lecture active by frequently raising questions to the whole class. Mostly voluntary students raise their hands and given the chance to respond. Discussion techniques (for shorter periods of time relative to the whole period) were also used according to students seats. As to me, it was not effective, or the approach generally focused on student recall with limited or no opportunity to assess student understanding. It didn’t encourage every student to take part but benefited only few students who were active learners. Use of wait time was inappropriate for most students to respond (O.C).

Further more, some others attributed the reason for using the skills from HDP to the less enabling environment at institutional level. One of the informants expressed his feeling in the following manner

I learned the program would be very complex and time-consuming. Also that it would have to be made much less burdensome on teachers if this is to on going with enthusiasm. I needed to teach different approaches, student centered approaches. It’s problem because you tend to fall back into chalk and talk and text books due to the several institution related limitations.

Informant-5, 20,03,2008

Some others made clear that they do not use active learning methodology. Their response seems a bit negative that they perceived it as a burden.

Much of the stuff presented to us was - in my opinion - unrealistic and fanciful. Teachers do not have the time to achieve these incredible goals placed (forced) upon us by the higher officials of the system. I didn't use any teaching and learning strategies from the program.

FGD-2, 18,04,2008

The reports of the above informants clearly show that they have the information of active learning methodologies and they admit its values but some things went wrong that encourages and motivates them to try in their teaching. Observation of tone of the above teacher's lesson and others who are not cited on here reveal similar evidence with what they claimed. Students are rarely engaged in meaningful learning experiences. Instructional strategies are limited to lecture and note provision.

#### **4.2.2. Applying Continuous Assessment**

Education and training policy states that continuous assessment in academic and practical subject including aptitude test will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels. As the role of the teacher becomes more concerned with support for the learner than being the provider of knowledge, the function of assessment must change from being simple and formal measuring mechanism to more sophisticated method helping the teacher to help the students learn (ETP, 1994). One of the main objectives of the HDP is helping teacher educators improve assessment in general and helping instructors use formative assessment widely.

Two types of responses were reported regarding assessment techniques. There are instructors who perceived signs of improvement in the way they evaluate their students' performance. I-1 suggested that he has shown improvement in giving feed back to his students' works as a result of his participation in HDP

You know the trend previously, while I was teaching, I tell the students to do assignments & to submit it but I don't give comments immediately. In this case, the students did not know about their progress. But after the training, I always comment students' paper. The comments are not simply like excellent, very good; the comments are very reflective, informative, the area that they need to improve. So, in this regard I have shown improvements.

Informant-1, 21, 02, 2008

The other informant also supported the above idea and he confirmed that he was using a variety of assessment techniques; he started to use group works and assignments in addition to formal examinations.

I was giving final & mid exams for my students but currently I am trying to break down the sessions to make it a bit continuous and even I am providing group and individual assignments. There is at least an initiative to implement some of the elements that I have acquired from HDP.

Informant-2, 28, 2008

Additional evidence from FGD also supports the improvement of practice in relation to assessment techniques they employed in actual teaching. An instructor from FGD-I stated

I started to use continuous assessment this year. For example, I was teaching communicative English I and II, and while I was teaching, I used four kinds of continuous assessment. I used story telling, interpretation, report writing and final examination. In addition, whenever they submit their assignments, I regularly give them comments.

FGD-1, 09,04,2008

Regarding these two instructors' real practice, I have observed some of their lessons. The teachers have been using oral questioning to check for student understanding; they were observing what students were doing during group discussions. Following each group's presentation, questioning techniques were used to assess students' understanding and some of the questions were open-ended that might enhance cognitive level (O.C).

Contrary to the above view, it was very difficult for others to apply continuous assessment due to different prevailing limitations. They failed to use it in spite of the fact that they admit its importance. As I-3 reported: "Continuous assessment is not an easy task. I am in a position for the first time to use portfolio. Checking the portfolio in each session and in each chapter is really very difficult. Whatever the case, I am using different tasks, assignments with value" (Informant -3, 05, 03, 2008).

The other instructor reported the same idea with above. He has mentioned his teaching load and the number of students he works with in a given semester as a reason for not practicing it in actual classroom teaching. But still he never denied the importance of using the continuous assessment technique.

I had six groups; in 6 groups I had totally about three hundred students. So I was expected to use the same continuous assessment. It is really tiresome & time taking to comment all those papers. It is not flexible to call each student and give feedback verbally. On the other hand, if you don't just know your students very well, then you don't know how much progress he/she is showing in the class. You have to know your students very closely. However, if you have much workload and many lasses it is very difficult to apply

Informant-4, 3, 3, 2008

Others attributed the failure to use continuous assessment to the time constraint due to semester scheduling and poor time management. An instructor from FGD-2 suggested the problem that: "Continuous assessment needs much time but you have only four months for a semester. Even the class does not fit with the situation, which means it begins after fifteen or thirty days after the students are registered; So that you don't get it very easy"(FGD-2, 18, 04, 2008).

The data from teachers and informal discussion with students suggested that the problem of time is not only from the schedule, but it is common for some instructors to be late (take about a month) to start class after students' registration. Eventually every teacher calls for make up or give assignments. Others compensate the class through extensive lecture which covers more than two and three chapters per session to finish the course outline.

My own observation confirms that assessment strategies used by most teachers were not encouraging. During some of my observation, many students were off task for significant periods of time with no appropriate attempt from the instructors to deal with the problem. Students were not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Excessive instructional time was lost in handling lecture by the instructors. I observed that students were unaware of their own level of achievement at the end of the classes in most cases;

feedback was not provided from both students' and teachers' sides. The instructors were unable to accurately identify students' level of success, or were unable to make suggestions for how the lesson may be improved based on students needs (O.C). This experience shows lack of follow up of the institution and weak level of teacher supervision. Every thing of teaching was left to instructor's discretion alone.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education advocates continuous assessment. This requires the teacher to follow the day to day performances of the student. Continuous assessment was designed to introduce students to a range of activities. A lack of match between what the ministry has desired and what is happening pose a question about the effectiveness of the HDP in equipping the candidates with the necessary skills.

### **4.3. VALUED ASPECT(S) OF THE PROGRAM**

Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues that all models of professional development activities generally strengthens teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions, He, nonetheless has the opinion that there is still a need for more research to be done in this area, specific aspects of teachers' professional development that created a significant effect on teachers' practices. The evidence from participants of this study also shows that they have acquired and insight in the area of various active learning methods and continuous assessment so that they are practicing in their actual teaching. They were asked about the most important feature of the program for their successful learning and practice of what they have learned. Through the analysis process, 'Mode of Training' was identified.

#### **4.3.1. Mode of Training**

Different strategies engage teachers in different kinds of professional learning, and professional development programs characteristically combine different strategies. In this regard, method used to deliver HDP to the participants/candidate was valued by the participants themselves. I-3 talked supporting the program being active.

One of the strengths of the program is that the training by lets the candidates to participate in activities. When you see the module, it is full of reflective activities and that is good. That makes the teacher to look back in to heir previous experiences and to reflect on their current progress, and also to project in to the future. So the idea of being active and reflective is one good part of the training program.

Informant -3, 05, 03, 2008

The way HDP was delivered to the candidates involves active participation and group interaction among the participants. One on the informants pointed out that it was highly important for interpersonal skill development.

The Face-to face discussions promote interaction among candidates. As each participant work to meet the group goal, they provide assistance and feedback to team members, exchange information, discuss issues and offer support. It develops interpersonal skills, require the teachers to work together, listen to and accept others' ideas, and develop strategies for dealing constructively with conflicts.

Informant-6, 25, 03, 2008

The participants thought that the experience sharing that they were performing in HDP classroom is very potential because they were candidates from different universities that in all universities they might into learn similar subject at the same mode. For that reason, they were sharing experiences; adding inputs to the already existing knowledge. I-1 more elaborated the issue

University teachers who come together and share experiences in a number of wonderful issues, either formally during the sessions or informally during coffee-tea break, you see? However can't meet in other ways; we may meet once or twice a year in a form of formal meeting. But in HDP classes we meet for two hours twice a week through the year. We are sharing a number of experiences, we are working together, so this even strengths our friendship. This part is very interesting part of HDP. So, with a number of challenges, still I appreciate that minimum is experience sharing.

Informant -1.21, 02, 2008

Based on the participant's responses about what they valued as important aspect of the program, it is possible to say that they are not against active learning approaches because they valued the method of training that it consisted of group interaction and experience sharing. It is also important to mention the fact that the practice of these active learning methods is limited to merely appreciation rather than using in actual teaching (for most teachers).

To sum up, the data revealed that some graduates of HDP have shown growth in knowledge and understandings about active learning and continuous assessment methods. In addition, they perceived the method of program delivery as important aspect. According to the graduate profile, teacher educators who graduated from the program are expected to identify their own needs and become reflective teacher educators; develop teaching as a skill based on sound theoretical knowledge and experience; use active learning and student centered methods; become role models of good practice; use active learning and student centered methods; become role models of good practice; have high standards of professional ethics and clear values; provide a high quality experience for student teachers (MOE, 2004). However, except few instructors, implementing the skills and becoming successful in achieving the graduate profile was not possible. The factor that stood against the effectiveness of the program will be presented in the following section.

#### **4.4 PERCEIVED BARRIERS**

Several researchers have categorized factors that mediate the influence of professional development. Throughout the interview and FGD process in this study, many participants refer to perceived factors that negatively affected their opportunity to learn and change of practice. I have taken Otto son (1997) method of category to present perceived barriers of the program for the sake of convenience. Accordingly, three main themes emerged from this section; educational factors, predisposing factors, and problem of enabling factors. Under each theme, sub-themes were identified.

#### 4.4.1 EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

According to Otoson (1997), educational factors are the characteristics of the professional development, including quality of facilitation, organization, and methods. Consistent to this idea, two sub- themes were identified from the data, content of the program and management of HDP.

**4.4.1.1. Content of the Program:** Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) found that teacher learning in most of professional constructions has not been considered very effective, due in part to the passive process where teachers are recipients of knowledge and skills as defined by an out side authority, it is not constructed around a set of common gals, and for the most parts, the experiences are isolated, extrinsically motivated, and leave little room to assess the accountability of results. HDP experience at JU also seems to have problem which is related to the content itself. According to the data, most instructors found the contents not challenging, some of the content was obtuse and not necessary. It was also vast and shouldn't have covered the whole year. For instance, I-1 suggested the following

Certain contents are silly, easy for those who are teaching at university level. For instance, university teachers may not need to define what teaching means at this level. Because we already know and took a number of courses, we are expecting more advanced things from HDP.

Informant -1, 21,02,2008

Another teacher added that what university teachers need to know should involve new innovations and the use of technologies rather than telling them what they already know.

The contents that should be included and treated in HDP need to be contents that are a bit advanced or it should be new findings, new discovery , new technologies that others are using or that are discovered now a days rather than simply telling them the definitions of other easy things.

Informant -4, 13, 03, 2008

Mentioning the repetitions of concepts and procedures in the HDP module, one of the participants stated:

The content should be modified. It is covered by a year, the time is very long and the contents are redundant. If you are critically examining this (HDP) handbook, there are redundancies; there are a number of repetitions. Even you can cover certain contents within fifteen or thirty minutes but you need to stay there for two hours.

FGD-2, 18, 04, 2008

As it is clear from the evidence, there are some points that contributed to HDP candidates' lack of interest and which need correction. For instance, they said that some data are old and there is point of redundancy. It needs certain modification; much updated information has to be added.

**4.4.1.2 Management of HDP:** Adult learning is based on the belief that adults need to (a) know the relevancy of why they are learning new information, (b) be self directed and autonomous, (c) make and have connections between new learning and previous life experiences, and (d) be goal-oriented, task-centered, and problem solvers (Hiemstra, 1993). These assumptions are important considerations when designing adult learning opportunities. Knowles stated that adults have ample life experiences that should be considered as factors in the learning processes. According to the data, the management of HDP has its own problems. One of my informants witnessed the case saying "If we are looking at the HDP management system. It was very harsh and even under certain cases they try to use compulsion, force writing letter to the dean" (Informant -2, 28, 12, 2008).

The other issue is the problem of HDP leaders in providing feedback. The existing data revealed that most people who are taking the position of HDPLs or tutors are not as such professionals. The feedback problem is there because certain HDPLs may not clearly know how to provide feed back. Concerning this, I-3 said

The feed backs the leaders give are not informative. They don't inform us about our progress. They simply say "excellent", "very good", "Keep it up", "is that so?", Really?"- Such funny feedbacks. If it is a feedback it has to be informative. You should in inform the candidate about his weakness and his strengths.

Informant -3, 05, 03, 2008

Adding on the above viewpoint, the other instructor commented on the background of the HDPLs. He agreed that it would have been more appropriate and the problems may not exist if this program were led by professionals who have pedagogy background as follows:

I know that they (HDPLs) have taken the training before. That is how they came up to be leaders. But when you feedback a candidates' portfolio, you need to se it, read patiently and indicate what he/she should be to be in progress. But that was not the case; there were no appropriate feed back from the leaders. I believe that if lenders are from pedagogy department. They can do much better than that of leaders from some other departments because they went through a number of courses which may enrich their knowledge about HDP

Informant -4, 13,03,2008

The objective of HDP is to achieve a paradigm shift, to achieve some behavioral change among students and among instructors; and achieving behavioral terms is not a simple task and it is difficult to expect a good result at the end unless the leaders become a good role model for their candidates.

#### **4.4.2 PREDISPOSING FACTORS**

The characteristics of the teacher, including their motivation for attending, background knowledge, and preexisting attitudes can be categorized as predisposing factors (Otto son, 1997). It is evident in this study that predisposing factors are perceived as obstacles to the implementation of active learning methodologies and continuous assessment. These are presented as attitude of colleagues, teacher motivation, and lack of devotion.

**4.4.2.1 Attitude of Colleagues:** there is a strong tie between teachers' attitude towards active learning and their effort in implementing the technique. Teachers who adhere to constructivist epistemology have positive attitude towards active learning and those who adhere to positivist epistemology are the reverses (Cohen and Hill, 2000). The evidence from teacher's interviews and FGD suggest that the problem of implementation of the new teaching methods is related to teachers themselves. One of the respondents reported:

What I have seen as a problem in most of the teachers (His Colleagues) is that they are not willing from the beginning. They do not have good attitude because they think that it costs them much to apply what they have learned. Even while they were taking the training, it was not from their full heart. They do it as some thing compulsory. But this is something which is considered to be part of their development plan.

Informant -2, 28, 12, 2008

Another informant suggested that individuals may have differing needs and ambitions and some might not want improvement. However, every professional whether he/she is an engineer, a manager, or an educator, needs to be kept updated in order to stay in the profession.

Certain people may not be happy because every body may not like to develop. But as long as professional development is concerned, as long as you are feeling teaching is my job, my profession, everybody should develop in the skill. If you are an engineer or a manager you need to continuously improve your self; unless otherwise, you will be expelled out of the system. Certain people are naturally happy to develop themselves, where as others may not, even they may not care about themselves.

*Informant -1, 21,02,2008*

The Problem of attitude is not only from the side of the candidates but also higher officials of the institution had negative attitude towards the program. One informant suggested that "The attitude should be changed. It is not only from the views of the candidates, but also from the higher officials. They have to accept it for the smooth progress of the program. If the issue of attitude is solved, the next is action, which will solve so many things" (FGD-3, 01, 05, 2008).

Research indicates that leadership plays a role in readying teachers for change by creating a positive culture that lets teacher's attitudes change naturally when they see how and whether a new practice helps student's learning (Sparks, 1994) Opposite to spark's idea, the data informed that officials' attitude is not positive towards the program.

**4.4.2.2 Teacher Motivation:** Teachers do not exist in a void; they are individuals with different backgrounds and ambitions who work in varied context. Teachers' motivation to attend professional development appears to be a key factor in change. The evidence of this study however shows the reverse. The participants reported that implementation of the new skills (ALMs and continuous assessment) is challenging by itself but nothing has been done to encourage teachers. Even the certificate has no any value as it did not bring any difference among instructors. Witnessing this, an instructor said.

If there is some value after graduation may be in the form of money or in the form of structure / position, I believe every body will speak about HDP and improvement of instruction. But now days there are instructors from our faculty who denied that they don't want to attend the HDP. When the program started I heard that no one will be allowed teaching in the universities without having HDP license. But there is no measure and there is no difference here.

Informant- 2,28,2008

There is a question from the participant about whether or not the higher officials of the system understand the objectives and values of HDP. However, the participants accepted the importance of the program regardless the problem they mention as obstacle for its practice.

Teacher from FGD-3 asserted:

I think there has to be a shift from above. Do leaders of the university from above or the ministry really understand the objectives of the program? I am not sure of that really. Personally I believe that HDP is helpful, it is advantageous, particularly for fresh instructors, particularly for those who did not take methodological course in the universities during their preparation, and also as part of continuous professional development, really HDP is helpful. But the problem is that when you devote your precious time, your money at least you have to achieve some gain. Generally there is no any thing which is given by the faculty to those who graduated from the program is that when you devote your precious time, your money, at least you have to achieve some gain. Generally there is no any thing which is given by the faculty to those who graduated from the program

FGD-3, 01,05,2008

The data from the informants suggest that the license has to have a value in order to motivate teachers. But currently, as to the participants' belief, there is no change among teachers with HDP license and with those who have not. They believed that when individuals add up something in their profession, automatically they need to be up graded in order to motivate them to do some other things. The absence of such kind of motivation in the case of Jimma University, however, has been perceived as having counter effect to change of practice.

**4.4.2.3. Lack of Teachers Devotion:** Growing professionally involves a great amount of effort, energy, and risk. Duke (1993) stated that teachers were often hesitant of failure. People associate failure with losing the respect of their professional colleagues. The application of HDP is basically something left to the individual teacher. It needs time; planning responding to individual needs, being flexible, having good technique, materials..., however, the actual classroom context is full of limitations. Some of these multiple and pervasive challenges associated with the HDP were reported for the lack of commitment from the side of candidates and as a counter for the effectiveness of the program. In relation to this, 1-2 asserted: "By its nature, application of HDP skills needs hard working and your personal devotion. If you are aware that it is up to you to devote your time, your will for this hard work, I think you can apply some of it and achieve something. This is what I observe" (Informant -2, 28, 12, 2008).

The need to think the way out and being problem solver is emphasized by the participants. According to their responses, under any circumstance, the implementation of HDP training skills needs the teacher to take the initiative willingly. As an example, one of the informants said:

Implementing ALMs demands you to take the initiative. Because, it needs materials or to have good techniques; for e.g. you might have large class size, it might be difficult to use a pair work in a large class size. That time you have to think about another ALM. But it is not good thinking to complain, you have to think about the way out

Informant -4, 13,03,2008

According to the above response, there were alternative ways of implementing the active learning methods in different contexts but what matter most was willingness from instructors.

#### **4.4.3 THE ABSENCE OF ENABLING FACTORS**

The contexts where in teachers teach and professional development occurs are usually varied, and they have a serious impact on teachers, their work and their professional development. During the study many teachers often referred to factors that existed in their real work place situation. These perceived factors were noted as having negative effect on the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities. Under this category, Financial and Material Resources, Time and workload, and Students' preferences were identified as hampering factors

**4.4.3.1. Financial and material Resources:** it is clear that resources are essential in any reform or effective professional development activities. In this study, lack of financial support and poor material and facilities were reported as barrier. For instance, a teacher witnessed the absence of financial support for doing action research saying

We have been told that we will have financial support but there was no support form HDP office. They didn't even give us a paper. We have been told that the program has its own budget, especially for AR. For example in my communicative II class; there is one chapter- public speaking. In that part I needed to show students different public speeches of students which are found on a DVD. But I couldn't find a room where I can show it to the students.

FGD-1, 09,04,2008

The data informs that teachers have the desire to conduct action research but they were not given the necessary support from the institution. It is one part of the HDP module but still now the AR is done only for the sake of HDP. No more AR has been done out side of the requirement for graduating HDP. The instructors are questioning the importance of learning

in the absence of implementation due to lack of support. An instructor witnessed that “For instance, last time Candidates asked some sort of material and money to conduct AR. The AR was to be conducted in order to change problem related to classroom situation, eventually they were denied. So, why do they bother?” (Informant -5, 20, 03, 2008)

The other instructor added mentioning the poor facility to support the teaching learning in the faculty

Some times there are conditions when the training skills are not used. For instance the issue of stimuli materials; Sometimes you need to have some materials to be given for the students so that you will distribute it for them, they will read that one and reflect up on it. But under some circumstances you might face barrier, the photocopy or duplicating machine doesn't exist, if exists doesn't function.

Informant -2, 28,12,2008

The material conditions in the classroom are also reported as hindrance to implement the new teaching methodologies. Concerning this idea, a teacher from FGD-1 suggested:

To implement the cross over or some cooperative learning, but when you look at the chairs and other things, they will not help you to implement the mentioned methodology. You see, it needs flash cards, different materials to facilitate the ALM. In the absence of all these, it is possible to implement but it is very difficult that you will get what you are expecting.

FGD-1, 09,04,2008

I think this is something that the program providers need to care of, because in the future, it may go against the sustainability of the program. If teachers are not rendered with the appropriate help, they may not be willing to do it. There are factors that can be linked to the institution. For instance, the number of students in the classroom is very large. Even if they try to apply Alms, they may look for materials, facilities, stationeries but these all things are not available.

**4.4.3.2. Time and Workload:** At Jimma University, there is a practice called community Based Training Program (CBTB) in which all students are expected to make survey of issues/problems in the society relevant to their field of study. During CBTP and practicum,

instructors are assigned as supervisors and go out with the students. In such cases, class will stop. Beside, every instructor usually teaches at last two different kinds of courses. When it is added to the time allotted to attend HDP and time required to plan and prepare for active learning student centered teaching approach, things get complicated. These Kinds of problems were reported as a bottleneck to exercise some of the skills in actual teaching. A member of FGD-2 suggested that

Here, teachers are highly overloaded. They have their own duties and if you add another duty on them, they feel or get tired. The HDP office should think about load reduction for candidates. If they are highly overloaded they may not actively participate in the lesson. So thinking about load reduction by any mechanism may be appropriate

FGD-2, 18,04,2008

As to some respondents, the three credit hour reductions granted for HDP candidates for their training means noting relative to their workload, and it counteracted the quality of teachers learning. I-5 contended the following

During my training I have been given a three credit hour reduction of my workload. But that didn't help me. For example, when I was taking the training, I had eighteen (18) credit hours and I was very much crowded with my classes. Actually I have done a lot to succeed in my training, but if the work load was not there, I could have done a lot, I could have used my time to take the training critically. But due to my work load, sometimes I filled my reflective activates even carelessly, without taking things in to consideration, without thinking from different sides

Informant-5, 20, 03, 2008

Similar to the idea of I-5, the other informant added: "If you just need the candidates to fill in the reflective activities seriously, give them much time. For example, we had a class on Tuesday and Friday. Always on Friday, we are expected to submit the reflective activity. In between we had only two days to fill those reflective activities" (Informant -4, 13, 03, 2008). In general, the time given to complete the training added to teachers' working loads were considered limitation for both the learning process and to implement what is learned.

**4.4.3.3. Students' Preferences:** Ethiopia's policies and programs most closely correspond to the humanist approach, although elements of behaviorism are evident in many aspects of the system-the curriculum, textbooks, examinations, and teachers' practices (Amare, et al,

2006). The curriculum materials are bulky with few activities or exercise so that the teachers mostly use lectures and provide assignments to students. The style of student examination/evaluation also encourages students to be dependent on witted notes. Students' preferences were reported by the participants as a problem that they do not accept active learning; student centered teaching methodologies. I-6 said:

The students did not practice such methodologies still what they found important is to get notes from you so that they can prepare more for the final examination and the like. The tradition that they come through doesn't fit with that of the ideas and concepts in HDP.

Informant-6, 25, 03 2008

Students' behaviors during group work and particularly the behavior of female students is also perceived as a problem of student centered active learning pedagogy. I-2 suggested the following

Particularly if you consider of female students, shyness is one of their problem. Most of them are passive listeners. We can't deny that there are few students who can play the role of leadership or problem solver, or doer. Some students by their nature want to dominate the others. Since we are at the early stage of practicing of this method, I know that it is a challenge for the fact that this methodology is a new approach and what the students practice so far was teacher dominated approach.

Informant -2, 28,12,2008

Unwillingness of the students is the main challenge for applying continuous assessment as well as to involve them on the learning process. From FGD-2 one suggested:

When you give them assignments it become boring and stressful for them because assignments are given almost from all teachers and students become very much crowded. I have truly experienced when ever I give them assignments, they say they are not willing because they have lots of assignments and they don't get it very easy.

FGD-2, 18,04,2008

One can understand from the participants' response that the problem is not only from the students. There are different kinds of group formation for different purposes. It is the responsibility of the teacher to consider each student's capabilities and behavior in order to form effective group. Considering students' abilities during group formation is important to overcome the domination of few students and to encourage shy students to take part in the learning process. The other problem is the assessment technique used by teachers is limited to assignments in most cases.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The intent of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the study that investigated the role of HDP in improving participants' knowledge and instructional skills. The chapter is therefore, presented in three parts: summary, conclusions and implications for practice.

#### **4.4. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives of their experiences with HDP. To this effect, efforts were made to understand their perceptions of the contributions of the program. I have used qualitative research method so that I would be able to understand the participant' viewpoints about what happened in their knowledge and teaching after their participation in HDP. In order to expand and update my knowledge around the problem under study, I have reviewed different literatures written in the area of principles and characteristics of effective professional development programs, adult learning, and the Handbook of HDP before I went to investigate what they have learned. Teacher educators who had taken the course have participated in the study through purposive selection. A total of eighteen (18) instructors have participated in the study, six in interview and twelve in FGD. In addition, I have observed ten classroom lessons of each department in the faculty of education, four lessons of teachers who involved in interview and six lessons of FGD participant instructors. Informal discussions with students and instructors were also used as an input in my effort to understand the case in detail.

The data from interviews and FGDs were transcribed and then combined with the data from observation; similar patterns and themes were identified, cross checked from different sources and compared across the six cases. During the analysis, each individual research question was addressed to ensure that the findings from the study were portrayed effectively. Accordingly, the four research questions were used as a framework of category under which to group the emerged themes from the data: perceived knowledge; perceived improvement in teaching skills; important aspect of the program; and perceived factors. The following are some of the major findings.

- ✦ The program could be able to create awareness and promote understandings in the area of teaching methodology. Particularly, the program enabled the teacher educators to learn more about active learning methods, Continuous assessment, and action research
- ✦ The use of active learning methodologies and continuous assessment by few teachers in their classroom teaching was evident. Nevertheless, there were many situations that the program (HDP) could not alter in the area of improving skills of teaching; there were teachers who found difficulty in changing their teaching skills based on the new knowledge, and there was no action research done other than the requirement for HDP graduation.
- ✦ From the whole program feature, the method of training delivery was valued by participants. More specifically, group interactions and experience sharing among HDP candidates during the training sessions was considered as an important aspect. of the program
- ✦ Mediating factors which affected the successful learning and implementation of the training skills were reported. These impeding factors are related to: the problem with contents of the program and its management including its feedback and follow-up mechanism; the characteristics of the teachers, including their motivation, preexisting attitudes, and level of devotion; the lack of enabling factors in their work contexts like material, financial, time and workload, as well as problems of working with students.

#### 4.5. CONCLUSION

In this part, what I have learned from the analysis of data have been discussed in relation to the objectives and graduate profile of HDP as well as the characteristics/ principles of effective professional development to reach at conclusion.

##### **The Differential Effects**

Borko (2004) and other researchers cited in the literature part of this study suggest a point that helped to verify some of the findings of this study. The main object of high-quality professional development is to help teachers deepen their knowledge and transform their instructional practices. Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience. In this regard, different authors have proposed different kinds of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values in which effective teachers must be proficient (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Some of them include general pedagogical knowledge: Knowledge of learning environments and instructional strategies; classroom management; and knowledge of learners and learning. From the participants own words, this was especially evident when analyzing the data and common themes in the research questions targeting “Knowledge about teaching” and change in “teaching skills”. Themes that emerged from the data within those two areas were tightly interwoven. The data revealed that as knowledge about teaching increased, so did teaching skills of some instructors. On the other hand, there is disconnection between the increase in knowledge and teaching skills for some others.

This range of responses on the improvement of teaching skills (implementation of what they have learned) reflects the differential effects that the program had on the teachers. Kelleher (2003) states that often teachers are sent to workshops that do not assist them in translating learning into the classroom practice. He stated that this practice of professional development seems ‘**to resemble a series of boats floating in different ways**’. The existing data showed that the same is true for HDP experience at Jimma University. The gained knowledge couldn’t help them to improve skill of teaching and the program remained informative for most instructors.

### **Neglected Value**

Despite its essential role in educational reform, the practice of most professional development activities has been criticized by various authors; one of the reasons is that they often neglect the participants' concerns and expertise (Meiers & Ingvaron, 2005). This shows that values and preferences of the participants is a crucial factor for the success of any program designed to promote individuals competence. In this study, participants were asked about specific aspects of the program that they valued for teachers' learning and practices. Data from their response revealed that the mode of course delivery were their preferred aspect of the program. Meiers & Ingvarson (2005) suggest that the strategies used in implementing effective professional development programs are a significant element in teachers' opportunities to learn; an important decision for any professional program developer is to choose a methodology for teacher learning appropriate to the goals and context of the professional development program. As I have understood from participants' responses, HDP was successful in relating its method of training to objectives of the program that it was highly active, interactive, and collaborative. Collaboration and cooperation are required skills in all paces of life. Although these skills have been realized during the training sessions of HDP and recognized as important, they frequently are absent from the classroom. Responses of the participants and my own observation confirm that instructional approaches often employed by instructors encourage students to be independent learners rather than cooperative learners; most students missed the opportunity to learn with and from their peers. Yet, as compared to the ambitions and graduate profile of HDP, the only valued aspect of the program by the participants may raise the question that the extent to which they are interested/accepted the program in general.

### **The Dilution Effect**

Although teachers practiced more student-centered teaching activities through the participation in HDP, their use of them was limited. Teachers seemed to believe in the value of student-centered teaching strategies but were unable to fully adopt these strategies because they felt hindrance. Researchers call this the “dilution” effect of professional development: The actual impact of the professional development is diluted by all of the other factors that support or hinder teachers from making change. The dilution effect is the primary criticism behind arguments against judging professional development activities (Adey, 1995).

- Professional development should provide teachers with learning opportunities that are meaningful, intellectually engaging, and some would say, professionally empowering. Contrary to this idea, has been criticized by the participants as being ineffective was the gap between their expectation and what was prescribed for educators to learn. The participants found that the contents of HDP were not challenging; some of the contents were insensitive for those who teach at university level. It was also redundant, vast and shouldn't have covered the whole year. Bransford (2000) stated that professional development sessions should be planned to focus on what the teachers need help with rather than just prearranged workshops.
- Moreover, Professional development activities designed for adults should follow principles of adult learning: establish a supportive environment, acknowledge teachers' prior experience, and help teachers consider how new learning applies to their specific teaching situation (Knowles, 1970). But these were missing and problem of proper handling of the participants was reported.
- The other management problem reported by the participants was poor feed backing and follow-up from HDP leaders. The feedbacks provided by HDPLs were not informative of the candidates' performances. Follow-up support is as important as initial learning opportunity. This post activity component includes opportunities for educators to practice new skills and receive structured feedback. Coaching,

interactions with colleagues, and modeling were often mentioned as being among the most effective forms of follow-up activities (Ball, 1996).

- Stout (1996) for example, proposed four motivations teachers have for participating in professional development: salary enhancement, certificate maintenance, and career mobility (building their resume to move up the ladder to higher administrative rank or pursue other careers). The evidences, however, showed that there was no motivational mechanism. Four hour reduction was insufficient relative to their workload and the duration of the program.
- Teaching using active-learning, student-centered pedagogies is more challenging when one is working in classrooms with large numbers of students /or with poor facilities and limited instructional resources. This view has been reported by the participants. Improving teacher capabilities without changing the conditions that influence the opportunities to use these capabilities is often counter-productive (Meiers & Ingifarson, 2005).

#### 4.6.IMPLICATION

Based on the finding of the study, implications and inferences have been discussed in this sub-section.

Jones and Lowe (1990) state professional development should offer experiences that provide new techniques, strategies, and methods. In similar way, HDP was able to impart knowledge and understandings in the area of active learning, continuous assessment, and action research. Even though educators are qualified (relative to others), they were in a position to learn showing that learning of professionals a continuous process which begins with the initial preparation that teachers receive and continues until retirement. Therefore, there should be diversified learning opportunities that enhance teachers' practices. Because the methods that educated students some years ago may not be successful for the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the finding support the need to continually train, improve and update professionals in order to cope up with the new demands of the dynamic world.

Although it had awaked new consciences and promoted improvement in some aspects, many others remained untouched. It was valued by some but rarely implemented into their classrooms. This difficulty of changing old practices was one of the limits for the program. Devoting no time or little time for synthesis, integrating, and planning beyond the (professional development) program is inadequate preparation for application. Helping participants anticipate and plan for barriers may facilitate practice changes (Ottoson, 19997). The finding of the study implied that the learning opportunity is detached from real contexts. Therefore, it is better to reconsider the day-to-day work of teachers and the actual classroom conditions. It needs to make a strong connection between what is learned in the program and the teacher's own work context. In addition, it needs to help candidates plan for application, identify and strategize barriers to application that they will face in the classroom.

The reports of the participants informed that the experience of HDP at Jimma University was mediated by the “diluting effects”. Some of the issues like the limited resources and poor facilities, overcrowded classroom conditions, overloaded teachers duties and lack of motivation may be related to institutional problems. It also seem to be ineffective as topics are selected by people other than the one receiving it (because the content of HDP was not acknowledged by teachers), its management was not found to motivate participant as adult learners, it rarely contain solution for the challenges which face teachers and students in the real work situation, and teachers lacked motivation and thus were not devoted. Teachers have different types of concerns. Differing concerns may dictate what types and subjects of professional development teachers select. HDP was designed to help all participants build and apply specific instructional skills without consideration of individual needs. It is my sincere belief to reshape the contents of the program based on information of each department and individual teachers training needs. The finding may tell that the program needs certain modification; updated information and new innovations and technologies have to be added. Many teachers refuse to accept the top-down planning of staff development. Duke (1993) agreed and stated, “The principles of adult learning show that when people use self-directed inquiry in professional development, they are more likely to sustain their learning in more disciplined ways than when outsiders impose professional development requirements”. Because the candidates are all adults, how to manage and deal with adults should be quite different from other people. Because adults are people who can enjoy autonomy, adults are people who can take responsibility by their own, under these cases strict supervision, punishment or things like that may not be as such effective. From the finding of the study it is possible to say that the planning of HDP and other professional development program, to be meaningful, require a “bottom-up” process rather than a “top-down” one. HDP coordinators need to collaborate with faculty leaders to fully understand what their candidates need in order fill the learning gaps. Program leaders & officials of the university need to be creative and make alterations to the traditional practice and scarcity of the resources and time necessary for professional learning.

Considering the reality of time in a teacher’s work day, the implications of these findings for practice are important. Fostering and environment that promotes ongoing professional leaning may help to encourage restructuring time to be used in a different way. Teachers

need support to transfer what they learn in professional development into their classroom practices. Officials or leaders need to facilitate this process by reducing the number of different class preparations teachers must make. Future studies will be needed to investigate possible alternative ways of structuring time and availing/allocating resources to better support the training and its implementation efforts by teacher educators. The University may design certain strategies. Saying people fully employ HDP skills (active learning student centered teaching approach) by itself may not give sense. It gives sense if and the only if the institution provides necessary facilities, furnishes classrooms with materials. Unless otherwise expecting the implementation of the HDP is becoming simply an ambition rather than something that can be realized.

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**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER TO HDP COORDINATOR**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HELP IN IDENTIFYING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Hello, I am Ayalew Beza, MA student at Addis Ababa University, Institute Of Educational Research And Development. Currently I am conducting a case study in relation to the role of HDP on the improvement of instructional practice. It is my hope that the information collected in this study will contribute to the topic of the training and continuing development of teaching professionals.

For the purpose of this study, I would like to ask you to identify a staff member who stands out as being exemplary among the graduates. I have included, with this letter, criteria for selecting participant teachers.

Sincerely,

Ayalew Beza

## APPENDIX B

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Code of the informant \_\_\_\_\_

Dear participants,

My name is Ayalew Beza; I am MA student at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Educational Research and Development. I am glad that you have decided to participate in this research study. The purpose of the study is to understand the role of HDP in improving instructional practices. Your participation in the study is voluntary and anonymous. Your name will not be used in any of the documents or final report and your responses will be confidential. You will participate in a semi structured, tape recorded interview and after I have transcribed the interview, I will ask that you read and verify that the transcription is an accurate account of our interview and return the document to me.

Sincerely

## GENERAL INFORMATION

A. What is your field of study/qualification?

1st degree \_\_\_\_\_,

2<sup>nd</sup> degree \_\_\_\_\_,

3<sup>rd</sup> degree \_\_\_\_\_

B. How long have you served in teaching profession? \_\_\_\_\_

C. When did you participate in HDP? \_\_\_\_\_

1. What information did you acquire that enhanced your knowledge of teaching?
2. How do you judge the contribution of HDP for effective teaching?
3. How do you relate the information you acquired from HDP to your previous knowledge about teaching?
4. What aspect of your teaching do you think is improved as a result of the knowledge gained?
5. I am interested in knowing about the differences you see in yourself as to how you make instruction?
6. What was the most valuable thing you remember from the whole program?
  7. Would you tell me about those things that you feel has the greatest influence on improvement of teaching from your experience of HDP?
  8. What were some of things that inhibited your learning & implementation of the information you acquired?
  9. In your opinion, what are the strengths of HDP? What are its weaknesses? How could it be improved?

Note: is there a question that I did not ask, that you think I should have asked?

**APPENDIX C**  
**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES**  
**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

**FGD GUIDELINE** (for groups of instructors of education faculty)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear participants,

My name is Ayalew Beza; I am MA student at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Educational Research and Development. I am glad that you have decided to participate in this research study. The purpose of the study is to understand the role of HDP in improving instructional practices. Therefore, your genuine responses are highly important for the success of the study. Your participation in the study is voluntary and anonymous. Your name will not be used in any of the documents or final report and your responses will be confidential.

1. What have you learned from your participation in HDP?
2. How do you judge the contribution of HDP in enhancing your knowledge about teaching?
3. How has the knowledge gained from HDP influenced your practice?
4. What positive instructional changes have resulted from your participation in HDP?
5. What type of teaching strategies do you frequently employ?
6. Would you tell me your most favorable experiences of HDP?
7. Which part of the program do you value most for the improvement of teaching/education?
8. Can you think of specific instances when the information presented in the HDP was not used in actual teaching?
9. In your opinion, what are the strengths of HDP? What are its weaknesses? How could it be improved?

**APPENDIX D**

**Classroom Observation Guide**

<b>Observable Theme</b>	<b>Activities/Evidence Observed</b>
<p><b>1. Classroom Instruction/Content Delivery</b> (engaging and supporting students in active learning)</p> <p>1.1. Activation of prior experience and current knowledge of students.</p> <p>1.2. Involving students in group or independent exploration, discussions arguments or debates on ideas, procedures, or principles in the lesson</p> <p>1.3. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.</p> <p>1.4. Differentiating instructional strategies to meet multiple learning styles.</p>	
<p><b>2. assessing student learning</b></p> <p>2.1. Maintaining accurate records.</p> <p>2.2. Anticipating, checking for, and addressing students' misconceptions and misunderstandings.</p> <p>2.3. Using different tools/activities of assessment at the beginning, during and at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>2.4. Involving and guiding students in assessing their own learning.</p> <p>2.5. providing feedback on students' progress/performances</p>	

**O.C (observer's comment**

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The thesis, my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Ayalew Beza

Signature 

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Firdissa Jebessa

Signature 

